

The gourmet's guide to London / by Lieut.-Col. Newnham-Davis.

Contributors

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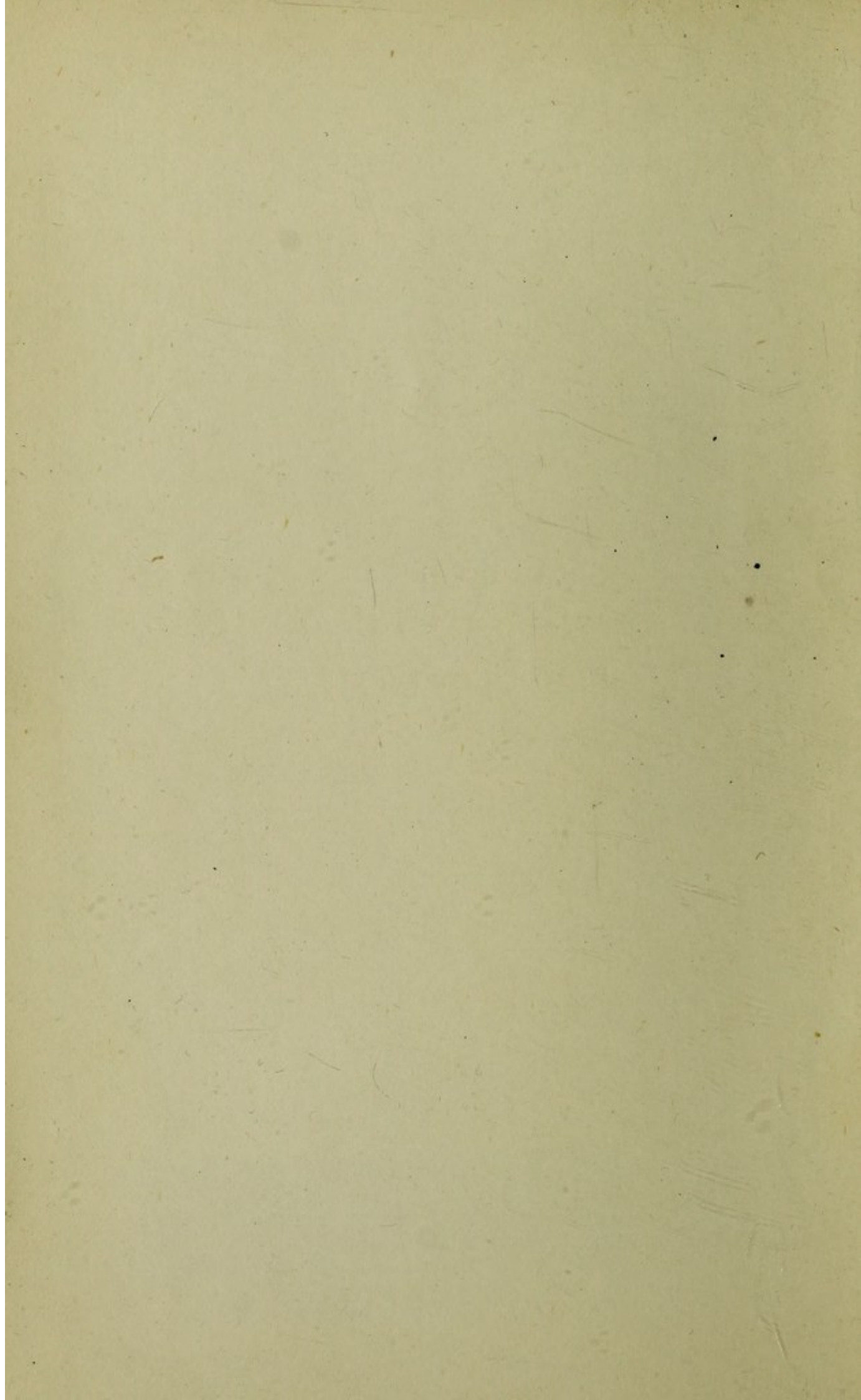
THE
GOURMET'S GUIDE
TO LONDON





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CHEESE

THE
GOURMET'S GUIDE
TO
LONDON

BY
LIEUT.-COL.
NEWNHAM-DAVIS

Author of
"The Gourmet's Guide to Europe"



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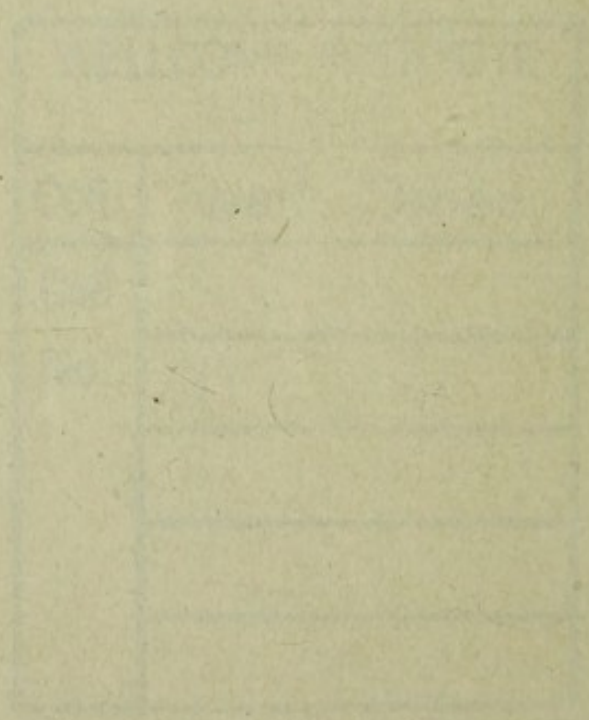
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1914

*The pleasures of the table
are common to all ages and
ranks, to all countries and
times ; they not only har-
monise with all the other
pleasures, but remain to
console us for their loss.—*

BRILLAT SAVARIN.

The history of the tribe
was known to all eyes and
hands, it was the history and
life; they were not the
same with all the other
tribes, but known to
all the people.

BRITISH MUSEUM



TO
ALL GOOD GOURMETS

TO
ALL GOOD GOURMETS

PREFACE

IN describing in this book some of the restaurants and taverns in and near London, I have selected those that seem to me to be typical of the various classes, giving preference to those of each kind which have some picturesque incident in their history, or are situated amidst beautiful surroundings, or possess amongst their personnel a celebrated chef or *maître d'hôtel*.

The English language has not enough nicely graduated terms of praise to enable me to give to a fraction its value to each restaurant, from the unpretentious little establishments in Soho to such palaces as the Ritz and Savoy, but I have included no dining-place in this volume that does not give good value for the money it charges.

Twelve years ago I wrote a somewhat similar book, "Dinners and Diners," which ran through two editions, but when I looked it through last year I found that there had been so many changes in the world of restaurants, so many old houses had vanished and so many new ones had arisen, that it was easier to write a new book than to bring the old one up to date. Mr Astor very kindly gave me permission to use in this volume any of the series of "Dinners and Diners" articles that appeared in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, but it will be found that I have availed myself very sparingly

of his kind permission. The chapters of this book appeared, with very few exceptions, in *Town Topics*, and I am indebted to the editor of that paper for his leave to gather them into book form.

Mr Grant Richards, the publisher of this book, quite agrees with me that no advertisements of restaurants shall find a place within its covers.

Should "The Gourmet's Guide to London" find a welcome from an appreciative public, and should, in due time, other editions of it be called for, I shall hope to broaden its scope to include in it some of the hostelries of Brighton and other seaside towns, also those of the great cities and great ports, and to describe some of those fine old country inns scattered about the kingdom where good old English cookery is still to be found in good old English surroundings.

For the French of the menus I do not hold myself responsible. The kitchen writes the French that it talks and who am I, a mere Briton, that I should attempt to alter it?

N. NEWNHAM-DAVIS.

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I

OLD ENGLISH FARE

WHEN a foreigner or one of our American cousins, or a man from one of the Colonies, comes to England, the first question he generally asks is: "Where can I get a typical good old English dinner?" Good old English fare is by no means too abundant in London—and old English fare I would define as being the very best native material, cooked in the plainest possible manner. We talk of English cookery, though it should really be termed British cookery, for Irish stew and Welsh lamb, Scotch beef and cock-a-leekie soup, and even a haggis, can fairly be included in the comprehensive term.

When men on short commons on an exploring expedition, or on a sporting trip, or on active service, talk of the good things they will eat when they get home to England, the first idea that occurs to most of them is how delightful it will be to eat a good fried sole once again; and with fried sole may be coupled English bacon, for no bacon anywhere else in the world is as good as that which the kitchenmaids fry in thousands of British kitchens. Perhaps the Channel sole and the bacon of the Southern Counties, Oxford marmalade and Cambridge sausages belong to the home breakfast-table more than to meals in the haunts of the gourmet, though the sole plays a most important part in many dinners, and the Christmas dinner turkey would be unhappy without its accompanying sausages. It is, however, at lunch-

time, the time of pasties, puddings and pies, that old English cookery is seen at its best.

I do not know of any eating-house that makes a speciality of the mutton-chop pudding with oysters, that Abraham Hayward praises so unrestrictedly, but now and again I meet in restaurants such good English dishes as Lancashire hot-pot and gipsy pie, which is an admirable stew of chicken and cabbage, shepherd's pie, in which the minced meat is covered with a well-browned layer of mashed potato, I am given sometimes at shooting luncheons. Toad-in-the-hole and bubble-and-squeak are pleasant memories of my schoolboy days, but if some Frenchman, who has studied Dickens, asked me where he could eat the stew described in "The Old Curiosity Shop," which consisted of tripe, and cow-heel, and bacon, and steak, and peas and cauliflower, new potatoes and asparagus "all worked up together in one delicious gravy," I should have to admit my inability to direct him. A fish pie is excellent at any meal, but a woodcock pie or a snipe pudding, I think, should be reserved for the dinner-table. The pork-pie now seems sacred to railway refreshment-rooms, picnics and race-courses. Oysters are real British fare, though other countries have learned from us to appreciate them; but I fancy that the old Romans first taught the gentlemen who clothed themselves in woad tattooings what delicacies they had waiting for them in their shallow waters. Oysters are admirable creatures when eaten out of their deep shell, and they play their part well in oyster soup and scalloped oysters and oyster fries. And there are many puddings and "made dishes" that would be incomplete without the presence of oysters in them. Jugged duck and oysters is a good old British dish, and there are oysters in the majestic pudding of the Cheshire Cheese. I may perhaps be allowed to

suggest to some cooks who put the oysters into puddings and pies with the other raw materials that a better way is to cook the dish, then remove the crust or paste, slip in the oysters, fix the crust again and cook till the oysters are warmed through.

The typical British dinner most often quoted is that which the Lord Dudley of the thirties, a noted epicure, declared was a dinner "fit for an emperor," and it runs thus: "A good soup, a small turbot, a neck of venison, duckling with green peas, or chicken with asparagus, and an apricot tart." Of British soups turtle always takes precedence in the list of honour, but as the turtle comes from Ascension or the West Indies, it can hardly claim to be a denizen of these islands. Hare soup and mock turtle, mulligatawny, mutton broth and pea soup are distinctively British, though the curry powder in the mulligatawny—a soup which takes its name from two Tamil words: *Mülligā* = pepper, and *Tunni* = water—comes, of course, from India. Oxtail soup has a good British sound, but I fancy that French housewives first discovered the virtue that there is in the tail of an ox.

Lord Dudley loved a turbot, but other judges of good British dinners sometimes give the preference to cod. Walker, of "Original" fame, gave a Christmas Day dinner to two friends, and the fare he provided for them was: crimped cod, a woodcock a man, and plum pudding. One of the most typical British dinners I have eaten was that which a gallant colonel, who very worthily filled the mayoral chair at Westminster, used to give annually at the Cavour Restaurant. It consisted of a large turbot, a sucking-pig nicely roasted, and apple pudding. Roast sucking-pig is a dinner dish better understood in England than anywhere else in the world, except, perhaps, in China. When the Duke of Cambridge,

brother of George the Fourth, was entertained in princely fashion at Belvoir, and was shown the menu of a dinner on which a great French chef had exhausted all his inventiveness, and was asked if there were any dishes not included in the feast for which he had a fancy, answered that he would like some roast pig and an apple dumpling, both good British dishes. His son, the Commander-in-Chief of our days, also had a liking for pork, and, at one time, word went round the British army that at inspection lunches it was wise to give his Royal Highness pork chops. Of course, the British army overdid it, and the old Duke had so many pork chops put before him in the course of a year that at last their presence on the menu was far more likely to assist in the securing of an unfavourable report on a regiment than was their absence. Gravy soup, a grilled sole, a boiled hen pheasant stuffed with oysters, and an open tart formed the favourite dinner of a renowned gourmet of my acquaintance.

Of the made dishes that belong to British cookery, jugged hare, I think, has the leading place. Yorkshire pudding is as British as Stonehenge is, and mince pies can claim to be to-day exactly what they were when the Puritans used to preach against them. Marrow bones and Welsh rarebits, buck rarebits, and stewed tripe and onions are old British supper dishes, but the early closing laws have killed the old-fashioned British supper in eating-houses.

Good British cookery in London has not fared well in its battle against the invasion of good French cookery, and the number of houses which made a speciality of British fare has decreased woefully in the last twenty years. The old Blanchard's and its half-a-crown British dinner is a memory of the past (for the new Blanchard's turned towards the goddess *A la*), and the "Blue Posts" in Cork Street has been

converted into a club. It was curious that the prosperity of this typical old English house depended to a great extent on a German head waiter; for Frank, who had all the best traditions of British cookery at heart, had served under the old Emperor Wilhelm in the great war, and had been wounded by a French bayonet thrust. There were certain rules of the house that were excellent. One was that, no matter what orders you might give beforehand, no fish was ever put near the fire until the man who had ordered it was inside the building, which ensured it going to table cooked to the second; and another was that the steaks, which were a great stand-by of the house, were cut from the mass of beef just in time to be transferred at once to the grill, thus making sure that none of the juices should drain away.

But there are still some temples of British cookery left in Cockaigne, and to some of them presently I will direct your steps.

II

SIMPSON'S IN THE STRAND

A WIDE entrance glowing with light, with Simpson's plain to see, on a wrought-iron sign above it, is in the great block of the Savoy Hotel building in the Strand, for the new Simpson's, though it retains all its old associations and its old manager and its old head cook—Mr Davey, the polite, white-haired little ruler of the roast, who wears a velvet cap, and who for forty-six years has seen the joints turn before the vast open fire in the kitchen—is now under the rule of the great organisation that controls the Savoy.

Come into the entrance hall, where you can give up your hat and coat to an attendant; though if you have been accustomed all your life to take them into Simpson's you will still find in the dining-room stands on which to hang them. The hall, with its marble pillars, white panels and groined roof, is light and airy; a staircase runs down from it to the smoking-room, and another one runs up to the dining-rooms upon the first floor. There is a tobacconist's stall in it, and if the door of the expense bar to one side be open you see through it shelves of bottles and flasks. Through the wide door leading into the big dining-room you see white-jacketed waiters moving hither and thither, and white-coated and white-capped carvers pushing the dinner waggons, crowned with big plated covers, before them, and as a background the fine fireplace, with its carved wooden overmantel

and its little marble pilasters, and a picture of a knight and lady of Plantagenet days feasting let into the central space.

Mr N. Wheeler, the rosy-faced manager, white-haired, and wearing the frock-coat of ceremony, will probably greet you as you go into the dining-room. He has seen all the various transformations of Simpson's Chess Divan, which was originally Ries's Divan, and he probably knows more about good old English fare than any man living. When we have eaten our turbot and saddle of mutton we will ask him how it is that these two best of British dishes are sent to table at Simpson's in such absolutely perfect condition. But before we choose our seats at one of the tables let us look round the room. The old Simpson's is still fresh in my memory. The painted garlands of flowers and studies of fish, flesh and fowl on the walls, glazed to a deep rich colour by the London atmosphere, the ground-glass windows, the big bar opening into the room, with Rembrandt-esque shadows in its depths; the great dumb-waiter, which looked like a catafalque, in the centre of the room; the folded napkins in the glasses on the mantelpiece; the horsehair-stuffed, black-cushioned chairs and benches; the divisions with brass rails and dingy little curtains on the rails.

The pens with their brass rails are still in the old place, but they are modernised pens; the wood is oak, and there is a comfortable padded back of brown leather to lean against. The eating-room has been transformed into a banqueting hall. The walls are panelled with light oak, with pilasters to give variety, and an inlay of lighter wood at the corners of the panels. There is a white frieze with good modelling on it, and round the white-clothed tables which fill but do not crowd the floor space are chairs copied from a fine Chippendale example. A good old English

clock is on a bracket, and fine cut-glass lustre chandeliers hang from the ceiling. In old days the waiters at Simpson's were mostly British veterans, and in the upstairs room Charles Flowerdew, the head waiter, a genial old soul who always offered his favourites amongst the customers a pinch from his snuff-box, had a wealth of anecdotes about the great men of the Victorian era who were habitués of Simpson's. The waiters of to-day are Britons, but they are young men, and if anyone has doubts whether Englishmen properly trained can be as quick and silent in the service of a dining house as foreigners are, I would advise the doubter to eat a meal at Simpson's and to watch how the waiters do their work. The boys who take round the vegetables become in time full-blown serving-men. The waiters no longer wear the dress-coats, heroes of many clashes with sauce-boats and plates of soup, which used to be the official garb of the British waiter. They wear white washing jackets, with at the breast a little black shield, and on it the crest of the house—the knight of a set of chessmen. All the tips are pooled, with the result that all the serving-men work for the general good.

And now to look at the bill of fare. There are no such foreign innovations as *hors d'œuvre* allowed at Simpson's, where the only concessions to France are in the wine cellar and that little French rolls as well as household bread are in the bread baskets. You can obtain a fish dinner of three kinds of fish for three and ninepence; but we will order just what we feel our appetite demands, and take no account of set dinners. If your taste is for turtle soup, a plate of that luxury will cost you three shillings, but, if one of the simpler British soups will content you, hare, pea, mock turtle, Scotch hotch-potch, oxtail, gibleet or mulligatawny are priced

at one shilling or one and sixpence. Then comes the important question of fish, and the choice really lies between a *Sole Souchet*, which Simpson's ought to write *Zouchet*, boiled codfish and oyster sauce, and boiled turbot and lobster sauce—the last one of the dishes on which Simpson's prides itself. Until I chatted with Mr Wheeler on the subject I always understood that a turbot to come to table in perfection should be hung for several days, but Mr Wheeler denounces this as rank heresy. A turbot should be nicked to draw off the blood of the fish, it should be soaked for twenty-four hours, and then it is ready to be boiled. It is instructive to watch a real habitué of Simpson's who prefers cod to turbot when a portly white-clad carver wheels his waggon up to the table. There must be the right proportion of liver with the fish and the due quantity of oyster in the sauce, or there will be dire threats of report to higher quarters. A boiled potato to anyone who knows what is good English fare is not to be accepted without criticism, and he would be a bold carver who dared to give the knowledgeable man a helping of saddle of mutton without a slice of the brown. But before we go on to the supreme matter of the saddle let me point out to you that whether you eat sole, or cod, or turbot, it means an item of two shillings on your bill.

The joints ring the changes on roast sirloin, boiled beef, boiled leg of mutton, roast loin of veal and bath chap, and saddle of mutton, and it is the saddle that is the favourite dish. Forty saddles a day is the quantity consumed at Simpson's, and now that the new room is opened sixty are required. Simpson's employs a buyer whose duty in life is to travel about England buying saddles wherever the finest mutton is to be procured. For fourteen days the saddles hang in the stock-room at Simpson's in

a temperature of 38° , then they are moved for two or three days to another store, through which there is a current of air, and then they are ready for the fire. And whether you eat of the mutton, the beef, or the veal, your portion and the accompanying vegetables will cost you half-a-crown.

We will not trifle with such kickshaws as *salmi* of game, or Irish stew, or jugged hare, and to finish our dinner we will take a helping of one of the pies or puddings on the bill of fare, or, better still, a good scoop of Stilton cheese or a wedge of Cheshire.

If you wish to be as British in your drinking as in your eating, there is cool British ale from the cask, which comes to table in a tankard, and cider, and the whisky of Scotland and that of Ireland. The house is also celebrated for its moderate-priced Bordeaux and Burgundy wines, bottled in the cellars.

If we go upstairs before leaving we can see the dining-room to which ladies are admitted—a handsome room of white with marble pillars—and you will notice the great bunches of wild flowers which adorn all the tables. On this floor there is a smaller private banqueting-room, and the new white Adams' Room, the double windows of which look into the Strand on one side and the entrance courtyard on the other. It is a handsome room, with settees by the window tables, and at night hanging baskets and lamps on the cornice throw light up to the ceiling to be reflected down into the room.

Down in the smoking-room on the basement level you will find a little band of chess-players, faithful to the old Divan, hard at the game, using the old chess-boards and the huge pieces of the Divan days, and it may further gratify your love for antiquarian lore to know that Simpson's stands on the site occupied by the old Fountain tavern, of which Strype

wrote: "A very fine tavern, with excellent vaults, good rooms for entertainments, and a curious kitchen for the dressing of meat." It was at the Fountain that the opponents of Walpole held their meetings and that the Earl of Derwentwater and the other Jacobite lords on trial for rebellion, being taken daily backwards and forwards between the Tower and Westminster, made favour with their jailer to let them halt for an hour to eat what they expected to be their last good dinner on earth.

III

A WALK DOWN FLEET STREET

THE CHESHIRE CHEESE

DOCTOR SAMUEL JOHNSON stands in bronze before St Clement Danes and faces his beloved Fleet Street. If the great dictionary maker took his eyes off the book he holds in his hands, got down from his pedestal without knocking over the inkpot which is perilously near his clumsy old feet, and started for a walk down the street he loved so well, his remarks on the changes that have been made by time and the architects would be instructive. What would he say to Street's Law Courts? And with what sesquipedalian words would he lament the disappearance of Temple Bar and the appearance in its stead of the pantomime Griffin? And how the old man would snort and fume to find the taverns he was used to frequent altered out of recognition, or moved from their old places. The Rainbow's lamp would bring him to a halt, for the Rainbow stands to-day where Farr the barber set up his coffee-house, "by inner Temple Gate." Farr was "presented," in 1657, as an abuse by his neighbours, who protested against the smell of the coffee, but were in reality afraid that the new drink was going to oust canary and other wines. Johnson knew the old tavern in the brave days when Alexander Moncrieff was the host, when it still, though its "stewed cheeses" and its stout were celebrated, called itself a coffee-house, and the largest room

was the coffee-room, with a lofty bay-window at the south end looking into the Temple. In this bay the table was set for the worthies who frequented the house, and they could, through a glazed screen, see all that went on in the kitchen. The old Doctor, reading on the door-jamb that the Rainbow is occupied by the Bodega Company, would discourse learnedly on the meaning and uses of a Bodega. He would note with approval Groom's little coffee-house, a few steps farther on, which, though it did not exist in his days, for it dates back only to 1818, is one of the few establishments still existing which lives by the sale of coffee as a beverage, and prospers on its best Mocha at threepence a cup.

The Cock in its present condition would puzzle the old man most consumedly, and he would look across the street to see what has become of that tavern's old site; but if he went inside the house he would find that Grinling Gibbons' wood-carving of the cock had flown across the street, and that in the upper room is the panelling from the old alehouse in which the festive Pepys drank and sang and ate a lobster and afterwards "mightily merry" took Knip for a moonlight row on the Thames. It would be useless to talk to the Doctor of Tennyson and the plump head-waiter of the Cock, but pilgrims following the footsteps of those poets who have lunched in Fleet Street will find that the Cock is still a house where the "perfect pint of stout" and the "proper chop" are reached out with deft hands to customers, and that no head waiter unless he be plump is ever engaged for the upper room.

The Devil Tavern, which Ben Jonson made so famous by his Apollo Club, and which stood between Temple Bar and the Middle Temple Gate, was bought by Messrs Child, the bankers, in 1787, some years after the death of Samuel Johnson, when it had

fallen into disuse, and was pulled down and dwelling-houses erected on its site. Ben's "Welcome" and the Apollo bust were transferred to the bank. The most famous of all the Johnsonian taverns, the Mitre, was another of the old houses to fall a victim to bankers, for four years after the Doctor's death it ceased to be a tavern, became in turn Macklin's Poets' Gallery and Saunders's auction-rooms, and was finally pulled down that on its site "Hoare's New Banking-house" should be erected. Joe's Coffee-house in Mitre Court borrowed the derelict name when the Mitre closed its shutters, and set up a copy of Nollekins' bust of the Doctor as homage to his memory.

Opposite to Wine Office Court, the Sage of Fleet Street would stop in his shamble and would wait for an opportunity to cross the road. If Doctor Johnson hated the transit of the roadway when the traffic was but of hackney carriages and the coaches of aldermen and stage coaches and horsemen, how would he face the hurtling streams of taxi-cabs and motor omnibuses which nowadays jostle in the road? And what, when he had crossed the road, would he think of Fuller's little sweet-stuff shop which, gay with colour, has fastened itself, where there used to be a dingy wine merchant's office with cobwebbed bottles of old port in its dim, solemn windows, on the Fleet Street front of the Old Cheshire Cheese? The new-comer looks like a bright stamp stuck on some musty old parchment deed. Doctor Johnson would, I am sure, growl as he rolled through the narrow entrance into the court and on to the door of the old tavern.

And as he and you and I stand in the narrow doorway and look to the right at the little bar, a harmony in dark colours with the old china punch-bowls in their accustomed corner, and glass and

pewter and silver catching reflections of light amidst the black of old oak; and to the left at the old dining-room kept exactly as it was in Doctor Johnson's time; and to the front at the old oak staircase leading to the rooms above, let me explain to you that each white-haired generation of frequenters of the Cheshire Cheese finds fault with the arrangements made for the newer generation. When Johnson and Goldsmith ceased to use the house I am sure that the comfortable gentlemen who had sat at the long table and had listened to their conversation found that of an evening the talk had grown dull; and when Colonel Lawrence, who had carried one of the colours of the 20th Regiment at the battle of Minden, had been a crony of Goldsmith, and had hobnobbed with him and with Johnson over the port at the Cheese, died, the company at the long table must have lamented that all the "good old sort" and the good old customs were passing away. A sturdy supporter of the Cheese, who is some fifteen years older than I am, sighs for the days when he was first allowed to sit at the table where the Deputy-Governor of Newgate and a head clerk of Somerset House led the conversation. And when I go into the Cheese nowadays and find that two score belles from Baltimore, or half-a-hundred pretty Puritans from Philadelphia, have taken possession of the lower room, are drinking tea with their lunches, are talking like an aviary in commotion, and are more intent on buying souvenirs of Johnson than on appreciating the delights of the pudding, I sigh for the days thirty years ago when the Cheese was a grumpy man's paradise. I am quite sure that when Mr Dollamore, a host of the Cheese who has grown to heroic size as seen through the mists of time, died, people of that day thought that the great pudding would never again be mixed and carved by a master hand. I look

back now to the serious expression, the sort of expression we all assume as we enter a church door, that used to come upon the face of smiling Mr Moore as the vast pudding was carried in and he prepared to pierce its snowy covering. When Henry Todd, a waiter who entered Mr Dollamore's service two years before the battle of Waterloo, left the house and his portrait was painted by subscription and given as an heirloom to be hung in the dining-room, no one believed that young William Simpson, then just entering the service of the Cheese, would live to be even a more famous head waiter, to have *his* portrait painted to be hung in honour in the coffee-room, and to give his name to one of the rooms upstairs.

And now, having explained that if an old frequenter of the Cheshire Cheese sometimes grumbles at changes it is only through affection for the old house, let us go into the dining-room and sit down and look around us. We will leave Doctor Johnson's seat at the long table, with its brass tablet and his portrait above it, for the Shade of the great man. You shall sit in Oliver Goldsmith's seat with your back to the windows looking out into Cheshire Cheese Court, roofed in now to make a second dining-room; I will sit opposite to you, and we will take note of our surroundings. The approval of the old Doctor can be safely guaranteed. The sawdust on the floor; the wide grate with a shining copper kettle on the hob; the old mirror; the churchwarden pipes on the window-sill; the green-curtained cosy corner by the door, just like the squire's pew in many old churches; the black-handled knives and forks arranged in a row of black oak hutches; the willow-patterned plates and dishes; the queer old receptacle for umbrellas in the middle of the floor; the wire blinds, and the old tables and oak high-backed settles are to-day

exactly as they were when Johnson in the flesh frequented the tavern. The "greybeard" and the leathern jack, gifts from Mr Seymour Lucas, R.A., are quite in keeping with the room, and such of the pictures as are not old deal with incidents in Johnson's life or are sketches of the room and of the worthies who have frequented it. The manager of to-day keeps the house just as it used to be a century and a half ago, and being so, it is one of the most interesting old buildings in London.

Upstairs are the kitchen, where the woman cook responds to the verbal shorthand shouts of the waiters by putting chops and steaks on to the grill and clanging the oven door as good things to bake go into its recesses, and other old rooms, in which are some interesting relics of the old lexicographer, the chair in which he always sat at the Mitre, and other things curious and quaint, but they must await inspection till after lunch, for to-day is a pudding day, and the fat waiter with a moustache is waiting for our orders.

The pudding in its great earthenware bowl stands on a little table in the middle of the room. It is a triumph of old British cookery. In it are larks, kidneys, oysters, mushrooms, steak, and there are ingredients in the gravy which are a secret of the house. There are many imitations of the Cheshire Cheese pudding, but no such pudding unless it comes from the Cheshire Cheese kitchen has quite the right taste and quite the right richness of gravy. There is no stint in the helpings at the Cheshire Cheese. Any man with an appetite has only to ask for a "follow" to obtain it, and there are traditions that some men of mighty capacity have even had three helpings. Monday, Wednesday and Friday are pudding days. There is generally Irish stew on non-pudding days, and the Cheese Irish stew is admirable. Marrow

bones are another speciality of the house, and a Cheshire Cheese bone holds much marrow. The typical Cheshire Cheese meal, however—and I am sure Doctor Johnson would agree with me—is The Pudding, and the strong Scotch ale of the house therewith; stewed cheese, which comes to table in a shallow little pan accompanied by hot toast, and to finish up a bowl of the Cheshire Cheese punch served from an old china bowl with a good old-fashioned silver ladle. But beware of drinking too much of this punch, being deceived by its apparent innocence. I know one man who, saying it was as mild as mother's milk, drank the greater portion of a bowl of punch, remarked that he was a boy again, and behaved as a boy, and not until noon next day came to the conclusion that he was a very elderly man with a headache.

IV

THE CARLTON

IF all the great French chefs all the world over were canvassed for an opinion as to which amongst them is the greatest cook of the day, I am sure that the majority of votes would be in favour of M. Auguste Escoffier, the Maître-Chef of the Carlton Restaurant in London. When any restaurant is exceeding successful, whether it appeals to popular taste, or to the taste of the most cultured classes, there is sure to be amongst those men who have brought it fame or brought it popularity, some strongly marked personality, a great organiser, a great cook, or, perhaps, a great *maître d'hôtel*, such as poor dead Joseph was. And the commanding personality at the Carlton is M. Escoffier, who, had he been a man of the pen and not a man of the spoon, would have been a poet, and who, wearing the white cap and the white jacket, makes the sense of taste respond to the beautiful things he invents, just as the sense of hearing thrills to the cadence of a poet's words, or the melody of a great composer's music. And M. Escoffier holds that things which are beautiful to the taste should be fair to the eye, and should have pleasant-sounding titles. He, for instance, rechristened frogs, making them "nymphes," and *nymphes à l'Aurore* has a place in his great book on modern cookery.

The following is a typical Escoffier menu. It is for a little supper after the Opera, and was published

in *Le Carnet d'Epicure*, a magazine, to the pages of which M. Escoffier is a prolific contributor.

Gelée de Poulet aux Nids d'Hirondelles.

Soufflé d'Ecrevisses Florentine.

Côtelettes d'Agneau de Lait Favorite.

Petits Pois Frais.

Ortolans au Champagne.

Salade d'Oranges.

Asperges de Serre.

Pêches à la Fraîsette des Bois.

Baisers de Vierge.

Mignardises.

The menu reads as delicately as the dishes would taste. The *baisers de Vierge* are twin meringues, the cream perfumed with vanilla and holding crystallised white rose leaves and white violets. Over each pair of meringues is a veil of spun sugar. This is worthy of the man who conceived the *bombe Nero*, a flaming ice, who gave all London a new *entremet* in *fraises à la Sarah Bernhardt*, and who added a new glory to a great singer by creating the *pêche Melba*.

M. Escoffier is a little below the middle height, grey haired, and grey of moustache. His face is the face of an artist, or a statesman, and the quick eyes tell of his capacity for command. The quiet little man who, amidst all the clangour of the great white-tiled kitchen below the restaurant of the Carlton, seems to have nothing to do except to occasionally glance at the dishes before they leave his realm or to give a word of counsel when some very delicate *entremet* is in the making, to taste a sauce or give a final touch to the arrangement of some elaborate cold entrée, has organised his brigade of vociferous cooks of all nations as thoroughly as Crawford organised the Light Division of Peninsular fame. There is never any difficulty, for every difficulty has

been foreseen. Only a man who has climbed the ladder from its lowest rung possesses such knowledge and such authority. M. Escoffier began his career as a boy in the kitchen of his uncle's restaurant in Nice. He went to Russia to the kitchen of one of the Grand Dukes, he served in the Franco-Prussian War as the Chef de Cuisine to the General Staff of the Army of the Rhine, and he knows the bitterness of captivity in the hands of an enemy. He was with Marechal MacMahon at the Elysée and left the Grand Hotel at Rome when Ritz and he and Echenard came to London to make history at the Savoy. He writes with a very pretty wit on subjects connected with his profession, and he is married to a lady who, under her maiden name of Delphine Daffis, is well known in France as a poetess, and who has recently been decorated with the violet ribbon as Officier d'Académie.

If I have given so much space to a sketch of the great Maître-Chef, it is not that he is the only man of talent amongst the personnel of the Carlton. M. Kreamer, the manager, is eminent amongst his fellows. In the restaurant M. Besserer, light of hair, and with a light curling moustache, is an admirable Maître d'Hotel, and the Carlton grill-room (to which I shall give attention when I write of the grill-rooms of London) owes much of its popularity to its manager, Signor Ventura.

And now for a little ancient history. Her Majesty's Opera House, with a colonnade surrounding it in which were shops and a little restaurant, Epitau's, where the Iron Duke and other famous men gave dinner-parties in the early Victorian days, stood at the corner of the Haymarket and Pall Mall. If I wrote of the glories and the disasters of the big house of song I should have to write a book. When a company bought the site, and the Carlton and His

Majesty's Theatre rose on it, the colonnade disappeared from three sides, and all the shops on those sides also vanished except the offices of Justerini and Brooks. These wine merchants held to their old position, and their window front was encased in the building of the new hotel without the business of the firm suffering a day's interruption. A cigar store has since then found an abiding place on the Pall Mall frontage. The name of Epitiaux's was taken by the restaurant next door to the Haymarket Theatre, but was eventually dropped in favour of a more attractive title, the Pall Mall.

The tall porter outside the entrance of the Carlton in Pall Mall sets the swing door in motion to let us through; coats and hats, cloaks and furs are garnered from us as we pass through the ante-room, and then we are in the palm lounge, that happy inspiration of the architect which has been copied in other hotels through the length and breadth of the habitable world. The double glass roof, letting in light but keeping out draughts, was a novelty when the hotel was built. But, though this palm court has been copied far and wide, it has never been bettered. The terrace breaks up pleasantly the great width of floor space. The tall palms, and the flowers and smaller palms before the terrace, and the green cane easy-chairs give a sylvan touch to this great hall in the heart of London; and, as an instance of perfect taste, notice the little medallions of Wedgwood ware dependent from the capitals of the creamy marble pilasters.

Up the broad flight of steps we go into the restaurant, a restaurant the colouring in which is such that it never clashes with the hues of any lady's dress. The garlands of golden leaves on the ceiling, the artful use of mirrors and evergreens to give the illusion that outside the windows north and west there are gardens, the cut-glass chandeliers converted into

electroliers, and giving a soft rosy light, the brown and deep rose of the carpet, the lighter rose of the chairs, the gilt cornice, the *œil de bœuf* windows towards the palm lounge, all form a perfect setting for charming people eating delicate foods. The keynote of the restaurant in decoration, as in the dinners which come from Escoffier's kitchen, is refinement. It is a pity, perhaps, that there is not daylight to brighten the restaurant from end to end, and that the electric lamps are always alight; but at dinner-time this is no drawback. An excellent string band plays on the terrace, but it is as well at dinner-time to choose a table far enough away from the musicians to ensure comfortable converse.

And now to describe to you a typical Carlton dinner. It is not easy, for I have so many memories of so many typical dinners there. Once the annual banquet of my old regiment was held at the Carlton in a great space of the restaurant screened off from the other diners. That was a noble feast! Again a memory comes to me of a silver wedding dinner, for which the table was decorated with creamy white and light pink roses, with silvered leaves. Escoffier composed for the occasion a dinner all white and pink, in which the Bortch was the deepest note of colour, the *filets de poulets à la Paprika* halved the two hues, and the flesh of an *agneau de lait* formed the highest light in the picture. That was the second occasion on which M. Escoffier sent to a dining-table the *pêches Aiglon*, the first occasion being a supper which Madame Sarah Bernhardt gave to Sir Henry Irving and other stars of our stage.

But most distinctive of all the dinners of ceremony at which I have been a guest at the Carlton was the dinner which Mr William Heinemann, the well-known publisher, gave to celebrate the publication by his firm of Escoffier's great work, "A Guide

to Modern Cookery." The dinner was the idea of the Maître-Chef, who suggested that the best way to criticise the book would be to invite some of the men in whose judgment the publisher had faith to eat a dinner cooked by the man who had written the book. We were fourteen in all, mostly "ink-stained wretches," and amongst the signatures on the menu, which I religiously pasted opposite the title-page of my autographed copy of the work, are those of Sir Douglas Straight and of T. P. O'Connor, of a member of the great house of Harmsworth, and of other men whose palates are as keen as their pens.

This was the menu of the dinner and the list of the wines we drank that 30th May 1907:

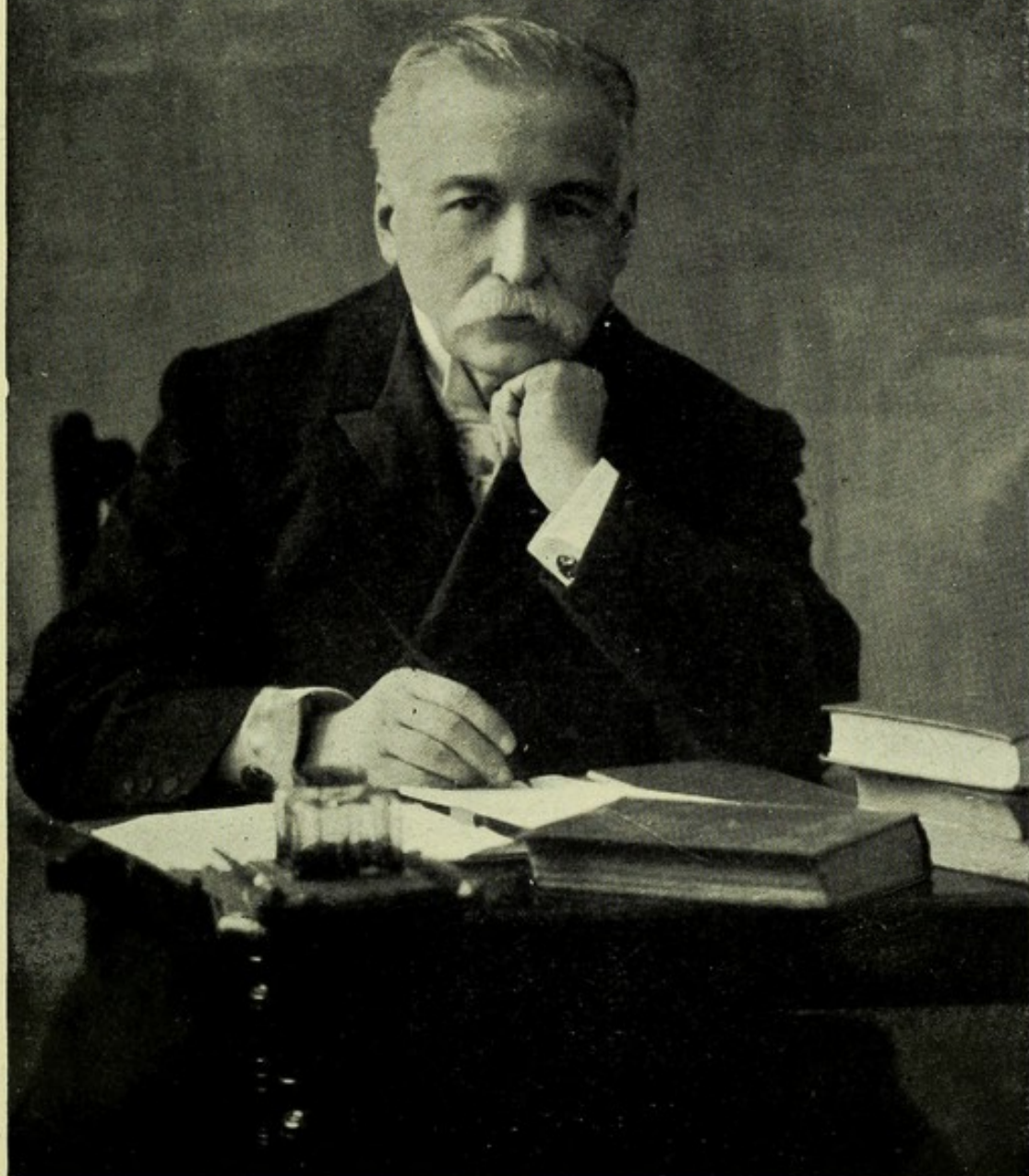
Melon Cantaloup.
 Caviar de Sterlet.
 Tortue Claire.
 Velouté Froid de Volaille.
 Mousseline d'Ecrevisses Orientale.
 Jeune Agneau Piqué de Sauge.
 Morilles à la Crème.
 Petits Pois à l'Anglaise.
 Poularde Ena.
 Trou Normand.
 Cailles aux Raisins.
 Asperges d'Argenteuil.
 Pêches Sainte Alliance.
 Mignardises.

VINS.

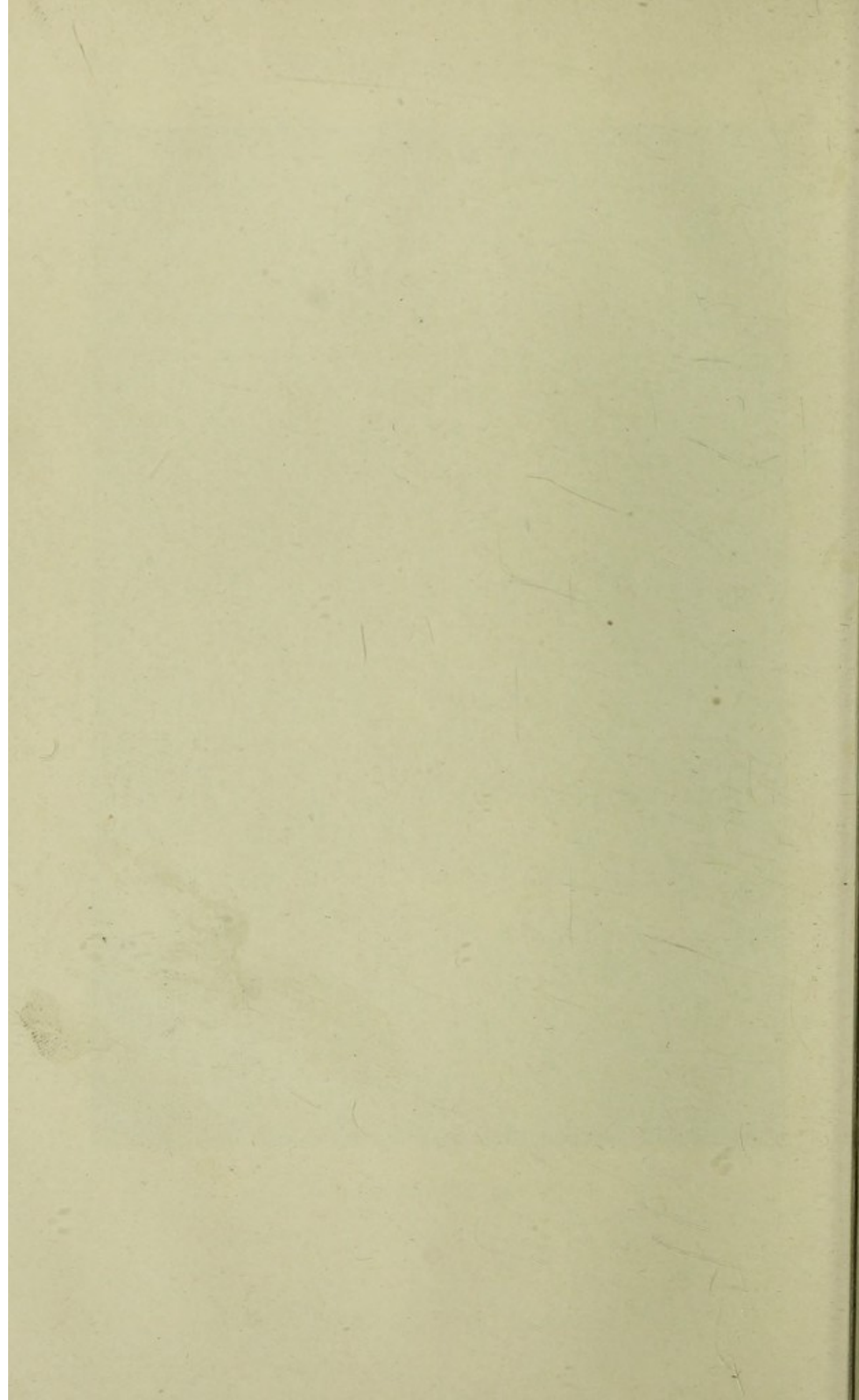
Vodka.
 Amontillado, Dry.
 Berncastler Doctor, 1893.
 Heidsieck and Co., Dry, 1892.
 Pommery and Greno, Nature, 1900.
 Château Lafitte, 1878.
 Dow's Port, 1887.
 Café Double—Grandes Liqueurs.

An délicat Epicurien.
Le Colonel Newnham Davis
en toute cordiale sympathie
A. Escoffier

novembre 1913



M. ESCOFFIER



The *velouté froid* is a test dish, for only a master hand can give it the right consistency without allowing it to become pasty. The *mousselines* were beautifully light, each in the form of a cygnet, surrounding a central figure of a swan. The *poularde Ena* was the one dish in the banquet to which, because of its richness, I kissed my hand and passed it by. The combination of quails and grapes is one of M. Escoffier's happiest inspirations, and the *pêches St Alliance* is one of those delicate *entremets* in which Escoffier excels any other great chef of to-day, or of the past. The *trou Normand* is rather a violent stimulus to appetite, and consists of a liqueur-glass of old brandy. When M. Escoffier came with the coffee, to ask us what our verdict was on his dinner, our only difficulty was to find a sufficiency of complimentary adjectives.

V

TWO LITTLE SOHO RESTAURANTS

AU PETIT RICHE. MOULIN D'OR

THERE is a little restaurant in Old Compton Street, the Au Petit Riche, with the outside of which I was acquainted for some years before I put foot inside it. It so evidently kept itself to itself that I felt that my presence might be resented. It has little casemented windows in white frames, and inside the windows are muslin curtains, on a rail, hung sufficiently high to prevent anyone from looking over them. Below the windows are green tiles, and above it a stretch of little panes of bottle-glass in white frames to give additional light to the rooms inside. A little ground-glass lantern hung outside the door, and the name of the restaurant was painted over the window, but there was no bill of fare put up outside, no attempt to draw in a diner unless he had made up his mind to dine at the Au Petit Riche and nowhere else. I had been told all about the restaurant by those gallant souls who experiment at every new eating-place that springs up between Shaftesbury Avenue and Oxford Street, and though all I heard about the little place was pleasant and interested me, I felt that the Petit Riche was not anxious to make my acquaintance. But when the Petit Riche put up outside its windows an illuminated sign and its number, 44, in big figures, I felt that it had abandoned its haughty reserve and

was beckoning to me, and the rest of London, to come in. And in I went, and have been going in at intervals ever since, for the little restaurant is artistic and French and amusing.

When you open the glazed door and go in you are faced by the question: "On the level or down below?" A door to the right leads into the little series of rooms on the ground floor, and a flight of stairs plunges down into the basement. Come, first of all, through the door to the right. We are in the first of three little rooms, with light-coloured walls. A row of small tables is on either side of each room, and in the first room a white desk, with palms on it, faces towards the door. A score of pretty little French waitresses, Bretonnes all, in white and black, are bustling about, and Mademoiselle, if she is not sitting at the white desk, will probably receive you at the door and smile and pilot you to a table. And I should, before going any further, explain to you who Mademoiselle is, and tell you the story of the *Au Petit Riche*. A good Breton and his wife came to London and established a little restaurant in Old Compton Street, and with them came their two very pretty daughters. And they made the *Au Petit Riche* a corner of Brittany in London. The chef, who had graduated at the *Escargot d'Or*, a big bourgeois house near the Halles in Paris, is a Breton by birth, and all the merry little waitresses are from Brittany. The elder of the two daughters married a young journalist and for a while left the restaurant, but when her father and mother thought that the time had come for them to retire, she and her husband took up the management of the restaurant, with her sister to help them. And Mademoiselle, fresh and smiling, with a bunch of roses pinned to her blouse, is in command in the upper rooms, while Madame, as gracious as she is handsome, sits at her desk in one of the lower

rooms with a great bowl of flowers before her, and laughs with the young artists, who form a large portion of the clientele of the *Au Petit Riche*, and controls the waitresses, and sends the waiters, of whom there are two, out to fetch the wine, which comes from a wineshop a few paces away.

Established at a table in the first of the upstairs rooms, a glance at the walls will tell anyone that the place is a haunt of artists, for the pictures are just the omnium gatherum of artistic trifles that an artist generally puts on the walls of his den. Pencil drawings, rough things in charcoal, etchings, mezzotints, caricatures, sketches in colour, Japanese coloured prints—a gallery of scraps at which a Philistine would turn up his nose, but which look comfortable and homelike to the eye artistic. And at the head of the *carte du jour*, which a little waitress holds out to you, there is a good black and white of the exterior of the little restaurant—there is the atmosphere of art about the place.

Let us look down the list of dishes and order our dinner. The little waitress, on chance, has addressed us in French, but if she is answered in English can carry on a conversation in that language. There are two soups on the list, *consommé Colbert*, which costs sixpence, no doubt because of the egg, and *crème Cressonnière*, which costs only threepence, and we will choose the cheaper of the two. Amongst the fish dishes, the salmon and the sole cost a shilling, but we will choose the *vol au vent de Turbot Joinville*, which costs ninepence. Amongst the entrées is an item, two *quails en Cocotte*, for a shilling. Curiosity prompts me to suggest that we should order this, having in mind what the price of a single quail is on a club bill of fare, but we shall be on safer ground in ordering one of the dishes of the house, the *filet mignon Petit Riche*, which costs a shilling, and with

it some peas, fourpence, and some new potatoes, also fourpence. Amongst the *entremets* is a *Pêche Petit Riche*, which the little waitress strongly recommends, but *beignets de pommes* at threepence seems to me a more fitting ending for our repast.

There is no long waiting for one's food at the Au Petit Riche; the soup arrives almost immediately and is wonderful value for threepence. The *vol au vent* is an admirable little fish pie, and the *filet mignon* a most toothsome morsel of meat, while the *beignets* are all that they should be. The little waitress, when we have arrived at the *filet mignon* stage of the dinner, asks with the utmost solicitude: "Do you like eet?" and I have replied for both of us "Very much indeed." At the table to one side of us are a young couple whose dinner has consisted of curried chicken and plum pudding au Rhum, and at the table to our other side, two ladies are eating a typical woman's dinner of *hors d'œuvre*, poached eggs and spinach, and a vanilla ice. The Au Petit Riche finds room on its small *carte du jour* for dishes to suit all tastes.

The little waitress brings the total of the bill on a bit of green paper; and having finished our dinner, and having paid for it, we will go down into the lower rooms before leaving the restaurant. In the lower rooms every table is always occupied, and I fancy that the habitués of the restaurant prefer them to the upper ones. One of them is decorated with golden fleurs-de-lis on a blue ground, and another is an admirable representation of the kitchen of a Breton farmhouse, crockery and all complete. There is a great buzz of talk in these lower rooms, and Madame la Patronne, sitting at her desk amidst the tables, takes her share in the conversation and attends to the making out of the bills at one and the same time.

If you go to the Au Petit Riche in the right frame of mind you will be abundantly amused and interested, and you will get wonderful value for the very small sum your dinner will cost you.

And now for my other little restaurant in Soho. It is the Moulin d'Or at 27 Church Street. When Karl Thiele, who was in the employ of Peter Gallina at the Rendez-Vous Restaurant, married the pretty book-keeper at the Richelieu Restaurant, they determined to set up in business on their own account, and took a ground-floor room in Church Street, gave it a good-looking window, put a row of little trees outside, hung baskets of ferns within, and christened it Le Moulin d'Or, hoping that their mill would grind golden grist. It was a doll's house restaurant when I first discovered it two years ago, and the great ambition then of its proprietor and proprietress was that they might in time become sufficiently prosperous to add the first-floor room to their establishment. They have prospered, and when I lately went to dine there I found that the lower room with a restful green paper had been increased in size by taking in the passage, and that upstairs is a new restaurant room also with green walls and a large window, the dream realised of the young couple. And not only have these improvements and additions been made, but quite close to the Moulin d'Or there has been put up a wonderful windmill with electrically lighted sails which revolve, and below it a hand pointing in the direction of the restaurant and a transparency whereon are inscribed the prices of the *table d'hôte* meals, luncheon, and dinner, and supper, for the Moulin d'Or has both its *carte du jour* and its *table d'hôte* meals. For half-a-crown, on the occasion of my last visit, I could have eaten *hors d'œuvre*, made my choice between a *consommé* and a *crème soup* and partaken of salmon, *filet de bœuf*, roast chicken and caramel

cream, but I preferred to turn my attention to the *carte du jour*, and ordered *crème Suzette*, 6d.; *truite au bleu*, 1s. 3d.; *escalope de veau Viennoise*, 10d.; *haricots verts*, 6d.; and an *omelette au Rhum*, 10d., all very well cooked and served piping hot. The restaurant has not yet a wine licence, but for all that a special wine is reserved for it at a neighbouring wineshop, an excellent light burgundy, *Chateau Villy*, at 4s. 6d. a quart, and 2s. 6d. a pint, and, besides, there is a quite comprehensive wine list. Karl Thiele and his wife, looking for new kingdoms to conquer, have moved to Brighton, where they are established in St James's Street, and the new host at the Moulin d'Or is M. Combes, a very young man, assisted by a very young wife. They are, in spite of their youth, maintaining the reputation of the house for good cookery.

VI

A RAG-TIME DINNER

AT THE IMPERIAL RESTAURANT

My little French cousin who has married the Comte de St Solidor (if that is not his exact title it is, literally, next door to it) has brought her Breton husband across the Channel to make the acquaintance of his English relatives, and is desperately anxious that he shall not be depressed by London. He is a jolly, round-faced Frenchman, with a rather straggly light beard and a great head of intractable light hair, and, were it not that he cannot speak a word of our language, might pass for a young Yorkshire squire. My little French cousin was particularly afraid that Robert, that is his first name, would suffer all the tortures of ennui on Sunday, for her mother, who was English-born, had told her that the English in England spend their Sunday afternoons, when they are grown-up, in singing hymns, and when they are children in repeating aloud the catechism. I told my little cousin to have no fear, that London Sundays are no longer what they were when her mother was a child, and I offered to take charge of Robert and herself on their first Sunday in London, from after lunch-time till bed-time, and to try and keep them amused.

I asked my little French cousin whether rag-time had penetrated to Brittany, and she, pitying my ignorance, told me that at Dinard, last summer, they had talked to rag-time music, and bathed to it, and had

even played syncopated *chemin de fer* to it, as well as danced to it. But, when I asked her if at Dinard she had ever eaten to it, she said, "But no," and gave a mimetic sketch of eating food to the air of "Everybody's doing it now," which was very funny. That settled where we should dine on Sunday, and I wrote off at once to the Imperial Restaurant to secure a dinner-table for four, and asked another cousin, a British one, to complete the *partie carrée*.

The afternoon of Sunday caused me no anxiety. Robert is devoted to music, so I took him and the Comtesse to the Queen's Hall to one of Sir Henry Wood's concerts, and on to the Royal Automobile Club to tea, and neither of them showed any sign of being oppressed by Sabbath gloom.

At ten minutes past eight I was waiting in the vestibule between the street entrance and the restaurant, where a marble bust of the late King Edward smiles at each customer who enters. I had ordered my dinner, a very simple one—*potage Germigny, truites au bleu, noisettes de mouton*, new peas and potatoes, ham and spinach, asparagus, and a *bombe*, and a magnum of Goulet, 1900, to drink therewith. For ten minutes I sat in the window-seat watching pretty ladies and men of all ages and types pass through the vestibule, give up their coats and cloaks, shake hands, and go in little coveys into the restaurant. The orchestra in the distance was sawing away at an operatic overture, the ante-room was comfortably warmed, and as dinner was the only event of the evening I did not fidget because my little cousin delayed in her coming. I was not the only solitary man waiting. In front of the fireplace stood a beautiful young man, with sleeve-links and studs and buttons to his white waistcoat that must have cost a fortune. Now and again he glanced at the clock, a work of art, in which a gilded cupid points with a

finger to the revolving girdle of hours on a vase, and when he had ascertained how late *she* was already he surveyed the other human creatures about him with tolerant pride and slight hauteur. I have no gift of telepathy, but I was quite sure that he was waiting for some very beautiful lady of the stage, and pitied those of us who had no such divinity to be our guest.

The British cousin arrived to time, and not very long afterwards my French cousins appeared. She looked at the clock and declared that they were late because Robert could not find his evening studs, and Robert laughed, as men do when called upon to substantiate a white fib told by their wives. She had asked me whether she ought to dine in her hair, or in a hat, and I had answered that either way would be quite correct. She had decided not to wear a hat in order to be quite English, and she looked entirely charming. I could not help glancing at the beautiful young man who monopolised the fire to see what he thought of my star guest. He was slightly interested, but he answered my glance by one which meant "Wait and see."

I had secured a corner table at a reasonable distance from the band, which occupies a platform about half-way down the room, and we enthroned the little cousin on the chair in the angle, so that she could see everybody and everything in the room. Every table but one was occupied, and that I knew was reserved for the beautiful young man whom we had left looking with a frown at cupid's finger. My little French cousin was in high spirits, and Robert acted as an amiable chorus. She recognised that the room was French—it is a copy of one of the salons at Fontainebleau, and perceived that the pictures of cupids, which are between the round windows and the tall casemented glasses, were inspired by Boucher. She liked the carved marble mantelpiece and the crystal

and gold electroliers. I was called upon to tell her who everybody was at the other tables, and I launched out recklessly into fiction. I knew by sight a dozen of our fellow-diners, and the rest I described as M.P.'s and ladies of title, officers of the Household Brigade, and divettes of the Gaiety, Daly's, the Lyric, and the Shaftesbury, which they probably are, celebrated painters and prima donnas, according to their appearance. My British cousin choked over a bone of the trout, so he said, but my little French cousin and her spouse were much impressed by my exhaustive acquaintance with all the celebrities of my native city, which was just the effect I wished to produce.

Little Oddenino, going the round of the tables, saying a word or two to all his clientele, came to our corner, asked if all was as it should be, took up the menu, and lifted his eyebrows. Of course I know that to follow the *noisettes* by ham was inartistic, but being in the vein of romance I said that my little French cousin was passionately fond of ham, and demanded it at all her meals, and not that I prefer ham to mutton, which would have been the truth. The little man bowed and smiled and passed on. My cousin asked who he was, and when I replied, "Oddy," she inquired if it was he who would presently make the rag-time. Pleased to be on bed-rock truth at last I gave her a shorthand sketch of Oddenino's career; how Turin is his native town; how he opened one of the great hotels at Cimiez, and earned the thanks of the late Queen Victoria and a fine tie-pin when she stayed there; how he was manager of the East Room at the Criterion, and of the Café Royal, and from the latter restaurant stepped two doors farther down Regent Street and built the Imperial Restaurant. I described story upon story of banqueting-rooms that are to be found on the Glasshouse Street side, and how Freemasons—good, charitable British Freemasons,

not troublesome political French Freemasons — feast in them in great numbers every night in the year. I sketched out the little man's other ventures, and I ended by telling her that Oddenino is a man of much consideration in the Italian colony in London, and has been decorated by his king. Surely she did not expect a Cavaliere to make rag-time music? And my little French cousin said "assuredly not."

When we had come to the *noisettes'* stage of our dinner the beautiful young man whom we had left waiting in the vestibule came in—alone. He looked as gloomy as Hamlet, and held in his hand a letter, which he tore into small pieces and thrust into the ice pail beside his table. "The poor animal!" said my little cousin pityingly. "He is dining with an excuse." He drank two glasses of champagne in quick succession, and then felt strong enough to sup his soup.

About this period a change came over the music of the band, which had conscientiously worked off the barcarole from "Hoffman," a Viennese waltz and a minuet. A clean-shaven young man, Mr Gideon, the clever composer of the rag-time successes who had been eating his dinner like the rest of us, took his place at the piano, and the orchestra subordinated itself to his leadership. Mr Gideon can make the piano speak as few men can, and my little French cousin and Robert both pricked up their ears and even let the asparagus get cold in their new-found interest. When Mr Gideon, dispensing with orchestral aid, sang "Honolulu," and here and there a girl's voice joined in the refrain, my little cousin turned sharply to me. "Ought one to sing?" she asked, and I told her that it was as she pleased. She listened with all her ears to catch the words, and at last trilled out with the rest: "Ma onaleuleu oné leu," and then laughed at her own boldness.

A quarter of an hour later my little French cousin, with both elbows on the table, a cigarette between her fingers, and sipping at intervals some *crème de menthe*, was singing "Hitchy Koo" with the best of them, and Robert was booming away harmonising a bass *bouche-fermée* accompaniment. It was curious how this general singing brought together those who dined. We had been separate little parties before, but the humanity of song made us into one big friendly audience. Even the beautiful young man recovered his spirits sufficiently to try to start an eye flirtation with my little cousin.

The heat in the room grew and the atmosphere thickened with tobacco smoke, but we all sat on till close on eleven o'clock, when the vestibule doors were opened to let out the smoke and let in the cold air, and the ladies put their stoles round their necks, and the men called for their bills. Mine, including cigars and liqueurs, came to exactly a guinea a head.

Before bidding me good-night my little cousin, speaking for herself and Robert, said that they had well dined and had amused themselves, and that the Britannic Sunday was not frightening. But I told her that all our Sunday entertainment was not yet at end, that Robert, when he had taken her home to their hotel, was going to drink a whisky-and-soda with me at the club, and that then I would take him on to an hospitable house, where *chemin de fer* is played, and that if there was no police raid she would see him back about five A.M.

My little French cousin looked at me to see whether I was serious, laughed in my face, and taking Robert by the arm led him to the taxi that was waiting for them.

VII

THE CAFÉ ROYAL

ONE of the questions people are fond of asking and, like "jesting Pilate," do not stay to have answered, is, "Which is the best place in London at which to dine?" This is generally only a prologue to their opinion on the subject, but when it is an inquiry, and not an overture, I always reply by another question, "Whom are you going to take out to dine?" for there are so many "best places" that the selection of the right one depends entirely on what are the tastes of the person, or persons, you wish to please. If a man were to answer *my* question by saying that he wished to entertain some bachelors of his own ripe age and ripe tastes, and that he would like to go somewhere where the food is very good, the rooms comfortable, and where there is no band to interfere with conversation, I should diagnose his case at once as a Café Royal one.

The Café Royal is pleasantly conservative, and it is more like a good French restaurant of the Second Empire than is any other dining-place I know in London. Its fame has reached to all other countries in the world, and a French waiter who hopes to become in due time a manager looks on an engagement at "The Café" as a step in his career. Therefore, if ever you feel inclined to be tight-fisted in the matter of tips to the waiters at the Café Royal, reflect that you may meet them again where their good word can help to make a meal comfortable for you. Once in Paris, when I went to dine at Maire's, far

up the boulevards, a restaurant into which I had not been for years, I was surprised to be received as though I was the prodigal son of the establishment, a *maître d'hôtel* taking especial care to find a pleasant table for me, and suggesting various dishes from the *carte du jour*, which shaped into a dinner after my own heart. I asked him if I had ever seen him before, and he replied: "I waited on monsieur at the Café Royal in the days when he used to drink the *Cliquot vin rosée*." I pause here to sigh regretfully over the memory of that *cuvée* of Cliquot, at which many men shied because of its colour, but which was the most delightful wine that ever came from the great house of the widow of Rheims. On the first occasion that I entered the restaurant of the Esplanade Hotel in Berlin, feeling rather like a boy going to a new school, I was received by a *maître d'hôtel* who knew that I liked a table at the side of the room, suggested to me three of the lightest dishes on the *carte* as my dinner, and told me that he remembered that at the Café Royal I always asked for the table in the far corner of the first room and that I liked short and light dinners.

It may be that in a few years, when the Quadrant of Regent Street must be rebuilt, and all the other houses in it will be obliged to conform in some respects to the Piccadilly Hotel, the sample building of the new style, the Café Royal as we know it to-day may be altered in appearance and in the arrangement of its rooms, but I hope that this will not happen in my time. It was the first restaurant at which I learned the joys of dining out in pleasant company — a *sole Colbert*, a *Chateaubriand* and *pommes sautées*, an *omelette au rhum* and a bottle of good Burgundy was my idea of a suitable dinner in those my strenuous days, and I have for the house all the affection I have for old friends.

The influence of Madame Nicols is against any unnecessary change. An old lady with white hair and dressed in black walks every day through the rooms of the Café Royal, and the habitués know that this is Madame Nicols on her tour of inspection. She still gives personal supervision to the work in the linen-room, as she did in the early days of the café, and her wish is that everything should remain as much as is possible as it was when M. Nicols was alive.

There is a romance in the history of most restaurants that have existed for any length of time, and the rise of the Café Royal from small beginnings is interwoven with the Franco-Prussian War and with the rise and destruction of the Commune. On 11th February 1865 M. Daniel Nicols, who had been in the wine trade at Bercy, that part of Paris where the great wine depots are, opened a modest little café-restaurant in the lower part of Regent Street. It occupied the space where the entrance and hall now are. A photograph of the front of the house at that time is extant, showing the plate-glass window with a broad brass band below it, and on the glass in white letters announcements of the good things to be found within. In front of the modest doorway stands M. Nicols, looking very proud of his establishment, while two of his friends lean gracefully against the pilasters of the entrance, and the head waiter stands respectfully a step or two farther back. On the little balcony before the windows of the entresol stand the ladies of M. Nicols' family. The interior of the window was in those days decked with salads and with any foods that looked tempting, to catch the attention of the passer-by. In fact, it was just such an unpretentious little restaurant as any young foreigner coming to London and determined to make a competence might start nowadays hoping that Fortune would turn her

wheel in his direction. But most young foreigners do not have the chance, or the judgment, to establish themselves in Regent Street. I have a dim memory when I was a schoolboy of being impressed by some stuffed pheasants in the Café Royal window, and at the time of the great war I was first taken inside it to meet there a distant connection of my family, a Buonapartist, who had been one of the Empress's ministers during the short period when the Government of France fell into her hands and had gone into exile when the Republic was proclaimed. Those are my first two recollections of the Café Royal.

It was the flood of non-combatants and political exiles, business men, authors and actors; Red Republicans, Monarchists, and Buonapartists, whom the war and the political upheavals in France sent over to this country, that made the fortune of the little restaurant. However they might differ as to the colour of their politics, they were all Frenchmen, they all sighed for the blue skies of France; they found in the Café Royal a little corner of their beloved native land, and they naturally all gravitated to it. The house was much too small for the number of its frequenters, when, fortunately, the old Union Tavern in Glasshouse Street came into the market, was bought, and converted into the café as we know it, with its painted ceiling and its wealth of gilding, and the restaurant and the private dining-rooms were established on the other floors. This was the first of many extensions and alterations. A building on the Air Street side was absorbed, and a billiard-room established on the ground floor, but very soon the billiard-tables were given marching orders, and the space they occupied was turned into a grill-room. An enlargement of the kitchen, the installation of a lift on the Air Street side, the making of a little ante-room and cloakrooms outside the restaurant—

before this improvement any man waiting for a lady who was going to dine with him did so in the passage leading to the café or on the stairs—and the construction somewhere very near the roof of a masonic temple and a ballroom were all additions.

M. Nicols and Madame Nicols gave personal attention to all details, and the experience M. Nicols had gained at Bercy was of great use to him in laying down the fine cellar of wines, particularly of red wines, which is the great pride of the house. To draw a very fine distinction, I would say of the Café Royal that it is a restaurant to which gourmets go to drink fine wines and to eat good food therewith, while at other first-class restaurants gourmets go to eat good food and to drink fine wines therewith. The only cellar of red wines that I know which can compare with that of the Café Royal is the cellar of Voisin's in Paris. The wine-list of the Café Royal is splendidly comprehensive, and in its pages are to be found all the fine wines grown in Europe, even Switzerland being recognised, and the wines of the Rhone Valley above the Lake of Geneva being given a place in the book. M. Delacoste, the first manager I remember at the Café Royal, under M. Nicols, was a great authority on wines, and he bought so largely that there came a time when M. Nicols recognised that his clients with the utmost good will could never drink all the wine laid down for them, and sold a portion of it by auction. Other managers of the Café Royal have been Wolschleger; Oddenino, who was appointed when M. Nicols died in 1897, and during whose tenancy of the post many of the improvements in the house were made; Gerard, mighty of girth, who had been in the kitchen of the Café Anglais under Dugleré, and who moved on to the Ocean Hotel, Sandown; and now Judah, who had been manager of the Cecil, and who keeps a very steady hand on the tiller. M. Judah,

on the occasion of the visit of the President of the French Republic to London in 1913, was created an officer of the Order of Merite Agricole.

Sportsmen have always had a special affection for the Café Royal. The men who were prominent in the revival of road-coaching were all patrons of the restaurant, and any night you may see half-a-dozen well-known owners of race-horses dining there. The Stage, the Stock Exchange, and Literature also have a liking for the old house, and hunting men love it.

When I mentioned it as the ideal place for a dinner of bachelor gourmets, I did not mean that men do not bring their wives and sisters and sweethearts there. They do. But the Café Royal does not lay itself out to capture the ladies. I never heard of anyone having afternoon tea there, and when a lady tells me that she likes dining at the Café Royal I always mentally give her a good mark, for it shows that she places in her affections good things to drink and good things to eat before those "springes to catch woodcock," gipsy bands in crimson coats, and palm lounges.

In the great gilded cage of the restaurant and the big room the windows of which open on to Glasshouse Street, the custom is to eat the lunch of the day, or to select dishes from it, while dinner is an *à la carte* meal. If one entertains a lady at dinner one probably orders a dinner which canters through the accepted courses, and I have by me the menu of such a one :

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.

Pôle Nord.

And with this dinner we drank a good bottle of St Marceaux.

But men when they dine together think little of the rightful sequence of courses, and order what their taste prompts them to eat. I have dined at the Café Royal, and dined well on *moules Marinières*—and one can eat *moules* at the Café without fear, half a cold grouse, a salad and a *petit Suisse* cheese. When the ham is a dish of the day it always tempts me, for the Café Royal hams are princes of their kind, and the cold *mousses* that the *chef de cuisine*, M. François Maitre, makes are beautifully light. The specialities of the cuisine of the Café Royal are *œufs Magenta*, *œufs Wallace*, *homard Thérmidor*, *sole Beaumanoir*, *filet de sole Simone*, *darne de saumon à l'Écossaise*, *truite Dartois*, *turbotin Paysanne*, *poularde bisque*, *faisan Carême*, *perdreau à la Royal*, *caille Chatelaine*, *poulet sauté Sigurd*, *suprême de volaille à la Patti*, *tournedos Figaro*, *noisette de pré salé moderne*, *côte d'agneau Sultane*, *filet de bœuf Cambacères*, *selle d'agneau favorite*.

Down in the café a *table d'hôte* meal is served, wonderful value for very few shillings, but I am not smoke-proof, and I like eating my meals without the taste and smell of tobacco added to them. The grill-room is always full, and perhaps more solid eating, of juicy fillets and grilled chops and cutlets, is done there than anywhere else in the house, except in the banqueting-rooms. I have banqueted with the Bons Frères, a club of cheery connoisseurs who like their dinner to be light and the songs that follow it also to be airy, in the great gilded banqueting-room with, as part of its decoration, many crowned N's, which might stand for Napoleon, but really indicate Nicols; I have dined in smaller rooms with the Foxhunters' Lodge, and with many other groups of good Freemasons and good diners; I have assisted at "Au Revoir" banquets without number, and I know when I am bidden to

feast in a private room at the Café Royal that I shall be given a good dinner on sound if perhaps conservative lines. This menu of a banquet given not long since, which is typical, will convey more what I mean than many words of description :

Natives.

Petite Marmite.

Saumon Sauce Genévoise.

Blanchailles.

Caille à la Cavour.

Jambon d'York aux Petits Pois.

Caneton de Rouen à la Presse.

Salade d'Orange.

Asperges Sauce Divine.

Bombe Alexandra.

Friandises.

Os à la Moelle.

Café.

Dessert.

VINS.

Graves Monopole, Dry.

Heidsieck and Co.,

1898.

Louis Roederer,

1899.

Ch. Le Tertre,

1888.

Martinez Port,

1884.

Denis Mouniés,

1860.

Liqueurs.

As a final word of praise for the Café Royal, let me record that just as many of its waiters grow grey-headed in its service, so the steps of any man who is a lover of good cheer and who has been an habitué of the restaurant seem unconsciously to lead him to its doors. It was my first love amongst the restaurants, and—well, you know how the proverb runs

VIII

OYSTER-HOUSES

THE great catastrophe of my life, I think, was that the first oyster I ate was a bad one. I was at school for a year or two at Dedham, as a preparation for Harrow, and Dedham is in Essex, and not far from Colchester. An old man used to wheel a barrow of oysters to the playing field, and dispensed his shell-fish at a penny an oyster. One day when I was in funds I thought that I would begin to enjoy the luxuries of life, and bought an oyster. That oyster was a bad one. Not just an ordinary bad oyster, but of a superlative badness, the most horrible oyster that any small boy ever tried to swallow—and failed. The memory of that oyster kept me for many years from making a second attempt. When I was first bidden to a Colchester oyster feast and sat amidst Cabinet Ministers and mayors and aldermen in their robes of office, and generals and admirals all pitching into the bivalves like winking, I, to the great surprise of the waiters, ate twice as many oysters as any alderman present. Had I been given an opportunity of making a speech after lunch I should have told the assembled company that my unparalleled feat in the absorption of Colchester natives that day was my revenge for the horrors of the first Colchester oyster I tried to eat one sunlit spring afternoon on the Dedham playing field. I have not yet been invited by a Mayor of Whitstable to accompany him to sea to eat oysters afloat on the first day of the dredging season, but I

have eaten many oysters plain and oysters scalloped at the "Bear and Key," and I never have had a grudge against any individual Whitstable oyster, so there is no injury to redress.

All this, I know, should be reserved for my autobiography; but as I am never likely to autobiograph myself it has to be set down here.

And now to talk of some of the oyster-houses of London. If on the "Roof of the World," the great tableland of Thibet, one British explorer met another British explorer, and the first man suddenly said "Scott's!" the second man inevitably would answer "Oysters," for Scott's window at the top of the Haymarket, with its little barrels of oysters and its crimson lobsters reposing on beds of salad stuff, and its big crabs lying on their backs and folding their vandyke-brown claws, as if in pious meditation, over their buff stomachs, is one of the landmarks of London. The old Scott's, before the fire that gutted it, has faded from the memory of most Londoners, and the new building, with its pillars, which are apparently of mother-o'-pearl pressed into black marble, with bands of ornamental brass about them, and its red blinds and red-shaded lamps in the upper storeys, is accepted as being the hub of the West End of London, just as the old one was. Inside the doors are the two marble-topped counters with piles of plates upon them, and on their fronts long napkins hanging from rails. Behind the counters men in white jackets are busy opening oysters and pouring out tumblers of stout and glasses of Chablis all day long. There are on the counters stacks of thin slices of brown bread and butter and other stacks of sandwiches of various kinds of fish and plates of prawns of coral-pink. I know of no better place than this wide oyster hall of Scott's for a theatre-goer to eat a very light meal before going early to a theatre when

he intends to sup luxuriously after the show. Scott's, though its shell-fish are its trump cards, desires to be all things to all men, and to all women. It possesses a "dive" in its basement with tiled walls, on which Japanese fish swim in and out through Japanesque weeds, and behind the oyster hall is the grill-room, shut off from draughts by a great glass screen, in which a white-clothed cook stands with a table of viands at his elbow, turning the chops and steaks, sausages and rashers on the big grill. Upstairs there is an *à la carte* restaurant, where all kinds of luxuries are obtainable, and Scott's is a very popular place at which to sup after the theatre.

If you would like to see how popular oysters are with Londoners at lunch-time, come with me to the Macclesfield in the street of that name leading out of Shaftesbury Avenue. When "Papa" De Hem first took over the Macclesfield it was just a public-house in the Soho district, but "Papa," who is a veteran of the Franco-Prussian War, and who was through the Siege of Paris, brought the thorough methods of an old soldier to bear upon the house. He turned all the old clientele out of its doors, and, though he kept a bar in the premises, it was by selling very large quantities of Whitstable oysters at a price that left him a very small profit that he saw his way to a fortune. Journalists and actors and artists and other dwellers in the realms of artistic Bohemia soon learnt of the new resort. Dagonet chatted of it in *Mustard and Cress*, Pitcher told tales concerning it in *Gals' Gossip*, and took the chair at the smoking concerts for charities held in the grotto upstairs, and as the prices have been kept rigorously low, and as the oysters have always been excellent, the Macclesfield is now one of the most popular oyster-houses in London. Come in through the glass door, and you find on one side the long bar,

and on the other side little tables, at which every seat is occupied by lunchers who are eating Whitstables on the deep shell, or oyster stew, or oysters fried, or oysters grilled, or broiled lobsters, or the mayonnaise of lobster which is one of the specialities of the house. There are luncheon dishes of meat and fowl also obtainable, but when I go to the Macclesfield I go there to eat shell-fish, and am not to be turned from my purpose by any roast chicken or grilled chop. We are not in the least likely to find a vacant seat at any of these first tables, so we will move on into the wider space where is the oyster bar, with men in white behind it, busy with their oyster knives, and behind them a background of barrels of Meux's stout. Here is the entrance to the grotto—an entrance beautified by trellis-work and Japanese lanterns. The walls of the grotto are of oyster-shells, with here and there an irregular piece of mirror showing through, and all Papa De Hem's best customers have written their names on the oyster-shells. The tables in the grotto are set close together, and there are two of them in a snug corner, towards which every customer first makes his way, only to find nine times out of ten that there is no place for him. The waitresses bustle about, and the proprietor has a word to say to all old friends. Upstairs on the first floor is another grotto, larger than the downstairs one, and quieter, and here ladies are often brought to lunch.

Stout is the classic accompaniment to oysters, and it is possible to eat the bivalves actually in the shadow of Meux's great Horseshoe Brewery, for the Horseshoe Tavern next door has an oyster dive down in the basement, just below its grill-room. On the way down to the dive you pass the great spirit casks of the Horseshoe safely placed behind a grille, the biggest cask of all being that of the

ten-year-old "Annie Laurie" whisky, which holds 1000 gallons. The oyster bar resembles a horseshoe in shape, and behind it is a wall of small kegs of Meux's stout. The Horseshoe is a good old-fashioned British house, with one of the largest open fires in London, and I remember that once when there was an especially splendid haunch of venison to be cooked for a party of gourmets Mr Baker was approached, and the venison feast was held at the Horseshoe.

Rule's Oyster-house, in Maiden Lane, in the window of which are two huge shells from Singapore and many big champagne bottles, is a house of many associations with the men of the pen of Victorian days. Albert Smith was the demigod of the establishment. Mark Lemon, Douglas Jerrold, Henry Irving, Besant and Rice, Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, Yates and Sala were some of the men who used to eat oysters in Maiden Lane and who have accorded appreciation of them. There are busts and portraits on the walls of the rooms of many theatrical celebrities, and in one room is a fine collection of Dighton caricatures.

White's and Gow's, in the Strand, both old-established fish and oyster houses, each deserve a word, and the Chandos, over against the National Portrait Gallery, gives its oyster-eating patrons six oysters, a glass of stout, and bread and butter for a shilling.

Sweeting's, in Fleet Street, is especially dear to me, because of its sawdusted floor. The front of the house has been set back in the widening of the street, but the house remains very much as it was. By the marble-topped counters are wooden stools, on which the lunchers perch like sparrows, and besides the oysters there are fish snacks and big lobsters, and on one of the counters is a selection

of sandwiches of all kinds. Upstairs there are two floors of dining-rooms for people who want something more solid than oysters or sandwiches.

No chapter on oyster-houses would be complete without reference to Driver's in Glasshouse Street, and Wilton's in King Street, both houses which supply the clubs and great restaurants with oysters, and which, as well, open oysters for hungry customers at their counters. At Driver's a little screen of stained glass only partially conceals the oysters which are spread out on the broad space behind the glass. On the door is the simple legend, "Driver, Oysterman," and inside are three black-coated men opening oysters behind the counter. In a little glass box sits a lady cashier. This in old days used to be where Mrs Driver sat, and could always spare time for a smile and a word to an old customer. On the wall behind the counter is a board with the orders for oysters contained by clips, and two shelves, on which are rows of big shells, showing wide surfaces of mother-o'-pearl. A little staircase leads to an upper room, where sybarites can sit and eat oysters and caviare and bread and cheese, and there is a little table downstairs tucked away behind the staircase; but I am one of the stalwarts who have always stood at the counter at Driver's to eat my oysters and to wipe my fingers afterwards on the pendant napkins.

Behind Wilton's plate-glass windows there are warrants suitably framed, and the proprietor is generally to be seen either behind his counting-desk or the little oyster bar in the spacious shop. Wilton's at one time used to purvey Irish oysters, as well as other British varieties, but the supply was so uncertain that they have been taken off the list.

If I have omitted to give the prices of the oysters at the various oyster-houses, it is because they vary so much. One can buy native oysters in the shops

at Whitstable for 1s. a dozen, or 1s. 9d. for twenty-five. By the time they arrive in London their cheapest price is 1s. 6d. a dozen, and the specially selected ones, which are sometimes called "Royal Natives," cost as much at some oyster-houses as 3s. 6d. a dozen. Seconds, Anglo-Dutch and Anglo-Portuguese are each a step lower down in price. American oysters are to be obtained in Paris at Prunier's, but I know of no house in London at the present time which imports them. Ten years ago they were obtainable at two of the houses.

IX

WHITEBAIT AT GREENWICH

GONE are the great days of the whitebait dinners at Blackwall and Greenwich. No longer does *The Morning Post* ever publish such a paragraph as this, "Yesterday the Cabinet Ministers went down the river in the ordnance barges to Lovegrove's West India Dock Tavern, Blackwall, to partake of their annual fish dinner. Covers were laid for thirty-five gentlemen," which appeared on 10th September 1835. No longer is there a great rivalry between the two Greenwich taverns, the Trafalgar and the Ship. The Ship still remains and the whitebait have not deserted the Thames, but though at intervals I read paragraphs that fish dinners are still to be obtained at the Ship, I never meet anyone who has journeyed to Greenwich to see whether this is so, and the last time that I went there to dine my reception was so chilly that I have not experimented again. But the account of that dinner may interest as showing what a Greenwich fish dinner was in the days of good King Edward.

It was pleasant to see Miss Dainty's (of all the principal London theatres) handwriting again. 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. When was I going to take her out to dinner? 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 Greenwich or the restaurant at Earl's Court.

For Greenwich the fair lady gave her decision, 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-zag 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 things 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, thick-set, and with a little moustache, came out of his room, and whether it was that Fleet Street and the Thames had given me a tramplike 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 six-thirty 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 storeys 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 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 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 half-way 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 that 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, 18s.; two liqueurs, 1s. 6d.; coffee, 1s.; attendance, 1s.; total, £1, 15s. 6d.

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!"

X

THE CECIL

I WONDER whether Jabez Balfour, the genius who jumped at Park Lane and landed on Broadmoor, ever comes to London from his country retreat, where, under another name, he earns his daily bread, and looks at the great palaces which were one of his money-spinning schemes and notes the changes that are made in them. He certainly would scarcely recognise to-day in the modern Hotel Cecil the great red-brick and stone block of chambers and flats which first grew up, some seventeen or eighteen years ago, next to the Adelphi Terrace overlooking the Embankment Gardens. A company with some very distinguished gentlemen on the list of the directors was formed to buy the great building, and they have worked with indomitable perseverance to make a house that was not intended to be an hotel into one of the most comfortable hotels in London, and to popularise a restaurant which at first refused to respond to their efforts.

The Cecil Restaurant opened with a great flourish of trumpets, with M. Bertini, a clever, quick-eyed, bearded Italian as manager, and M. Coste, who was one of the greatest of the great chefs of the close of the Victorian era, in command of the kitchens. But the company had been in too great a hurry to begin to earn money, and the arrangements were not yet working quite smoothly when London that dines and thinks about its dinners was first asked to sit in judgment on the new dining-place.

The first roughnesses soon wore off; M. Bertini was an admirable *maître d'hôtel*—I have lost sight of him of late years, but I think he went for a time to South Africa, and he made a short appearance as proprietor of a small restaurant in the Haymarket—and M. Coste, “the old man,” as the rest of the staff affectionately called him behind his back, sent out through the doors that separate the kitchen from the restaurant little dinners that delighted the palates of connoisseurs. This propinquity of kitchen to restaurant is a great advantage. As you sit at your table in the Cecil Restaurant you can, if you listen for it, hear the voices of the men who call out the orders to the cooks—an unceasing chant, a hymn to Gastronomy, and as a result no dish ever comes cold to table at the Cecil Restaurant.

What, however, was radically wrong at first with the Cecil Restaurant was its decoration. It is a very large, very high pillared hall, with a glazed balcony overlooking the Victoria Gardens, and big windows on the west giving a glorious view of Westminster; but its decorations were at first too sombre in colour. The panelling was of walnut wood, a large square of deep crimson velvet was embroidered with the Cecil arms, the great mantelpieces of purple-grey Sicilian marble conformed to the quiet scheme of colour, and the pillars and great window casings all harmonised in the minor key. The mantelpieces are all that remain to-day of the original scheme of colouring, and they are scarcely noticeable amidst the shimmer of pink and white and gold. A minor drawback was that the restaurant had no ante-room, and that a dinner-giver had to await his guests in the bustling hall of the hotel. People who dined at the Cecil Restaurant in those days praised the cooking, and had nothing except good words for the attendance and wine, but they said it was not “cheery.” Nine out of ten ladies or men did not trouble to analyse

their feelings, but it was the coldness of their surroundings that affected them.

To tear down all the decorations of a newly built hall is an heroic remedy which no board of directors would willingly face, and before this was done other less expensive remedies were tried. A separate entrance for the restaurant was made in the courtyard, and a lounge built and quite charmingly decorated. M. Paillard, the great Parisian restaurateur, crossed the Channel and became for a time manager of the restaurant, making with M. Coste in the kitchen a remarkable combination of talent. A Roumanian band, fierce-looking gentlemen in embroidered garments, who had been sensationally successful at one of the great exhibitions in Paris, were imported, were perched up on a rostrum and made the roof reverberate with their czardas. The services of "Smiler," a curry-cook of great renown, were exclusively retained for the Cecil. (Sherry's in New York offered "Smiler" large sums of money to transfer his services, and he crossed the Atlantic with a little band of underlings of his own nationality. "Smiler" travelled first class, and the reporters on the other side not unnaturally took him to be an Indian Prince on his travels. "Smiler" did not undeceive them, and enjoyed for some days all the privileges given to royalty in a republic. Then he reported at Sherry's.) Mr Hector Tenant, the managing director of the Empire, joined the Cecil board, and a series of variety performances after dinner on Sundays filled the big restaurant to its holding capacity on those evenings. Harry Lauder, concerning whose talent and fine voice everybody was talking at that time, sang, I remember, on one of those occasions. But there must have been some excellent reasons for not continuing these variety performances, for after a time they ceased.

At last the board took its courage in both hands and redecorated the restaurant from floor to ceiling. It is now a hall of white and gold and pink. The panels are of Rose du Barri silk, the pillars are gleaming white, while the frieze is of the lightest blue. A dark rose carpet gives relief to this shimmering, shining restaurant, and in its centre is a handsome table of many tiers for fruit and sweet things, a table of gilt sphinx heads and many electric lamps. The waiters wear knee-breeches; the band plays in an ante-room. The redecorated restaurant at once jumped into the affections of the world that dines, and further to add to the good temper of this place of butterfly colouring, the directors engaged as the *maître d'hôtel* in charge of the restaurant, M. Califano, who is known to the patrons of the Cecil as "Sunny Jim." One of the advantages with which M. Califano has been endowed by Nature is a smiling face, and some wit at the time that "Sunny Jim" was a favourite figure on all the hoardings, gave M. Califano his nickname.

To complete their work of betterment, the board added to the restaurant and hotel the new palm court, a sumptuous lounge, upholstered in powdered blue and gold, which has eaten up more than a half of the great forecourt of the Cecil. This forecourt, which was almost of the size and shape of a Roman hippodrome, was a great comfort in past days to the cabdrivers of London, for there was unlimited room in it for them to wait to take up guests at the hotel; but it was a great waste of space. The new palm court is a very splendid place, and besides giving the restaurant a noble reception-room, it has shut away from the hotel all the noise of the street and all the bustle of the reception hall. It has, however, done away with the most American spot in London,

the space of paving outside the front entrance of the Cecil which used to be known as "The Beach." Here used to be cane chairs and rocking-chairs and piles of luggage, and a newspaper stall, and in the summer-time pretty girls sunning themselves, and waiters hurrying to and fro with cold drinks and long straws in them; and the American guests of the hotel who loved the brightness and the bustle of the spot christened it "The Beach," and preferred it to any of the gilded parlours inside the hotel. The new palm court, however, in a stately manner, has taken the place of "The Beach" as a meeting-ground for the hotel guests. Mr Kaiser, the general manager of the Hotel Cecil, tells me that the building of this fine lounge has been of benefit to the restaurant as giving a finishing touch to its comforts, and I have no doubt that this is so, for dining in the restaurant, I found it comfortably filled by people staying in the hotel, and guests from outside, and "Sunny Jim" told me of the vast numbers whom on such special occasions as Christmas and New Year's Eve he manages to accommodate in the restaurant and balcony.

I ate the Cecilian dinner, a seven-and-sixpenny *table d'hôte* meal, which I found quite excellent. This is the menu :

Huitres Natives on Hors d'Œuvre.
Consommé Princesse.
Crème Parisienne.
Filets de Sole Carême.
Quartier d'Agneau Arléquine.
Pommes Macaire.
Caille en Cocotte au Jus d'Ananas.
Salade.
Asperges, Sauce Hollandaise.
Glace à l'Andalouse.
Friandises.

The delicate sauce with the sole, the neatness of

the garnish of the vegetables with the quarter of lamb, the plumpness of the quail and their contrast of taste with the pine-apple, would have assured me that the kitchen is in first-class hands, even had I not known that M. Jean Alletru, a chef who stands very high in the estimation of his brother chefs, had succeeded M. Coste, when that great man retired.

I might have spent a shilling less and have eaten an alternative dinner without the oysters in it, or I might have taken advantage of an arrangement by which anyone dining at the Cecil can pay a fixed price for his or her dinner, and choose practically anything they like from the *carte du jour*, which is a very ample one, and which generally contains some of the *spécialités* created by M. Alletru. This is the list of these *spécialités* and a couple of very pretty little dinners can be arranged from amongst them, the only thing needed in addition being a soup. *Tomate en surprise au caviar, turbotin Prince de Galles, filet de sole Clarence, timbale de truite froide Norvégienne, ris de veau St Cloud, caille à la Salvini, poitrine de volaille Providence, selle d'agneau Cecil, poularde à la Jacques, fraises Tetrazzini, bouteille de champagne en surprise.*

I have given high praise to M. Alletru, but the highest praise that a *maître-chef* can receive is that which comes from his brothers in art, and no higher compliment could be paid to the management of the Hotel Cecil and their *chef de cuisine* than that the Ligue des Gourmands, the association of all the principal French chefs in England, when they held their first Diner d'Epicure under the presidency of M. Escoffier, placed themselves in the hands of the Cecil and of M. Alletru, who, with his brigade of cooks, sent to table the dinner that M. Escoffier had designed. If I print the menu of this banquet, a banquet at which there were three hundred guests

present, in preference to that of any of the many banquets at which I have been a guest in the great banqueting halls of the Cecil, it is because in my opinion it is the perfection of a dinner of ceremony. The *Dodine* and the *Fraises Sarah-Bernhardt* were the two sensational dishes of the feast, but it is not a dinner of many courses of rich food, and is interesting without being heavy :

Hors d'œuvre.
Petite Marmite Béarnaise.
Truite Saumonée aux Crevettes Roses.
Dodine de Canard au Chambertin.
Nouilles au Beurre Noisette.
Agneau de Pauillac à la Bordelaise.
Petits pois frais de Clamart.
Poularde de France.
Cœur de Romaine aux Pommes d'Amour.
Asperges d'Argenteuil Crème Mousseline.
Fraises Sarah-Bernhardt.
Dessert.
Café—Liqueurs.
Bénédictine.

Whether the Cecil was the first of the great banqueting houses to effect a reform in the service of public banquets I am not sure, but it was at the Cecil that I first found that such a reform had taken place. In old days it was the custom for the waiters to trail a dish along the whole length of a banqueting-table, and the salmon, which went up the room a noble-looking fish, came down five minutes later to starvation corner, a head, a tail and a skeleton. It was at the Cecil that I first noticed the breaking up of the tables into manageable sections of guests, with a waiter and his aids to each section, and the dinner served straight from the kitchen to that section. The restaurant and the banqueting halls and the private dining-rooms by no means exhaust the list of the accommodations of those who dine that

the Cecil affords. There is below the Rose du Barri room another one, the Indian room, decorated in Oriental fashion with blue and yellow tiles, and in this a grill dinner and a *table d'hôte* dinner are both served, and when this room overflows another equally spacious room is opened and becomes the grill-room.

(As I correct the proofs of this chapter news comes to me that "Sunny Jim" will in 1914 become a joint partner in the management of the St James's Palace Hotel in Bury Street and will give special attention to its restaurant.)

XI

CLARIDGE'S

I REACH back in memory farther in touch with Claridge's than with any other hostelry in London. One of the stories of her early life that my mother often told me when I was a small boy was how my grandfather, as crotchety an elderly widower as ever ruled an Indian district, when he finally retired from the service of John Company, arrived in London with his bullock trunks and sandalwood boxes lined with tin, his bedding rolled up in bundles, his guns, his fly-whisks, and palm-fans, and all the strange paraphernalia that an Anglo-Indian official gathered about him in those days. With him came his faithful bearer, and an ayah, and his little pale daughter, and they all descended at Claridge's Hotel—though perhaps in those days it might have been Mivart's. The first great grief of the little girl's life was that the "Nabob," as my grandfather was called in the family, delivered a "hookum" to the manager of the hotel that an English nurse must be provided directly for his small daughter, as the ayah ought to return at once to her own country, and my mother was obliged to say good-bye to her devoted Indian attendant. My first personal introduction to Claridge's was when, as a schoolboy, I was invited by another schoolboy, who wished to show off, to go with him to visit a German *Graf*, a nobleman with a very long string of minor titles, whose greatest glory was that he owned a castle on the Rhine. The *Graf* was very polite to

the two little English boys, and talked to us in very bad English; and when we took our departure he saw us to the door as though we had been persons of the greatest importance. Mr Claridge, wearing a skull-cap of velvet, happened to be in the hall as we passed through, and I remember well the beautiful bow that he gave to the Count. Mr Claridge's bows were celebrated; they were of a different depth, according to the rank of the person to whom he bowed, and there was even a delicate difference in the salute that he gave to a Serene Highness to that with which he welcomed a Royal Highness. Claridge's in those days consisted of half-a-dozen houses connected with each other, and the best rooms in these houses formed the suites where the various royalties who patronised the hotel lodged, Mr Claridge and his staff of servants being always on the watch that the privacy of his guests should not be invaded. On one occasion, when a famous caricaturist took a room at the hotel, Mr Claridge waited on him and informed him that he must transfer his custom elsewhere, for, though he, Mr Claridge, was a great admirer of the artist's talent, and decorated the walls of some of the rooms with his work, he could never allow a royal personage to be caricatured within the walls of his hotel. Not that Mr Claridge himself always spoke too respectfully of the great ones of the earth. Archbishop Temple used to tell a story that when in 1846 the Pope seriously thought of taking refuge in England, Mr Claridge remarked that he was so full up with kings and royal dukes that he could only offer his Holiness a small back room, but that, being a bachelor, he, the Pope, would probably not mind.

The old Claridge's was pulled down and the new Claridge's built in the nineties, and I remember the opening day, when a great crowd of fashionable people came to look at its *salons* and ballroom and

restaurant, and the royal suite. The india-rubber roadway in the entrance, then a novelty, was much admired, and the six footmen in the hall, in their state livery, looked mighty splendid. Mr D'Oyly Carte, who more than anyone else had been the moving spirit in the creation of the new hotel, was wheeled about in a chair through the crush of pretty ladies and distinguished gentlemen, for he was then very ill.

The new Claridge's soon found its own particular atmosphere, an atmosphere of perfect serenity. The little army of footmen, who were too gorgeous for ordinary occasions, were reduced in numbers, and now only one superb being in plush and silken calves moves about the hall and arranges the papers in the reading-room. The inner hall, with its pillars and walls of white, and its reflected light, is a most comfortable lounge in which to sit after dinner and listen to the orchestra, and out of this open two rooms, one of Wedgwood blue with Wedgwood designs on it, and the other of old gold. The restaurant has been considerably altered since its first opening, for it has been divided into two rooms, the colouring of it has been brightened, and at night an abundance of light is now thrown on to the painted ceilings from cunningly concealed lamps. The bases of the great arches which support the roof are cased in dark oak, with an inset of olive wood; the carpet is of rose and grey and the chairs are of green leather with the arms of the hotel stamped upon it.

It is a restaurant in which dinner takes its right place as one of the tranquil pleasures of life. The music of the band is never too loud, the fine napery and the admirable glass are pleasant to the touch, the flowers in the silvered stands of the table lamps give an agreeable touch of colour, the cut glass of the

pendent electroliers sparkles, and the first and the second *maîtres d'hôtel*, M. Invernizzi, who comes from the Palace Hotel, at St Moritz, to London for the season, and M. Castelani, who is a permanency at Claridge's, are tactfully attentive, while M. Gehlardi, the manager of the hotel, walks through the rooms during the course of dinner to bow here and there at a table, and to assure himself that all is well. It is the clientele of Claridge's that has made its atmosphere, for the well-dressed, good-looking, quiet people who dine at the tables, put a comfortable distance apart, are folk whose names bulk largely in the Society columns of the newspapers, and the list of the diners on any given night in Claridge's Restaurant would be for the most part a string of titles. Good manners are in the air, and I do not think that even the rawest plutocrat could be unmannerly amidst such surroundings.

On the night that I last dined at Claridge's, I had written beforehand asking that a table for three should be reserved for me, and I had intended to give my guests the larger of the two dinners of the restaurant, the twelve-and-six one, which runs through the usual courses, and which is by no means a set dinner, for any dish which does not exactly match the fancy of a dinner-giver is changed for another to suit his whim or his palate. But I found that a special little feast had been ordered for me by M. Gehlardi, and the menu of it was as follows:—

Melon Cantaloup.
Bortch à la Russe.
Filets de Sole Newnham-Davis.
Noisette d'Agneau aux Fines Herbes.
Petits pois frais. Pommes Noisettes.
Coq en Pâte.
Salade de Romaine à l'Estragon.
Fraises Parisienne.
Friandises.

The *chef de cuisine* at Claridge's is M. Maurice Bonhomme, who had passed through the kitchens of two great Parisian restaurants, the Café de Paris, and Ledoyen's, in the Champs Elysées, before he came to London. He is a chef of high repute, and these are the specialities of his kitchen:—*filet de sole Tosca, suprême de sole Pré Catelan, Coulubiach de saumon, suprême de volaille d'Orléans, cailles Hacchi Pacha, Coq en Pâte Claridge's, pêches Caprice, fraises Delphine.*

Of the dishes of my dinner, the excellent *Bortch à la Russe* was served as it is in Russia, with little *pâtés* to break into it. The list of these *pâtés* in the menu of a Russian dinner is often a long one. The *filet de sole*, which M. Bonhomme paid me the compliment of christening to my name, is a quite admirable *sole poché au Madère*, with all the fumet of the fish retained and served with sliced *champignons* and *pointes d'asperges*. I sent my very best compliments to M. Bonhomme on his masterpiece. The *coq en pâte* is an ornamental dish, for the fowl stuffed with all manner of rich things is encased in a paste shaped like a cock, crest and all. The outer covering is broken before the bird is carved. It is a dish of almost terrifying richness.

Quite a number of the great people of the land give their banquets at Claridge's, and out of the sheaf of the menus of these feasts I select one of the Surrey Magistrates' Club Dinner, which shows that our Solons across the Thames dine and wine with much discretion and taste :

Royal Natives.

Hors d'œuvre.

Consommé Monte-Carlo.

Bisque de Crabes.

Turbotin braisé au Champagne.

Whitebait diable noir.

Selle de Béhague à l'Estragon.
 Haricots verts de Nice.
 Pommes nouvelles au Beurre.
 Timbale à la Galoise.
 Caneton d'Aylesbury à l'Anglaise.
 Salades d'Oranges.
 Asperges vertes Sauce Hollandaise.
 Pêches Melba.
 Friandises.
 Bonne Bouche.

VINS.

Oloroso Fine Old.
 Piesporter, 1904.
 George Goulet (mag.), 1900.
 Moët et Chandon.
 Dry Imper., 1904.
 Dow's 1896.
 Courvoisier Brandy.
 Fine Champagne, 1865.

I wonder how a club dinner of magistrates of fifty years ago would contrast with such a dinner as the above.

XII

THE EUSTACE MILES RESTAURANT

OLD "Rats," which is the disrespectful title by which most of his friends call Major-General Sir Ulysses Ratbourne, late of the Bundlekund Fusiliers, was holding forth to his crony, Colonel Bunthunder, late of the same distinguished regiment, in the hall of the Cutlass and Cross-bow Club as I passed through it, and the General paused for a second in his denunciation of Radicals and Socialists to say that he wanted to have a word with me, and then finished his peroration. Colonel Bunthunder muttered: "Very true, very true," and went on into the smoking-room shaking his head sorrowfully, and the General turned to me.

"Look here, my lad"—anyone under seventy is "my lad" to the General—said he, "I want you to give me a bit of advice."

I said the correct platitude, and awaited developments.

"My nephew Bill, the one in the Hussars, has just married, and he and his wife are coming up to town, and I want to know where to take 'em to dine."

I reeled off the list of the half-dozen most fashionable restaurants; but the General cut me short. "Ay, my lad, that's all very well; but the girl that poor old Bill's been and married is a vegetarian. What d'ye say to that, now?"

The General had put into the word "vegetarian"

just the tone of astonished disgust he would have employed had he told me that the young lady was a militant suffragette; but I did not echo that at all. "Take them to the Eustace Miles Restaurant in Chandos Street," I advised; "and whatever your niece's fads may be, you can give her what she wants there."

Old "Rats" thanked me with the chastened thankfulness that men show when given the address of a specialist for some obscure disease of which they think they are a victim, wrote the address down on a card, and went after Colonel Bunthunder into the smoking-room to tell him all about it.

It occurred to me, however, directly the old General had left me, that I was sending him to a restaurant into which I had never myself been, and concerning which I knew nothing, except that I always look into its windows and at its bill of fare whenever I pass down Chandos Street; and, therefore, in order that I might be able to give the old man some detailed information from my own experience, I went next day to Chandos Street to lunch.

Before I set down what my experiences were, I wish to express my personal admiration for the single-mindedness of Mr Miles and his wife in doing the work they have set themselves to do. That Eustace Miles, half trained, went into a tennis court to defend his title of amateur world champion against a young American gentleman trained to the second, and that he made a fine fight for the championship with the odds desperately against him, shows that a diet of non-flesh food doesn't kill pluck or stamina. And before the authorities asked Mrs Miles not to send the E.M. soup barrow down to the Embankment on winter nights, as they wished to clear that thoroughfare of derelicts, she and her helpers had done much to feed the hungry and to reclaim some of those who

were not irreclaimable, which shows that a kind heart thrives on Emprote and Protonnic and Compacto, and the other meatless foods with strange names. Lastly, that the Eustace Miles Restaurant celebrated last year the seventh anniversary of its opening, shows that London wanted such a restaurant, and that it has kept its clientele.

The big windows of the Eustace Miles Restaurant are "dressed" as if they were shop-windows. Sometimes they are full of tins and packets of the non-flesh foods arranged in piles and pyramids; sometimes they look like the windows of a book shop, piles of literature and charts of the human frame being in evidence; and sometimes boxing-gloves and foils and pictures of young men holding themselves upright and sticking out chests as full as those of pouter-pigeons draw attention to the fact that a physical school high up in the building is one of the Eustace Miles activities. Sometimes the windows look like those of a pastry-cook's shop, and sometimes they bristle with copies of *Healthward Ho!* the monthly magazine which Mr Miles edits. Always outside the door in a glazed case is the bill of fare for the day printed in red and green type, and I have often wondered what "Egg and Mushroom Fillets and Duxelles Sauce with Asparagus and New Potatoes (N.)," or "Pinekernel Quenelles and Onion Sauce with Spring Cabbage and Potatoes (N., F.U.)," or "Hazel-nut Sausages and Gravy with Cauliflower and Roast Potatoes (N., F.U.)," taste like, and what the capital letters after each dish mean. Now, however, there was no reason to linger and look at the card. I was about to plunge into the great unknown, to sample the dishes with strange names, and to learn the secret of N.N. and F.U.

A commissionaire, looking just like other commissionaires, though he, like all the other employees

of the restaurant, eats the food of the restaurant, opened the door to me and gave me a card for my bill, and my first impression was that I was in a Food and Cookery Exhibition, for in front of me was a stall piled high with tins of Emprote and a cash desk with a little model of the E.M. barrow by it, a stall for pastry and biscuits, and a book-stall; but beyond this first line of defence I saw little tables with white cloths on them, and many people sitting at them, and I walked on looking for a vacant seat. I came to a table with only one occupant, and sat down; a little waitress in a neat brown dress put the red and green printed bill of fare into my hand, and I found myself suddenly faced by a puzzle to which the purple ink *carte du jour* of a small provincial French restaurant is as ABC is to a jig-saw puzzle. However, in larger print than anything else on the card was the announcement that a half-crown *table d'hôte* luncheon and dinner was served, so I said to the waitress in an offhand manner, as though I were an habitué: "I'll take the half-crown lunch, please." She never budged. "Compacto *croûtes* or roasted cashews?" she asked me, and I gasped out, "Compacto," and wondered what on earth I was going to eat.

Then, while the little waitress had gone to get me the first instalment of the unknown, I looked down the menu and made up my mind which of the two soups, the two entrées, the two sweets and two savouries I would order when the waitress came back again, and then turned my attention to the room and the people at the tables. There is a suggestion of a gymnasium about the restaurant, for it is a high room with a broad gallery running round it about half-way up its height, and it is lighted by a great space of skylight. All the boarding, and there is a good deal of it, is painted dark green, and on the walls is a

dark green and white paper. A tea-stall, green and white, and a long buffet of green wood, with pots of flowers on it, are at one end of the restaurant; the floor is covered with oilcloth, with strips of crimson cocoa-nut matting laid over it, and there are flowers in vases on the little white-clothed tables which occupy all the floor space below and in the gallery. There is a sense of airiness and spotless cleanliness about the place. Big notices draw attention to the Normal Physical School and other of the Eustace Miles activities, and a request to gentlemen not to smoke till after six P.M. was just above my head.

The people at the tables were just like the people one sees at any other restaurant where the prices are not high—ladies who might be stenographers, or country cousins up for a day's shopping, young men who, I daresay, are bank clerks—a good, level, healthy-looking gathering. A man with clear blue eyes and a close-clipped white beard sat down in the seat opposite to mine, and ordered something without looking at the menu; a youngster in golfing kit took the other unoccupied place at the table, and a wrinkle came across his forehead as he plunged mentally into the intricacies of the *à la carte* sheet, until the waitress helped him by pointing with her pencil to some dish printed in red ink, and he joyfully assented to her suggestion. A young man brought in a bulldog on a leash, and the dog was petted on his progress up the floor by all the little waitresses.

The waitress who had me in her charge returned with the *Compacto croûtes*, two little angles of hot toast with something spread on them, and she took my order for the next course, of lettuce and sorrel *potage*, and for some ginger ale, which I ordered as having a vague feeling that it would be in keeping with the meal. The *Compacto* had a far-off taste of potted meat, and I had noticed that it was labelled N., F.U., which

a note at the top of the menu told me meant nourishing and free from uric acid. The dishes marked N.N. are "Very Nourishing." The lettuce and sorrel soup, when it came, was distinctly to be commended, a trifle thin, perhaps, but having the taste of the vegetables in it, and being excellently hot. This also, I was pleased to see, was noted as N. and F.U.; and had I been subject to gout, which—"touch wood," I am not, I should have been eating an admirable non-gouty meal. Then came what on the menu was described as a main dish. It was asparagus and lentil timbale, cucumber sauce, stuffed vegetable marrow and new potatoes *sautés*. I rather hope that this will not be the main dish that old "Rats" will stumble up against when he takes his niece to dine at the Eustace Miles Restaurant, for the timbale did not seem to me to have any strong taste of asparagus in it—perhaps the lentils had killed it. The stuffed vegetable marrow was rather a watery delicacy, but I ate up the *sautés* potatoes, feeling quite glad that I knew what their taste was going to be. The next dish, however—honey shortbread and stewed apricots—I can unreservedly praise; the shortbread was excellently light and the stewed apricots were good things of their kind. I had told the waitress that as a savoury I would have *matelote* eggs on toast, but I cancelled that order, for I look on savouries as superfluities, and ate some cheese as a finish to my repast.

The little waitress totalled up my bill on the card that the commissionaire at the door had given me, and I was making my way to the pay-desk when I saw in a corner by the book-stall a lady engaged in opening letters; and, thinking that this must be Mrs Eustace Miles, I asked her if such was the case, and when she said "Yes," introduced myself. She welcomed me to the restaurant, explained that her husband was away playing a championship game at

tennis, and said how sorry she was that she had not met me before I lunched, as she would have liked to suggest to me the dishes that best suit anyone making their first essay on non-flesh foods. I told her, however, that I had wished to make my first attack just as any other meat-eating member of the public would do, and I was very glad to be able to compliment her on the cook's soup and the short-bread. I had bought at the book-stall the May number of *Healthward Ho!* and had carried off from the dinner-table a sheaf of leaflets giving information concerning the restaurant and the *salons*, and in addition to these Mrs Miles gave me a leaflet describing the exhibit that the then chef of the restaurant, Mr Blatch, N.C.A., sent to the Food and Cookery Exhibition in 1910, and which won a gold medal there, and an account of the *déjeuner* at which M. Escoffier and the editor of *Food and Cookery* and *The Catering World* were present, and which was described by the latter in glowing terms, "excellent," "delightful" and "delicious" being adjectives used for every course. This was the menu of the feast:

Milk Cheese and Celery Mayonnaise.
Salsify and Barley Cream Soup.
Cashew Nut Timbale and Cranberry Sauce.
Nut and Vegetable en Casserole.
Vegetables (Conservatively Cooked).
Jamaican Fruit Salad.
Devilled Compacto.

It was recorded that M. Escoffier very much enjoyed the devilled Compacto, and praised the work of the chef who had prepared the *hors d'œuvre* and the entrées. As, however, since the date of this *déjeuner*, which was in March 1910, M. Escoffier has given the world his famous *Dodine*, and his not less famous *Poularde Poincaré*, he was evidently not weaned

from the errors of flesh-eating by his visit to the Eustace Miles Restaurant, nor shall I be lured away by any stuffed vegetable marrow from creamy salmon and plump quails.

But I shall say no word to dissuade old "Rats" from going to dine at the Eustace Miles Restaurant, for I am quite sure that what he will eat there will certainly do him no harm, and if he chooses F.U. dishes may probably do him a lot of good, but I should like to be present when the old man first looks down the green and red bill of fare of the day and finds himself faced by all the strange new dishes, for his remarks will be worthy of the occasion.

XIII

THE PRINCES' RESTAURANT

WHEN the house for the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours—that classic stone building with busts of great painters in the ovals that ornament its façade, busts on which the sparrows perch and watch the traffic in Piccadilly—was put up in the early eighties, there was space below the galleries for some shops and for a large hall. It occurred to somebody, probably M. Benoist, whose great charcutier's shop was just over the way, that Princes' Hall was eminently suitable to be a dining-room, and Princes' Restaurant came into existence, M. Benoist being the moving spirit, his brother-in-law, M. Fourault, being the manager, and M. Azema, a chef of much fame, being at the head of the kitchen.

Princes' Restaurant, as I first remember it, was not the beautiful room it is now. The painted ceiling with its concealed lights, as fine an example of this kind of art as we have in London, was a later addition; the garden outside the windows of the restaurant had still to be made, and I think that the windows which look towards St James's Church were not in the great room when it was first built. The hotel, which has an entrance in Jermyn Street, and in which there are some noble rooms for banquets and balls, was another afterthought. The lessees of some of the shops on the Piccadilly front were bought out before the palm garden, in which

impatient gentlemen wait for ladies who are late, and where satisfied diners smoke their after-dinner cigars and drink their coffee, could be made, and comparatively lately communication has been established between the restaurant and the galleries above, in order that when there is a ball in the picture-hung halls the dancers can troop down to sup below.

If Princes' Restaurant and Princes' grill-room and Princes' Hotel are like Rome in that they were not built in a day, they are very good to look upon in their finished state. The restaurant has a great height, and the early diners can smoke there without the least taint of tobacco greeting the later comers. Its ceiling is, as I have already written, a beautiful example of decorative art, and a bill of exceeding length, the sum total of which astonished me when I was told how many figures it comprised, was paid for this embellishment. Its walls are creamy in colour, the curtains are of soft pink, and the tall windows south and east are reflected in mirrors, looking like other windows on the northern side, where the space is not occupied by the Palm Lounge. A musicians' gallery runs along the western side, and the doors into the kitchen are below this, but the red-coated musicians have forsaken their aerie, which now forms a way to ballrooms and galleries, and have found a snug corner on the floor of the restaurant. There are some fine marble statues of nymphs on pedestals and palms and banked-up plants and flowers in the restaurant, and the general effect suggests that one has stepped out of London greyness into some Southern clime where all is light and bright and spacious. At night the electroliers are shaded so as to give a mixed golden and pink light, which is most comfortable to the eyes, and is, I am sure, very becoming to the complexions of the ladies, and the

carpets and the upholstering of the chairs carry on the harmony of deep rose and pink.

The history of the present success of the Princes' Restaurant is the story of the triumph of the short dinner over the long one. As a lunching place Princes' was a great success from the day its doors first opened. The ladies of Mayfair and Belgravia and Tyburnia found that it was comfortably near their shopping centres, and the little ladies of the stage also liked to lunch there. The musical comedy ladies monopolised the first half-dozen tables to the right as one entered, leaving the rest of the tables to the other ladies, and Stage looked at Society's hats, and Society looked at Stage's furs, and no doubt each envied what the other wore. But for quite a while—it seemed a long while to the shareholders—Princes' did not find its destiny as a dining place. M. Benoist wished it to be a great *à la carte* restaurant such as he has made the restaurant of the Hermitage at Monte Carlo, but for some unexplainable reason diners did not flock to Princes' to eat expensive dinners, nor did a long *table d'hôte* dinner tempt them. At last it was determined that new methods should be tried and new men came on to the Board of Directors to try them, that very energetic and very successful organiser, Mr Harry Preston, of Brighton, being one of them. A short theatre dinner became the trump card of the restaurant in the evening, the Princes' ballrooms became the scene of most of the dances organised in theatreland, and when the company began to earn an annual dividend for its shareholders the advantages of brief dinners became very apparent to them.

This was the dinner of the day that I took a lady to eat at seven o'clock on an evening on which Sir George Alexander produced a new play at the St James's :—

Hors d'œuvre à la Russe.
Petite Marmite Henri IV.
Crème Lamballe.
Suprême de Saumon Doria.
Agneau de Pauillac à la Grecque.
Boutons de Crucifères aux Fines Herbes.
Chapons à la Broche.
Salade.
Biscuit Glacé au Chocolat Praliné.
Friandises.

This was the six-and-six theatre dinner of the day, not too long to be eaten during the hour that theatre-goers allow themselves for a meal, and quite long enough for those for whom dinner is the one event of an evening. M. Roux, the *maître d'hôtel*, who has been at the Princes' for eighteen years, also showed me the menu of a half-guinea dinner which the Princes' holds in reserve should the little dinner not be impressive enough for some of its clients. The dinner was excellently cooked, and the tiny *pilau* which came to the table with the lamb would have caught the appreciative attention of any gourmet, and assured me that M. Génie, the present head of the kitchen, who had previously won his spurs at the Carlton and the Brighton Metropole, and had at one period learned all there is to learn in Egypt, the land of *pilau*, is a worthy successor to M. Azema and M. Granvilliers. The lady who dined with me was much impressed by the two Pierrots sitting on the moon, a work of art which came to table with the *biscuit*, and was enthusiastic as to the playing of the orchestra. I thought myself that the musicians insisted a little too much that their music and not my conversation was what the pretty lady had come to Princes' to hear, but the question of music in a restaurant is a matter on which the gentler sex and the denser one are never in accord and the managers of most establishments find it a thorny question. If

an orchestra of distinction is engaged nothing in the world will persuade its head that his music should be merely an accompaniment to conversation, and the opinion concerning music of a young man who has so much to say to a pretty girl that a dinner never lasts long enough to allow him to say it all, is very different to that of a bored husband, who has nothing in particular to remark to his wife after they have reached the soup course.

At seven, when we commenced our dinner, two other tables were already occupied. By half-past seven the room was comfortably full, and at a quarter to eight, when we left to go to the St James's, diners were still coming in to their tables. Most certainly what the dwellers in the leafy lanes of Mayfair and by the snipe-ground of Belgrave Square required was a restaurant in Piccadilly, where they can dine well and at not too great a length, nor at too great a price, on their way to the theatre, and Princes' has at last given them what they wanted.

XIV

THE CRITERION

THE East Room at the Criterion is a trophy of one of woman's victories over man, for it was one of the first, if not the very first, restaurant-rooms designed and decorated to harmonise with feminine frocks and frills, and made beautiful that mankind should bring beautiful womankind there to eat things delicate. In the sixties, restaurants were few and far between, and were mostly places where men dined without their feminine belongings. But all this was changed in the seventies, and the East Room did its full share in persuading man that it added pleasure to a good dinner in a restaurant to be faced by a pretty woman. The East Room of to-day is twice the size of the one that Messrs Spiers and Pond first built, and its decoration of white and gold, and panels painted with Watteau subjects, its harmony of greys and pink in carpets and furniture and curtains, its ante-room with old French furniture, and the satisfactory arrangement by which the music of the orchestra, perched in a gilded cage above the big entrance hall, comes softened by distance to the diners in the East Room, are all happy second thoughts. But the East Room was, in 1873, when it was first opened, the dining place to which every lady asked her husband to take her, and it has held its own against ever-increasing competition through the years. Its windows look down on the rush and swirl of Piccadilly Circus, a wonderful scene either by day or night, and it adds

to the pleasure of an unhurried meal to watch the hurry of thousands of one's fellow-creatures.

At one period, after the extension of the building, there were two East Rooms, a dividing wall being where the arches and curtains now are. The one of these nearest the grand staircase was a strictly *à la carte* restaurant, while in the other, approached through a corridor, a *table d'hôte* meal was served. The East Room of to-day smiles on both classes of diners. When a man sits down at his table there at dinner-time, M. Kugi, the *maître d'hôtel*, puts before him the *carte du jour*, an ample one, with any special delicacies in larger print than the others, and also lays on the table the menus of the half-sovereign and seven-and-six *table d'hôte* dinners, and it is his experience that the greater number of diners look at the *carte du jour* and then, mistrusting their own judgment, order one or the other of the *table d'hôte* meals.

This was the menu of the seven-and-six dinner one night when I dined at the East Room at a tiny dinner-party, before going to the theatre down in the cellars of the big building to see the play running there :

Hors d'œuvre.

Consommé Rossolnick.

Crème aux huitres.

Truite de rivière Dona Louise.

Selle d'Agneau Mascotte.

Pommes nouvelles.

Poularde du Surrey à la broche.

Salade.

Parfait au moka.

Friandises.

Dessert.

It was a very well-selected, well-served dinner. Had we chosen the half-guinea dinner we should have had an addition to this menu of *cailles à la*

Grecque and *chou de mer*, *sauce vierge*. The *Rossol-nick*, with its flavour of cucumber, was excellent, the trout were fresh and firm, and the Surrey fowl as plump as any foreigner from Mans. M. Auguste Pannier, the chef of to-day, is worthy of the great men who have preceded him in the kitchen of the East Room. And not only have there been great cooks, but great managers as well at the Criterion, with the East Room as the particular object of their care. Oddenino, Mantell, Gerard, who all moved on to other posts, were predecessors of M. Emile Campenhaut, the manager of to-day, as was also M. Lefèvre, whose health broke down, but whom I remember as being an enthusiast on the subject of the art of cookery, a man who brought plenty of brain power to bear on the subject of delicate food. I think that the best of the many dinners I have eaten *à deux* in the East Room was one ordered in consultation with him, and I subjoin it as a good specimen of an East Room *à la carte* feast :

Caviar.

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.

The *caille à la Sainte-Alliance*, in imitation of Brillat Savarin's *faisan à la Sainte-Alliance*, consisted of a truffle in an ortolan, the ortolan being in the quail. The *Croûte Caume* is an admirable banana dish in which the tastes of the banana and pine-apple and apricot and kirsh all mingle.

The East Room is, of course, only one of the many

restaurant-rooms in the great stone building. Immediately under the East Room are the Marble Restaurant and the grill-room. The Marble Restaurant, in old days, when men of position did not think it undignified to stand at a bar and drink brandy and soda, was the Long Bar, and a wonderful sight this bar, running the whole length of the building, used to be at midnight, crowded with Londoners of all the leisured classes and with a score or more of good-looking barmaids in black behind the bar. When the habits of the men of London began to change, and the Long Bar did not draw so many devotees, the firm of Spiers and Pond was not quite convinced for some time that the "palmy" days of the bars were gone, and they made the Long Bar one of the most beautiful saloons in London, decorating it with marbles and inlay of Venetian glass. That beautiful saloon is now the Marble Restaurant, in which a five-shilling *table d'hôte* meal is served, and where singers on Sundays discourse music to the diners.

The American Bar had its period of great success, and in the grill-room, which formed part of the bar's surroundings, chops and steaks, unsurpassed anywhere in London, used to be grilled. But the character of some of the habitués of the American Bar was too pronouncedly sporting to be altogether satisfactory, and the American Bar passed away from the front part of the building as the Long Bar did. There is a buffet now at the Jermyn Street side, but it is no longer the haunt of the gentlemen who were so overwhelmingly devoted to sport. The grill-room, without the American Bar, is a very flourishing section of the Criterion. It differs from most other grill-rooms in having plenty of sunlight and fresh air, and has this distinctive feature, that there is an American cook in its kitchen and that American

dishes can always be obtained there even when they are not on the bill of fare. I have eaten clam broth, terapin, dry hash, scalloped sweet potatoes, and Graham pudding, when dining there with Americans.

The Criterion contains a score of banqueting-rooms, including a huge one at the top of the house, where a statue of Shakespeare looks down upon the diners. The West Room, which is now one of the banqueting-rooms, has been used by the management for many experiments. For a long time a *Diner Parisien* was served there, and as its cost was only five shillings, and as one got a great deal of very good food to eat for that sum, I used to patronise it very regularly in my subaltern days, when a dinner in the East Room could not be budgeted for. At one time it was given over to the vegetarians, and good-looking damsels in art clothing brought the diners dishes of nut cutlets and vegetable steaks; but the nut-eaters did not hold possession of the room for long.

It is not easy to-day to associate the great stone building in Piccadilly Circus with the revels of miners in an Australian township. But it was in Melbourne, during the gold fever, that the seed was sown which blossomed into the big stone house in the centre of London. Felix Spiers and Christopher Pond were both young Englishmen. Felix was born in one of the old houses on Tower Hill, which was then the office of the General Steam Navigation Company, whose agent his father then was. The family of the Spiers moved to Paris, and young Felix was put into a banking house, where he remained until he was eighteen. Then he went to Melbourne, with the gold fever upon him, to make his fortune. In Melbourne, he met young Christopher Pond, also an Englishman, and also determined to make his pile. Spiers had become, for the time being, a wine merchant, an

experience which later was to serve him to excellent purpose at the Criterion, for he laid down some admirable wine there, amongst it some hock which as long as it lasted I used to drink in preference to any other wine on the Criterion list. The miners were spending money in Melbourne as though it were water, and the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, received much of the golden shower. It occurred to young Spiers and young Pond that it would be a profitable undertaking to start a restaurant next door to a theatre, and they established, in Collins Street, the Café de Paris. Their next enterprise was to become caterers for the Melbourne and Ballarat Railway. They were full of ideas in those days, and one of these was to bring out to Australia a team of English cricketers and to tour them as a speculation. This was the thought of which the test matches were born. Spiers and Pond came to England intending to persuade Charles Dickens to make a great reading tour in Australia, and then it was that they espied the nakedness of the land in regard to railway catering. Dickens came to their aid with his attack on Mugby Junction, and he wrote an article in *All the World* entitled "The Genii of the Cave," in which he described the then novelty of the "Silver Grill" under the arch at Ludgate Circus, which Spiers and Pond established. The Criterion was the pet child of the two great caterers. It rose on historic ground, for it occupied the site of the old "White Bear," which had been a celebrated coaching-house, one of those fine old inns of many galleries. The theatre was opened four months later than the restaurant; but it was not until 1879 that Sir Charles Wyndham, with whom so many of its successes are associated, took over sole management, though he had been a partner for the previous three years with Mr Alexander Henderson in its control.

XV

SOME CHOP-HOUSES

MANY of the City chop-houses nestle together in the alleys and courts between Cornhill and Lombard Street. There, on either side of one of the narrow little passages, you will find Simpson's Chop-houses, with pleasant grey-green walls to their rooms and a window in which simple food, cooked and uncooked, is shown as bait to draw in the hungry passer-by; and there in Castle Court is the George and Vulture, which is also Thomas' Chop-rooms, which dates back to 1660, is proud of its Dickens' traditions, and is more ambitious in its bill of fare than most of the chop-houses.

There also, in Chance Alley, is Baker's Chop-house, which, that there may be no mistake as to its pretensions, describes itself on a board at the Lombard Street entrance to the alley as a tavern, and a chop-house, a coffee-house, and soup-rooms. It is a dignified little house, which bears its years well—it was founded in the seventeenth century—and which, with its two bow-windows with small panes of glass and its glass door in between, commands confidence even before one has crossed the threshold. Inside one of the windows are wire screens to give privacy to the company in the house, but the other window begs all men to look in and see the fish and the joints, the vegetables, the salad stuff, and, perhaps, a loin of cold beef, samples of what the larder contains. Beyond this rampart of good things edible you may

see dames and damsels attired in black, busy in a glassed-in little room drawing beer, taking payment from satisfied customers for what they have eaten, and a grave gentleman, with white hair and beard, making entries in a large ledger; for the little portioned-off space you are looking into serves as bar and counting-house, some old punch-bowls on a shelf giving it its right old-world note.

Once inside the door you find yourself in as snug and cosy an eating-house as you can find in London. The ground floor is partitioned off into many boxes. There is one to your left as you come in, the counting-house being on your right, and two, one of them with a curtain to give it privacy, facing you, and another just beyond the grill, and yet another one below the round clock in a black frame which is on the back wall. The partitions and the walls are of wood panelling painted and grained to resemble light oak, but whoever the craftsman was who worked at it with feather and comb, he must have passed away long ago, for the painting, like everything else in the house, has been mellowed by time. The partitions are carried up high wherever there is any possibility of a draught reaching anyone sitting in one of the boxes, and in the high partitions the top panels are of glass. There are pegs for hats and coats on the wall and a stand for umbrellas near the fireplace. The fireplace, a big grill in a stone frame, is in one of the side walls, and close in front of it, his body partially sheltered by a wooden screen, stands the cook, white-bearded and in white cap, white jacket and apron. At his elbow is a compartment, a big box without a lid, in which are chops, steaks, and all other things grillable, and any man who thinks he is a judge of a raw chop or steak, looks over into this box before he finds a seat for himself, and indicates to the cook which particular fragment of

red meat he wishes to have prepared according to his liking. Above the fireplace is a framed water-colour picture of the outside of the house, and on either side of this work of art are pewter plates in a splendid state of polish. The other interesting work of art on the walls is a portrait of "James," who was a waiter at Baker's for thirty-five years. James was, I imagine, early Victorian. He has a benign appearance, and his watch-chain is almost as large as a cable. The waiters of to-day are as British as James was, and they go about their business with much quickness and dexterity. To complete my description of the lower room at Baker's, I should add that there is sawdust on the floor, and that a narrow staircase, the steps of which are covered with lead, leads up to the rooms on the other floors.

You will have seen written in little frames on one side of the counting-house window looking into the chop-room some of the dishes of the day that are ready—curried chicken, Irish stew (one-chop and two-chop portions), stewed steak, and the like, and your waiter will tell you of other good things—pies and puddings, each a portion for one—that are ready. If you are for something from the grill, you make your selection from the cook's stores. If a cut from the joint is to your taste, you go upstairs to the big room on the first floor, where there are red walls and no partitions.

A basket of great chunks of household bread is on the white-clothed table at which you find a place; your chop, if you have selected a chop, will come to you on a willow-patterned dish, and you will transfer it to a willow-patterned plate. In old days all meat at Baker's used to be served on pewter. But if the four plates over the fireplace are the only survivors of the pewter set, your beer will be brought you in a pewter tankard, and most of the glass is of old

pattern. When you come to the cheese stage your slice of Cheddar and pat of butter are both excellent. Indeed all the food at Baker's is good. No eating place which does not give good food at reasonable prices ever survives in the City, and Baker's has seen nearly three hundred years pass away. Who the original Baker was who gave his name to the chop-house no one knows, but a guess is made that he was a relation of that Mr Baker who was Master of Lloyd's Coffee-House in Lombard Street in 1740, and who carried to Sir Robert Walpole the news of Admiral Vernon's taking of Portobello, being suitably rewarded as a bringer of good tidings.

The customers of Baker's Chop-house are excellent walking advertisements of the house. They all seem to be prosperous City men, young and old; they are well groomed and they look well-fed and contented.

When you have finished your meal at Baker's you leave twopence by your plate as the waiter's tip, you give the grill-cook another penny, if you have eaten grilled fare, as you pass him on your way out, and then, pausing at the wicket of the counting-room, you recite to the lady who faces you the things you have eaten and what you have imbibed, and she, doing a sum of mental arithmetic, tells you instantly what you have to pay. As a souvenir of the house she will give you a post card, if you ask for it, carrying a miniature copy of the work of art over the fireplace.

But there are chop-houses in London outside the City limits, and I know of three of them within arrow-flight of Piccadilly Circus. There is Snow's, for instance, in Sherwood Street, almost in the Circus. Snow's has a reputation for its steaks, and I know men who declare that the best bacon and eggs in the world are those brought in between two plates from the kitchen and placed on the tables at Snow's. It has lately been rebuilt, and is a modern

reproduction of a Tudor house, its three little gables and the green gallery before its upper windows being very picturesque. The old tables and the old partitions are in their old places in the lower rooms, but the walls of glazed tiles and the curved brass hangings for coats and hats are scarcely Tudor. The company at Snow's at its busy times of the day is a curious mixture. Your neighbour at table may be a clergyman up from the country, or the man who shaves you at Shipwright's round the corner, or a young artist, or a taxi chauffeur.

Stone's in Panton Street, which dates back to 1770, is another chop-house, though it is better known as a wine-house. It has its coffee-room, where good, plain grilled food is obtainable, though it rather sinks the title "chop-house" in the more aristocratic "*à la carte* restaurant." Stone's has always been a favourite resort of men of the theatre.

Not very many Londoners know of the Sceptre Chop-house, Number 5 Warwick Street, a little street which runs parallel, on the east, to part of Regent Street, for it is not in a main thoroughfare. It is a typical early Victorian chop-house, and it used to be a haunt of Charles Dickens when he was making his first successes as an author. The front of the house has been newly painted, but the interior remains as it was in 1830, when it first opened its door. Its window is frosted half-way up to obviate the necessity for blinds, with a pattern and announcements that the house supplies chops and coffee left in plain glass amidst the frosting. I warrant that window created considerable enthusiasm in Warwick Street in 1830. At least three of the proprietors, past and present, of the Sceptre have their names recorded on the front of the building. Sanders' name is almost obliterated on the length of brass that forms the window-sill, and shows faintly on the glass

of the door. Gosling is preserved to memory by his name in gold letters over the door, while Purcell's is very large above the window. Inside, the long room is a harmony of quiet colours. There is brown boarding half-way up the walls, and above that green that rests the eye. By the door is an enclosed cosy corner, with a mirror in an old black frame over the fireplace. All down the room are low mahogany partitions with seats cushioned in black. The tables are of mahogany, polished by constant rubbing of the waitresses' napkins, and no tablecloths ever hide the deep colour of the old wood. At the end of the room is a screen of three arches of dark wood. The two side arches are filled with panelling and mirrors; but through the centre arch can be seen the kitchen with its sawdusted floor, its ranges of plates and dishes, and the cook and the cookmaids in print dresses going about their work. The waitresses in black dresses and white aprons and caps bustle up and down the room and in and out of the kitchen. A stove heats the long room, and glazing in the roof gives it light. A staircase of black wood leads to the upper rooms, and by the doorway into the street is a little compartment, no larger than a sentry-box, which is the pay-desk.

The food at The Sceptre is of the simplest kind, and a haricot chop or roast chicken are about its highest flights. Your soup, mutton broth, or mock turtle or kidney costs you 4d. or 6d., according to the size of the soup plate. You can pay 9d. or 10d. for your chop and 10d. for your steak. A cut from the joint, for The Sceptre gives you a choice of three joints, is a 9d. matter; but you can get a very ample helping of apple tart for 3d. It is under the heading of entrées that The Sceptre puts such high flights of cookery as curried mutton and rice, boiled tripe and onions, Irish pie and mixed grill.

Many men distinguished in art and music and literature have felt, and still feel, the fascination of The Sceptre Chop-house. You may, very likely, amongst the company at the old mahogany tables, see one of the brightest writers on *Punch*, or our greatest living painter of battle pictures, or the man who composed "In the Shadows."

Upstairs are two delightful old rooms, browned by time and the London climate, with old wooden shelves, old clocks, old brass candlesticks, old chairs and tables. In one corner of the front room, by a window, stands Dickens' chair, for it is here, so the tradition of the house has it, that Dickens used to come in his early days to write, and it was in this corner that many of his "Sketches by Boz" were jotted down on paper. The Sceptre was a spruce, new little house at this period of Dickens' life, and probability as well as tradition is on the side of its having been one of his early haunts.

XVI

SOME GRILL-ROOMS

THE modern grill-room we owe, I think, to the Americans, for the travelling American, who has his own very sensible ideas as to what comfort is, does not wish every night of his life to attire himself in a "claw-hammer" evening coat, but he feels that without that garment he would be out of place in the restaurant of any of the fashionable hotels. The grill-room gives him an excellent dinner, just as long or just as short as he likes, served quickly, in luxurious surroundings, and he can dress as he likes, to eat it. An American always knows what he wants, asks for it, and keeps on asking until he gets it. Quite a number of Britons of both sexes wanted all the conveniences of the grill-rooms long before the modern grill-room came into existence. (Hard-working men of business who had not time to go home to the suburbs to change their clothes, men of the theatre, authors and managers who work late in the evening, actors and actresses who like a very light meal before going to the theatre, and to sup after their work without wearing gorgeous raiment, and a host of other people who get their living by their brains.) But they had not the pertinacity of the American in demanding what they wanted.

Quite the beginning of the modern grill-room was that silver grill which Messrs Spiers and Pond established some time in the sixties under the arch at Ludgate Hill; but I look to the little grill-room

in the old Savoy Hotel in the days before the new building had pushed through to the Strand as being the ideal of a modern grill-room, and I always measure any grill-room of to-day by the standard of that little place of good eating. It was small, and its windows looked up an unlovely cul-de-sac of which it formed the end. The people who controlled the Savoy Hotel and the Savoy Theatre all used it as their own dining-room; the general public scarcely knew of its existence; the food there was excellent. Besides the chops and steaks and other real grill-room fare, there were always one or two savoury entrées kept hot in metal pots and pans on a miniature hot plate in the middle of the room, and when the *maître d'hôtel* brought over one of these and took off the cover under one's nose, the savour of its contents alone gave one an appetite.

The present Café Parisien at the Savoy, which the russet-bearded Gustave steered to a great success, is the legitimate successor to that other grill-room which was hidden away in the midst of the building, but it has not the charm of discovery felt by those who used the old grill-room. The Café Parisien, which has its entrance in the Savoy forecourt, where gorgeous servitors in French-grey uniforms of State take one's coat and hat just as they do if one is going to spend one's money in the restaurant, is a great Adams room painted a very light grey, with *portières* of light pink, and with chairs and carpets of a deeper rose. It has a little space outside, a *terrasse*, as the French would call it, which is railed off from the courtyard by a white trellis, over which roses are trained. This is a very pleasant spot in hot weather, if so be that no motor sighing out deep breaths of petrol is standing in the vicinity. This Café Parisien is a place of pleasant, clean-shirted Bohemianism, much patronised by the aristocracy of the theatre. There is

an elaborate *à la carte* menu with stars against those dishes which are ready. A man in a hurry can eat a four-course dinner here in half-an-hour without risking indigestion, but a couple who wish to talk over their meal can make a cutlet and an ice an excuse for sitting out an hour.

The grill-room of the Princes' Restaurant, to which one descends from an entrance in Piccadilly, is a comfortable white room, with white pillars and mirrors in the panelled walls, where quite good food is served, and where there are always the dishes of the day ready as well as the chops and steaks, kidneys and sausages, and other legitimate grill fare. The Brussels carpets and the dark leather of the chairs are restful to the eye, and the lights in the crystal bouquets which hang from the ceiling are not too glaring.

Almost across the way, in the great building of the Piccadilly Hotel, quite an unpretentious entrance and a small staircase with marble walls lead down to the grill-room. There is a lift by the stairs which is much used by the people coming up from the grill-room, though only lazy folk use it to go down there. This unpretentious entrance and staircase are the portals to a suite of very high, very spacious rooms, running the full length of the building. There are pilasters with gilt capitols; and casemented mirrors in the walls. The electroliers holding imitation candles give abundant light. The grill is behind a great glass screen; carvers in white wheel about big joint waggon and a Turk in gorgeous raiment is ready to make Oriental coffee. The deep rose of the carpet contrasts with the white of the walls. At a multitude of tables are hundreds of people of every comfortable class in life, from the bank clerk to the field-marshal, and from the typist to the duchess, eating meals simple or elaborate, just as they will. This grill-room, like

most of the others, caters for every taste ; for there is an elaborate *carte du jour*, two *table d'hôte* luncheons at half-a-crown and three-and-six, and a *table d'hôte* dinner at five-and-six. Electric fans keep the atmosphere pure. This grill-room is all day long a very busy place, and as many as five hundred dinners are served nightly.

Of the Criterion grill-room, the great airy hall on the ground floor of the building, I have already written in another article.

On the other side of Piccadilly Circus the Monaco has a grill-room with light buff walls and light buff marble pilasters. Its entrance gives on to Shaftesbury Avenue. Near by is the Trocadero grill-room, down to which a staircase of green and grey marble descends, and which, with its walls of grey marble and gold and buff, its mirrors, its hammered copper-work, its great grill and its orchestra, is handsome almost to the point of gorgeousness. A *table d'hôte* dinner is served here, as it is now in most modern grill-rooms.

In Regent Street the Café Royal possesses a heavily gilded grill-room, with entrances through the café and from Air Street, a grill-room in which the best *entrecôte* and the best pint of Burgundy in London are obtainable ; and on the other side of Regent Street, its entrance hidden away in that dead little road, Haddon Street, is the grill-room restaurant of the New Gallery Cinema Theatre, in the basement of that establishment. It consists of two rooms, panelled with oak and hung with copies of old tapestries. From these it takes its name Les Gobelins. Mr Goetz, of the Vienna Café, opened this little place of refreshment, and there were always Austrian and German dishes on its bill of fare, but it has now changed hands, and M. Victor, late of the Imperial and Les Lauriers, is in command. Its cookery remains very good.

The Carlton grill, which has its own entrance in

the Haymarket, is as good a specimen of the grill-room of to-day as one could select to show to anyone who wished to understand the differences between the chop-houses of yesterday and the grill-rooms of to-day. The staircase which leads down to it is oak-panelled. In the little ante-chamber where hats and coats are given up there is a newspaper stall, and in another ante-room are easy-chairs, dark green in colour, and small tables with tops of burnished copper. The grill-room itself is all white, little pilasters breaking the smooth sides of the walls. Blue china stands on the shelves, a Cromwell clock ticks on a bracket, and at one side of the room are arched recesses with stained glass windows at the back of them. The lights in the electroliers burn here day and night, but the atmosphere is never stuffy. A glass screen keeps the heat of the grill from the room, and in front of this screen are piles of crimson tomatoes, and chops and steaks of deeper red, and mushrooms yellow, grey and warm brown, a harmony in reds and greys. Its *carte du jour* is all-embracing, and some of the dishes are always ready. M. Ventura is the presiding spirit in this grill-room. He knows the tastes of his clientele and which tables they prefer, and when there are no unoccupied tables and people have to be turned away, as sometimes happens, or asked to wait in the ante-room until tables are free, his grief is really heartfelt.

At the very gateway of the Strand the Grand Hotel has a popular grill-room, walled with shining tiles of white and buff; the Cecil has a great Indian room of blue and yellow tiles; and, indeed, every big hotel from the great pile of the Kensington Palace, in the west, to the hotel of the Great Eastern Railway in Liverpool Street in the east, has its grill-room, the simplicity of the fare and the fact that the raw material is always on view to the diner before

it is placed on the grill being a guarantee of the quality of the meat.

Most of the restaurants also have their grills.

Romano's turned its old kitchen into a reproduction of a room in a Russian farmhouse with horns on the walls and an icon up in a corner, and even at one time carried realism to the point of putting the waiters in this part of the establishment into white blouses with red sashes at the waist, the dress the Tartar waiters in Moscow wear. You get the restaurant food in this grill-room at about half the restaurant prices. A new electric grill has been installed in this Russian room which grills just as well and far more quickly than a charcoal or a coal grill.

The Frascati, in Oxford Street, has a grill-room on the ground floor with walls of white marble veined with grey, and with mirrors in Oriental frames; and at the entrance to Tottenham Court Road the Horse-shoe has an excellent grill above its oyster saloon.

The Holborn shows originality in devoting a grill-room to ladies, and in the old Freemasons' Tavern in Great Queen Street, which now calls itself the Connaught Rooms, there is in the basement a large grill-room, with a choice of three joints at luncheon time as well as an extensive *carte du jour*, a grill which is much patronised by the lawyers from Lincoln's Inn Fields. In the evening a dinner is served in a smaller room, and I have dined there before going across the way to the Kingsway Theatre. Those who dine are, I think, mostly connected in some way or another with Freemasonry, and the talk that goes on at the tables has reference to high offices in the Craft and Mark, to "raising" and "passing," and to that ancient and sacred ritual which ladies still believe to be in some way connected with a red-hot poker.

XVII

ROMANO'S

ALFONSO NICOLINO ROMANO, a head waiter at the Café Royal, in 1874 bought with his savings a small fried fish shop in the Strand, converted it into a bar and restaurant, and in addition to his own name on its front added Café Vaudeville, for it was, and is, almost next door to the Vaudeville Theatre. Romano's in those days possessed a central window flanked by two doors, one leading into the bar and the other to the rooms above. In the window as an ornament was a small aquarium which contained goldfish, and those fish must have lived exciting, if short, lives, for the patrons of the bar tried to feed them with cigar ash, lemon rind, burnt almonds, and torn-up notepaper, and it is even said that "Hughie" Drummond, one of the most amusing and most reckless of the clean-shirted Bohemians who made "the Roman's" known all the world over, tried to take a swim with them.

Romano was a curly-haired, humorous, quick-witted little Italian who talked a strange Anglo-Italian jargon—"Pore ole Romano e got badda addick this morning" his usual morning greeting, was an example of it—and who was on the easiest terms of familiarity with most of his clients without ever overstepping the line. He had not very many rules as to the conduct of his business, but one from which he never departed was that he would under no circumstances make a reduction in the total of a bill.

He would give an aggrieved customer some of the very best "cognac" of the house or split a bottle of the most expensive champagne with him or ask him to dinner next day, but what he would not do was to reduce any item in the account. One of the most frequent forms of verbal invitation given by "The Roman" was to a Sunday midday inspection of his cellars in the Adelphi arches. "You coma see my cellars, Mister So-and-So Eskwire, best in London" was the actual wording. Romano had come from a good school, and he laid down an excellent cellar. The food in the restaurant was also beyond reproach.

Behind the bar, a bar which was always full of racing men, journalists, coaching men, men from the Stock Exchange, men about town—for those were the days when no man in the movement thought it undignified to be seen standing up in a place of refreshment—was the restaurant. It was little more than a corridor, a long, narrow room with space for one line of tables only; but at those tables used habitually to sit the merriest gathering of good fellows, and I include the ladies in that term, that ever came together in a London restaurant. There were witty journalists such as Shirley Brooks, "Pot" Stephens, "Jimmy" Davis, and "Shifter," and there were men of the theatre—Cecil Raleigh, for instance, and "Charlie" Harris, who when the waiter called the order for his dinner down the speaking-tube always added himself "pour le patron," for Romano, who lunched and dined at the table nearest the bar door, was not likely to get a tough steak or a thin quail. There were Guardsmen, such as "The Windsor Warrior," "Billie FitzDitto," "Haddocks," and "The Bonetwister," and men about town, of whom Hughie Drummond and Fred Russell were perhaps the best known, and coaching men, "Dickie the Driver" and "Swish" and "Partner,"

who used to delight in bringing jolly old Jim Selby to dine; and Arthur Roberts, then at the very top of his form, and "Mons" Marius, as representatives of the actor fraternity. And around this kernel of good-fellowship formed a fringe of other good fellows who came and went, men from the country, men from the far parts of the world, soldiers, sailors, planters, explorers, country squires. It was rather a clannish gathering, for everybody seemed to know everybody else at the line of tables, and people who were not taken into companionship, no difficult matter if they were kindred souls, felt "out of it," and went elsewhere.

Between the Gaiety Theatre and Romano's there grew up an indefinite alliance, and golden-hearted Nellie Farren would lunch there when a new burlesque was in rehearsal, and "the Child" and dear "Jack" St John and others of the principals looked with favour on the restaurant, and on Lord Mayors' days made a brave show of beauty at the windows of the first floor. The Gaiety Girls of those days, splendid women and jolly good fellows, who enjoyed life, and by their beauty and sociability helped other people to enjoy life, lunched and supped at the Roman's. I have a dozen names at the tip of my pen, but if I wrote them down I should stray into a gossip over the ladies of the burlesque and light opera stages in the seventies and eighties, and should require columns and columns of space to deal adequately with such a subject. Most of them married, and, as the fairy tales have it, "lived happy ever after." And the "halls," we didn't call them variety theatres then, were also represented at the Roman's. Jolly, humorous Bessie Bellwood lunched there five days out of six, though she kept the Roman humble by asserting that she preferred the tripe and onions at Chick's to anything his kitchen could produce, and when she was in

good anecdotal form kept everybody near her tremulous with laughter. And the sisters Leamar, who used to sing a duet as to Romano's being "a paradise, sure, in the Strand" and added the information that "the wines and the women are grand," naturally paid frequent visits to the restaurant to assure themselves that the description was a correct one.

The Roman gathered about him a staff which exactly suited the tone of the restaurant, proof thereof being that so many of them remain in its service to this day. M. Luigi Naintre, the manager of Romano's, has climbed the ladder of promotion steadily through all the grades at the restaurant, and though for a while after Romano's death he wandered into other folds, one of the first acts of the company which now controls the restaurant was to ask him to come back to it. Long experience has taught him the art of making each frequenter of the restaurant believe that the establishment is maintained entirely to meet his or her taste and whims, and he is essentially the right man in the right place. M. Minola, his second in command, also graduated in the "Roman" school. The cellarman, L. Bendi, and the wine-butler, L. Villa, have been in the restaurant as far back as I can remember.

I must pass quickly over the fire which burned down the old Romano's and its rebuilding on the site of the old restaurant and on that of another house next door. The panelled hall and, in the restaurant, the Moorish arches with the pictures of the Bosphorus seen through them were features of the new building, and remain to-day as they then were. In the nineties Romano died of pneumonia, contracted by standing one cold winter day outside the restaurant door with no great-coat on, and the restaurant came under the Court of Chancery.

The Court of Chancery was not at all sorry to hand over its duties to a company, with Mr Walter

Pallant, the then chairman of the Gaiety Company, as its chairman, which was formed to purchase the restaurant. Mr "Teddy" Bayly, who as a patron of the restaurant had helped materially in making the fortune of the Roman, became manager, and Luigi was appointed as second in command. When Mr Bayly left Romano's for a restaurant of his very own M. Luigi mounted one rung more of the ladder of promotion and was appointed manager.

The first business of the company, after giving the building "a wash and brush up," was to find a chef of celebrity and experience to take charge of the kitchens. They found in M. Ferrario exactly the man for whom they were looking. M. Ferrario had learned his art under M. Coste in the kitchens of the Cecil, and when he himself became the commander of the kitchens of a restaurant of the first class he showed that he had used his powers of observation, that not only did he know all that there was to be learned concerning the *haute cuisine française*, but that he had an open mind with regard to the cookery of all other nations. The *mouzakkas* that M. Ferrario sends from his kitchen are the best I have eaten outside Bucharest. He makes a ground-nut soup, the one delicacy that Nigeria has added to the cookery book, quite admirably, and Romano's is the only restaurant that I know of in Europe where one can eat a Malay curry cooked as it is cooked in Malaya and served in the Malay fashion, with sambals and with shining Malayan shell spoons for the rice. What substitute M. Ferrario has found for the fresh cocoa-nut pulp which is the foundation of all Malay curries I do not know, but he has found something which replaces it admirably. In the winter at lunch-time north countrymen say that Romano's Lancashire hot-pot is the real thing, and there is another British luncheon dish, gipsy-pot, which I eat at Romano's,

a savoury stew of chicken and cabbage and other vegetables and other meats, which I find exceptionally good.

But perhaps I had better give you in detail what are the specialities of Romano's kitchen. They are, for lunch: Malay curry of chicken, Lancashire hot-pot and gipsy-pot. For dinner: *poule au pot*, *bortch à la Russe*, *potage Normande*, *potage Nigérienne*, *filets de sole Romano*, *filets de sole Sportive*, *sole au plat aux courgettes*, *sole à la crème*, *truite George V.*, *poulet nouveau Valenciennne*, *perdreau Romano*, *mousse de volaille au curry*, the last being an admirable *mousse* with just a far-away reminiscence of India, a sort of dream of all the good curries of the East, in it.

If I gave you the menus of all the nice little dinners for two of which I have been one of the participators at Romano's I should fill a fat volume. But here is a little spring dinner which will serve my purpose very well:

Crevettes Roses.
Fumet de Volaille aux œufs Filés.
Filets de Sole Sportive.
Epaule de Pauillac Bergère.
Petits Pois Nouveaux à la Crème.
Asperges d'Argenteuil.
Sauce Divine.
Fraises Diva.

And the wine I drank with this was a bottle of 1900 St Marceaux, which was the choice of the lady who honoured me with her company. The *filets de sole Sportive* are soles which bring to table with them just a dream of Chablis, and which are nobly backed up by crayfish.

The old Romano's in its first period was very clannish. The new Romano's, though it is a comparatively small restaurant, finds room for all men and all ladies who love good food and who like the

slightly Bohemian, pleasantly Parisian, atmosphere of the "Paradise in the Strand." I have seen a duchess dining at one of the corner tables, and I do not suppose that there is a man about town, from dukes to the latest emancipated Oxonian, who does not know Romano's and its ways. The clientele varies with the different meals. At lunch-time, particularly, if there are rehearsals in progress at the Adelphi or the Gaiety or any of the other light opera or revue theatres, a host of pretty little ladies go to Romano's and very probably the "Governor" and the librettists and composers, and a stage director or two, will be lunching at a corner table. Half-a-dozen other managers are sure to be somewhere in the restaurant, and there will be ladies not of the stage, and solicitors, and barristers from the Law Courts and a plaintiff or two, and a journalist or two, a very interesting *salmis* of the stage world and the business world and the world of Law, with a good seasoning of men from the far parts of the world, and men about town and soldiers and sailors. At dinner little parties going on to the theatre finish their feasts about the time that the habitués of the restaurant, who are going on nowhere or to a variety theatre, make their appearance. At supper-time the stage is once again the most strongly represented element, and there is no restaurant in Paris which can show at this hour prettier faces or more unforced gaiety. The bright young spirits from the 'varsities all love Romano's, but Luigi has a wholesome fear of the "Twenty-firsters," as the boys call their coming-of-age feasts, and the numbers at these gatherings at Romano's are kept within very strict limits.

There is one happy young Oxonian who absolutely defeated Luigi at a birthday feast. He had been solemnly warned that the spirits of his party must not rise too high, and he and they had all behaved

with quite suspicious decorum during supper. The band had finished playing, and the bandmaster, on departing, had locked the door of the pulpit-like Moorish bandstand that projects high up into the room. When closing hour came and all the guests were moving out except the party of young Oxonians Luigi told them that they also must take their departure. But their leader begged to be allowed to sit on for a few seconds longer, even though the lights were turned out. Out went the lights, and then here and there a single light was put up again that the waiters might see to pile the chairs on the tables and put the restaurant into its night attire. Luigi, looking at the supper-party, thought that their numbers had diminished, and from the bandstand came the sound of someone playing the piano. In the two seconds of darkness the giver of the feast had performed a really wonderful gymnastic feat. Jumping off from the back of one of his guests, he had climbed up into the bandstand and had taken his seat at the piano. The door was locked and the key gone home with the bandmaster; his fortress was unstormable, and he was in complete possession. For a quarter of an hour or so he played little selections at the piano, inquiring of Luigi, who stood below, what were his favourite airs, and it was only when his musical repertoire ran out that he climbed out of his aerie and dropped to the floor.

On occasions, generally on the evening of first nights at the theatres, when an extension has been obtained, suppers at Romano's sometimes end in little dances. But the great dance of the year at Romano's is the "Twelfth Night," one which is not so much a party given by the restaurant as a party given to themselves by the habitués of the restaurant. All the tables for this night are secured weeks in advance, each host pays for his own party, but Romano's

supplies all the toys and the presents, the masks and tambourines, and anything new in trifles that is to be bought in any city of the world. The shops of Paris and Vienna are ransacked to provide novelties for this evening. The spirit of Paris always hovers above Romano's, but this particular night in its fun without rowdiness is the most Parisian night of the year.

Romano's as it now is is very different in its arrangements from the restaurant that the company took over from the Court of Chancery. What was the linen room is now a gallery, which is nicknamed the "Bird Cage," looking down on to the restaurant. The kitchen has been taken away from below the restaurant and put behind it, and where the kitchen was is now a grill-room with lattice-work arbours decked with vines and a vista leading up to a little fountain. The whole scheme of decoration of the restaurant is now of the lightest of light Moorish design, the details being copied from the Alhambra at Granada. The most important change of all is the disappearance of the old bar, a bar which in its day made history, its place being taken by a little waiting-room, which is a reproduction in most of its details of the Henri IV. room in the Victoria and Albert Museum. A good deal of loving care has been bestowed on all the details of the decoration and equipment of the restaurant. Look at the brass handles on the doors leading into the hall, and you will see that they are admirable works of art. In the same way the napery put on the table at dinner-time before coffee is served is well worth a glance. Some of the china is quite beautiful in pattern, and the gilt finger-bowl brought you at dessert is very probably a copy of some of the loot taken by Attila and now preserved in the Budapest museum.

Banquets are sometimes given at Romano's in the

private room looking down on the Strand, which has been shut off from the balcony, and no better indication of the type of these could be given than by setting down the menu of the latest dinner of the Wine Connoisseurs' Club, at which there were forty guests:

Cantaloup Glacé.
Tortue Claire.
Velouté de Volaille Duchesse.
Truite George V.
Ris de Veau aux Perles Noires.
Selle de Behague aux Primeurs.
Pommes Ideal.
Granite au Clicquot.
Poularde Flanquée D'Ortolans.
Salade Romaine.
Asperges Vertes, Sauce Divine.
Pêches Orientales.
Mignardises.
Paillettes au Parmesan.
Dessert.

The *Truite George V.* which has a place in this menu is one of the specialities of the house. It is a salmon trout, braized in port, served cold on ice with sliced oranges and a luscious jelly.

Little Romano used to allude to his cellars, as I have written, as "best in London," and the restaurant has always had a celebrity for the great choice of champagnes of the great brands and great years it offers its patrons. Most of the profits made during the last few years have been expended on champagnes, and no restaurant in London is better prepared to face that champagne famine which will so soon be upon us.

XVIII

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ONE of our legislators had very kindly asked me to dine with him at the House of Commons, at eight-fifteen P.M., and had told me that he would meet me at the public entrance. When I mentioned his name to the civil young policeman at the outer door he touched his helmet and said that my host had just gone through, so I followed on his tracks. I went past Westminster Hall, which was in splints, for the ceiling was under repair, and along that other great hall where statesmen of the past stand looking their very best in marble. There were two lines of the public sitting on the benches in between the marble statues, no doubt hoping eventually to obtain admission to the Strangers' Gallery, for it was the winding-up night of the Marconi debate. I mentioned my host's name to every policeman I came across, because I found that when I did so they touched their helmets and looked pleased, and I am always delighted to give inexpensive pleasure to any policeman.

In the public lobby the legislator, who, incidentally I may mention, is Chairman of the Kitchen Committee, found me and took me in the direction of the dining-rooms. We passed the new fireplace that the House of Commons has presented to itself, quite the most tasty thing in fireplaces I have ever seen, with a sort of glorified ingle-nook seat on either side of it. I peeped through the glass door into the members' dining-room with its handsome panelling, and the

Ministerial Room, where some fine portraits hang on the walls, and eventually we went down the staircase with the good napkin panelling on either side, looked at that other staircase which was in course of construction for the convenience of lady guests, came to the long corridor where the photographs taken by Sir Benjamin Stone hang, and going down it had glimpses through open doors of dinner-parties in which ladies predominated, all mighty merry, and twittering like the birds in an aviary. From the chairman's own room, which he occasionally lends to his brother members, sallied forth a Ministerial Whip, who seized my host by the arm, held an open wine list before him as though they were going to sing hymns out of the same book, and asked him what champagne he ought to order for his guests. That knotty point being settled I gave up my hat and coat to an attendant, and followed my host, who threaded his way through the tables in the largest Strangers' dining-room to his own particular dining spot in a recess which commands a view of the whole of the room.

It is an exceedingly pleasant dining-room. The walls are of panels of grey and white, framed in light wood, with on them good prints in black frames, the gifts of M.P.'s who love their House just as ordinary men love their pet clubs. The four-square pillars which support the roof are painted cream colour; light is thrown up on to the ceiling from glass electroliers, shaped like round shields, and here and there a palm and some green screens give a restful note of cool colour. At one end of the room a clock on the wall reminds M.P.'s of the passing time, and at the other end, on a roll of paper, which passes through a wooden frame, is printed the name of the member who at the moment is addressing the House. The windows of this pleasant dining-room look out

on to the terrace and across the river to the great hospital, behind which the sky still held some of the rose of sunset. There were dinner-parties innumerable being held in the room, and the manager informed us later that he had been obliged to tell many would-be hosts that he could not find room for their parties.

A great debate means a gala night in the dining-rooms of the House, and had I not known where I was, looking at the pretty and smartly dressed ladies and their smiling hosts, I should have thought that I was in one of the smaller dining-rooms of one of our great restaurants. Here and there amongst the guests and the dinner-givers were faces I recognised, and the legislator told me during the course of our dinner who were the other hosts at the different tables, for he probably knows personally more men of all the different parties than does any other member of the House.

“I have ordered a very small dinner,” said my host, as a waiter brought us a pot of caviare ensconced in a basin of crushed ice, and this was the menu of the said small dinner :

Caviare.
Consommé d'Aremberg.
Homard Sauté Paillard.
Noisettes d'Agneau aux Primeurs.
Pommes Suzon.
Cailles de Vigne sur Canapés.
Salad Cœur de Laitues au Citron.
Asperges Anglo et Française.
Sauce Mousseline.
Pêches Flambées.
Dessert.

The lobster was an admirable dish, the rice served with it being a corrective to the exceeding richness of the liquid, and when the chairman and myself had eaten it with great relish I suggested to him that parf

of the pleasure it had given us was the fact that neither of us ought to have touched it at all, for the chairman had only just recovered from a second bout of influenza, and my tame doctor would have had a fit if he had known that I made a clean plate of such a rich delicacy. The dinner throughout was admirable, and I asked my host who was the *chef de cuisine*, and what was his history. The chef to the House, he told me, is M. Roux, who looks to M. Escoffier as the great master under whom he learned his art.

My host had told me to ask him any questions I liked concerning the catering and the management of the kitchens and dining-rooms, and I learned that the committee consists of sixteen members drawn from every party in the House, and that it meets once a week; that the allowance made by the House for the upkeep of its dining-rooms is £2600 a year, and that the turn-over is usually about £17,000 a year, but that in 1912, being an exceptionally busy one, it rose to £25,000. I also learned that there is always first-class specialist advice ready to be called in, for no matter what subject is under discussion—be it table-cloths, or cutlery or glass—there is sure to be amongst the members of the House someone who is the highest authority on the subject, and who willingly comes to the assistance of the Kitchen Committee.

When I began to ask questions about the regular House dinner and about that celebrated shilling dinner of which the outside public hear so much, the Chairman sent for the manager, a young man who has stepped from the post of assistant into the full-blown dignity of the managerial frock-coat, and asked him to show me the menus of the day and the wine list. There was a tone of pride in the manager's voice when he said that 300 dinners had been served that evening in the upstairs rooms, and he also told me the number of the guests in the downstairs rooms—186, I think

he said, in all. The shilling dinner, of which about 150 are served each night, consists of fish or entrée, or joints, two vegetables, bread or plain toast, a pat of butter and Cheddar or Cheshire cheese. There is also a vegetarian dinner ready at a quarter of an hour's notice, from six till nine o'clock, which on that particular night consisted of *crème d'asperges*, *œufs à la tripe*, *carottes à la crème*, or *haricots verts au beurre* or *macaroni Milanaise*, and cheese and butter. And there is a half-crown dinner of the day of four courses, vegetables and cheese and butter. Sixpence table money is charged for guests. This is the menu of the five-shilling dinner of that day, and it reads to me a very good one :

Melon Glacé.
 Consommé Froide or Crème d'Asperges.
 Filets de Sole Dejaset.
 Quartier d'Agneau à la Broche.
 Pommes Fondantes.
 Petits Pois au Beurre.
 Cailles de Vigne Casserole.
 Salade Romaine.
 Bombe Fraisalia.
 Croustades Maltaises.
 Dessert.

There is also a grill menu and a long list of cold joints. To make the list of menus complete, the manager showed me that of the two-shilling dinner, which is ready at six o'clock, served in the dining-room of the Press Gallery. Later on in the evening I was shown the separate kitchen which serves the dining-room of the Gallery and saw that it was as well organised as is everything else in the kitchen department of the House. Looking through the wine list, I noticed that some of the sherries have come from Windsor Castle, Marlborough House and Sandringham; the most expensive of these being that—bottled 1875—from Windsor, for which 12s. 6d.

a bottle is charged. But a glass of Amontillado costs no more than 4d. Sixpence a glass is the lowest price charged for any port, and the most expensive on the list is Cockburn's 1847, bottled 1850, which is a guinea a bottle. There are some 1898 champagnes still on the list, and some 1900. The wines of 1904 make the longest list, Veuve Clicquot heading the roll at 13s. 6d. a bottle; Heidsieck Dry Monopole, Pommery and Greno, Pol Roger, Moet and Chandon, Krug and Monte Bello varying in price from 13s. 6d. to 10s. a bottle. The brand Deutz and Gelderman is represented by pints at 6s. 6d., and the magnums of Monte Bello cost 18s. 6d.

Our dinner finished and all the questions that I could think of asked and answered, my host took me out on to the terrace to drink our coffee. All the light of the sunset had died out, and the long lines of lamps on the Embankment across the river were shining brilliantly. Across Westminster Bridge the tramcars, all blazing with light, were passing and repassing each other, an effect I commend to Mr Arthur Collins for use in some future Drury Lane production. The terrace itself is dimly lighted by gas lamps, but this half light, pleasant and in keeping with the solemn mystery of the great, dark river that flows past, seems to frame fittingly the brilliance of the wonderful night scene. Little groups of ladies were about the tables in that centre space where members may dispense hospitality. The talk of the men who came to speak to my host was all of what was in progress in the chamber of debate upstairs, of the pity of it that no agreement had been come to and that a division was necessary, of the admirable speech that Mr Balfour had made in the afternoon, and such-like matters.

I felt that I had kept my host too long from his place and wished to bid him good-night there and then, but he said that though he had failed to obtain a ticket

for me in the afternoon to hear the debate, he would try again ; so upstairs we went, and he left me in charge, in the Members' Lobby, of a benign old gentleman with a pointed white beard and wearing knee-breeches, while he went inside to see what he could do. He returned waving a card, the white-bearded gentleman looked even more benign, and took my hat and coat, and I was sent with the card up a little flight of stairs. In perfect comfort I listened to Mr Bonar Law making his points on the Unionist side, rapping with his finger-nails on the big box on the table as he did so, and then heard Sir Edward Grey, tucking his right hand under his frock-coat as though that garment pinched him below the arm, reply for the Government ; watched the members stream out for the division, heard the numbers read out, and saw the end of an historic debate.

A most pleasant and interesting evening

XIX

A REGIMENTAL DINNER

AT THE TROCADERO

THE Commissionaire at the centre entrance to the Trocadero greets me with "Regimental dinner, sir? First floor, leave your coat and hat to the right." A very intelligent man this commissionaire, an old soldier who knows another old soldier when he sees him. I leave my coat and hat as directed, ascend in the lift, and am disgorged into a corridor, the walls of which are covered with an inlay of gold Venetian glass tesserae, pay the very small sum that subscribers to the Regimental Dinner Club are mulcted, and go into a screened-off space of the large banqueting-room in which the feast is to be held. Here two score gentlemen, old and young, most of them with a bar of miniature medals on the lapels of their evening coats, are talking, laughing, moving to and fro, and shaking hands with great heartiness. It is by no means a *mauvais quart d'heure* these minutes of assembling before a regimental dinner, for old friends who see each other only once a year meet then, and the inquiries as to each other's health and prosperity and happiness are no formal compliments, but a real desire to know how the world wags with old comrades in arms.

The screens that divide the room in two are withdrawn and the company take their places at the table in no set order, though the veterans all try to sit next to some old friend of their soldiering days and the subalterns cling together in little swarms at the far ends of the table. The room in which we

are dining, the Alexandra, is panelled to a man's height with dark marbles, with central squares of light marble, and there are at one end pillars of black wood fluted with gold. It is a room with a dignity of its own. Through the lace-curtained windows can be seen the electric advertisements on the other side of Shaftesbury Avenue, advertisements which set forth in a blaze of alternating red and green and white light the virtues of somebody's whisky and somebody else's cigarettes, and through the open windows come the roar of the traffic and the hoots of the motor horns. We are dining on the very hub of London. The table for the dinner is of horseshoe shape, with another length of table running up the centre. There are candles with pink shades, and pink flowers in vases and strewn on the table in garlands. The Major-General, who is the full Colonel of the regiment, who served in it for many long years, and was at one time the Adjutant of one of the battalions, sits at the top of the bend of the horseshoe, and chance, not precedence, has put me on one side of him. The two Brigadier-Generals who are amongst the diners, each of whom wears, as our chairman does, his C.B. cross at one end of his long bars of miniature medals and decorations, are somewhere farther down the curve of the horseshoe, and brevet colonels and subalterns and captains and lieutenant-colonels and majors all sit where fancy leads them, some of the seniors to talk to the son of an old friend, a boy who has just joined, some to talk polo, or fishing, or gardening, or shooting, or the iniquities of the Land Tax with friends of like tastes.

A Regimental Dinner ought to be described by some lady novelist who has never been to one and is in no way hampered by any unromantic facts. Grizzled men bearing the scars of old wounds should talk to each other of midnight marches and fierce charges and hand-to-hand combats, and tell the tale

over their port of how Billy Bright Eyes, the curly-headed drummer of Company B, won the Victoria Cross on some day of awful slaughter. Unfortunately for picturesqueness' sake the grizzled men talk about nothing of the kind. The man who could narrate as moving stories as ever Othello dropped into Desdemona's willing ear tells his next-door neighbour of the fishing in Norway he has taken this year and of the advantages of travelling to it from the port in a motor car instead of going on the old country conveyances. The man who really earned a V.C. in South Africa, though there were no lookers-on to write glowing accounts to headquarters, is discussing with another man of many battles the advantages of Waterloo over other late-bearing strawberry plants, and laments that there are no pears this year on any of his trees. Tales of a big night at mess in "The Shiny," when a Highland regiment, passing through, was entertained at a dinner which only ended when the pipes were playing "Hey Johnnie Cope" in the grey before sunrise, may stray casually into the conversation, and a regretful word or two may be said that the regimental polo fund in India had not enough ready money to buy a certain pony which would just have won a match for the regiment in an important tournament. Cricket, polo, grouse moors, the coming hunting season, the present play at the Gaiety, the merits of the various revues are the things talked about, and "shop" is almost as rigidly excluded from the conversation as though the dinner was taking place in the regimental mess.

The length of a regimental dinner is as difficult to curtail as is that of a City feast or a Masonic banquet, for any manager of a restaurant or any *maître d'hôtel* considers it to be an "important" meal, and believes that the guests will not think they have dined satisfactorily unless they have eaten prodigiously. But

the three officers who manage our Regimental Dinner Club are happily men of the world as well as old soldiers, and they insist that the dinner shall be ordered to please the tastes of those who dine, and not of those who serve the dinner. This is the menu of the Trocadero dinner. The little circle of beef offered to each man is the only heavy dish in it, and the chicken with its tempting stuffing is the only rich dish that it contains :

Melon Glacé.

Hors d'œuvre de Choix.

Tortue Claire.

Truite de Rivière au bleu, Beurre fondu.

Pommes nature.

Poularde du Mans Favorite.

Médailon de Bœuf Rossini.

Spoon au Kummel.

Caille de Vigne sur Croustade.

Salade Romaine.

Asperges nouvelles, Sauce Maltaise.

Fraises à la Zouave.

Corbeille de Friandises.

Pailles au Parmesan.

Dessert.

Café.

VINS.

Punch.

Johannisberger,

1900.

Chas. Heidsieck,

1904.

Moët et Chandon,

1904.

Château.

Branaire Ducru,

1900.

Dow's

1890

Port.

Courvoisier's

1831

Brandy.

The menu, according to custom immemorial, is decorated with the crests of the regiment, with the date of its raising, 1572, and with a little picture of the uniform of the regiment in the year 1684, when the full privates wore black boy-scout hats, bands such as barristers still wear, and coats with very long skirts.

Twenty years ago no regimental dinner could have been held without interminable speeches, which were sometimes listened to with scant patience by the subalterns, who wanted to get to the Empire or the Alhambra before the performance ended. Nowadays there are no speeches, at all events at our dinner, and the only toast proposed is that of "The King." After this loyal toast has been drunk and the cigars lighted, all formality vanishes, every man moves from his place and goes to talk to those of his old friends who have been out of earshot during dinner; the subalterns make inquiries as to whether the Caharet Club or the Four Hundred Club is the most amusing place in which to keep awake after all the restaurants are shut, and as eleven o'clock comes some of the guests go off to the Service clubs, some have to catch last trains, and the commissionaire downstairs has a busy time whistling for taxis.

There is not much ancient history to delve into with regard to the Trocadero Restaurant. Part of it stands on the ground which, when Great Windmill Street was a cul-de-sac, before Shaftesbury Avenue was made, was occupied by the Argyle Dancing Rooms, familiarly known as "The Duke's." "The Duke's" played its part in the night life of London in the sixties and seventies, when Kate Hamilton's and the other night houses still existed in the Haymarket, and though there were occasional rows there, some of the officers of one of the Household cavalry regiments being on one occasion marched off to the police station,

it was on the whole a well-conducted establishment, with an admirable orchestra to play dance music. But the spasm of morality which passed over London towards the end of the last century swept the Argyle Rooms out of existence, and their proprietor, Mr "Bob" Bignell, converted the vacant rooms into the Trocadero Music Hall. Mr "Sam" Adams was the next proprietor of the music-hall, and then Mr Joseph Lyons, who was not yet a knight, saw the possibilities of the site for a restaurant, and gave a very large price for the old hall. The Trocadero Restaurant, when it first was built, was only half as large as it is now, for that red-brick portion of it which faces Shaftesbury Avenue was a nest of flats and chambers, and the conversion of this building when Lyons & Company bought it, into restaurant premises, was an architectural feat. Where the old building ends and the additions begin can be clearly seen by the difference in the architecture.

It is a curious fact that Sir Joseph Lyons, the head and mainspring of the great organisation which controls the scores of restaurants and hundreds of tea-shops belonging to Lyons & Company, wished in his youthful days to be an artist, and that his amusement now, whenever he has any leisure, which he rarely has, is to paint sunsets.

XX

“JOLLY GOOD”

A HALF-GUINEA DINNER AT THE TROCADERO

No account of the Trocadero would be complete without an allusion to the *table d'hôte* dinners which are served in the great hall of the restaurant, and I do not think that I can do better than reprint the account of a half-guinea dinner I gave there some ten years ago to a small Harrow boy. The Mr Lyons of the article is now Sir Joseph, and I fancy that the Messrs Salmon, who are now County Councillors and members of many other important bodies, are too busy to show even such an important person as a young Harrovian all the glories of the restaurant. But in all essentials the half-guinea dinner of to-day at the Trocadero is much as it was ten years ago. It was excellent then and is excellent now.

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 tuberosé 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 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 *maitre 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 seven-and-six *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 classroom 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 race-course, because we thought a man watching the races with his back to us was Mr Middlemist. And I asked him if Harrow was likely to be badly beaten by Eton in the coming match at Lord's.

This for a moment thawed Jones minor into humanity. Harrow, he said, was going to jolly well lick Eton in one innings, and before the boy froze up again I learned that the Headmaster's had beaten some other house in the final of the Torpid football matches, and several other items of interesting news.

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 ballroom 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.

XXI

IN THE SHADOW OF THE PALACE THEATRE

KETTNER'S LE DINER FRANÇAIS

I KNOW as a result of my early training in Miss Woodman's school for the "sons of the nobility and gentry" in Somerset Street, off Orchard Street, that a piece of land almost entirely surrounded by water is called a peninsula. But I was never instructed in any school as to there being a special name for a theatre almost entirely surrounded by restaurants. If there is such a name it should be applied to the Palace Theatre, for restaurants have sprouted up about it just as grass grows round the foot of a tree.

Of this group of restaurants two at least that I know deserve special mention, one as having been the pioneer of clean restaurant kitchens and the other, a very cheap restaurant, as having made the fortune of one restaurateur and of being in the course of making the fortune of his successor. Kettner's, in Church Street, was the first small restaurant that dared to show its kitchen to all comers at a time when the kitchens of most little foreign restaurants were places of horror. M. Auguste Kettner was a chef who had learned his art in his native country, and who, as an investment of his savings, started a small restaurant, in 1867, in Church Street, Soho. Those were the days before Shaftesbury Avenue was driven through the slums, before Cambridge Circus was made, before the Palace Theatre was built, and when Soho was a maze of little streets. So puzzling to a stranger was

its geography that the district inspired W. S. Gilbert to write a "Bab" ballad concerning Peter the Wag, the policeman with a taste for practical jokes who always sent the people who asked the way of him in the wrong direction. Retribution came to Peter when he lost his way near Poland Street, Soho.

"For weeks he trod his self-made beat,
Through Newport — Gerrard — Bear — Greek — Rupert — Frith
— Dean — Poland Streets,
And into Golden Square."

Kettner's was discovered by a correspondent of *The Times*, and the readers of the *Thunderer*, which in those days took very meagre notice of the amusements and enjoyments of life, were surprised to be told of a little restaurant in the centre of Soho where the kitchen was as clean as a new pin and where excellent food was to be obtained at surprisingly cheap prices. That article made the fortune of Kettner's just as other articles in less august papers have made since then the fortunes of other restaurants. Journalists, artists and actors, the swallows who herald prosperity, came to the restaurant, and George Augustus Sala, the author, who was a *fin gourmet*, with a knowledge of the practical side of cookery as well, became the great patron of the restaurant.

In the early seventies, as a young subaltern with a microscopic income and a desire to make it stretch as far as possible, I used often to dine at Kettner's. It was a real chef's restaurant in those days, an *à la carte* establishment where one ate one or two dishes quite admirably cooked, and where a walk through the kitchen and an inspection of the larder always preceded or followed a dinner. I never hurried over a meal to be in time for the rising of the curtain at a neighbouring theatre, for there were no neighbouring theatres then, but enjoyed my dinner to

the uttermost. M. Kettner then was so successful in business that he was gradually absorbing house after house, and his restaurant, instead of being in one little house, occupied the ground floor of several houses, doors being driven through the party walls. The private rooms on the first floor were favourite dining places of couples who wished to be *tête-à-tête*, and I fancy that when the popularity of such little dinners at restaurants was dimmed it was a blow to the restaurant in Church Street. I have always thought myself that the almost entire disappearance of the small private dining-room from restaurants coincided with the building of innumerable houses of flats, and that the dinners which used to be given in the *cabinets particuliers* are now eaten in flats.

In 1877 two events of great importance to M. Kettner happened: he wrote his "Book of the Table" and he died. His table book, of which a second edition has recently been published, is a curious mixture of very useful recipes and scraps of information concerning all matters under the sun that can in any way be connected with cookery. Achilles, for instance, is brought into the book that reference may be made to the Achilles statue in Hyde Park, and then to the great Duke of Wellington, of whom the story is told that his cook, Felix, left his service in despair because the Duke could not distinguish between a dinner cooked by an artist and one horribly mauled by a kitchenmaid.

When at the height of his fame and prosperity M. Kettner died and left a widow, and Madame Kettner, when her days of mourning had passed, married M. Giovanni Sangiorgi, who also became her partner in the business, a kindly man who keeps a watchful eye on the restaurant which is now controlled by a company. The restaurant was in comparatively late years rebuilt and an entrance hall given to it, and the

two rooms to the right of the hall were in 1913 very tastefully redecorated, but it still retains its characteristic of being several small houses joined together. The first sight that greets one's eyes on entering the hall is a view of the kitchen, generally with a cook in white clothing busy about his work as the centre of the picture, and those who lunch and dine are, as of yore, asked to walk through the white-tiled, beautifully clean domain of the chef. A grill-room now forms part of the establishment, and the character of the meals is changed in that *table d'hôte* dinners at various prices are the trump cards of the establishment. I fancy that the propinquity of the Palace, of the Shaftesbury Theatre, and now of the Ambassadors' may have had a great deal to say to this change, for when I dine at Kettner's before going to the Palace or the Shaftesbury I can see that most of my fellow-guests are theatre-goers. A three-and-six *table d'hôte* dinner in the grill-room and five-shilling and seven-and-six ones in the restaurant are the early evening meals of the establishment, and below is quite a fair specimen of the menu of the five-shilling dinner. It is the one I ate on the last occasion that I made a pilgrimage to see Madame Pavlova dance. The quail was fat and tender, and the *crème Victoria* a good soup :

MENU

Hors d'œuvre.
Consommé Bortsch.
Crème Victoria.
Turbotin Bercy
ou
Blanchaille.
Poulet Poëlé Derby.
Côtelette de Mouton Maréchale.
Pommes Nouvelles.
Caille Rôtie.
Salade.
Glacé de Moka.

But Kettner's now has to encounter many rivals, for young men such as Kettner himself was when he made the fame of his restaurant are following his example, and all the Soho district bristles with little restaurants which give wonderfully good food for the small prices they charge. Kettner's will always, however, be famous for showing its clients a spotlessly clean kitchen when such kitchens were the exception, and this excellent custom and example it maintains to-day.

The other noticeable restaurant of this group is one founded by M. Roche, which bears in large letters on its front "*Le Diner Français*," and which occupies the ground floor of No. 16 Old Compton Street. A story I have been told of the origin of the restaurant is rather picturesque. M. Roche was a baker and *pâtissier*, and one day two Frenchmen came into his shop and asked where they could get a good French meal. M. Roche replied that he and his family were about to eat their midday meal, and that if the strangers from his native land cared to join them he would be delighted. The two Frenchmen enjoyed their midday meal so thoroughly that they asked to be allowed, during their stay in London, to take all their meals at the bakery, paying their share, and M. Roche's establishment gradually changed its character, becoming a full-blown restaurant. That M. Roche served his apprenticeship under Frederic at the *Tour d'Argent* in Paris does not militate against the probability of this story. M. Roche, having made a fortune in Old Compton Street, returned to France and bought an hotel near Granville. *Le Diner Français*, from which the establishment takes its name, was always an eighteen-penny meal, and continued to be so under the present proprietor, M. Béguinot, until the epidemic of "lightning strikes" came in the

spring of 1913, when, to cover the extra expense entailed by giving cooks and waiters their weekly holiday, the price was raised to one-and-nine. M. Roche always had the reputation of buying the best material in the market, and M. Béguinot has maintained this reputation. The restaurant at dinner-time is generally filled to its holding capacity, and as many as four hundred dinners are sometimes served on one evening. The restaurant is narrow, but it runs far back, three rooms being thrown into one. The walls are of cream colour, with a skirting of deep orange; the floor is covered with oilcloth; the knives are black-handled, but cheapness in M. Béguinot's establishment does not mean dirt, for everything is as clean as clean can be, and the waiters, who all talk excellent English, wear shirts and aprons as clean as the walls. Near the door in the first of the rooms are two long tables, and at these any man who is by himself takes a seat.

For one-and-nine one is given a choice of either *hors d'œuvre* or soup, fish, an entrée and an *entremet*, and there is quite a reasonable choice of dishes under each heading. I dined at M. Béguinot's restaurant one Sunday night, and Sunday is by no means a bad day on which to dine there, for the rooms are then less crowded than on weekdays, and, sitting at one of the long tables, I selected from the *carte* of the dinner cold *consommé*, fried sole, sweetbread and spinach, and an ice. The *consommé* was reasonably strong, the sole was really a little slip, but quite fresh and well fried; the small sweetbread was excellent, and the diminutive portion of ice was all that it should be. There was a liberal supply of bread on the table, and the crisp sound of the cutting of the long yards of bread at a side table was almost continuous throughout dinner. When I had finished my meal I certainly did not feel full to repletion, but it sufficed.

My neighbour on one side of me had ordered a *hors d'œuvre*, and the globule of butter given him with his two sardines was a tiny one. He followed fish with fish, and I noticed that the slice of cold salmon of a pale pink came from the tail end. He followed my suit in ordering sweetbread, and finished his meal with a tartlet. I was extravagant in my order for wine, for, passing over the elevenpenny Graves and the next wine on the list, I recklessly commanded a pint of Sauterne, which cost me 1s. 10d., so that my bill came to 3s. 7d., and I got very good value for my money.

My fellow-guests on Sunday night were a selection from all the respectable classes, little parties of ladies, married couples and that contingent from the artistic colony which is always to be found in every Soho restaurant.

XXII

THE WELCOME CLUB

IN the days when I was still an enthusiastic amateur actor, I was once "cast" for the insignificant part of an aged peasant—the organiser of the performance assured me that though there were only a dozen lines in the part, it nevertheless "stood out"—and in a smock-frock, a pair of second-best trousers tied up with hay-bands, fishing boots, a bandana handkerchief round my neck, a long, straggly white beard, a red nose and an old tall silk hat, brushed the wrong way to give it the appearance of beaver, I depicted the rude forefather of the village. I spoke in a trembling, squeaky voice and I was addressed by the lads and lasses, yes, and even by the noble old squire and by the black-browed villain, as "Granfer." The part did not, apparently, stand out enough to catch the notice of our audiences, but to those who played with me that drama of village life I have remained "Granfer" to the present day, and every summer I ask three of them, my Pet Grandchild, my Tiny Grandchild and Little Perce to dine with me one evening at the Welcome Club and to go the round of the side-shows afterwards, that being very much the sort of entertainment that every real grandfather ought, I think, to give his grandchildren.

I made my acquaintance with the Welcome Club in the year that it was first built, at the beginning of all things at Earl's Court. Mr Alec Knowles was the first secretary of the club. The idea of the

Welcome Club, of which distinguished foreigners could be made honorary members, originated at the great Chicago Exhibition, in the grounds of which there was a club of this name.

The trees that were planted in front of the lawn of the club have grown to a good size now, but even more picturesque than the formal lines of planes are the thorns and other old trees which were on the ground before the makers of the exhibition gardens took things in hand, and which were left there. Year after year, additions and improvements have been made to the Welcome Club. What was originally a dining-room and a lawn has become a club-house in a garden. The long shelter, a pleasant place in which to dine on a summer's evening, has been enlarged more than once, and now, with its alcoves, each a tiny dining-room, with vines growing up its supports and flower beds edging its railings, it pleases the eye of the artist and architect as well as the eye of the diner. On the other side of the club-house is a pretty drawing-room for ladies, and Time, which always works in sympathy with a clever architect, has done its share in deepening the colour of the tiles, in bringing the lawn to velvety perfection, and in drawing up the young trees inch by inch. Never before have the garden beds been so gay with flowers as they were in 1913, and the interior of the club-house has been brightened up to concert pitch.

To organise the staff of a club that is only open for four months in the year is no easy matter, for the pick of *maîtres d'hôtel* and cooks and waiters do not as a rule care to accept engagements that only last for a third of a year. A club as far from its bases of supply as is the Welcome cannot arrange its catering so easily as can clubs in the centre of London, which have their fishmonger's and butcher's shops just round the corner, and a wet or a cold night

means almost empty dining-rooms at Earl's Court. Difficulties, however, only exist to be overcome, and Mr Payne, the chairman of the Earl's Court Company, determined that it shall no longer be said that it is impossible to get a good dinner in any exhibition, has brought all his energy to bear on the problem, and with Mr Charles Bartlett, as secretary, with a Bond Street firm of caterers responsible for the personnel and material and with M. G. Thuillez in charge of the club kitchens, I think that Mr Payne made good his promise. I certainly have never before at the Welcome Club eaten a dinner so satisfactory in every way as the one I gave one fine evening last July to my three grandchildren.

I had written word to the secretary, an old friend, saying on what evening I was coming to dine and asking him to give the manager a hint whether to reserve for me a table in the dining-room or the shelter, according to whether the evening was warm or cool. The weather that day was fine, but the temperature kept about the temperate line. As the manager was unable to guess whether the ladies would find the shelter chilly and as there was that evening no great rush for tables, he reserved until I should appear upon the scene, a table for four in the dining-room and another for the same number in one of the alcoves of the shelter.

When I came to the club, five minutes before the hour of dinner, I opted at once for the table in the alcove, looked at the menus of the *table d'hôte* dinners, one a five-shilling one and the other a seven-and-six one, and chose the latter, ordered my wine, a magnum of Krug, and then sat in one of the big wicker chairs on the lawn and waited for my guests.

The scarlet-coated band of an infantry regiment had taken their places in the band pavilion in the centre of the gravelled space and the bandmaster was

rapping on his music stand to command his men's attention. There were already many people sitting on the circle of seats which surrounds the pavilion. Away to the left men in dress clothes and ladies in evening frocks were going in little parties into the Quadrant Restaurant, and opposite to the Welcome Club, with the breadth of the open space in between, there were groups of men about the American bar and the tea pavilion. The great tower, which is part of one of the mountain railways, loomed big to the right, but the cars that run on the rails had for a time ceased to rattle and splash through the stream of real water which forms part of the scenery. The flying machines still farther to the right were also still for the moment, the wire hawsers which support them looking like the rigging of a ship. Presently I saw my three guests approaching, having come into the gardens by the most westerly entrance, and we were soon seated in the alcove, where an electric lamp hung from the ceiling and another lamp on the table was alight, though the sun had only just set.

This was the menu of the dinner that we ate :

Melon Rafraichi.
 Consommé Tosca.
 Crème Bonne Femme.
 Turbot Bouilli Sauce Homard.
 Tournedos Doria.
 Pommes Rosette.
 Noix de Ris de Veau en Cocotte Demidoff.
 Sorbet Mandarinette.
 Caneton d'Aylesbury rôti au Cresson.
 Salade Cœur de Laitue.
 Glacé Comtesse Marie.
 Friandises.
 Dessert.

Our conversation naturally enough drifted on to stories of amateur acting ; but not until my Tiny Grandchild had first described a deed of heroism she

had done while staying at a country house. In the dead of the night she heard a bell ring continuously, and assuming that burglars were in the house and had carelessly set an alarm bell ringing, she woke up her husband in the next room and proposed that they should there and then rouse all the inmates of the house and capture the burglars. But her husband looked at his watch and as an amendment suggested that, as the ringing was probably an alarm clock, set by a diligent housemaid, instead of alarming the household it would be better for my T. G. to sleep out her beauty sleep. We re-christened the daring lady "The Little Heroine" as we supped our *crème bonne femme* and declared it to be good. With the *tournedos* my imperfections of memory with respect to "words" were cast into my teeth, and especially of a sentence I introduced into *His Excellency the Governor*, when, as Sir Montague, I declared to Ethel that I would "dower her with the inestimable guerdon of my love," words that Captain Marshall never wrote. And, further, it was recalled that most of us who had played together in this comedy, and its author, went one evening to see Mr H. B. Irving and Miss Irene Vanbrugh and Mr Dion Boucicault and Mr Marsh Allen and others play the comedy, and how a shout of delight went up from our row of stalls and puzzled our neighbours sorely when Mr Irving, primed, no doubt, by Captain Marshall, declared that he would dower *his* Ethel with the "inestimable guerdon" of *his* love.

To change the subject I drew the attention of my three grandchildren to their surroundings, for there are a few minutes of supreme loveliness at the Welcome Club when the light is fading from the western sky and all the electric lamps suddenly spring into brilliancy. The tower of the mountain railway no longer appears to be a thing of wood and

canvas, but stands a great, dark, solid mass against the sky, with the twinkle of some letters of electricity upon its battlements. In the trees on the lawn, lamps, red and blue and golden, shimmer like fireflies; all about the bandstand are garlands of white light, and the flying machines, shadows dotted with coloured light, go swinging round in the distance.

When we had finished our dinner we sat in contentment for a while on the lawn, listening to the music of the band and drinking our coffee, and then, as an aid to digestion, went in to The Hereafter side-show, almost next door, where skeletons dance and a bridge swings and rocks over a torrent of painted fire; and then on to the booths where the china of "happy homes" can be broken up at a penny a shot, where the two ladies did desperate execution against the kitchen service. And next to the revolving cylinders, where we watched enterprising young gentlemen stand on their heads involuntarily, and to the variations on hoop-la stalls, at one of which we all tried unsuccessfully to win watches. And on to the summer ballroom; and to the bowl-slide; and finally, as the supreme digestive, we all four went down the water chute, I taking the precaution of leaving my tall hat below in charge of the gate man: for one year going down this chute my Tiny Grandchild, being shot into the air by the bump on the water, descended on my hat, which I held in my hand, and turned it into a good imitation of an accordion.

XXIII

GOLDSTEIN'S

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).
Filletted 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 that dinner was ordered for that evening at Goldstein's 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-pudidng, which was to appear much later at the feast.

Goldstein's is the restaurant patronised by the "from," 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 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 nine P.M., but crowded at the midday 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 may by now have done so, 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.

XXIV

THE MITRE

AT

HAMPTON COURT

WE all know that in the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love, but it is not such common knowledge that in the early summer the thoughts of a man of mature age turn with equal agility to duckling and green peas. And with duckling and green peas I always associate the Mitre at Hampton Court. So it came to pass that I asked a crony of like tastes to myself to meet me on a spring Sunday at Hampton Court in the late afternoon, and suggested that we should walk in the gardens of the Palace and see the rhododendrons, which were then in great beauty, and that we should afterwards dine at the Mitre, sup green pea soup and eat duckling and green peas.

The Mitre is the most typically late Georgian, or early Victorian, inn that I know of in the neighbourhood of London, and its great attraction is that it has kept the old cookery, the old furniture, the old pictures, the old china, the old plate, and last, but not least, the old manners. It has been quite unconscious of the changes in the outside world, it knows nothing of electric light and such newfangled ideas, there are no French rolls to be found in its bread baskets, and its ducklings are spitted and roasted before an open fire, being well basted the while.

This, very briefly, is the history of the Mitre. It is the direct successor of the Toy Inn, an old house which stood on Crown property, and the lease of which expired about the year of the battle of Waterloo. The Toy was pulled down, and Mr Goodman, and Mr Sadler with him, were obliged to look for a new home in which to carry on the old traditions. This they found in three houses standing together near the wooden bridge (alas and alack that the picturesque old bridge has given place to the dull-red iron horror which was built in 1865!), and one of the charms of the Mitre is the quaint irregularity of its architecture, the brown bricks and red tiles of its face turned towards the Palace, its white face and slate roof on the river side, the great wistaria and the ivy knitting together all the various features.

And parenthetically I wish to protest against the hiding away of the Mitre from the view of the people as they cross the bridge, or of those who row or go by launch or river. Just in front of the Mitre Hotel is an eyot, which I believe is Government property. The willows on this have been allowed to grow so high that they entirely blot out the view from the river of the white face of the Mitre, and the long row of windows of its banqueting-room; and equally, of course, the trees obstruct the view of the river from the delightful little bowling-green with ivied arches which is between the hotel and the backwater. If, whoever he is, the Government official who has this eyot in his charge will walk across the Hampton Court bridge or sit for ten minutes on the lawn before the Mitre he will, I am sure, require no further prompting to order the pollarding of the trees.

Mr Goodman came to the three old houses and put up the name of the Mitre in golden letters, and

gave orders that the pillars that support the great bow-window on the first floor should be painted as though they were of very variegated marble, and with him from the old inn he brought the little glass bow window which looks out from the bar parlour into the Mitre hall, and he also brought with him all the old Spode china from the Toy. Some of the original china is still preserved at the Mitre, and whenever new plates and new dishes are required Messrs Copeland, the successors to Spode, make them in the old moulds, though those moulds are now wearing out; and the plates from which the guests of to-day eat their lunches and dinners are identical with those that came across the Green from the Toy. After a while Mr Goodman moved on to the Whitehall Hotel, a big white-faced house which looks out on to the Green, and which abuts on Cardinal Wolsey's old stables, and Mr Sadler the First reigned in his stead.

It was Mr Sadler the First who bought the old Sheffield plate which makes such a brave show at the banquets at the Mitre, tureens in which the soup comes to table, and the platters on which the fish is served.

Six o'clock was the hour at which I had asked my crony to meet me on the steps of the Mitre that we might consult together as to the menu of our dinner, and I found him waiting for me chatting to Mr Sadler, the elder of the two sons of Mr Sadler the First, and in the background was Bagwell, the head waiter, who is a model to all British head waiters. He has the appearance and the comforting manner of a high dignitary of the Church, and I am quite sure would wear knee-breeches and an apron and rosetted tall hat with as good grace as any bishop in the land. The oldest inhabitants of Hampton Court, when I have sung Bagwell's praises to them, have said to me:

“ Ah, but you ought to have known Smith,” the head waiter who flourished some thirty years ago. But to them I reply that not having known Smith it is a comfort to me to be acquainted with Bagwell. Bagwell had on a card a suggested menu for our dinner, which ran thus:—Green Pea Soup, Grilled Trout, Stewed Eels, Duckling and Green Peas and New Potatoes, cold Asparagus and Gooseberry Tart. The eels I looked upon as a superfluity, though they are one of the dishes of the house and are kept alive in the hotel in tanks until the moment comes for their sacrifice. I also parried the suggestion that sweet-breads should be included, for I hold that a duckling, if he be a good duckling, well roasted and filled with savoury stuffing, is so good a dish that he requires no supplement of any kind.

When at seven we returned from our walk through the gardens of the Palace a table had been spread for us in the bow-window, whence the view of the river, and the house-boats, and the towing path, and the walls of the Palace Gardens, and the big trees and the old gates, is a very splendid thing. A quiet-footed, quiet-mannered waiter was ready to attend on us, and on the table were the shining cruets and a little loaf and a slab of beautiful butter, and to the tick of half-past seven the soup in a plated tureen was put in front of me.

The soup was excellently hot and of a strength unusual in a vegetable soup. It had, I fancy, been laced with all manner of good things. It made an excellent commencement to the dinner. The trout, a fine salmon trout, of a beautiful pink, came straight up from the grill on a plated dish, and with it the Tartar sauce in a plated boat. When the cover was taken off from the duckling, set down before me to carve, the sweet savour of good roasting and the perfume of the stuffing gratified the sense of smell.

And that duckling was as tender as a duckling should be, and the peas were large and cooked to the requisite degree of softness, and the apple sauce was excellent. That our plates were the old Spode plates, soft blue in their pattern, and that the knives and forks and spoons were all of an old pattern, were all tiny points of enjoyment. The asparagus was good green English asparagus, and the crust of the gooseberry pie was of meringue-like lightness.

At the table to one side of us in the big bow sat a couple who were also dining on duckling and drinking a bottle of champagne, for the Mitre has an excellent cellar of wines at prices far below those of London restaurants, and at the table on the other side were two ladies and three men who had been on the river and had brought river appetites and river good spirits to table with them. Farther back in the room were other little parties of diners. I had asked host Sadler some questions about the Masonic banquets which are held in the red-walled rooms the windows of which overlook the bowling-green, and after our dinner was finished he brought me a little sheaf of menus of banquets, and he also brought a bottle of the old Cognac of the house, which he was anxious that we should taste. I looked through the menus, and the following of a banquet of the Bard of Avon Lodge seemed to me to be that of a distinctly English feast. It has in it the *matelote* of stewed eels and the braised sweetbreads for which I did not find room in our little dinner for two:

SOUP.

Purée of Asparagus. Spring.

FISH.

Grilled Trout. Sauce Tartare.
Stewed Eels en Matelote.

ENTRÉE.

Braised Sweetbreads.

REMOVES.

Roast Fore Quarter of Lamb.

French Beans.

Ducklings. Peas.

Asparagus.

SWEETS.

Gooseberry Foule. Cream.

Madeira Jellies.

Iced Pudding.

DESSERT.

My crony and I sat sipping the old brandy, talking at intervals, and watching how the daylight gave place to the afterglow, how the people on the towpath thinned in numbers to single figures, and the homeward bound boats on the river became fewer and fewer. As the light died out the river became a sheet of dull silver, and the colour of the old brick walls of the Palace gardens and its out-buildings grew to deeper and a deeper purple, and the great trees became warm black silhouettes against the darkening sky and the lights in the house-boats moored by the bank began to throw reflections into the stream.

Everything, even a spring evening at Hampton Court, must come to an end, and at last I called for my bill. The dinner was eight shillings a head, and so moderate had we been in our summer beverages—the old brandy was host Sadler's contribution—that the total came to a sovereign.

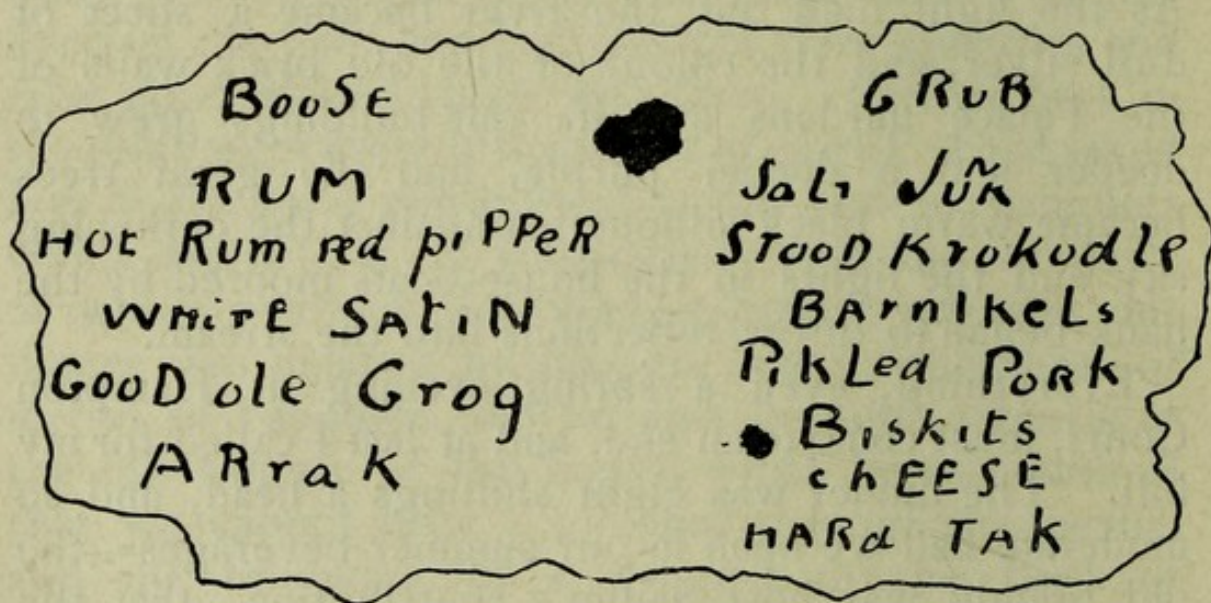
We walked along the path up the river in the cool of the evening till we could see the lights in Garrick's Villa, and then my crony and I bade each other good-night and went our separate ways.

XXV

IN THE HANDS OF PI(E)RATES

THE CONNAUGHT ROOMS

WHEN it was decided by the contributors to *Printer's Pie* to entertain their editor, "The Pieman," a little committee of artists and writers, with the editor of *The Tatler* as secretary, considered various plans for



giving Mr Hugh Spottiswoode a dinner with unusual surroundings.

A decision was arrived at that the contributors to the *Pie* should become Pi(e)rates, for one night only, and in that guise should entertain the Pieman in a pirate haunt, and then the next question was the choice of a dining place and the difficult matter of finding the proprietor or manager of a restaurant who would enter thoroughly into the spirit of the burlesque and would provide a real pirate feast with

blood-curdling piratical surroundings. A member of the committee suggested Mr George Harvey, who controls the Connaught Rooms in Great Queen Street, as the very man, and to the next meeting of the committee Mr George Harvey came, quiet, humorous and resourceful, and when he heard the outlines of our scheme he smiled, and said that he thought he quite understood what we wanted.

It was essential to the success of our little joke that the guest of the evening should know nothing of the reception he would get, and when the Pi(e)rates were informed that the dress of a bold buccaneer was to be the wear at dinner at the Connaught Rooms, they were entreated to keep this a secret from the Pieman. Strangely enough, the secret was kept; he had no inkling of what was going to happen to him. When, heralded by a commissionaire, he came up the grand staircase of the restaurant, faultlessly attired in his best evening clothes, he gave a jump when the Master-at-Arms of the Pirates, attired in the levee uniform of a pirate king, suddenly appeared before him with drawn cutlass and a ferocious look, and told two stalwart members of the pirate gang to "Arrest that man!"

If it would interest you to know who the pirates are, when they are not pirating, you have only to look at the contents pages of *Printer's Pie* and you can there read the list of the authors and artists who were busy between seven and eight o'clock one Friday, in a little room in Great Queen Street, transforming themselves from fairly respectable members of society into the most shocking criminals that ever went to sea. There were pirates of all kinds, all centuries and all classes. There were gentlemen pirates with nickel-plated revolvers; one pirate of particular ferocity from the Barbary Coast had given himself an emerald-green complexion;

another pirate, who feared that his good-natured face might belie his costume, carried on his breast a large placard with a photo on it for identification purposes, and the legend "I am an [adjective] pirate." Some of the pirates wore long false noses; many of them had the skull and crossbones on their jerseys; cocked hats with feathers were quite fashionable wear, and no belt had less than three pistols stuck into it. One writer of humorous short stories came as an old growler cabby, explaining that cabmen were the only pirates that he had ever met. The chairman of the dinner, who had been selected for that onerous post because, as the designer of the covers of all the *Printer's Pies* he had always come first amongst its contributors, had added an Afghan sheepskin coat to his other piratical garment—luckily for him the night was very cold—and was attended by a minor pirate, who carried on a long stick a triangular lantern as a sign of authority.

When the pirates' prisoner was arrested he was requested to step into a little boat on wheels, the doors of the ante-room were flung wide open and the boat was dragged into the presence of the pirate Captain, who stood in the centre of the room, with the pirate band playing "Down Among the Dead Men" on silvered papier-mache instruments to his left, and to his right the pirate crew flourishing pistols and cutlasses. The little boat paused for a moment while the pirates gave a blood-curdling boarding yell, and then continued its career at hydroplane pace into the dining-room, with the pirates following after.

The Crown Room had become a pirates' lair prepared for a feast. The walls had been shut out by scenery representing sea and mountain; the floor was an inch deep in sawdust; in the corners of the room were plantations of palm-trees, with parrots in cages in the midst of them. These parrots missed the

opportunity of their lives, for they were so stunned by the noise the pirates made at their meal that they never uttered a single scream.

At one side of the pirates' lair was a great dhow, such as one sees sailing in and out of Aden. It was really a stage for the band and the after-dinner performers, but it had been converted into a dhow. In its tall stern a piano was housed; it had high bulwarks, a tall mast and a great lateen sail. From the mast-head flew the "Jolly Roger," and in the rigging was a huge red lantern.

A dozen round tables had been prepared for the pirates, with sheets of brown paper laid on them as tablecloths. The room was lighted by candles stuck into bottles and set on the tables. Of knives and forks there were none apparent; the salt was great lumps of the rock variety, the mustard was in teacups and the pepper in screws of brown paper. The menu, which is reproduced at the head of this chapter, was written with an inky stick on torn bits of brown paper, and each pirate's place was marked for him by a card with blood spots on it. Every table had a big card in a split cane set up to mark a pirate locality. There were Skeleton Cove and Murder Gulch, Coffin Marsh, Gallows' Hill, Cannibal's Creek, Dead Man's Rock and others, and the ship's officers, the roll of which included the Stale Mate, the Hangman, the Powder Monkey and the Ship's Parrot, presided each at a table. The first mate sat next to the Captain, and it was his business to wave a black flag over his great commander's head at intervals, and to beat constantly a big drum which was concealed under the table.

The waiters at the feast looked even greater ruffians than the feasters, which is saying a great deal. They were the most shocking set of criminals and marine cut-throats that ever carried a dish of salt

junk. Most of them had black eyes; their bare arms were wondrously tattooed, and they all smoked short clay pipes as they went about their work. The pirates, because of their superior station, smoked long churchwardens, of which, and playing-cards, there was a plentiful supply scattered about the tables. One waiter entered so thoroughly into his part that he danced a little hornpipe as he took round the dishes.

When the feast had commenced with oysters, the pirate waiters suddenly produced a supply of knives and forks, and menus of what the real dinner was. Below is the menu of the real dinner, and an excellent dinner it was. Pirates who had known better days nodded to each other approvingly across the table when they had eaten the fish dish, which was exceptionally good. Mr George Harvey most certainly has succeeded in regilding the faded glories of the Freemasons' Tavern and in putting the Connaught Rooms, which is the title of the rebuilt house, very firmly on the dining map of London.

Huîtres Royales.
 Consommé Excelsior.
 Timbale de Sole Archidue.
 Poularde Hongroise.
 Nouilles au Parmesan.
 Noisette de Pré-Salé Montmorency.
 Pommes Anna.
 Faisan en Cocotte à la Truffe.
 Salade Jolly Roger.
 Jambon d'York au Champagne.
 Poires St George.
 Friandises.
 Barquettes de Laitances.
 Dessert.
 Café Double.

The band, a real string orchestra, in white jackets, on the deck of the dhow, played rag-time melodies

and other inspiriting airs, and occasionally made itself heard above the noise with which the pirates settled down to their feast. The big drum was always in action, and somewhere outside the hall a waiter shook a sheet of theatre-thunder in a vain attempt to equal the noise of the drum within; pistols were discharged in all parts of the lair, and the pirate with an emerald-green complexion, whenever he thought the Captain looked dull, walked over to his table and fired a pistol into his ear to cheer him up. When this failed to attract the Captain's attention, a large cracker was set fire to under his chair.

One of the groups of pirates, thinking that the band were having far too peaceable a time, suddenly drew pistols and cutlasses, boarded the dhow, and put the musicians to the sword, which delighted the fiddlers very much. There was also dancing during the dinner, for two of the pirates, wishing to give a real society touch to the function, rose and performed a wild Tango in and out of the tables. That was not the only dance, for a fat carver, who wore a conical white cap and white garments plentifully besprinkled with gore, had stood during the early stages of dinner and had looked on at the pirates' antics, being much amused thereat. One of the pirates, thinking that a spectator ought to have some share in the active work of the fun, seized him and forced him to dance, and dance the carver did, with such good will that he finally tired the pirate out, and remained, perspiring and smiling, the victor in the dance.

When dinner was over the guest of the evening was tried by court-martial. He was accommodated with a chair in the centre of the room and given a cigar and a drink; a wide circle of candles in bottles was put about him to give light to the proceedings, and all the pirates sat in groups in the

sawdust, the master-at-arms, with drawn cutlass, behind the prisoner, the accuser, a picturesque ruffian, and the prisoner's friend, an equally forbidding scoundrel, and the pirate Captain being the only individuals standing up. This grouping formed a really striking picture, and I have no doubt that many artistic eyes took in its possibilities. The accusation brought against the prisoner was that he had paid income tax (groans from the pirates), that he was even suspected of paying super-tax (yells of fury from the pirates), that he kept tame animals, notably Welsh rarebits, and that he fed them. The pirate Captain had already warned the prisoner that his sentence had been determined upon, and therefore that it was no use for him, or anybody else on his behalf, to plead his cause; but the prisoner's friend had a speech ready, and loosed it off, making the case very much blacker against his client than it had been before. Sentence was then duly pronounced, but as the pirate Captain had mislaid the plank on which the victim was to walk, and as the goldfish which were to represent sharks had been left downstairs, the doom of the victim resolved itself into the presentation to him of a pair of silver handcuffs with a tiny watch at the end of one of them.

After the court-martial, the pirates gave themselves and their guest an entertainment. One pirate sang admirably; another pirate, whose name, I think, before he went to sea, was Walter Churcher, told excellent stories, and a third pirate went through the whole performance that the flashlight photographer inflicts on good-natured diners, his apparatus being a whisky bottle and a tin mug, and then handed round photographs he pretended to have taken of our guest.

There was more fun to come, but as midnight was drawing near, and as I belong now to the early-to-bed

sect of sea-wolves, I departed quietly. The lift boy at my flat, when he saw the brick-dust of my marine complexion, said to me, as he took me up: "Good gracious, sir, whatever has happened to your face?"

It was a great night altogether!

XXVI

APPENRODT'S

I HAD been, like every other Londoner, aware of the coming of Appenrodt's shops into the panorama of the London streets; but I had never gone into one of the Appenrodt establishments until a year ago, and it was the dread of the armour-plate sandwich of the buffets that sent me there.

I often, when I am going to an early first night at the theatre, cut matters so fine as to dinner that I have only time to eat a couple of sandwiches at a buffet, and as often as not the barmaid, knowing that I am not a regular customer, does a feat of sleight of hand and gives me the roof, the two top sandwiches of the pile. If I protest I am assured that they were fresh-cut not a quarter of an hour ago, and being a moral coward in such matters, I eat them. If I postpone my sandwich meal until after the theatre a second thickness of armour-plate has been added to the bread.

One evening, walking home after the theatre to my flat in the wild north-west, I became aware when I reached Oxford Circus that I was very hungry. Through the windows of Appenrodt's shop at Oxford Circus I could see men in white jackets very busily slicing bread and making sandwiches for the people who sat at the little tables. I went in, ate a couple of ham sandwiches which had been made for me before my eyes, and blessed the name of Appenrodt, for they were all that a ham sandwich should be.

When Appenrodt's headquarters at No. 1 Coventry Street were a-building I watched with interest the putting in of the big plate-glass windows, and after its completion I looked whenever I passed at the big *cartes du jour* which are put up outside wherever there is space for them. One evening, on my way to a club in the Leicester Square district to dine, I found, just as I arrived at the Coventry Street corner, that I had cut my time very close, and that if I dined at the club I should not be in my place at the rising of the curtain. I looked at the big bills of fare outside Appenrodt's, and went up into the restaurant on the first floor to see whether I could get there a quickly served meal. I had an excellent plate of *chicken consommé*, a cut from one of the joints of the day—roast veal and bacon—and a rice pudding. I found this simple food quite excellent, and I got to my theatre in plenty of time.

My first experience led me on to other dinners in Appenrodt's restaurant on the first floor, and I found that the dishes, without exception, were admirably cooked, and that the soup and the *soufflé omelette* with which I now always begin and end a repast at Appenrodt's are noticeably excellent. There is plenty of choice, for the menu of the day comprises four soups, ten fish dishes, at least the same number of entrées, some of these being those that Germans love, vegetables and sweets in due proportion, four joints at lunch-time and the same number at dinner.

This is a typical dinner that I ate one night at Appenrodt's, and these are the prices I paid for the dishes :—*crème conti*, an excellent white soup, 6d.; *suprême de brill Dugleré*, 1s. 6d.; *pilaff de foie de volaille à la Grecque*, 1s. 3d.; and *omelette Mylord*, which is a form of *omelette surprise*, 1s. 6d.; and I drank therewith a pint of Rhenish sparkling

muscatel with all the taste and bouquet of the grape in it.

The restaurant is all white and gold, and has a low ceiling, but as it has a row of windows on two sides I have no doubt it will be quite cool in summer. The curtains to the windows are of some pleasant straw-coloured material, with pink spots on it; the carpet is dark. A glass screen is in front of the lifts which bring the dishes down from the kitchen at the top of the house. There are two staircases, one, the main one, from Coventry Street, and another one from Wardour Street, leading up to the restaurant. The waiters are mostly Germans, who speak good English, and who have the bearing of drilled men. I have no doubt that Mr Appenrodt, who at one time sacrificed a growing business to go back to Germany to do his military training, does not engage any of his countrymen who have shirked their years of service. The only drawback to the restaurant that I have noticed is an unavoidable one owing to the construction of the house, that the personnel of the coffee kitchen have to pass through the restaurant coming and going about their work.

The people who dine in the restaurant at Appenrodt's seem to belong to all classes. When I have dined there early I have seen amongst the customers men and ladies whom I recognised as belonging to the Variety profession, and who eat an early meal before going to the theatres where they perform. Many of Appenrodt's countrymen and countrywomen dine in the restaurant, and the black-coated classes of respectable Londoners and their womenfolk have already found out how good the food is there.

Having seen all these things, and feeling sure that Appenrodt, with his many shops and his restaurants, meant a new power come into the centre of London, I became curious as to the owner, or owners, of the

name and asked whether it was just a *nom de fantasie* or whether there really is such a person in the flesh as a Mr Appenrodt. I was assured that there was a Mr Appenrodt and that if it would gratify my curiosity to talk to him he would be very pleased to meet me.

And so it came that I met Mr Appenrodt in his own restaurant, and found him to be a very quiet, patently sincere German gentleman, with a round face, pleasant, steady eyes, hair a little thin on the top and a large dark moustache. He told me across a luncheon-table the story of his life, and I was able to assure him that other people besides myself would find the history of his early struggles in England an interesting one.

He was born in Berlin in 1867, and, having been a clerk in a Hamburg shipping agency, came to this country when he was nineteen years old to learn the English language. He soon found a billet in a City office, as correspondence clerk at a pound a week, and he determined to stay in England, though his father, who was a spirit distiller, wished him to return to Germany and the distillery.

When he was twenty years old he thought he knew London well enough to engage in business on his own account. His father would not help him, but he had £2000 left him by his mother, and with this he engaged in various speculations, the thought of which now moves him to hearty laughter. He wanted to induce the English to smoke the German students' long pipes and to use washable india-rubber playing cards.

These and other such brilliant ideas made a very serious inroad on his capital. He held, amongst other agencies, one for a manufacturer of preserves, and this brought him into touch with German provision shops. These shops were all tucked away in little side streets in the Soho district, and Mr Appenrodt thought that

there would be a good opening for German *delicatessen* if it was possible to show them in better premises and with more appetising surroundings. He opened in a basement at the corner of Lombard Street and Gracechurch Street a shop, in a room about twenty feet square. At that time there were no light refreshment places in the City except the A.B.C. shops, and Mr Appenrodt soon had a large clientele for his little shop. He saw that there was a fortune to be made in catering for the wants of the middle classes, but before he experimented on a larger scale he went back to Germany to serve his one year of military service, having sold his little business to a man who transferred it to some licensed premises and made a fortune by it.

When Mr Appenrodt came back, having completed his term of military service, he found that his luck in the City had petered out, for not one of the shops he opened in succession proved to be a success. The last straw was a shop in the Commercial Road, which seemed likely to eat up all the funds he had left. But it was during this last attempt that his luck turned. He engaged a young lady as shop assistant, and she brought him good luck and success; and his love story, for it was a love story, led up to the right ending of all love stories, a happy marriage. And he backed his luck, for he and his wife made a last bold bid for fortune by taking a shop in the West End, at the corner of Coventry Street and Whitcomb Street. This venture proved an instantaneous success. Mr Appenrodt and his wife at first did all the work themselves, and their business hours were from nine A.M. until one the next morning. They had no afternoons or evenings off, and worked all and every Sunday.

Easier times came, assistant after assistant was engaged, and one branch after another was opened. Not all of these proved successes, but in spite of

minor set-backs, the firm of two continued to flourish more and more, and has now the big shop and restaurant at Coventry Street, eight branches in various parts of London and a big depot in Paris. Mr Appenrodt has refused many offers to turn his undertaking into a company. He looks on his five hundred employees as his family, and is not willing to put them at the mercy of strangers.

That was Mr Appenrodt's story to me across the table, and when I asked him questions he amplified his personal history in various ways. He told me how the Parisian depot came to be established: that one day he met a former employee, one of his own countrymen, who talked French like a native of France. He knew his man, and he told him that he was just going over to Paris, and that if he could find a suitable shop to let there, he would take it and put his old friend in as his partner and as the manager. He found the shop, put his friend into it, and it has proved a most successful speculation. He told me of the various obstacles he had to overcome in building his premises in Coventry Street; of the large sums he expended to buy out the owners of the three houses he required and of the difficulties he experienced in obtaining a licence to sell beer and other liquors; how at last he bought two public-houses and surrendered their licences, and how the Licensing Magistrates then gave him permission to serve alcoholic drinks, but only with food. His prices, Mr Appenrodt told me, are fixed as being the lowest prices at which he can sell first-class food and make a reasonable profit on it without looking to any profit from the drinks that are sold, for no pressure whatever is put on the patrons of his restaurant to drink anything stronger than water.

I asked Mr Appenrodt what his special hobby was, and he told me that it was to buy public-houses and to

turn them into Appenrodt establishments, which, if you come to think of it, is as true a work of reform as any that is being carried out in London.

He and his wife, he went on to say, love the work they do. They go together frequently to the firm's factory in the country, where workmen, many of them imported from Germany, make the sausages, the glassed delicacies and other specialities of the house, and on fine days to the farm they own at Hendon, a picturesque tract of country through which the River Brent flows, where they breed pigs for the pork sausages—though English pork is so firm that Dutch pork or other foreign porks must be mixed with it to make it bind—and fowls and other farm produce.

Before I said good-bye to Mr Appenrodt he asked me if I would like to see the kitchen and other parts of the house, and I said "With pleasure," for I never think that the final word can be said regarding a restaurant until one has seen the kitchen that supplies it. We went upstairs to the top of the house, passing on the way a room in which half-a-dozen women were peeling potatoes for the potato salads, potatoes specially imported from Germany, for English potatoes crumble too easily to be satisfactory material. And eventually we came to a big kitchen at the top of the house, very airy and very clean, where a French *chef de cuisine* rules over cooks of all nationalities. Descending again, we went into the basement to look at Appenrodt's *Keller*, decorated after the German style with landscapes and figures, where two bands play alternately all the afternoon and evening, and where good Germans, and Englishmen who like good German beer, congregate to eat simple food and drink the produce of Austrian and German hop-fields.

And finally I walked round the big shop on the

ground floor, where at the marble counter the men in white were busy cutting sandwiches, and Mr Appenrodt explained to me the beauties of the glassed delicacies and the great variety of sausages of all countries, and as he took up one after another, sausages of majestic size, products of Germany or Italy, cut so as to show a section, and smaller sausages in glass jars, and bunches and packages of sausages, and Swiss sausages in a shape to take up very little room in a knapsack, I felt coming over me exactly the same feeling that I experience when a collector of beautiful china, or priceless lacquer or wonderful metal-work explains to me the beauties of his collection, a feeling that I too want to collect that particular kind of curio. If I were much in Mr Appenrodt's company I feel quite sure that I should become an enthusiastic amateur in the matter of sausages.

XXVII

THE BURFORD BRIDGE HOTEL

ONE of the pleasantest short runs out of London by motor car is to Box Hill and the little hotel which lies just below it. In summer the most picturesque way of getting to the hotel is either by one of the Brighton coaches, which make it their lunching place, or by the coach which goes to Box Hill and back in a day. And by no means an uncomfortable, and certainly the cheapest, way of going down to the hotel is to do as I did one Sunday—journey by the L.B. & S.C. Railway, getting glimpses of Epsom and the great rolling common land of Ashted, of little rivers, and old mills, and wooded downs, on the way.

The Burford Bridge Hotel, which takes its name from the wide brick bridge near by, over the River Mole, stands alongside the high road where it curves from the hill-side down to the level. It is a picturesque building, for when the Surrey Trust, of which more anon, took the house, it was a mere wayside inn. It has been gradually built on to, and is now more a group of houses of white rough-cast and slate roofs than one house. It has rambling tiled-roofed stables and a garage alongside it, and is surrounded by tall trees. Behind it, just where the hill begins to rise, are its gardens, with turf terraces and geraniums in terra-cotta pots on white pedestals. A great cedar stands in the midst of one of the lawns and another lawn is a bowling-green.

Some of the trees on the hill-side stretch out great branches which give shadow to the garden-seats.

Creepers climb over the house, there are rose-bushes by the paths, and out beyond the bowling-green an orchard of old fruit-trees is on the banks of the Mole, a brown stream in which the weeds wave gently as it moves with a pleasant rustle through the down country on its way to join the Thames. There are two dovecotes in the garden of the hotel, and the flutter of white wings in the sunlight is pretty to see. Behind the gardens is Box Hill, one part of which is steep, grassy down scored with white footpaths, the other half stony slopes so steep as to be almost cliffs, up which the woods and undergrowth climb. On the Sunday of my visit the dark green of these woods was scarcely touched by the russet and orange of the autumn tints.

In the old portion of the house there are small rooms on the ground floor, and above, a dozen little bedrooms with flower-boxes in their windows and bell-pulls hanging by the fireplaces; for though there is electric light all over the house, the old-fashioned bell-pulls and the long line of bells in the corridor have been left as an old-world touch. Out into the garden there juts a newly built part of the house, with a large dining-room on the ground floor and bedrooms above. The dining-room is panelled with chestnut wood to within a couple of feet from the ceiling. It has on one side recesses, one of which forms an ingle-nook for the fireplace, and opposite to them, in the wall facing the garden, are many French windows which give on to the lawns. At one end of this pleasant room is a great bow-window looking down the length of the lawns and orchard, and the tables in this bow are the ones most sought after. The strips of red carpet on the

polished wooden floor deaden the sound of the feet of the waiters as they go to and fro, the chairs are handsome ones of red leather, and as they bear on their backs a scroll with "The Gaiety" on it, I presume they were bought when the Gaiety Restaurant breathed its last.

All the classes for which the old inn, turned hotel, caters are provided for. There is a refreshment-room for the chauffeurs, a bar for the rustics. There is also a very pleasant sanctum, which I should have called the bar parlour, but which is dubbed the lounge, in which are the heads of some of the foxes killed by the local pack of hounds, and a photograph of a meet at the hotel, some coaching prints, a picture of a racehorse and its jockey, some little stags' heads which were in the house when it was bought by the Trust, a grandfather clock, some Japanese bronzes and Wedgwood vases, some old-fashioned wooden arm-chairs and some big leather ones. It is in this comfortable room, with a long stretch of window looking on to the road, that the worthies of the neighbourhood assemble to talk over local politics and other important matters. There is a little ante-chamber to the dining-room with comfortable seats in it, a coffee-room and a drawing-room which runs the full width of the old house and is the room in which the ladies staying in the house sit after dinner.

The Surrey Public House Trust, which bought the Burford Bridge Inn, and in whose hands it has become one of the most flourishing small country hotels in England, is an association of noblemen and gentlemen of Surrey who have bought a dozen inns and hotels in the county, and who run them on the sanest and soundest possible lines. The sale of alcoholic drinks is not looked to as the principal source of profit, and as none of the houses owned

by the Trust are tied houses, the goods, eatable and drinkable, are purchased in the best and cheapest markets. The company has as its manager at Burford Bridge Mr "Mike" Hunt, who comes of the family who were the lessees of the Star and Garter at Richmond in its palmy days. Mr Hunt, plump, light-haired, with a moustache somewhat resembling that of the German Emperor, knows all there is to know of hotel management, and the eight and a half years he has been at Burford Bridge are the years in which the hotel has risen to its present fame. He knows pretty nearly every motorist who uses the Brighton road, and is a keen supporter of local sport.

The road to Dorking at certain times of the day, especially on Sundays, is alive with motor cars and motor cycles, and the cars at lunch-time and at tea-time cluster in front of the hotel like swarming bees. In the big dining-room the lunch that is served is an excellent one. There is a choice of two soups, one thick, one clear; fish—on this particular Sunday there were some excellent lobsters—a great choice of cold meats and one hot meat dish, and a choice of puddings. A cut from the cheese is the ending of lunch, and then a cup of coffee served under one of the trees on the lawn. Half-a-crown is the charge made for this very ample meal.

If you are making a day of it, as I did on this Sunday, it is pleasant in the afternoon to stroll past the station, near which a little wooden chapel stands thatched with reeds, and on through country roads where the little roses of the brambles were turning to blackberries, and past garden hedges where the box and holly mingle, out towards Updown Woods. Once away from the clatter and roar of the main road one is soon in the heart of the most beautiful country in Surrey, and one comes back to the hotel, when the rush of the

motors returning to town is lulling, to find a little blue mist coming up from the valley before the distant wooded hills, and all the rooks winging their way homeward to their rookery in the great trees, and in the broad meadow by the Mole across the road, scores and scores of rabbits out for a frolic.

This is the dinner that I ate on that Sunday evening at Burford Bridge :

Consommé à la Reine.
Thick Giblet Soup.
Boiled Turbot, Sauce Hollandaise.
Roast Leg of Mutton.
French Beans. Potatoes.
Roast Duckling
or
Roast Partridge.
Salad.
Beignets Soufflés.
Tartlets Confiture.
Cheese, etc.

The giblet soup was excellent, the turbot fresh, and, though the mutton might have been the more tender for another day of hanging, the partridge and the salad were capital and the *beignet* made with a very light hand. The price of the dinner was 4s. 6d., and I drank with it a pint of Rudesheimer, which cost me 2s. 9d.

A large party of ladies and men who were staying in the hotel had a table in the centre of the big room and were very merry over their meal. Two pretty girls and a young man, motoring up to London, who stopped at the hotel to eat a dinner on their way, two pleasant-faced ladies staying at the hotel, and various couples of men, were some of the diners that night. After dinner I watched the departure of the motorists, who were completing their journey up to London, sat for a while by the fire in the drawing-room, for there

was sharpness in the September night air, and at ten o'clock, gently tired by my afternoon's walk on the hills, went up to bed in a clean little bedroom with some good old prints on its walls. Next morning the sound that woke me was the cawing of the rooks on their way to the fields.

XXVIII

THE RITZ

THE Ritz Hotel and Restaurant will keep in the remembrance of Londoners the name of the foremost *hôtelier* of our days, M. Ritz, a man whose genius is written across Europe and America, from Paris to Frankfort, from Biarritz to Salsomaggiore, from Lucerne to Madrid, from Budapest to New York. Too much quick brain work unfortunately has broken down M. Ritz's health, and he is never likely to take any share again in the control of the hotels which bear his name. He was the man who first taught the mass of the rich English how to dine in cultured comfort in their own capital; yet to the great majority of those who benefited by his perfect taste and his genius for giving unostentatious luxury to the gourmets of the world he was an unknown personality. Duchesses and actresses, legislators and actors, explorers and curates, all are known to the public by their photographs in shop windows and in the newspapers, but I never saw a photograph of Ritz in a Regent Street shop or in a journal.

It was by chance that he first came to England. When the Savoy Hotel was opened M. Ritz was manager of the Hotel National at Lucerne and of the Grand Hotel at Monte Carlo: Mr D'Oyly Carte found him at the Grand Hotel, and asked him if he would come to the Savoy for six months to put the restaurant in order. He came, bringing with him M. Escoffier, who had been chef at the Grand. Ritz

at the Savoy made the supper after the theatre the popular meal it still continues to be, though it is, thanks to the Early Closing Act, a scramble to eat five-shillings' worth of food in half-an-hour, and he also discovered, while at the Savoy, that if a restaurant wishes a large number of its guests to be of the softer sex a band is a necessity. He saw that an Austrian band, engaged at the suggestion of Mr Hwfa Williams, kept the diners half-an-hour longer at their tables over their cigars and coffee, and that ladies soon came to consider a dinner unaccompanied by music a tame feast. For the music, often over-loud, to the accompaniment of which I eat my meals in most restaurants, I am not in the least thankful to M. Ritz; but the majority of diners, especially those in petticoats, if such things exist nowadays, think differently.

The fight to obtain music at restaurants on Sundays was one of M. Ritz's great battles. I remember the days, not so very long ago, when a band could not play on Sunday in a restaurant unless some individual dinner-giver engaged it to play for his guests, and had no objection to the other diners listening to it. Another advance made by Ritz was the obtaining of newly baked bread for those who lunched and dined at the Savoy restaurant on a Sunday. The baker who at first supplied this bread broke some law or some regulation in doing this, and was summoned; but M. Ritz, not to be beaten, established a bakery in the hotel to supply the bread. Other restaurants followed suit. He had an enormous facility for quick work, no detail was too small for him, and when he had made up his mind that a thing should be done he took unlimited trouble to have it carried out. At one time, when he managed the Carlton, he could not understand why the coffee made there should not be quite up to the level of the coffee

at his hotels on the Continent. He tried every experiment possible, brought water from all parts of England, took every precaution against the dampness of our climate, and finally asked one of the Rumpelmayers, the great pastrycook family of the south of France, to come to London to advise him in this matter.

I used to see M. Ritz at this period of his life very often, and used to chat with him on matters of *gourmandise*. Very slim, very quiet, with nervous hands clasped tightly together, he would move through the big restaurant seeing everything, saying a word under his breath to a head waiter, bowing to some of the diners, staying by a table to speak to others, possessing a marvellous knowledge of faces and of what the interests were of all the important people of his clientele. There was a maxim, he said, which should be carved in golden letters above the door of every *maître d'hôtel*, and that maxim was, in English, "A customer is always right," and he always bore this in mind. Whenever at that period M. Escoffier invented a new dish a little jury of three, M. Escoffier, Madame Ritz and M. Ritz, used to sit in judgment on it in solemn conclave before it was allowed to appear on a menu in the restaurant. I once asked Madame Ritz, who has been M. Ritz's real helpmate and counsellor throughout his married life, to what quality she attributed her husband's success in life, and she answered, "sensibility," giving the word its French meaning.

M. Ritz had a talent for doing the right thing at the right time in the right way. I once saw him in the early morning on the platform of the station in Rome. He looked, as he always looked, as though he had come out of a band-box, well-shaved and well-brushed, the ends of his moustache pointed upwards, his whiskers brought down to the level of his mouth, wearing those dark garments of extreme

neatness which one always associates with the manager of hotels. He was the one male person on the platform that morning who was not dishevelled, nor tired, nor unshaven; but he had raced across the Continent as fast as trains could carry him to be there to receive a duke and duchess who were going to stay at the hotel in which he had an interest.

A *coup du maître d'hôtel*, of which he told me afterwards with a smile, was the method by which he put a large luncheon-party of ladies on easy terms with each other. It was a luncheon given at the Carlton and attended by the ladies who were sending the hospital-ship out to South Africa during the Boer War. Many of the ladies did not know each other well, and M. Ritz, exceedingly anxious that the luncheon should be a success, feared that they might not be easily conversational, so at the commencement of the feast he took round a bottle of Chateau Yquem and suggested to each lady that a little glass of white wine made a good beginning to lunch. In two minutes every lady was chatting most pleasantly to her neighbours whether she had ever seen them before or not. Of the determination of M. Ritz in his early days to learn everything that was to be learned in the restaurant world, I remember one instance, told me by his wife. He held a well-paid post in one of the smart Parisian restaurants, but left it to go to Voisin's at a smaller salary, because he thought there was more to be learned in the good old restaurant in the Rue St Honoré than in the other place of good cheer.

But it is of the Ritz Restaurant, not of Ritz himself, that I am writing in this chapter. I have read that the Ritz has swallowed up the site of the old "White Horse" cellars, from which so many of the coaches used to start, but the White Horse cellars had crossed the road a century and a half before I began to

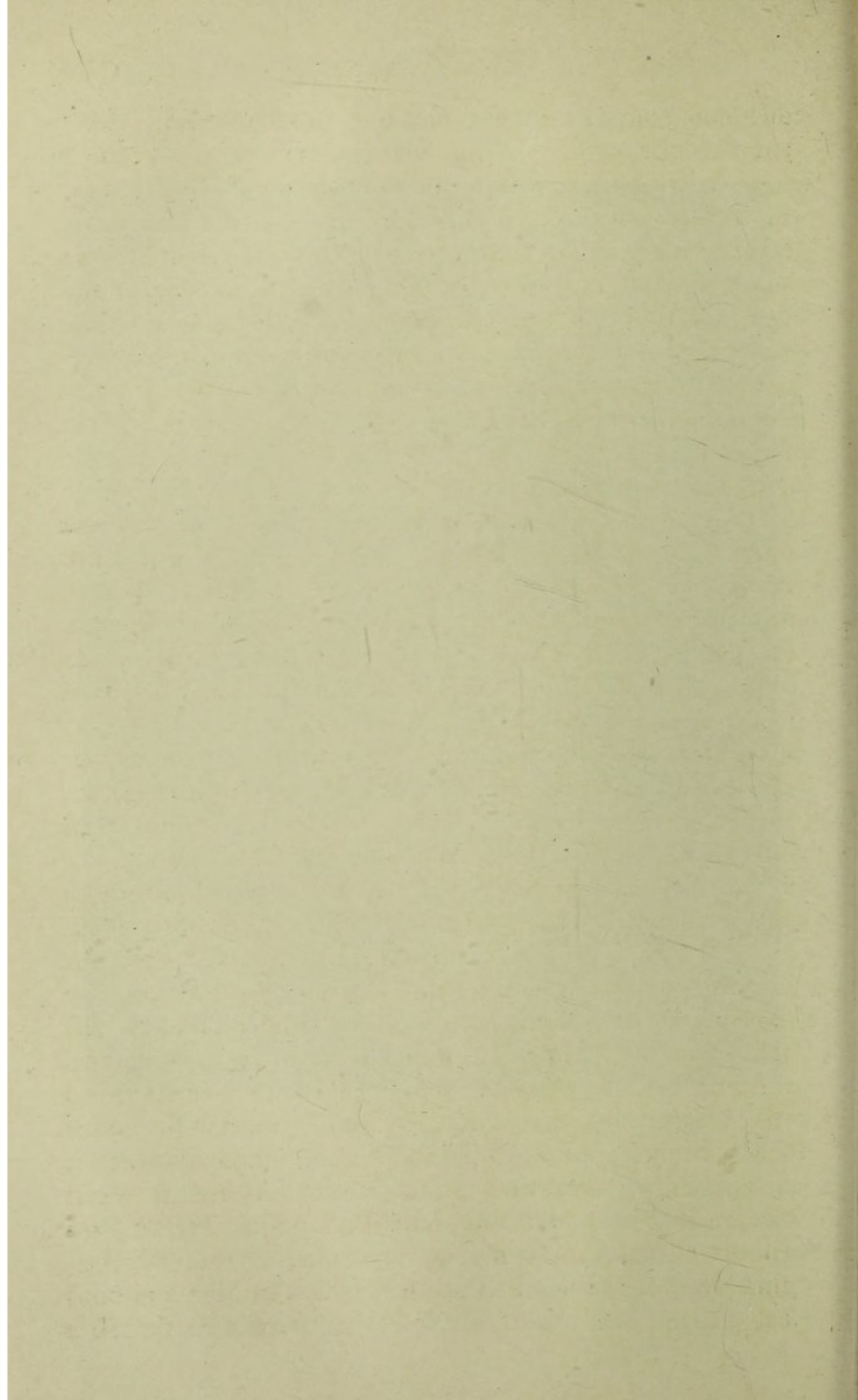
know my London. The Isthmian Club-house at one time occupied the portion of the site overlooking the Green Park, and when the Club moved on to other quarters it became the Walsingham, part chambers, part restaurant, one of the group of houses and hotels which stretched from the Green Park to Arlington Street. When M. Gehlardi managed the Walsingham, and M. Dutru was its chef, there was no better dining place in London.

The great white stone building of the Ritz, with its arcaded front and its entrance to the restaurant and ballrooms right in the middle of the arcade, is a comparative new-comer to London, in that it was opened in 1906. It is a building, inside and out, of the Louis XVI. period, with every modern luxury added. The Winter Garden, where one awaits one's guests, is a delightful place of creamy marble pillars and gilt trellis-work, casemented mirrors, carved amorini and a fountain with a gilt lead figure of "La Source" looking up at the golden cupids poised above her. The little orchestra of the hotel plays in this Winter Garden, and its music in no way interferes with the conversation in the restaurant.

The restaurant itself may be said to be dedicated to Marie Antoinette, for the gilt bronze garlands which hang from electrolier to electrolier, forming an oval below the painted sky, were designed to represent the flower decorations at one of Marie Antoinette's feasts, and though the garlands have been much lightened, for at first they were too heavy in design, they are still reminiscent of the poor little queen who lived such a merry life and met so sad an end. It is a restaurant of soft colours, of marbles, cream and rose and soft green, of tapestried recesses and of handsome consoles in the niches. Towards the Green Park long arched windows look on to one of the pleasantest prospects in London, and below these



M. RITZ



windows and between them and the Park is a little forecourt, in which a green tent is pitched when a great ball is to be held in the suite of rooms below the restaurant, and where on hot summer evenings dinner is served in the open air. At one end of the restaurant is a gilt group of Father Thames contemplating an exceedingly attractive lady who represents the Ocean. Everything in the restaurant is of the Louis XVI. period, and the Aubusson carpets and the chairs and all the silver and the china and the glass used in the restaurant and the banqueting rooms harmonise with that period.

The restaurant is not a very large one, and sometimes tables for its guests are set in the Marie Antoinette room with which it connects, and in that portion of the corridor which forms an ante-room. But though it is not of a very great size, the Ritz has a most aristocratic clientele. Royal personages often lunch and dine there, and diplomacy regards it as its own particular dining place, for tables are retained by the secretaries and attachés of two of the Embassies, the German and the Austrian, and, I fancy, by a third one also.

Lady Amalthea had very graciously said she would dine with me at the Ritz, so I went in the afternoon of a hot day to interview M. Kroell, the manager, who stepped across Piccadilly from the Berkeley to succeed M. Elles, who, for a time, managed both the Ritz in Paris and the Ritz in London. With M. Kroell was M. Charles, the manager in charge of the restaurant, and I asked that I might be given that evening a little dinner for two, not of necessity an expensive dinner, but one suitable for a warm evening, and I sent my compliments to M. Malley, the *chef de cuisine*, and said that I hoped that I should find some of the specialities of his kitchen amongst the dishes.

M. Malley came from the Ritz at Paris when the London Ritz was first opened, having acquired his art at the Grand Véfour and the Café Anglais. He presides over a very spacious range of white-tiled kitchens, in which all the rooms which should be hot are divided by a wide corridor from the rooms which should be cold, and he has a talent for the invention of new dishes, amongst these being a very splendid dish of salmon with a *mousse* of crayfish, which he has named after the Marquise de Sévigné, a reminiscence of his days at Vichy, and his *pêches Belle Dijonnaise*, of which more anon. Russian soups are one of the specialities of the Ritz kitchen, and there is a Viennese pastrycook amongst the members of M. Malley's brigade, who makes exquisite pastry. The late King Edward had a special fancy for the cakes made at the Ritz, and a supply used to be sent to Buckingham Palace, but M. Elles told me that this was a State secret, for M. Menager, the King's chef, might not have liked it to be known that anything from another kitchen entered Buckingham Palace.

As I had left my dinner in the safe hands of the experts, so I also left the question of the champagne we should drink, only asking that it should be one recommended by the house.

Before going on my way I reminded M. Kroell that on the last occasion that I had word with him he was presented with a miniature in brilliants of the order bestowed on him by the King of Spain, and I asked him if he had been awarded any other decorations. M. Kroell laughed, and then modestly owned to the German military medal, and as he told me this he involuntarily squared his shoulders as an old soldier.

Lady Amalthea arrived with military punctuality (she is a soldier's wife) in the best of spirits, wearing a dream of a dress, and her diamonds and turquoises.

A table had been kept for us at the upper end of the room, where Lady Amalthea could both see all the guests and be seen by them. She ran through a little selection from Debrett as she took her seat, having scanned most of the diners as she came in, and I was enabled to add to this by identifying a group at one of the tables as some of the Peace Delegates from the Balkans.

Then we settled down to the infinitely important matter of seeing what the dinner was that M. Malley and M. Charles in counsel had arranged for us.

This is the menu, and though at first sight it seems a long one for two people it is an exceedingly light dinner, and we neither of us ate the tiny cutlets which were the *gros pièce* of the feast. The wine to go with it was a bottle of Reederer 1906:

Melon.
Consommé Glacé Madrilène.
Filet de Sole Romanoff.
Cailles des Gourmets.
Côtes de Pauillac Montpensir.
Petits Pois.
Velouté Palestine.
Poulet en Chaudfroid.
Salade à la Ritz.
Pêche Belle Dijonnaise.

The melon, delightfully cold, struck the right note in a dinner for a hot evening; the Madrilène soup, beautiful in colour and flavoured with tomato and capsicum, carried on the summer symphony; the Romanoff sole was quite admirable, served with small slices of apple and artichokes and with mussels, the apple giving a suspicion of bitter sweetness as a contrast to the flesh of the fish. M. Charles happened to be near our table at this period, not, I think, quite by chance. I assured him that if there was such a thing as a gastronomic nerve M. Malley's creation

had found it. The quails formed part of a little pie brought to table in a pie-dish of old blue willow pattern, and with them were coxcombs and truffles and other good things. The *poulet en chaudfroid* was a noble bird, all white, and in it and with it was a pink *mousse* delicately perfumed with curry powder, a quite admirable combination. The Ritz salad is of *cœurs de romaine*, with almonds and portions of tiny oranges with it. Last of the dishes in the dinner came the *pêche Belle Dijonnaise*, which is one of the creations which have made the fame of M. Malley, and which will become historical. It is a delightful combination of peaches and black currant ice with some cassis, a liqueur of black currants, added to it, and it is called *Belle Dijonnaise* because of the old Burgundian proverb: *A Dijon, il y a du bon vin et des jolies filles*.

I do not doubt that many people dined well in London on that hot June evening, but this I will warrant, that no two people, however important they might be, or whatever they paid for their dinner (my bill came to £2, 10s.), dined better than did Lady Amalthea and I at the Ritz, and I make all my compliments to M. Malley.

I should not do the Ritz full justice if I did not refer to the banquets which are served in the Marie Antoinette room and in the great white suite below the restaurant. As typical of the Ritz banquets I give you the menu of one that Lord Haldane gave to the foreign officers visiting London in June 1912, and I also give the accompanying wines:

Caviar d'Esturgeon.

Kroupnick Polonaise.

Consommé Viseur Glacé en Tasse.

Timbale de Homards à l'Américaine.

Suprême de Truite Saumonée à la Gelée de Chambertin.

Aiguillette de Jeune Caneton à l'Ambassade.

Courgettes à la Serbe.
Selle de Veau Braisée à l'Orloff.
Petits Pois. Carottes à la Crème.
Pommes Mignonette Persillées.
Soufflé de Jambon Norvégienne.
Ortolans Doubles au Bacon.
Cœurs de Laitues.
Asperges Géantes de Paris, Sauce Hollandaise.
Pêches des Gourmets.
Friandises.
Mousse Romaine.
Tartelettes Florentine.
Corbeille de Fruits.

VINS.

Gonzalez Coronation Sherry.
Berncastler Doctor, 1893.
Château Duhart Milon, 1875.
Heidsieck Dry Monopole, 1898.
G. H. Mumm, 1899.
Croft's Port, 1890.
La Grande Marque Fine, 1848.

The dinner looks at first glance to be an exceedingly long one, but it is also an exceedingly light one, the saddle of veal being the only substantial dish of the feast. The *aiguillettes* of duckling from one of the special dishes at the Ritz, and the *soufflés* and the *mousses* that come from the Ritz kitchens are always ethereal. This banquet is an excellent example of a feast which is important without being heavy.

XXIX

SOME OUTLYING RESTAURANTS

IN calling the restaurants about which I write in this chapter "outlying" ones, I do not mean that they are in the far suburbs, but only that they are some little distance from Nelson's Column, which I take to be the centre of restaurant land, and that each of them is in a part of London having its own entity—Knightsbridge, Belgravia, Sloane Square and Bloomsbury.

Rinaldo, in the days when he was at the Savoy, used to stand at the desk by the door and tell us all as we came in what tables had been reserved for us. Of course, as *maître d'hôtel*, he had other duties, but as he knew my whims concerning the position of my table, and as he always sent me just where I wanted to be, I have him in grateful remembrance for doing this. When he left the Savoy he set up on his own account at No. 15 Wilton Road, which is just opposite Victoria Station, and there, I am glad to say, he still flourishes. He is no longer quite the slim Spanish don with a peaked black beard that he used to be, but proprietorship has a waistcoat-filling effect on restaurateurs, and time softens black hair with streaks of grey.

Rinaldo's restaurant is quite spacious, a high and airy room with plenty of light. Its walls are of pleasant grey with decorations in high relief in the upper part, and on the stained glass of the sky-light are paintings of game and fruit. Baskets of ferns in

the shape of boats hang from the roof, and there are always bunches of roses on the tables. Behind a screen at the far end is the service bar where the wines are served out, and in the centre of the room is a very appetising table of cold meats and fruit; the melons and other things that should be kept cold being on a long box of broken ice; the mushrooms reposing in big wooden baskets; the crayfish and the egg-fruit and the other delicacies, according to seasons, all being set out with exceptional taste and looking very tempting.

Quite an aristocratic clientele lunches and dines at Rinaldo's restaurant. Many of the great people of Belgravia like to lunch in a restaurant which is no great distance from their homes; the Monsignori from the neighbouring Roman Catholic Cathedral often go there, and quite a number of gourmets who like the Italian dishes—for Rinaldo, though he looks like a Spaniard, is an Italian—of which there are always some on the bill of fare, are very constant patrons.

The restaurant has an extensive *carte du jour*, and most people who lunch there prefer to order that meal from the card, though there is a two-shilling lunch for those who are in a hurry. On the *carte du jour* which I took away with me on the last occasion I lunched in Wilton Road I found amongst the entrées *ris de veau financière*, *Vienna schnitzel*, *côte de veau Napolitaine*, *bitock à la Russe*, *entrecôte Tryolienne* and *fritto misto à la Romaine*, which shows that the restaurant caters for many nationalities and many tastes. My lunch on this occasion—it was a warm summer day—consisted of a slice of cantaloup melon, 9d.; *fritto misto*, 1s. 6d.; a cut of cheese; an iced *zabajone Milanaise*, 1s., and a cup of coffee, which is always excellent at Rinaldo's, and which, disregarding his early bringing-up—for Italians never allow metals to touch coffee—Rinaldo pours out of a fascinating

little metal pot. A three-and-six dinner is the dinner of the house, and Rinaldo explained to me that this rarely contains Italian dishes; for Englishmen in the evening find them rather difficult to digest. This is a menu, taken by chance in the autumn, of the dinner of the restaurant:

Hors d'œuvre.
 Consommé Tosca.
 Crème Portugaise.
 Turbot Bouilli. See Homard.
 Filet d'Hareng Meunière.
 Mignonette d'Agneau Marigny.
 Grenadine de Veau Clamart.
 Grouse rôti.
 Salade.
 Choufleur au Gratin.
 Glacé Napolitaine.
 Mignardises.

Gretener, who is the proprietor of the New Albert Restaurant, 77 Knightsbridge, also, in the past, scored good marks in my memory, for he was manager of that very difficult proposition, the restaurant of the Gare Maritime at Boulogne, and during his reign there it was always possible, by giving him warning beforehand, to get an excellent luncheon excellently served. As most of the business of that restaurant is to put the greatest amount of food in the shortest possible time into travellers who keep one anxious eye on the train outside, or to cater for big parties of excursionists at the cheapest possible rate, a manager must have a soul for the gastronomic art to keep his restaurant under these conditions a place of delicate cookery. When M. Gretener and his pretty wife came to England they established themselves at a restaurant in Knightsbridge, which has a tessellated pavement and walls of ornamented glazed tiles with mirrors at intervals, and a ceiling on which cupids in high relief gambol on medallions with a blue ground. A stained

glass window is at the far end of the restaurant, a wide staircase leads to the first floor, and under the staircase is a little glassed-in serving-room. M. Gretener has collected a very faithful clientele, and he also sends out meals to the dwellers in the houses of flats which abound in Knightsbridge. In the summer-time many people who go out of a morning to Hyde Park, strangers in the land, French, Germans, and Italians amongst them, see Gretener's as they go through the Albert Gate and make it their lunching place. A three-shilling dinner is the dinner of the house, but whenever I have been there I have ordered my meal *à la carte* from the very moderately priced card of the day, and this is a typical bill. *Crème Lentils*, 8d. *Mayonnaise of Salmon*, 2s. *Noisette d'agneau Doria*, 1s. 6d. *Haricots verts sautés*, 6d., and *Bavarois chocolat*, 4d.

The Queen's Restaurant, No. 4 Sloane Square, is one to which I often go when there is a first night at the Court Theatre, for it is only just across the road from that house. Its proprietor, M. Coppo, who learned his business at the Café Royal, bustles about his restaurant with a napkin under his arm doing the work of *maître d'hôtel*. The restaurant, with cream-coloured walls and mirrors in white frames, consists of several rooms thrown into one, the part by the entrance door being narrow and just holding two rows of tables, while at the back there is plenty of space. The clientele, on the occasions that I have been there, has been a mixture of all the comfortable classes—Guards' officers from the neighbouring barracks, fashionable people of both sexes from Sloane Street and its neighbourhood, dramatic critics making a hurried meal before going to the theatre, business men, and an artist or two from the Chelsea studios. M. Coppo gives his patrons a set dinner,

the price of which, I fancy, is 3s. 6d.; but I have always ordered my dinner from the *carte du jour*, and I have found the food to be quite reasonably cheap and good.

I wonder how many people of the tens of hundreds who take their books to Mudie's to be exchanged know that the Vienna Café just across the road is an excellent place at which to lunch. In the upstairs rooms I have eaten, in the middle of the day, Austrian and German dishes excellently cooked, and there is a Viennese cheese cake which is a speciality of the house for which I have a liking, and with a slice of which I have always ended my meal. The coffee of the house is the excellent coffee made in the Austrian manner, and at tea-time the Café down below is always crowded with people, especially ladies, who like the Viennese cakes and pastries that they obtain there.

XXX

THE KING'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 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 mantelpiece 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 arm-chairs, 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 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 to fill the vacant chairs.

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 Turquie.
Hure truffée. Sauce Cumberland.
Pluviers dorés.
Pommes de terre Anna.
Champignons grillés.
Omelette soufflée.
Huîtres à la Diable.

The spatchcocked smelts, the boar's head, with its sharp-tasting sauce, and the *soufflée*, I recognised as being favourite dishes on the King's Guard.

On this evening the wearers of the black coats, as well as the red, had served his 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 of London and at College Green, have compensating advantages, and the officers' 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 guardroom 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 to the officer 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 imaginary stationery 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 anyone 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 late Majesty King Edward, 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, the Sovereign's health is not, I believe, drunk after dinner—though I fancy that King Edward, when 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 bridge-table 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 Queen Victoria in the early part of her reign. It is the work of

“Lieut.-Col. Cadogan,” and was begun on the wall of a guardroom—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 portraits 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 guardroom, 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 the greater portion of 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 downstairs 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.

XXXI

THE OLD BULL AND BUSH

THERE is no side of London life that has died out more completely, so far as the upper classes are concerned, than the visits to the old tea-gardens which used to be the resort of the well-to-do classes from the days of King Charles II. up to the beginning of the last century. Baginnage Wells, to which Nell Gwynne first brought the bucks, is only a name now, but Coleman, in his comedy, *Bon-ton*, defined good tone as to

“ Drink tea on summer afternoons
At Bagginage Wells with china and gilt spoons.”

Sadler's Wells was a tea-garden with a music-room before Rosoman pulled down the building to put up a theatre. White Conduit House used to take fifty pounds on a Sunday afternoon for sixpenny tea tickets, and its white bread was considered a great luxury. The bowling alleys of Marylebone Gardens were famous; and there were tea-gardens and a bowling-green at the Yorkshire Stingo, opposite Lisson Grove. Kilburn Wells advertised that its gardens and great room were adapted to the use of “the politest companies,” and at Jenny's Whim there was a great garden, in different parts of which were recesses, and in a large piece of water facing the tea alcoves big fish and mermaids showed themselves above the surface. The Apollo Gardens in the Westminster Road, and Cuper's Gardens opposite Somerset House,

were amongst these old places of amusement, most of which are now only names. There is, however, at the present time a tavern with tea-gardens of the old-fashioned kind quite close to London, which, besides its picturesqueness, has other recommendations which give it a right to inclusion in a "Gourmet's Guide."

The Bull and Bush at North End, Hampstead, which is the tavern to which I refer, has no very long history behind it. It was a farmhouse when Jack Straw's Castle and the Spaniards were inns with tea-gardens attached, the gardens of the latter house being laid out in the formal Dutch style, which became fashionable after the Revolution. Tradition has it that the Bull and Bush was at one time Hogarth's house, and Mr Austin Dobson, who garnered information from all quarters into his book on Hogarth, admits the claim of the house to this distinction, but thinks that it was a house to which Hogarth went for "a visit." There are long periods in Hogarth's life, before his father-in-law, Sir John Thornhill, forgave him for his elopement with his daughter and took the young pair to live with him in the family house in Covent Garden, of which no record has been kept, and I should like to imagine that the blue-eyed, bold young artist carried away the girl he loved to the farmhouse on the breezy common to spend their honeymoon there, and that he and she together planted the ring of fir-trees in the garden which are still called "Hogarth's firs." The house ceased to be a farm, and became a place of refreshment in later days, and W. H. Pyne (Ephraim Hardcastle), in his collection of essays, "Wine and Walnuts," tells of an imaginary excursion made to the Bull and Bush by a party which included Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough, Sterne and Garrick, and puts in Gainsborough's mouth praise of the creamy

milk and the fine Dutch damask to be found at the little inn.

And the great Victorian painters and writers followed the example of their predecessors in going on jaunts to the Bull and Bush, for when Harry Humphries, a great favourite with all men of the pen and brush, was the host of the house, Dickens used to frequent it, and George Augustus Sala, Clement Scott and E. L. Blanchard, and those two great *Punch* artists, George du Maurier and Charles Keene, and many more of a like kidney.

There is no difficulty in finding the old inn to-day, for at the flagstaff and the pond which mark the western end of the long, bare backbone of the common (from which London can be seen below to the south in its veil of smoke, and on clear days the Surrey hills beyond, while to the north are the hills and fields of the great landscape that stretches from Harrow round to Hainault) the North End road plunges down, with common land, furze and undergrowth and big trees and grassy knolls to one side, and on the other old oaken park palings and big trees.

Just where the road first dips a blind fiddler stands, and all day long he plays one air, and that air is Kate Carney's song, "Down by the old Bull and Bush." The inn itself is almost in the shadow of a big mansion, Pitt House it is called, to which the great Lord Chatham retired when he suffered from his nerve storms, refused to see any of his fellow-ministers and could not even bear the presence of a servant, his food being passed in to him through a panel in the door. In the road to one side of the inn a peripatetic photographer generally establishes his studio. The Bull and Bush is a white-faced building with a slated roof, standing a little back from the highway, and behind it and on both sides of it are

many trees. It is an old house with a big window to its large room on the first floor and nice old-fashioned bow-windows with small panes to the two bar-rooms on the ground floor. One of these bar-rooms is a real snugger adorned with sketches by some of the artists who have made themselves at home in the inn. Various large boards set forth that lunches, dinners and teas are obtainable; that the name of the host is Mr Fred Vinall; that there are private dining-rooms, a coffee-room and billiards; and that a two-shilling ordinary is ready every Sunday from two to three o'clock. This "ordinary," which I believe is a very noble feast for the money charged, is held in the big room upstairs.

The gardens are at the back of the inn, and though summer is the real time to enjoy the attractions of the arbours at the Bull and Bush, it is quite pleasant when the new leaves are covering, in the spring, the trees with the lightest green, or on a still, autumn day when the tints around the lawn are all russet and copper, to drink tea on the little terrace behind the house in the centre of which is a great stone vase for flowers and at which little tables with red and white and yellow and white covers are set for the tea-drinkers. The tea is excellent, and though the slices of bread and butter are thick they are of fine bread and the freshest of butter. When spring merges into summer the green bowling lawn, with turf as thick and level as a carpet, also has its quota of cane chairs and little tables, and the rustic arbours all around it, on the roofs of which are boxes of flowers, are also all occupied. The waiters are kept busy carrying cakes and bread and butter and tea and stronger beverages all through a summer day to the little family parties who take their ease in the garden of their inn.

As a neighbour to the bowling-green is the platform which serves as an out-of-door dancing floor

when Cinderellas are held on summer evenings, and as the flooring on which the chairs are put when a concert is given on a little stage which is to one side of this planked space. In the middle of this dancing and theatre floor is the circle of firs which bears Hogarth's name. There are electric lights on the terrace and amidst the trees and round the lawn and dancing floor. Tuesdays and Thursdays and Saturdays are the days on which the concerts or the dances are generally held in summer.

Mr Fred Vinall, short in stature, genial in manner, with close-clipped grey beard and moustache, has just as distinguished friends amongst players and artists and men of the pen as any of his predecessors. He has revived the old pleasures of the tea-gardens of a hundred years ago, and to see the gardens of the Bull and Bush on a warm summer evening is to learn that Londoners can take their evening pleasures out of doors with cheerful mirth and with sobriety as well.

And now at last I come to the reason why the Bull and Bush should be recommended to gourmets not only as a place where Londoners can be seen amusing themselves sanely, but as a place of excellent eating. Mrs Vinall, wife of the host of the old inn, Belgian by birth, has all the talent of a Cordon Bleu, and if warning is telegraphed or written to the inn of the coming of a party of gourmets, a lunch or a dinner, admirably cooked under Mrs Vinall's supervision, will be ready for the gastronomers, the table set in the open air, and they will, I am sure, eating in the invigorating air of Hampstead Heath food admirably cooked, thank me for having told them of a lunching and dining place clear of the London smoke.

XXXII

THE BERKELEY

THE pleasant, white-faced hotel, with its restaurant on the ground floor, which faces the Ritz across Piccadilly, stands on classic ground, for it was at the corner of Piccadilly and Berkeley Street that Francatelli, the great cook and *maître d'hôtel*, pupil of the even greater Carême, was in command of the St James's Restaurant and the hotel of that name which in the middle of the last century stood first, with no *proxime accessit*, amongst the restaurants of the capital.

Nowadays we take our great French cooks in London for granted; they are part of the life of London. But in the fifties Clubland was still a little astonished and flattered that the great chefs were willing to desert their own country to dwell amidst the fogs and rain of England, and restaurants were comparatively rare, and few of them were of a very high class. Hayward, who first published his "Art of Dining" in 1852, gives in his book little biographies of Ude and Francatelli, and alludes rather slightly to Soyer, who was the third of the trio of very great cooks. Disraeli, who had enough of the artistic temperament in him to assign to gastronomy its proper place amongst the pleasures of life, recorded the dismissal of Ude from Crockford's in the following words:—"There has been a row at Crockford's, and Ude dismissed. He told the committee he was worth £4000 a year. Their new man is quite a failure, so

I think the great artist may yet return from Elba." The "new man" was Francatelli, and he was so far from being a failure that when it was thought that Buckingham Palace should possess the greatest cook in England the position of chief cook and *maître d'hôtel* to the Queen was offered to him. He did not find the position a comfortable one, and resigned at the end of two years. For a time he lived in retirement, but in the sixties he once more placed himself on the active list, and took charge of the St James's.

In doing so he was following the example of Soyer, who, in the fifties, established a restaurant in Gore House, which had been the residence of Lady Blessington. Soyer expected that the Great Exhibition would send a crowd of rich people to his restaurant, and many great people patronised it, but in the end he lost £7000 by his venture. Hayward says concerning him that "he is more likely to earn immortality by his soup kitchen than by his soup," alluding to the soup kitchens that Soyer as a Government Commissioner established at the Royal Barracks in Dublin during the great famine in Ireland.

In 1868, when "The Epicure's Year Book," an attempt to copy Grimod de la Reynière's "Almanach des Gourmands," was published by Bradbury and Evans, Francatelli was at the zenith of his fame at the St James's, and the anonymous author, in that book, who wrote the chapter on "London Dinners," after paying a compliment to British fare, saying that Wilton and Rule are not afraid of comparison with any oyster dealers in the world, and extolling the flounders and steaks of the Blue Posts in Cork Street, declares that cookery "such as Ude once served at Crockford's and his successor Francatelli is now serving at the St James's Hotel, Piccadilly, is not reached by any other hotel or tavern in London." As it may interest my readers with a taste

for antiquarian lore to know which were the restaurants recommended in the sixties for good plain food, I continue the quotation. "At the Ship and Turtle in Leadenhall Street, or at Birch's (Ring and Brymer), on Cornhill, the turtle is cooked with perfect art; and the punch would satisfy the author of 'Le veritable art de faire le Punch.' The fish, at the fish dinner at Simpson's in Cheapside, is admirable. Nay, you may have a chop broiled under your nose, at Joe's, behind the Royal Exchange, that shall defy criticism. At Simpson's in the Strand; at the Albion, by Drury Lane Theatre; at Blanchard's (ask for his Cotherstone cheese), in Beak Street, Regent Street, the Earl Dudley's neck of venison, duckling with green peas, or chicken with asparagus—the main elements of his dinner 'fit for an emperor,' are to be bought excellently well cooked. The Rainbow, in Fleet Street, is a well-known, good, plain house; and a grill well cooked and served, where Messrs Spiers and Pond have put up their silver gridiron, at Ludgate Hill, is a new illustration of London plain cookery. The London, in Fleet Street, is an admirable house; cheap, and yet where there are—a rare thing in the City—well-kept tables. This house publishes its menus in the evening papers. Our oyster shops have no rivals in the boastful capital of gastronomy. Take Pim's, for example, in the Poultry, where there are perfect oysters, and the luncheon delicacies of our modern day. But when the ambitious diner glances along the line of entrées, even in the best of the houses I have cited, he is in danger. In the City, the Albion is the best kitchen for elaborate dishes, and the dinners given here are smaller than the crowds which meet over huddled, flat, and chilled dishes at our great public dinners. Yet nobody would for one moment think of comparing the most carefully prepared dinner for sixty

with such a menu as Francatelli prepares for half-a-dozen in Piccadilly." From this general damnation, however, the author exempts Willis's, in King Street, St James's, where, he says, the mutton pies of the Old Thatched House Tavern may still be eaten; Epitau's, in Pall Mall; the Burlington, in Regent Street; Verrey's and Kühn's, in which places "very respectable French cookery is to be had."

"The Epicure's Year Book" gives amongst its menus of remarkable dinners of 1867 one of the "Epicure" dinner served at the St James's. The *diner à la Russe* was in those days ousting the dinner in the French style, in which the dishes were placed in three services or relays upon the table and carved by host and guests, and such an epicure as Captain Hans Busk, who was the gourmet *par excellence* of the sixties, gave his guests at the United University Club very much such a dinner as men eat to-day, though his dinners were of too many courses. But at the Mansion House the first and second and third services were still adhered to. Francatelli, though conforming to the new style, made concessions to the old school, as this menu shows. His French was a little shaky, for he did not know when "*à la*" should be used and when it should not be used:

Les Huîtres.

Potages.—La purée de gibier à la chasseur; à la Julienne.

Poisson.—Les epigrammes de rougets à la Bordelaise; le saumon à la Tartare.

Entrées.—Les mauviettes à la Troienza; les côtelettes à la Duchesse; les médaillons de perdreaux à la St James; le selle de mouton rôtie.

Legumes . . . Salade.

Second Service.—Le faisan truffé à la Périgieux; la mayonnaise de crevettes; les choux-fleurs au parmesan; la charlotte de pommes; le gâteau à la Cérito.

The St James's was not by any means the first hostelry at the corner of Berkeley Street, for in the

stage-coach days a coffee-house—the Gloucester, I think—occupied the site, and some of the coaches for the west used to start from it; but I have already given you a fill of the history of the forerunners of the Berkeley, and will come at once to recent years and the modern building.

M. Diette, who was one of the men who awakened London from its mid-Victorian gluttony and taught Londoners to dine lightly and dine well, was for a time at the Berkeley before he went to the Continent to make the Hotel du Palais at Biarritz a very splendid place of entertainment. He died recently at Le Touquet, where one of his many sons-in-law, M. Recoussine, is in command of two of the big hotels. In 1897 there were many alterations and additions made to the Berkeley, the restaurant was almost doubled in size, and when M. Jules was manager of the hotel and Emile was in charge of the restaurant, and M. Herpin was *chef de cuisine*, the Berkeley was, as it is now, one of the “best places” at which to dine in London. The restaurant in those days was panelled with light oak, and the ante-room, by the entrance, was all old gold. Jules was translated to the Savoy and now, as a proprietor, is comfortably settled at the Maison Jules in Jermyn Street. M. Kroell was another manager who stepped from the Berkeley to a larger hotel, having only to cross the road to reach the Ritz. Mr Raymond Slanz, the manager who controls the Berkeley in this year of grace, is as eminent as any of his predecessors. He is young, energetic, and has brains, which he has used unsparingly in keeping the Berkeley abreast of the times. He is the most cosmopolitan of managers, for he has gained his experience all over the Continent, in England, America and South Africa. He has been the architect of his own fortunes, for when he first

came to London he started his upward career from the position of extra waiter at the Savoy. The restaurant to-day is all white; its walls have a deep white frieze, with on it in relief a wood through the trees of which a mediæval hunting party thread their way, half the animals that came out of the Ark being afoot in this wonderful preserve. There is some gold ornamentation just below the frieze and on the casings of the windows, and gilt electroliers are in the centre of the panels. Shields of semi-opaque glass and lamps hidden by the cornice throw light up on to the ceiling and there are gilt capitols to the fluted columns. The rose and grey of the carpet and the rose of the chair cushions form a pleasant contrast to the white. The ante-room in which a string band of musicians in gorgeous uniforms play has the same decoration as the restaurant. The Berkeley restaurant flourishes so satisfactorily that more tables are wanted, though it is comparatively lately that a new room was added, and the space occupied by the cashiers is to be thrown into the restaurant. M. Arturo Giordano, who is generally known as "Arthur" and who used to oscillate between the Palais at St Moritz and the Berkeley, is now permanently in charge of the restaurant, and M. J. Granjon, who came to London from the Grande Cercle Republican, and who has been created a Chevalier of the Order of Merite Agricole, is the *chef de cuisine*.

One warm July evening I found myself at eight o'clock dinnerless in Mayfair. I was to have dined with friends at their house, but on arriving there found that my hostess had been taken suddenly ill and that dinner was the last thing concerning which the household was troubling itself. My room under these circumstances was more welcome than my company. My favourite table in my favourite club

would, I knew, be occupied by somebody else; the Berkeley was the nearest restaurant, and I accordingly walked there and found one of the small tables at the far end of the room unoccupied. At the Berkeley there is always a *carte du jour* with an abundant choice of dishes, those ready being marked with a cross. It is the custom of the house, and a very good one too, to allow the diners to choose their own dinner from the *carte* and to charge them half-a-guinea or twelve and six, according to whether the dinner is a long one or a short one. I was in the course of ordering a short dinner and had selected *rossolnik*, a Russian soup, some turbot, a wing of a chicken *en cocotte*, and was hesitating over the various *entremets*, when Arthur espied me, came to my table and took matters into his own hands. He asked to be allowed to alter my menu slightly in order that some of the specialities of the house might play a part in it. I was nothing loth, for my dinner under those circumstances became interesting, and I was prepared to consider critically any of M. Granjon's creations that Arthur might put before me. This was the menu :

Melon Cantaloup.
Crème Raymonde.
Turbotin Beaumarchais.
Suprême de Volaille Bagatelle.
Velouté Châtelaine.
Pêches Glacés Hortense.

The soup was a cream of chicken, delightfully soft, a very gentle introduction to what was to follow. The *turbotin Beaumarchais* is a noble dish, a strong white wine sauce with the essence of the fish in it, and sliced truffles, and mushrooms and carrots being served therewith, parsley, and just a suspicion of onion. The *suprême de volaille Bagatelle*

I recommend to anyone who, like myself, is occasionally warned off red meats by sundry twinges, as being a dish of fowl which is interesting and not in the least vapid. Asparagus and mushrooms and truffles go with it, and the principal ingredients of the sauce are port and cream reduced. The *entremet* consisted of peaches and grapes, raspberries, and a cream ice with, I fancy, more than one liqueur added, the whole forming a noble *Coupe-Jacque*, served in a silver bowl. My dinner being a short one, I had plenty of appetite left for this admirable fruit dish.

The Berkeley, both the hotel and the restaurant, always seem to be a stronghold of the country gentleman. If I heard that an M.F.H. of my acquaintance whom I wished to see was in town and I did not know his address, the hotel to which I should telephone first to ask whether he was staying there would be the Berkeley, and no doubt the wonderful frieze of the restaurant is a compliment to the mighty hunters who stay in the hotel. Many squarsons and the higher ranks of the clergy are amongst the patrons of the Berkeley, and whenever I dine at the restaurant it seems to me that it ought to be the week of the Oxford and Cambridge or Eton and Harrow cricket matches, for I always see amongst the guests at the dinner-parties pretty girls with complexions of cream and rose, the sisters of Varsity lads and public schoolboys, country maidens whom I always associate with "Lord's," light and dark blue ribbons, and wild enthusiasm.

I have never dined at the Berkeley without coming away a pleased man, and the dinner that M. Granjon cooked for me when I was dinnerless in the wilderness which borders the Green Park sent me away from the Berkeley rejoicing.

XXXIII

THE JOYS OF FOREIGN TRAVEL

THE RESTAURANT GUSTAVE

THERE are one or two tales of wonderful discoveries of excellent little restaurants in unexpected places abroad that, with variations, I hear over and over again from travelled folk.

One of these stories is a motoring one. The scene is usually the south of France, and a long day's journey, an early *déjeuner*, a breakdown in some desolate spot and a long delay before the damage could be repaired are the preliminaries, all told at considerable length. Then comes a harrowing description of the oncoming of darkness, of the discovery that the town at which the travellers intend to spend the night is still many, many kilometres away, of a shortage of petrol, of the faint feeling that comes through lack of food. A shower of cold rain, or mud up to the axles, a broken-down bridge or a swollen stream generally come into the story at this period to lead up to the sense of relief, described with rapture, which the travellers experience when, at a turning of the road, a light is seen at a distance. This is found to be the window of a little inn, quite unpretentious outside, with a sanded floor inside, everything quite clean, the host a retired *maître d'hôtel* who had in his time been a waiter in Soho, and talks a little English, the hostess an excellent cook. And then the story ambles along to its happy

ending with the description of the *soupe à l'oignon* which is put on table, over which a clean napkin is spread, of the delicious savour it emits and how beautifully hot and strong it is, of the grilled wings of a chicken which follow; of an *omelette au confiture*, which the cook herself brings to table; of country wine and country butter; a long stick of bread and some cheese made on a neighbouring farm. And the "tag," in a dozen words, tells how the chauffeur, who has also been well fed, finds a fresh supply of petrol, and how the contented travellers reach at midnight the town where they intend to sleep.

The scene of another story is a minor cathedral town in Italy or Spain, and the tale commences with a vigorous denunciation of the principal hotel in the place: stuffy rooms, vile food cooked in rancid oil; an impudent head waiter and an unhelpful hall-porter. The central division of the story deals with a long day of sight-seeing; a midday meal of sandwiches, "horrid things made of the ham of the country and coarse bread"; and a terrifying adventure when, having lost their way in a network of streets, the ladies of the party are stared at by some horrible unshaven men who say un-understandable things in patois, and then laugh. The tale concludes thus:—"Just as we thought that we should have to pay one of the impudent little boys to show us the way back to that disgusting hotel we turned a corner, and there we saw a clean little restaurant with little trees in front of the window and a bill of fare, with lots of nice things on it quite cheap, hanging on the door-post."

There are unlimited variations on the above, and the tale can take from two minutes to three-quarters of an hour in the telling, according to the volume of guide-book gush and the amount of lip-smacking over the food that is introduced into it.

But why go to France, Italy or Spain to obtain these materials for a story? The circumstances can be exactly reproduced in London. The preliminaries are to eat nothing between breakfast and dinner-time and to tire yourself out with exercise. Then, if you wish to indulge in the motoring adventure, engage the most rickety taxi-cab to be found on any stand and drive round and round the inner circle of Regent's Park until the inevitable breakdown occurs. When, after a quarter of an hour's delay, the chauffeur says that he is ready to go on again, tell him to drive to Soho Square, then to go down Greek Street, and to stop when he comes to the Restaurant Gustave.

Or if it is the cathedral city incidents you would like to live through once more, start in a worn-out condition from Golden Square, and make your way in a zigzag through the narrowest streets and alleys you can find to St Anne's, Soho, which is big enough to be a second-class cathedral, and go on, still zigzagging, till you reach Greek Street and Gustave's.

And this is what you will find when you get there. A little restaurant with a chocolate face and with a plate-glass window, on which the fact is announced that it is an *à la carte* establishment. Two little trees are in front of the window—little evergreen trees are fashionable just now in Soho—and the name "Gustave" is well in evidence above, with an electric lamp to throw light upon it. Inside the window a long lawn curtain gives privacy to the restaurant. The card of the day, with half-a-hundred names of dishes written in black ink, hangs in a brass frame by the door.

Go inside, and you find yourself in a little room—a French gentleman who went on my recommendation to Gustave's described it to me afterwards as a *boîte*—with cream-coloured walls and a chocolate

skirting. A counter, to which the waiters go to fetch the dishes, with a girl behind it very busily engaged, is at one side of the room. Oilcloth is on the floor, and a little staircase leads to the first floor. Eleven tables are in this room, all of them generally occupied, mostly by French people; but there is a second smaller room on beyond, which holds four tables, and on the two occasions lately that I have dined at Gustave's I have found one of these tables vacant.

Everything is very clean at Gustave's, and if the napery is thin and the glass is thick, that is quite in keeping with the travel story. The people at the other tables are probably French. They belong to the respectable classes, and they behave just as well as though they carried innumerable quarterings on their escutcheons. A young waiter puts the *carte du jour*, with an ornamental blue border, on the table in front of you, and Monsieur Gustave, who, napkin on arm, bustles about his little restaurant, comes to give advice, if needed, as to a choice of dishes.

Gustave—who must not, of course, be confused with that other Gustave who was manager of the Savoy, and who is now at the Lotus Club—is a little Frenchman, with a moustache, who is very wide awake. He has a sense of humour, and he talks excellent English. He was for a time at an hotel in Hatton Garden, and at the Restaurant des Gourmets before he came to Greek Street.

The first item on a bill of fare that I took away with me reads: “ $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. Escargots, 8d.,” but long ago, at Prunier's in Paris, I tried to attune my palate to snails, and failed, so on this particular night I did not even consider their inclusion in my dinner. Nor did I dally with *hors d'œuvre*, though I might have had sardines, or *filets de hareng*, or *anchois*, or *salmis* for twopence. But I ordered soup, and I

think I went up in Gustave's opinion when I preferred three-pennyworth of *soupe à l'oignon* to *pot au feu* at the same price. There were three fish dishes on the card, *moules Marinières*, 6d.; *merlan frit*, 6d.; *sole frit*, 10d.; and Gustave recommended the *moules* as being a dish of the house, and having come in that morning.

Looking down the list of entrées to find something sufficiently bizarre in taste to match the commencement of my dinner, I hesitated over a *pilaff*, which would have cost me 8d., almost plumped for a *râble de lievre*, which meant an outlay of 1s., and then, remembering that it was Christmas-time, as near as possible ordered a *boudin*, which is the sausage that all good Frenchmen eat once a year at the *réveillon* suppers on Christmas Eve. But I remembered the nightmare that followed the last *réveillon* supper to which I went in Paris, and, passing over all the entrées, ordered nothing more exciting than a wing of chicken, 1s., and a *salade chicorée*. A *crème chocolat*, 4d., was my *entremet*.

The onion soup proved to be excellent—quite strong and quite oniony, which, as I was not going into polite society that evening, could offend no one. The mussels quite justified M. Gustave's eulogium, but as I did not eat the whole bowlful, and left some of the savoury liquid, M. Gustave, with an expression of concern on his face, came to my table to ask whether I had found any fault with the dish. I assured him that my appetite, not the mussels or the cook, was alone to blame. The wing of the chicken was plump and tender, and had I paid half-a-crown it could not have been better. The *crème chocolat* certainly tasted of chocolate, if the cream was not a very pronounced feature in it.

It was a very excellent meal—at the price—and had I carried out the starvation and strong exercise

and vivid imagination preparation that I have so strongly recommended to you, instead of lounging out to tea in the afternoon with a pretty lady and eating tea cake and sugary things at five o'clock, I should have recorded all the beautiful things about the little restaurant that I hear in the travel stories.

XXXIV

A SUPPER TRAIN

ONE day last year I ate two meals under roofs owned by the Great Eastern Railway Company.

I lunched in the dining-room of the Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street, a splendid, airy room, light grey and gold, with brown Scagliola marble columns. The tables in this dining-room are set a good distance apart, rather a rare luxury in the City, where space is very limited; one is not forced to overhear the conversation of the people dining at other tables, and waiters do not kick one's chair every time they pass. The people lunching seemed to be a happy blend of visitors staying in the hotel and City men who had come in from their offices, but there was none of that breathless hurry-scurry that I always associate with a lunch in the City.

A curious piece of furniture, glass above, wood below, caught my eye as we went into the room. It looked at a distance like a jeweller's showcase, and I asked my host if it was that. He laughed and told me to inspect the jewels that it contained. It was a sideboard for the cold meats, showing them, but at the same time keeping the dust from them. It is cooled by ice. It is such a happy idea that the Carlton Club has copied it.

This is the menu of the lunch that I might have eaten in its entirety had I chosen :

Consommé Pluche.
Potage Solferino.
Boiled Salmon, Caper Sauce.
Fried Fresh Haddock.
Omelette Alsacienne.
Grilled Kidney, Vert Pré.
Roast Haunch of Mutton, Red Currant Jelly.
Roast Veal à l'Anglaise
(Or choice of cold meats).
Cabbage. Tomatoes.
Boiled and Lyonnaise Potatoes.
Roast Partridge and Chips.
Damson Pudding. Baked Custard.
Stewed Apricots.
Cheese. Radishes. Watercress.

I know of old that the cookery at the hotel is excellent, for I have often lunched both there and at the Abercorn Rooms, next door, so I did not feel in honour bound to form myself into a tasting committee of one, and to go through the menu. I ate salmon and partridge and damson pudding, and found them excellent. On the menu I saw that the price of the lunch was 3s. 6d.

My host, being a Freemason of high degree, asked me if I had ever seen the Masonic temple in the Abercorn Rooms, and as I said that I had not we crossed on the first floor from the hotel to the rooms, and, meeting Mr Amendt, the manager of all the Great Eastern catering enterprises, on the way, he showed us the temple, splendid with panels of onyx and columns of delicately tinted marble, the lamps of onyx, dish-shaped and throwing their light up to the ceiling, seeming to me to be the most beautiful things of their kind I have ever seen in a temple. Mr Amendt, having his master key in his pocket, took us through many ante-rooms and small banqueting-rooms, with pictures by Lely of some of the beauties of Charles II.'s Court on the walls, and we looked n, on my way to the street, at the great Hamilton

Hall, a replica of the banqueting-room of the Palais Soubise, where the waiters, lunch being finished, were putting the chairs upside down on the tables, and at the grill-room, named after the county of Norfolk, which, with its violet marble pilasters and its paintings of City celebrities—Nell Gwynne being cheek by jowl with such eminent respectabilities as Whittington and Gresham—is at night one of the pleasantest little banqueting-rooms in which I have ever feasted.

As I said good-bye to my host and to Mr Amendt, I remarked that I should be at Liverpool Street again early next morning, as I was going down to Southend for the week-end, and that if I had not been due at a London theatre that night I should have enjoyed sleeping in the fresh sea air. Whereon Mr Amendt pointed out to me that I could perfectly well go to the play and catch the supper train down to Southend at midnight. If this suited me I had only to telegraph to the hotel at which I was going to stay, and Mr Amendt said that he himself would order my supper for me. It all seemed to fit in so admirably that I said, "Thank you very much," and sent off my telegram at once.

I had abundant time to change my clothes after the theatre, and taxied down to Liverpool Street Station through the deserted City streets. At the station, however, there were many people on the platforms, the refreshment rooms blazed with light, and scores of little parties in them seemed to be partaking of midnight tea. I found that a table had been reserved for me in the restaurant car of the Southend train, and a white-jacketed waiter told me that my supper would be served immediately the train started, and that a compartment in the carriage next to the restaurant car was at my disposal. Mr Amendt had been even better than his word.

Waiting on the platform, I watched another train, a suburban one, on the next line of rails, fill up. Bare-headed ladies, clutching in their hands the programmes of the theatres to which they had been, came sailing along; little messenger boys, their evening's work over, climbed into the carriages, and one gentleman, who evidently thought his time for rest had arrived, took the whole of one side of a third-class compartment to himself, lay down, and went at once to sleep.

When the suburban train had left, a few minutes before midnight, the stream of passengers set towards the Southend train, and I wondered which of them were going to be my fellow-supperers in the restaurant car. A party consisting of an elderly gentleman—I am sure he was an uncle, for he had the good-natured look that all genuine Dickensy uncles acquire—had evidently brought up two nieces and a little schoolboy nephew to see some play. They were returning in the highest of spirits, and got into the restaurant car at once, the uncle asking whether his champagne had been properly iced. A clergyman with a paper bag in his hand, which I think must have contained sponge cakes, looked regretfully at the car, and told the guard that had he known that it was running he would not have brought his supper with him. I saw nobody else who was an obvious supperer, but when the whistle blew and the flag was waved, and the train started, I found that in the section of the restaurant car where my table was there were two elderly ladies at one of the tables, a young man in spectacles at another, the good uncle and his little party at the third and that the fourth was reserved for me. There was on my table a little bunch of chrysanthemums in a glass vase with a heavy foot to prevent it from overturning, and I noticed with appreciation several devices for holding in their places

cruets, water bottles, salt cellars and glasses should the train at express pace threaten to shake things off the table. This was the menu of the supper that Mr Amendt had ordered for me :

Lobster Mayonnaise.
Mutton Cutlets Reform.
Roast Grouse. Straw Potatoes.
Salad.
Omelette au Confiture.
Devilleed Sardines.
Cheese. Biscuits. Butter.
Watercress. Lettuce. Celery.
Black Coffee.

Like my lunch earlier in the day, the Great Eastern offered me more than I had sufficient appetite to cope with. I found the *mayonnaise* excellent, and did full justice to the grouse, the *omelette* and the devilled sardines. The young man in spectacles, I could see, had ordered for his supper fried cod and a glass of porter; the elderly ladies were drinking tea and eating cake; and the uncle and his little party were, like myself, eating a sumptuous meal.

As I ate my supper the train rushed through the East of London, and Bethnal Green and Stratford were patches of lighted windows in the darkness, but when we were out of the zone of bricks and mortar and in the country there was a full moon high above, and fields and trees all grey and shadowy in the mist that was rising.

The two elderly ladies had gone back to their compartment, the young man in spectacles paid his bill, and I judged from this that we must be nearing Southend, and asked for mine. The waiter bowed politely and informed me that I was the guest of the Great Eastern Company. As I could not argue with such an indefinite thing as a railway

company, I had to accept the situation, and therefore I cannot set down how much the excellent meal I ate should have cost me.

When the train ran in to the terminus at Southend it certainly did not seem to me that I had been travelling for an hour.

XXXV

THE ADELAIDE GALLERY

THERE is no story of the success of a London restaurant more interesting than that of the Adelaide Gallery, which is more generally known as Gatti's.

The first Gatti to come to this country from the Val Blegno in the Ticino Canton of Switzerland, on the Italian side of the Alps, was the pioneer of penny ices in England, and his shop in Villiers Street by the steps leading down to the steamboat pier below Hungerford Market was for the sale of these ices and *gaufres*, the thin batter cakes pressed in a mould and baked, a delicacy the small children of Continental countries love, but which has never ousted the British penny bun for its pre-eminence in these islands. When Hungerford Market was swept away to give space for the building of Charing Cross Station, its name, however, being perpetuated by the bridge, the first Gatti's was re-established under the arches of the station and became in due course the Charing Cross Music Hall.

To the Gatti of Villiers Street and the Arches came from their native village two of his young nephews, Agostino and Stefano—the wags of the later Victorian days called them Angostura and Stephanotis. They determined, as soon as they felt their feet, to launch out on their own account. They leased the derelict Adelaide Gallery, which had its entrance in Adelaide Street, converted it into a café restaurant after the Continental pattern, and opened it on 21st

May 1862. So juvenile were these enterprising young Swiss that the younger brother could not legally sign the lease, being under twenty-one. The Adelaide Gallery was then right in the centre of the triangle of buildings bounded by King William Street, Adelaide Street and the Strand: it was parallel to the Lowther Arcade, and the entrance to it was by a narrow corridor from Adelaide Street, a street named, of course, after King William the Fourth's queen.

The gallery had been built in 1832 as the Gallery of Practical Science, at a time when object lessons in science were considered essential for the improvement of youthful minds; and in the long gallery, which is now a part of the restaurant, were working models of shaft wheels, while down its centre ran, waist-high, a long tank with a suspension bridge across it and a lighthouse in its midst. In this tank, working models of steamboats with very long smoke stacks puffed up and down. A gallery ran round this long hall and had pictures on its walls and models on stands of the various forms of architectural pillars. The Polytechnic, opened six years later, which this generation still remembers in its Diving Bell and Pepper's Ghost days, was run on similar lines. The gallery became subsequently a Marionette theatre, a casino and the home of some negro minstrels, but it never settled down successfully to any form of moneymaking until the young Gattis started it on its career as a café restaurant. An habitué of the Gallery in its scientific or in its casino days would only recognise the building to-day by its arched ceiling and by the circular openings in the roof for light and air.

Agostino and Stefano Gatti put marble-topped tables in the Gallery, couches against the walls and chairs on the other side of the tables, and in the basement they made billiard-rooms. Chops and

steaks and chip potatoes, the last a novelty to London, were the trump cards of their catering. At first the magistrates, possibly suspecting that the casino might be revived under another name, refused the Gallery a music licence, but that was granted later on in its existence. The Adelaide Gallery as a restaurant was a direct challenge to the old chop-houses. It gave very much the same fare under more airy and more cheerful conditions, and the Londoners took a wonderful fancy to the "chips."

My earliest memory of a visit to the Adelaide Gallery is a schoolboy one, for I was taken there to sup after seeing Fechter play in *The Duke's Motto* at, I think, the Lyceum. I ate on that occasion chops and tomato sauce, went on to pastry, and finished with a Welsh rarebit—a schoolboy has no fear of indigestion. I came to know the restaurant very well in the eighties, when I was quartered at Canterbury and at Shorncliffe for a spell of home service. I got at that time as much fun out of life in London as a Captain's pay and a small allowance would permit. I had sufficient knowledge of matters gastronomic to know that I received excellent value for my money at Gatti's, and the ladies to whom I used to give dinners said that they liked Asti Spumante and Sparkling Hock just as well as champagne—and perhaps they really did, bless them.

Early in the eighties most of the improvements made to the Gallery had been completed, and the restaurant ran right up to Adelaide Street and down to the Strand. Whether the entrance and new rooms on the King William Street side had then been made I forget, but if they had not been they soon after came into existence. One special friend of mine in those days was the big man in uniform who stood at the Strand entrance, and whose constant companion

was a large St Bernard dog. The big man always had a cheerful turn of conversation, and if by any chance I grew impatient because a lady whom I expected to dine did not appear, he would console me by saying that "probably nothing worse than a cab accident has happened." The St Bernard in its old age grew snappy, and eventually, when it had come back twice from new homes which had been provided for it, had to be destroyed. Both Messrs Agostino and Stefano Gatti were still alive in those days, grave-faced, pleasant gentlemen, who lunched together and dined together at a table not far from the entrance to the kitchen, and who when their meals were finished, sat at a semicircular desk and took the counters from the waiters as they had done ever since the first days of the restaurant.

I was somewhat later to make their acquaintance, and this was how it happened. Little "Willie" Goldberg, who was known to all the English-speaking world as The Shifter, was a man of brilliant ideas, which he rarely had the patience to carry into effect. I received one morning from him a telegram asking me to meet him at ten minutes past one at the Strand entrance of Gatti's, adding that it concerned a matter of the highest importance, which would bring much profit to both of us. I arrived at Gatti's in time, and was met at the door by The Shifter, who told me that the Gattis wanted a military melodrama for the Adelphi, that theatre being their property; that he had thought of a splendid title for a soldier play; that he and I would write it together; that the Gattis had asked him to lunch to talk the matter over; and that he had suggested that I should come too. Then we hurried into the restaurant. We lunched with Messrs Gatti, and when, after lunch, they very gently said that they were ready to hear anything that we might have to tell them, The

Shifter disclosed the title, which pleased them, and then sat back in his seat as though the matter was settled. The Messrs Gatti asked for some slight outline of the play, but The Shifter put it to them that an advance of authors' fees should be the next step in the business. This, the Gattis said, was not the way in which they transacted the business of their theatre, whereon The Shifter closed the discussion by saying farewell. When we were outside in the street again, I suggested that the next thing to do would be to get out a scenario to submit to the Gattis; but The Shifter was in high dudgeon; he wrinkled up his long nose in haughty scorn and then said: "These Gattis don't understand our English ways of doing business"—and that was the beginning and the end of our great military melodrama. But I had made the acquaintance of the Gattis, and was always afterwards on very pleasant terms with them.

It is not within the scope of this article to deal with the Gattis' enterprises in theatres, but the tale of their purchase of the Vaudeville Theatre should be told as an instance of their kindness of heart. Amongst the many Gatti enterprises was the establishment of a great electric-light-distributing business. This began with a very small installation in the cellars of the Adelaide Gallery, and increased and increased until it is now one of the greatest electric light companies in London. At one time the electric light plant was established in a building just behind the Vaudeville Theatre, and Mr Tom Thorne, the actor, whose management had not prospered greatly, told the Messrs Gatti that his ill-success of late was owing to the noise the engines made behind the stage. Messrs Gatti, to obviate this grievance, bought the theatre, or at least as much of it as is freehold.

There always has been a strong theatrical element amongst the clientele of Gatti's, and the authors who

wrote the Adelphi melodramas—Dion Boucicault, Henry Pettitt, George R. Sims, Robert Buchanan and others—used constantly to be amongst the people lunching and dining in the Gallery. In their theatrical enterprises the Gattis never forgot the Adelaide Gallery, and the one thing essential in an Adelphi melodrama was that it should conclude in time to allow the audience to sup at the restaurant. All the black-coated classes patronised the Gallery, from the comfortable business man, who got as good a chop there in the evening as he did in his City restaurant in the middle of the day, to the little clerk who took the girl he was engaged to there because she liked the music and the brightness of the place. The country cousins all knew Gatti's, and knew that it was a place where they would get a good meal at a reasonable price, and that no advantage would be taken of their ignorance of London charges. Salvini, the great actor, used to take his meals at Gatti's when he was in England, and the great Lord Salisbury had a fondness for a chop and chips, and used to gratify it by going to the Adelaide Gallery. An old Garibaldian, a fine, white-haired old gentleman in a slouch hat and a long, threadbare cloak, was the most remarkable of the clientele of Gatti's in the early eighties; he was evidently very poor and one dish with him constituted a meal, but because he had fought as a red-shirted hero, the waiters at Gatti's treated him with more deference than they would show to any prince, and took the copper he gave as a tip with as much gratitude as they would have expressed for the gold of the millionaire.

The Gatti's of to-day has adapted itself to modern requirements, but it caters for much the same class as of yore, and its food is still excellent material, well cooked, though there is a great deal more variety now than there was in the old chops and

chips days. It retains, however, all its old democratic ways. Its clients choose their own tables and their own seats, hang up their own coats and then catch the attention of the waiter who has charge of the table. The restaurant—cream and gold, with French grey panels in its roof—has now four entrances: the Adelaide Street one, two in King William Street and one in the Strand. While the main restaurant remains an *à la carte* establishment with a plentiful choice of dishes, including a list of grills, there is a *table d'hôte* room at the King William Street side, a handsome hall with a gilded roof and pink-shaded electroliers, which throw their light up on to the ceiling. The latest addition to the dining-rooms is a banqueting hall, reached by marble stairs from King William Street. It is a handsome and well-proportioned room, with a musicians' gallery at one side, and an ante-room half-way up its stairs, and it holds one hundred and fifty feasters quite comfortably.

At the same little table where their father and their uncle sat, the two Messrs Gatti of to-day—John (ex-Mayor of Westminster) and Rocco—sit, young copies of their predecessors, in that one of them has kept a plentiful head of hair, whereas the other one has been less conservative. They give the same attention to the business of the restaurant that the original Gattis did, but the semicircular desk has vanished and the work of taking the counters is now done by deputies on either side of a great screen which stretches before the wide entrance to the kitchen. Mr de Rossi, dapper and energetic, is the manager of the restaurant, and it is always a comfort to me that when I lunch or dine under the musicians' gallery the *maître d'hôtel*, whom I have known for thirty years, comes and gives me fatherly advice as to the choice of dishes for a meal.

The kitchen of the Adelaide Gallery is one of the few in London that possess a large open fire for roasting, and its Old English cookery is, therefore, always good. It caters, however, for all nationalities, and as an indication of what its prices are, and of the variety of its fare, I cannot do better than give you the list of entrées I find on the *carte du jour*, which I took away the last time I dined at Gatti's :

Carbonnade de bœuf à la Berlinoise, 1s. 2d.; *lapin sauté Chasseur*, 1s. 4d.; *vol-au-vent de ris d'agneau Financière*, 1s. 6d.; *pieds de porc grillés Saint Ménehould*, 1s. 2d.; *fegatino di pollo alla Forestiera*, 1s. 4d.; *terrinerie de lièvre St Hubert* (cold), 1s. 9d.; *côte de veau en casserole aux cèpes*, 1s. 9d.; *turnedos Rouennaise*, 2s.; *chump chop d'agneau, purée Bruxelloise*, 1s. 6d.; *tête de veau en tortue*, 1s. 6d.; *salmis de perdreaux au Chambertin*, 2s.; *langue de bœuf braisée aux nouilles fraîches*, 1s. 6d.; *escalopes de veau Viennoise*, 1s. 6d.; *miron-ton de bœuf au gratin*, 1s. 4d.; *côtelettes d'agneau Provençale*, 2s.; *pigeon St Charles*, 2s. 6d.; *noisettes de pré-salé Maréchal*, 1s. 9d.; *entrecôte Marchand de Vin*, 2s. 6d.; *demi faisan en casserole*, 4s.

And here is the menu of the five-shilling dinner I ate one Friday in October in the *table d'hôte* room, in company with many people, who were evidently going later to theatres :—

Hors d'œuvre à la Parisienne.

Consommé Julienne.

Crème d'Huîtres.

Turbotin d'Ostende Réjane.

Anguilles Frites. Sce. Tyrolienne.

Côtelettes de Volaille Pojarski.

Petit Pois au Sucre. Pommes Comtesse.

Faisan Ecossaise Rôti en Casserole.

Salade Sauté.

Glacé Mokatine.

Délicatesses.

Gatti's, like every other restaurant of standing, has its own special dishes, and some of these were included in a lunch which I ate with Messrs John and Rocco Gatti when they were good enough in a chat we had to refresh my memory in regard to the early days of the restaurant:

Hors d'œuvre à la Parisienne.
 Zéphire de Sole Adelaide.
 Suprême de Volaille Royal.
 Asperges vertes. Sce. Chantilly.
 Perdreau Rôti à la Broche.
 Cœur-de-Laitue à la Française.
 Cerises Montmorency Sarah-Bernhardt.
 Corbeille de Délices.
 Café.

The *zéphire de sole Adelaide* is an admirable *filet de sole* and oysters therewith; the breast of the chicken was served with an excellent white sauce; and the *entremet* was worthy of the distinguished tragedienne after whom it is named.

The wine list at Gatti's is a document to be carefully studied. The Gattis of the previous generation laid down some very fine wines, and clarets and Burgundies of the great years of the end of the last century are to be found in the Adelaide cellars. The champagnes of great years and of great houses are priced far lower than they are to be found on the lists of fashionable restaurants, and there is some old cognac in the cellars to which I take off my hat whenever I am privileged to meet it. It was bought by the Gattis at the time of the Franco-Prussian War, when stocks of old brandy were sold at low prices. It is marked so as to show a profit on the purchase-money—not at its worth—and I know of no better brandy at any London restaurant, whatever price customers may choose to give.

XXXVI

THE COMPLEAT ANGLER

I DESERTED, shamelessly and openly deserted, but I had an excuse.

When we started, a boatload of men in a launch from above Boulter's Lock on a still, hot summer Sunday afternoon, the sky was grey above and the river and Cliveden Woods were all in pleasant shadow ; but when we were come to Odney Weir and Cookham Ferry the sun broke through the clouds and sucked them up, and at Bourne End the river sparkled and the sails of the sailing-boats tacking up the long stretch below Winter Hill gleamed in the sunlight. It was as hot an afternoon as we ever get in England, and as we steered into the eye of the sun the glare hurt my eyes, and there was no dodging it. When we came to the Compleat Angler, just below Marlow Bridge, and lay alongside its green lawn, with the flower beds and rose-trees right at the garden edge, I looked at the people sitting on the rustic chairs by the rustic tables in the shadow of the line of trees that acts as a screen against the western sun, and the villagers who loll the Sunday through on the railing of the bridge and stare at the hotel, and I thought how pleasant it would be to sit in the shade until dinner-time came, to eat that meal with the burble of the water falling over the weir in my ears, and afterwards to go back to town by a late train. So I deserted openly and shamelessly.

The Compleat Angler is a very old inn, so old

that no one knows when it was built. But it was very probably in existence when the bodies of Warwick, the King-maker, and his brother Montacute were carried to Bisham Abbey to be buried. An engraving of a hundred years ago shows the old inn with a rope walk by its side, where the gardens of the hotel now stretch on the bank of the swift stream below the weir. The old wooden bridge which the present suspension bridge has replaced started at the angle of land by the weir, an angle now covered by the dining-room of the hotel, and it was under this bridge—not the present one—that a legendary hero of gastronomy, the Marlow bargee, ate the Puppy Pie.

In the pre-railway days the Compleat Angler looked for its patrons amongst the fishermen and the simple folk who gained their living on the river. The hotel to-day is one of the most comfortable old-fashioned riverside inns between Oxford and London, an inn that stoutly upholds its old English characteristics. The brown roofs of the old building and its old brick walls are still there, and the old fruit-trees of the orchard give shade on its lawn; but new wings have been built on as the custom of the hotel has increased, and the great stretch of delightful garden behind the hotel, from which there is a glorious view of the Quarry Woods, must be a comparatively new addition. Mr Kilby, the present landlord, his face tanned by the river air and river sunshine, his hair and moustache almost white, has been in possession of the house for twenty-two or twenty-three years; but before this time it had been in the hands of one family from generation to generation, right back into the misty past. Mr Kilby has kept the hotel Old English in character in all essential particulars. There is good black old oak panelling in the little hall, and Jacobean furniture

and an old grandfather clock, and on its walls, in glazed cases, are monster perch and other giants of the Thames caught at Marlow, and engravings of local celebrities and local magnates of past days; while in the dining-room are caricatures by Gillray and other wielders of the pencil in Georgian days. The gardens, kitchen garden and flower garden and lawns, behind the house, are also delightfully English, for the flowers that grow there are the Old English flowers, roses and lilies, stocks and pinks, ladies'-slippers and cherry pie, and a host of others, flowers that are old friends and which fill the air with scent on a hot afternoon. There are roses everywhere around the Compleat Angler. Those who land from their boats pass under a great arch of roses, and in the garden the roses climb over many bowers—for "pergola" is a word I hesitate to use in writing of this Old English pleasance. Honeysuckles grow up the supports of the verandah that gives shade to the windows of the dining-room, and there are bright flowers in all the window-boxes. Above all, there is the charm of the river, the indescribable freshness that always comes with tumbling water, the delight of the long, trembling reflections thrown by the trees and the spire of the church across the river, the grace of the white-clad girls who punt upstream and of the swans that sail quite secure by the edge of the weir, and the pleasant "lap, lap" of the water as the launches cut through it. If I wished in one hour to give an American friend an idea of the charm of the Thames I would take him to the chairs under the great willow that stands by the weir in the grounds of the Compleat Angler, and when he had sat in this shade for half-an-hour watching the calmness of the river and the eddies of the weir stream, the rushes, the reeds, the trees, the long line of wooded hills, the

swans and the boats, if he did not understand what the Thames is to an Englishman, I should despair of him. If I was interested in a young couple who were hesitating on the brink of matrimony, and I wished to push them into it, I would invite them to take tea with me on the lawn of the Compleat Angler, and when the sun dropped low and the shadows of the trees lengthened and the air grew heavy with the scent of the roses, I would leave them together for an hour, and if in that hour the man had not proposed I would consider him a base deceiver, a heartless wretch incapable of sentiment.

In the late afternoon, when the bells of the church were ringing for evening service, I walked up the High Street, in which the lads of the village and the lasses all in white were abroad, and looked at Marlow's sole antiquarian relic—the stocks, which stand in an enclosure of turf and trees and flower-beds. I continued my pilgrimage to Shelley's house in West Street, and then on over the wooden bridge of old grey wood to the Lock.

The sun had set and the west was all opal with the dying light when I came back to the lawn of the Compleat Angler. The launch that had lain the afternoon through by the steps was gone, with its load of merry people, and the motor cars were all off on their return journey to London. Only the people staying in the hotel remained. It was dinner-time, but I was loth to leave the open air, for the hush of the evening had fallen. I could hear faintly the sound of a hymn being sung in the church, and that sentimentality, which is not religious feeling, but which is akin to it, had fallen upon me. I was at peace with all mankind. I forgave the architect who designed Marlow Church tower for the

triviality of his Gothic ; I had no rancour against the tailor who took three weeks to make me three white evening waistcoats ; I could think kindly of the people who send me insufficiently stamped letters from abroad, and I could remember that even the income-tax collector is a fellow-man. Had there been anyone by to whom I could recite poetry I would have been prepared to quote Herbert to my purpose, but the only companionable soul available at the moment was a friendly Irish terrier, and terriers have no soul for verse.

At last I went in to dinner. A corner table in the biggest of the three dining-rooms, a real summer-house, its walls being all windows, had been reserved for me, and from my seat I could look across the river to one side and on to the weir stream on the other. The light of day was not all gone, and I hardly needed the shaded lamp which kept company on the table with a great bunch of sweet-smelling flowers from the garden. I had not ordered any special dinner, but ate the *table d'hôte* meal of the house, the charge for which is six shillings. It was a good English dinner, and my only complaint regarding it is that there were some tags of unnecessary French upon the menu card. This, in plain English, was the dinner I ate and enjoyed :

Thick Mock Turtle.
 Salmon.
 Clear Butter Sauce.
 Braised Ham.
 Broad Beans.
 Madeira Sauce.
 Roast Chicken.
 Chip Potatoes.
 Green Peas.
 Raspberries and Cream Ice.

I might have added a savoury to this, but I like

to end my dinner with a sweet taste to linger on my palate. My bill altogether came to seven-and-six.

Feeling contented with myself, and life, the Compleat Angler, and my fellow-men, I sauntered to the railway station in time to catch the nine-forty train back to London.

XXXVII

ARTISTS' ROOMS

DIEUDONNÉ'S. PAGANI'S

THERE used to be two little rooms in London restaurants with walls made interesting by the signatures of great artists of song and colour and sculpture and music, who, some of them, had sketched little scenes above their names, and others had dotted down a few notes of music.

One of these little chambers was the sitting-room of Madame Dieudonné, in Ryder Street. Madame Dieudonné was an old French lady who kept a boarding-house much patronised by the great artists who came over to London from France. In her kitchen was an admirable chef, and the fame of the *table d'hôte*—a real *table d'hôte* in its original sense, for Madame always sat at the head of her own table—was so great that people who loved good cooking used to ask permission to be allowed to dine at it. But Madame Dieudonné did not give this permission to all comers, and it was necessary that the would-be guest should be presented to Madame and should obtain from her an invitation to her circle before a place was laid for him. Any special favourites amongst the guests were asked by Madame to come after dinner into her sitting-room, there to drink coffee and to chat, and amongst these favourites were the great musicians, and the great actors and great painters of her own land, who stayed at the

boarding-house. When any man, or any lady, was asked for the first time into this holy of holies, he or she placed a signature upon the wall and any further embellishment that came to mind. Gradually the middle portion of the walls became a perfect treasure-house of autographs.

Madame Dieudonné died, and her circle was broken up, the old lodging-house became a hotel, and when M. Guffanti, its present owner, brought his great energy to bear upon it, it soon became prosperous. Alterations were made, the white room on the first floor, with its panel pictures of gallants and ladies in silks and brocades, which is now used for banquets, was constructed, and when Madame Dieudonné's little room was thrown into what is now the entrance hall, the workmen destroyed the signatures on the walls, evidently regarding them as mere dirt, in spite of all the precautions M. Guffanti had made to preserve them, and the only remembrances left of the stately old lady who used to sit at the head of her own table is in the name of the hotel and restaurant.

Dieudonné's has flourished exceedingly, and M. Guffanti, his hair a little thinner on the top of his head than when first I made his acquaintance, but with the same majestic curve to his moustache ends, and possessing the same invincible energy, has increased the size of his hotel by taking in several other houses.

The Dieudonné's of the present day is a large building of white stone and red brick, always very spick and span, and decked out with flower boxes. The restaurant on the ground floor is a fine room in the Adams style, a very light grey in colour, with some of the ornamentation just touched with gold. At one end are three large bow-windows, and at the other end there is a musicians' gallery for the orchestra. On the side walls the ornamentation suggests

doorways with mirrored panels, pink shades on the electroliers have subdued the light, which, when the room was first built, I found too white and too brilliant, and the lamps on the tables are also pink-shaded. The carpet is of a deep rose, and the white chairs are also upholstered in that colour. It is a very pleasant dining-room, and the people who dine there are all pleasant to look at, and do good food the compliment of going dressed in becoming garments. I very rarely dine at Dieudonné's without seeing a ladies' dinner-party in progress, for Dieudonné's has always been a favourite dining place of the gentler sex since the early days when Giovanini, the old *maître d'hôtel*, with bushy eyebrows and Piccadilly weepers, used to consider any ladies without an escort as being put under his special and fatherly protection.

Dieudonné's chiefly relies on two *table d'hôte* dinners, one the opera dinner, at six-and-six, and the other the Dieudonné dinner, at eight shillings. On the last occasion that I dined at Dieudonné's before going on to the Russian Opera at Drury Lane I ate the opera dinner, the menu of which I give below. It was the day of President Poincaré's state entry into London, and that event is celebrated by two of the dishes in the dinner :

MENU.

Hors d'œuvre Variés
Consommé à la Française.
Crème de Laitues aux Perles.
Saumon d'Ecosse Poché.
Sauce Mousseline.
Pommes Nature Concombres.
Côtes de Pré-Salé Poincaré.
Canetons d'Aylesbury à l'Anglaise.
Petits Pois Nouveaux.
Coupe Entente Cordiale.
Friandises.

The Dieudonné dinner on this day only differed from the shorter one by the inclusion in it of *escaloppes de ris de veau George V*.

The other restaurant which created and retains an artists' room is Pagani's, in Great Portland Street, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Queen's Hall and St George's Hall. When, in 1871, Mario Pagani opened a little shop, which became a restaurant, in a house in Great Portland Street, the German Reeds were in possession of St George's Hall, with, I think, Corney Grain, as a newly risen star, in their company. The Queen's Hall had not been built and St James's Hall, the site of which is now occupied by the Piccadilly Hotel, was the musical centre of London. M. Pagani, being an Italian, gave his customers Italian cookery, and very good Italian cookery too, and the journalists and the painters and the singers soon heard of the new little restaurant where there were always Italian dishes on the bill of fare. Pellegrini, the *Vanity Fair* cartoonist, and Signor Tosti were two of the first patrons of the restaurant. Mr George R. Sims, doyen to-day of literary gourmets, loved the restaurant as it was in its early state, and wrote of the good Italian food to be obtained there, and his portrait, on a china plaque, occupies, rightly enough, the centre of one of the walls up in the artists' room. In 1887 M. Mario Pagani retired, and for a time his brother and his cousin carried on the restaurant; the latter, M. Giuseppe Pagani—left, in 1895, in sole control—taking as partner M. Meschini, the latter of whom eventually became the sole proprietor, bequeathing, when he died, the restaurant to his widow and to his son.

Pagani's in the forty odd years of its existence, has increased in size to an extraordinary extent, and the building, with its elaborately ornamented front of glazed tiles with complicated figures in the pattern and ornaments of Della Robbia ware, its squat pillars

of blue and its arches, luminous at night with electric light, differs immensely from the little, stuffy Italian restaurant that it originally was. It has a second entrance now in a side street, and a Masonic banquetting-room, and a lift, and its restaurant on the ground floor is a very large one and always reminds me of those great establishments that I see in the German cities. It is a very comfortable restaurant, and its brown walls, its mirrors with trellis-work and creepers painted on them set in brown wooden frames, and its ceiling painted in quiet colours, all give a sense of cosiness. There is in this downstairs restaurant a dispense bar, which looks very picturesque seen through a glazed screen, and just by this screen is the entrance from which the waiters stream out from the kitchen carrying the dishes ordered by the patrons of the restaurant, which they show as they pass to a clerk. To dine habitually at Pagani's at a table facing the kitchen entrance is to obtain a complete knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of the Italian waiter. He is not run into a mould as a French waiter is, but retains many individualities. He always wears a moustache, and is pleasantly conversational with his fellows and with the customers.

In its early days, the cookery at Pagani's was Italian and nothing but Italian, but with ever-increasing prosperity the scope of the kitchen has broadened, and now most of the dishes on the *carte du jour* have French names. The head cook, however, is a good Italian, M. Faustin Notari, who has climbed the ladder of promotion to the top during the twenty years he has been in the kitchens of Pagani's, and there are always some Italian dishes on the bill of fare. The following are the dishes that I most frequently see on the card:—*Minestrone, minestrone alla Genovese, zuppa alla Pavese, filetti di sole alla Livornese, spaghetti*, and Macaroni done in every way possible, *ravioli al sugo*

or *alla Bolognese*, *gnocchi alla Romana*, *fritto misto alla Tosti*, *ossi buchi*, *arrostino annegato*, and I generally finish my dinner at Pagani's with a *zambaglione*. Pagani's has its specialities of the house apart from Italian dishes, and when I have dined, as I often do, as one of the committee of an amateur dramatic club, in the Artists' Room, I generally find *poulet à la Pagani*—a very toothsome way of cooking the domestic fowl—on the menu of our little feasts. *Filet de sole Pagani* is another excellent dish, an invention of the house. *Poule au pot* and *cassólet à la Provençale* and the *bisque*, and the *bortsch* at Pagani's are always excellent. The diners whom I see at the other tables downstairs at Pagani's all seem to me to belong to that very pleasant world, artistic Bohemia. The great singers of the opera and the great musicians who play at the Queen's Hall go there to lunch and dine and sup, and their artistic perception is not confined entirely to music, for I notice that they generally bring very pretty ladies with them to eat the good dishes of the restaurant. A little touch of Bohemia that always pleases me at Pagani's is the boy who comes round with a tray selling cigars and cigarettes. The restaurant-rooms on the first floor used, in the early days when Pagani's was quite a small place, to be the rooms to which the sterner sex used to take ladies to dine, and there was a particular corner by a window with a tiny conservatory in it which was the favourite spot in the room. The gentler sex now dines everywhere in the restaurant, but in the first-floor rooms, with pleasant red walls, glazed screens put between the tables give a sense of privacy.

The Artists' Room is on the second floor, just on the top of the staircase. There is not room for many people in it, and the dinner-parties held there must of necessity be small ones. But there is no room in any restaurant in London which is in itself so

interesting as this one. The walls are almost entirely covered with signatures and sketches and caricatures; there is a large photograph, framed and autographed, of Sir Henry Irving as Becket; there are drawings by Dudley Hardy and three or four caricatures, including one of himself, drawn by Caruso. There is a photo of poor Phil May in riding kit on a horse; there is the menu of the dinner given by the artists of the Royal Opera at Covent Garden to Mr Thomas Beecham. On the mantelpiece stand some good bronzes of English and French Volunteers, and the menu of a banquet given by Pélissier, the head of the Follies, to his friends, and his invitation to this feast, which commences in royal style: "I, Gabriel," etc., and ends with the earnest request, "Please *arrive* sober," have been honoured with frames. Mademoiselle Felice Lyne's autograph records one of the latest successes in opera. There are two smoked plates with landscapes drawn on them with a needle, and there is the medallion in red of Dagonet I have already mentioned. The name of Julia Neilson, written in bold characters, catches the eye as soon as any other inscription on one of the sections of the wall covered with glass; 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 sacking 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, Puccini, Chaminade, Calvé, Piatti, Plançon, De Lucia, Melba, Mompes, Tosti, Kubelik, Tschaikovsky, are some of the signatures.

XXXVIII

THE PICCADILLY RESTAURANT

IT was a chance remark made by "The Princess," as three of us sat at lunch one Saturday in the open air at the Ranelagh Club, that nowhere in Central London was there an open-air dining place, that led me to ask her and "Daddy," her husband, both of them my very great friends (which is the reason that I permit myself to call them, as the Irish would say, "out of their names"), to dine with me one night in July, weather always permitting, in the open air within fifty yards of Piccadilly Circus.

Walking down Piccadilly, and looking up at the façade of the great Piccadilly Hotel, a building which has something of the nobility of a Grecian temple, and something of the heaviness of a county jail, I had noticed that a grey tent had been put up on the terrace, half-way up to the heavens, behind the great pillars and the gilded tripods, and I knew that this meant that as soon as the evenings were warm the restaurant would cater on the terrace for those who like to dine in the freshest air obtainable in muggy London.

Some form of covering is a necessity for any roof garden in Central London, not as a protection from rain or cold, but to deliver diners from the plague of smuts. Some day, when electricity and gas have between them driven coal far outside the boundaries of the capital, it will be possible for Londoners to breakfast under the plane-trees planted on their

roofs, and to look, while they eat, at the roses climbing on the trellis-work which hides their little pleasure from the neighbours on the next roof; but in this present year of grace an open-air meal within the three-mile radius necessitates the blowing of smuts off each plate as soon as it is put on the cloth, and a great portion of the conversation of the table talk centres round the black smudges to be wiped off the diners' noses. The Piccadilly, by pitching its tent on its terrace, has gone as near to open-air dining as is possible in our London atmosphere.

It was well that I had added the provision "weather permitting" to my invitation, for on the evening that my two guests motored up from their old manor-house near Richmond the sky had clouded over, a misty rain was falling, and the temperature had dropped to November level. The dinner-table that would have been reserved for me on the terrace was cancelled, and a table for three laid in the restaurant of the big hotel—that very handsome saloon panelled with light wood, with gilded carving in high relief on the panels, with a blue-and-gold frieze, and elaborately decorated ceiling and case-mented mirrors—a saloon which is a noble example of Louis XIV. decoration. I had ordered my dinner beforehand, taking care to include in it some of the specialities of the kitchen of the Piccadilly, and had interested in the designing of the little feast M. Bertl, the restaurant manager, and the *chef de cuisine*, M. Victor Schreyeck; while M. Pallanti, one of the *maîtres d'hôtel*, who is an old acquaintance, had put me in that portion of the room which is under his special charge. The dishes on which the kitchen of the Piccadilly especially prides itself are its *délices de sole* and its *filets de sole*, both named after the establishment, its *poularde à l'étuvée au Porto*, its *poularde Reine Mephisto*, its *cailles Singapore*, and its

vasques of peaches, or of raspberries, or of strawberries, all titled Louis XIV. in sympathy with the decoration of the room.

This was the dinner that I ordered, a summer dinner for a hot evening, for I had hoped that the weather would be kind, and that we should be able to eat on the terrace :

Melon de Cantaloup Frappé.
Kroupnick.
Sole à la Piccadilly.
Suprême de Volaille Jeannette.
Caille Royale Singapore.
Cœur de Romaine.
Asperges Vertes. Sauce Divine.
Vasque de Fraises Louis XIV.
Corbeille d'Excellences.

I waited for my guests in the lounge where the orchestra plays, a lounge panelled, as the restaurant is, and with paintings of fruit in the circular wreaths above the doors, with cane easy-chairs and cane tables with glass tops scattered about, with palms in great china vases, with gilt Ionic capitals to the pilasters on either side of the great supports to the roof, and with a great painted ceiling. A glazed screen with windows and doors in it separates the lounge from the restaurant.

"The Princess," when my guests arrived, was wearing a most becoming gown, and had brought her furs with her, in case I, as a mad Englishman, might insist on dining on the terrace in spite of the rain. "Daddy," who is, like myself, an old soldier *en retraite*, had put on one of his Paris unstarched shirts with many pleats, and was wearing his fusilier studs. M. Bertl, his beard pointed like that of a Spaniard, bowed to us at the entrance of the restaurant, and directed us to our table, by which was a second little table with on it all the apparatus

for the elaborating of the fish dish before our eyes. Near it stood the *maître d'hôtel*, pale and determined, feeling, I think, that the reputation of the house was in his hands, and a waiter and a *commis* under his immediate orders. "The Princess," as I have written, wore a most becoming gown, and it pleased me that she should have so framed her native beauty, and I am sure it also pleased her, for at the other tables all the other guests were exceedingly well groomed and well frocked—a most good-looking company.

The soup, a white Russian soup with barley as its dominating ingredient, is one of those peasant soups the French have borrowed from the Russians, and have refined in promoting it to the *haute cuisine*. The *sole à la Piccadilly* is a fish dish which grows to perfection as it is manipulated before the eyes of the expectant diners. A wide bath of mixed whisky and brandy boils up over the spirit lamp, and into this the boiled soles make a plunge before they are carried away to be filleted; then into the almost exhausted mixture of spirits is poured the sauce, which is a "secret of the house," and as this boils up first cream and then butter is added to it. The *filets de sole* come hot to table, and over each portion of the fish is poured the precious sauce, sharp tasting, with a suggestion of anchovy amidst its many flavours. While this sole was being prepared, "Daddy" at first talked on of polo matches at Ranelagh and golf at Richmond, and did not notice that both "The Princess" and myself had become silent, as gourmets should be when watching a delicate culinary operation, but he, too, after a while felt the solemnity of the moment, and became dumb until the fish was before him, and he could pronounce it to be "very good indeed," an emphatic expression of opinion on the part of all three of us which, I trust, was conveyed to M. Schreyeck in his domains. The

suprême de volaille was a noble *chaudfroid* of chicken with a rich stuffing or farce, I am not sure which is the correct description, in which *foie gras* was the dominating note. The quails were named after the island of Singapore, because with them in the china dish came a most savoury accompaniment of pine-apple pulp and juice—and there are thousands of acres of pine-apples in Singapore—an admirable contrast to the flesh of the plump birds. To this dish also our council of three gave high praise. The bowl of strawberries and ice and fruit flavouring, another of the dishes of the house, made an admirable ending to a very good dinner, and with this dinner we drank a champagne strongly recommended by the house, Irroy 1904. I paid my bill, the total of which came to £3, 13s. 6d., the charge being 12s. 6d. a head for the dinner, which was a small sum for such delicate fare, and then we went into the lounge, where the band was still playing, to drink coffee and liqueurs, and to allow “Daddy” to smoke one of the very long cigars of which he always carries a supply.

It was still raining when my two guests started in their motor car back to Richmond, but they declared that they were fortified for their journey down into the country by a most satisfactory dinner.

The Piccadilly Hotel of to-day stands partly on the site of the agglomeration of halls and bar and restaurant which all came under the name of St James’s Hall, the bar and restaurant being, in the mouths of the frequenters thereof, “Jemmy’s.” The great hall was in its day the centre of the musical world, and its Monday Pops and its classical concerts were celebrated. In a smaller hall the Moore and Burgess Minstrels flourished for many years until fickle London for a while grew tired of burnt-cork minstrelsy. The big bar of the St James’s declined,

as did most other restaurant bars, when gentlemen no longer cared to be seen taking their liquid refreshment standing, and the clientele of the restaurant was decidedly Bohemian. When "Jemmy's" was wiped off the map of London there were not many tears shed at its disappearance. The Piccadilly Hotel and its restaurant, when they were first opened, went through their teething troubles, as do most new establishments. The restaurant opened with a great flourish of trumpets, most of its personnel coming straight from Monte Carlo to London, but though the *maitres d'hôtel* knew who was who in the principality of Monaco they were not so well acquainted with the personalities of London life. All these matters invariably straighten themselves out. I read in the columns of City intelligence that the hotel, under the management of Mr F. Heim, who is now managing director, is a financial success, and is paying good dividends. The restaurant has gathered to itself a clientele that is smart and well-dressed, and it treats its guests excellently.

To the great grill-room, which lies down in the basement below the restaurant, and which is one of the largest and one of the busiest places of good cheer in London, I allude in my chapter concerning some of the grill-rooms.

XXXIX

THE RENDEZVOUS

BEHIND every successful restaurant there is some personality—a clever proprietor, a great cook, a managing director with a talent for organisation, or a popular *maître d'hôtel*. The Rendezvous, in Dean Street, has been brought to prosperity and popularity by the work of one man, its proprietor, M. Peter Gallina. He is a dapper little Italian, with a small moustache, a man of good family who ran away from home as a boy and has made his way by his native cleverness and perseverance, and by the possession of an exceptionally keen palate. He grounded himself well in all that concerns a restaurant in a small Parisian establishment not far from the Avenue d'Iéna. When he had learned there enough of the trade to qualify him to be a manager of any restaurant he came to England with his savings in his pocket and took the position of manager in a small Strand restaurant, while he looked about for an opportunity to become a proprietor and to possess a restaurant of his own. He had the name of his restaurant ready before he found a suitable house, for one day after a meal he sat thinking of various matters and idly scribbled on the tablecloth a series of capital "R's." Then, with no special intention, he fitted on names to the "R's"—Rome, Renaissance, Renommé, Rendezvous, and suddenly found that the title he wanted had come to him. And in the same chance way he found the position

he wanted for his restaurant. During the period that he was at the restaurant in the Strand he used to go to Dean Street to buy coffee for his little household, and he noticed one day that a house there was to let. It had been used by one of those mushroom clubs which spring up almost in a night in Soho, and the police had terminated its short existence by making a raid on the premises as a gaming-house. M. Gallina saw his opportunity, took it, spent some money in brightening it up, and gave it an old-English window on its ground floor, and that was the beginning of the Rendezvous.

The gastronomic scouts soon discovered that Peter Gallina in his little restaurant was giving extraordinarily good value at very moderate prices, and some of them sent me word concerning it. Mr Ernest Oldmeadow, the distinguished novelist, was one of the first of Gallina's customers, and brought many others to the newly established restaurant. Mr G. R. Sims, the genial "Dagonet" of *The Referee*, was one of the first among the scribes to tell the general public of the existence of the Rendezvous, and he wrote a ballad in its honour. I, in the early days of the existence of the restaurant, made the acquaintance both of it and its proprietor, who then, as now, affected clothes of an original cut. In his restaurant Peter Gallina wears a small double-breasted white jacket, with skirts and a very wide opening in front. This opening is filled by the most voluminous black cravat that has been seen since the days of the Dandies. A small white apron is another article of his costume. In those early days M. Gallina oscillated rapidly and continuously between the kitchen and the restaurant, first seeing that the dishes were properly prepared, and then watching his customers appreciatively eat the food. He had no licence then to sell wines, and a small boy was

constantly sent scurrying across the road to a wine-merchant's shop almost opposite, a shop which should have interest for all readers of books, for its proprietor is a well-known author.

M. Gallina in a little book of "Eighteen Simple Menus," with the recipes for all the dishes, a very useful little book which he used to give away to his customers, but which he now sells to them for a shilling, has in a preface set down some "Golden Rules for Cooks," and the first of these is "Buy good materials only. The best cook in the world cannot turn third-class materials into a first-class dish." This rule M. Gallina has always observed himself.

The Rendezvous has constantly been increased in size. A house next door to it fell vacant, and M. Gallina at once took it and converted it into part of his restaurant. Then with larger dining-room came the necessity for a larger kitchen, and this matter was put in hand. A wine licence granted to the restaurant brought with it all the responsibilities of a cellar, and M. Gallina has now an admirable kitchen and offices, with walls of shining white tiles, and a cellar big enough to hold all the wine that his customers require. A tea and cake shop, with tea-rooms on the first floor, the *Maison Gallina*, next door but one to the restaurant, was the next achievement of the enterprising little man, and, finally, he rounded off his restaurant by building at the back a new room, all dark oak and mirrors and Oriental carpets, with a handsome oak gallery running round it.

The Rendezvous Restaurant is now one of the landmarks of Dean Street. The wide windows of its ground floor are of little square panes, each window set in a white wooden frame, above a facing of glazed red tiles, and before them stands a line

of Noah's Ark trees in green tubs. Over these ground-floor windows the restaurant's name is written in Old English characters on a white ground. A line of shrubs in winter and flowers in summer is beneath the windows of the first floors of the two old houses, and at night a row of globes blazes with electric light above the name of the restaurant.

The interiors of the two front rooms on the ground floor of the restaurant have been decorated to represent the parlours of an Old English farmhouse. There are heavy black beams supporting the ceiling, the walls are panelled with green cloth in wooden frames, the electric lamps give their light in old lanterns, and there are silver wine coolers with ferns in them on the broad window-sill. Upstairs, and there are three staircases in the restaurant, one of the rooms on the first floor is kept in its original Georgian panelled simplicity, while the other is a Dutch room with plaques of Delft ware on the walls. The new room at the back I have already described.

The clientele of the restaurant comprises every class of Londoner from princes to art students. The late Prince Francis of Teck often dined there. I have seen ladies in all their glory of tiaras of diamonds and of pearl necklaces eating an early meal at the Rendezvous before going to the opera; and the youngster who is one day going to obtain Sargent's prices for his pictures, but is still in the chrysalis stage, and the as yet undiscovered Melbas and Clara Butts receive just as much attention when they eat the one dish which forms their lunch or dinner as do the great people of the land who indulge in many courses. The Royalty is but a score of steps away from the Rendezvous, and many playgoers on their way to that theatre dine at the restaurant or sup there after the performance. Messrs Vedrenne and Eadie quite appreciate the

advantage it is to have a flourishing restaurant just outside their doors, and gave M. Gallina every encouragement when he first established himself in Dean Street.

The *Rendezvous* has a *carte du jour* which gives a great choice of dishes. The long card is covered with items printed in red or written in blue ink, and special delicacies are set down in scarlet. There are various sole dishes and a score of those of other kinds of fish. The entrées take up half the card, and birds and salads, vegetables, savouries and dessert each have a thick little column of written items under their respective headings. The prices, as I have already written, are quite moderate for good material. The fish dishes average eighteenpence, the entrées a little less. I have eaten at a dinner-party given in the new room a very noble feast, and I have dined by myself on soup, sole, a *navarin* of lamb and an *entremet*, my dinner, without wine, costing me five-and-threepence.

There are two specialities of the house—the *sole Rendezvous* and the *soufflé Gallina*—which should be included in any typical dinner of the establishment, and the last time that I dined at the restaurant and entertained a lady I included both of these in the menu, which ran thus:

Melon Cantaloup.
Crème Fermeuse.
Soles Rendezvous.
Aile de Poularde en Casserole.
Aubergine à l'Espagnole.
Soufflé Gallina.
Café.

The *sole Rendezvous* is an admirable method of cooking the fish with a white wine sauce and most of the other good things that a cook can use in a fish dish, all of which make it admirable to the taste but

exceedingly rich. The *soufflé Gallina* is a *soufflé* with brandied cherries, and it is served in a little lagoon of fine champagne cognac which is set alight. It is by no means a teetotal dish. This dinner for two, with a pint of Vieux Pré, a champagne recommended by the house, and a bottle of Mattoni, came very near a sovereign.

XL

THE PALL MALL RESTAURANT

EVERY Londoner knows the Pall Mall by sight, the restaurant one door above the Haymarket Theatre, and is familiar with the lace-curtained window of its buffet, its entrance and the line of five French windows with flowers before them on its first floor, and there are few playgoers who have not, before spending an evening at the Haymarket or His Majesty's over the way, dined at one time or another at the Pall Mall Restaurant. It is a restaurant which has prospered exceedingly, and has done so because its two proprietors, MM. Pietro Degiuli and Arnolfo Boriani—both ex-head waiters at the Savoy and the Carlton—see to every detail concerning their restaurant and their kitchen and their cellar with untiring diligence and with a complete knowledge. They are both—Degiuli, small and neat and dapper, M. Boriani, broad, wearing a curled-up moustache and looking like a *tenore robusto*—always in the restaurant at meal-times doing the work of *maîtres d'hôtel* and giving personal attention to every member of their clientele.

In the ten years that have elapsed since they rechristened the restaurant, which for a short period had been known as Epitaux's, they have made many improvements. The restaurant itself, a high room with a curved roof and two sliding skylights in the roof, which not only let in the light but fresh air as well, is now a white restaurant, with deep rose

panels alternating with mirrors between the pilasters. There is a little gilding in the decoration, but as carpet and chairs and lamp-shades conform to the scheme of rose, the restaurant may be described as all white and deep pink. There was originally a musicians' gallery at one end of this dining-hall, a legacy from the Café de l'Europe, as it was called in the fifties, and in the days of the café the doorway was cased in to prevent draughts reaching the worthies who used to sup there after the performance at the Haymarket Theatre. The old wooden screen to the door has been swept away, and people lunch and dine and sup in the gallery which has replaced the domain of the musicians. A little lounge where hosts can wait for their guests, made by absorbing part of the premises of the shop next door, is one of the most recent additions to the Pall Mall, and the Fly-fishers' Club having moved to larger premises, MM. Degiuli and Boriani have been able to construct a banqueting-room on the first floor that, with a private dining-room which can accommodate twenty diners, gives them now quite a large establishment.

As I have written, the two proprietors give personal attention to every matter connected with the restaurant, and they have not forgotten that they are Italians, for in their *table d'hôte* lunch, the price of which is half-a-crown, one of the dishes is usually an Italian one, and all the coffee made in the establishment is made after the Italian fashion, no metal being allowed to come in contact with the fluid. For their supper menu they always choose simple dishes, which can be cooked directly an order has been given by those who sup. There is a *carte du jour*, but the dinners that nineteen out of twenty diners order are one or other of the *table d'hôte* dinners of the day, a four-shilling and a five-and-six one. This was the

menu of the more expensive of these two dinners on the last occasion that I dined at the Pall Mall :

Hors d'œuvre Varies.
Consommé Madrilène Froid and Chaud or Germiny.
Saumon Hollandaise.
Cailles Richelieu à la Gelée.
Selle d'Agneau Soubise.
Fonds d'Artichauts Barigoule.
Pommes Château.
Volaille en Cocotte.
Salade.
Fraises Melba.

The soup was good, the quail especially attracted my notice, for its jelly was flavoured with capsicum, giving it thus a special cachet.

The service at the Pall Mall is quick and silent, and, though there is no unseemly hurry, the dinner is quickly served, for most of the people who dine at the Pall Mall are going on to a theatre.

The Pall Mall has an exceedingly *comme il faut* clientele, and any man who did not wear evening clothes or a dinner jacket in the restaurant would feel himself rather a fish out of water there at dinner-time, and would probably take cover in the gallery. I see at the Pall Mall very much the same people whom I see at the Savoy and the Carlton, and the lady who dines at the smaller restaurant before going to a theatre to-day, probably to-morrow, when a dinner constitutes the entertainment for the evening, is taken to dine at one of the larger restaurants. And perhaps because the Pall Mall stands where the stage of one of the theatres in the Haymarket used to be, the restaurant numbers amongst its clientele many of the great people of the opera and of the theatre, as its book of autographs shows. This is a book full of scraps of wisdom and wit, and the Stars of Song and Politics and the Stage have not been

afraid to cap each other's remarks. Thus when Madame Patti leads off on the top of a page with a charming platitude, "A beautiful voice is the gift of God," Madame Yvette Guilbert inscribes below a reminder that "An ugly voice is also the gift of God"; Sir Herbert Tree, taking a different view from that of either of the ladies, asks whether a voice should not be considered "A visitation of Providence"; Miss Mary Anderson sides with her sex, for she opines that "All things are the gift of God"; and Sir Rider Haggard rounds off the discussion with "But the greatest gift of God is Silence." Lord Gladstone, about to depart for South Africa, writes, "Faith in the Old Country" as his contribution, and Mr Lloyd George puts immediately below it a sentence in Welsh, which being translated means "Liberty will conquer"; Mr Ben Davies, also a man of gallant little Wales, writes in his native tongue, below Mr Lloyd George's sentence, "You are quite right, Lloyd George, but your liberality has taken most of my money." Mr John Burns, dining at the restaurant on "Insurance Day, 1911," was not stirred up to any poetic flights by the occasion, "Health the only wealth" being his rhymed contribution.

Amongst the signatures in the book is that of Signor Marconi, who is not inclined to write his name more often than is necessary. His contribution was coaxed from him by a flash of wit on the part of M. Boriani. On the menu of the dinner eaten by the inventor of wireless telegraphy appeared the item "*Haricots verts à la Marconi*." The great electrician asked why they were so named. M. Boriani trusted that the beans were not stringy, and the inventor having reassured him on this point, he said that in this case they might rightly be described as "*Sans fil*."

MM. Degiuli and Boriani have chosen as the motto

of their restaurant, "*Venez et vous reviendrez*," and this confident prediction has been justified.

There is much history concerning the site on which the Pall Mall now stands. In the latter years of the Stuart dynasty, when the lane which led from Piccadilly down to the Mall gradually became a street of houses, Charles II. gave permission to John Harvey and his partner to sell cattle as well as fodder in the Haymarket. All along this market, on both sides, inns sprang up, and one of them occupied the site where the Pall Mall Restaurant now stands. The inn was pulled down early in the eighteenth century, and on its site Mr Potter, a carpenter, built a "summer" theatre; this theatre was converted by Samuel Foote somewhere about 1760 into a winter theatre. Mr A. M. Broadley has written for the proprietors of the Pall Mall an interesting booklet which deals at length with this theatre and its managers, Foote and the Colmans, and with the great actresses and actors and musicians who appeared on its stage. Mozart played on the spinet there as an infant prodigy; Margaret Woffington made her first bow to an English audience in the part of Macheath in *The Beggars' Opera*, "after the Irish manner"; and two actresses who married into the peerage—Lavinia Fenton, who died Duchess of Bolton, and Elizabeth Farren, afterwards Countess of Derby—played on its stage. But on 14th October 1820, the Little Theatre, as it was called, closed its doors with the tragedy of *King Lear* and a farce. It was not at once pulled down, and was still standing in a battered state when the present Haymarket Theatre, built by John Nash, was opened in 1821, just a fortnight before the coronation of George IV. When the Little Theatre was eventually pulled down shops were erected on its site. Two of these were in the year of the first Great Exhibition converted into the Café de l'Europe,

the great hall of which, somewhat altered, is the large room of the present restaurant. Mr William John Wilde, who was Buckstone's treasurer at the Haymarket Theatre, became the proprietor of the Café de l'Europe in the late fifties, and as there was no early-closing law in those days the café naturally enough became the favourite supping place for those who had sat through a long evening at the theatre almost next door, and the sturdy critics who congregated in the first row of the pit ate their devilled bones and tripe and onions, Welsh rarebits, chops and potatoes in their jackets, at the café after midnight and passed judgment on the performances of Buckstone and Liston, Sothorn and the other famous comedians of the theatre as they supped. Mr D. Pentecost was the last proprietor of the old café. He was, as "Dagonet" in *The Referee* has lately reminded us, a nephew of Pierce Egan, the author of "Tom and Jerry," and he was, amongst other things, the refreshment contractor to the Alhambra. He was also the proprietor of the Epitaux Restaurant in the colonnade of the opera house in the Haymarket. When that building was pulled down, in order that the Carlton and His Majesty's Theatre should be built on its site, Mr Pentecost transferred the name of Epitaux to the Café de l'Europe. The building was redecorated and MM. Costa and Rizzi became the lessees. Ten years ago, as I have previously written, MM. Degiuli and Boriani became the proprietors and gave the restaurant its present name and its present appearance.

XLI

IN JERMYN STREET

MAISON JULES. BELLOMO'S. LES LAURIERS

JERMYN STREET used to be sacred to small private hotels, shops and bachelors' chambers, but the restaurants have now invaded it and there are half-a-dozen places of good cheer which have their front doors in the street, while some of the Piccadilly restaurants have a back entrance there.

M. Jules had the happy idea of taking two houses, one of them at one time the home of Mrs Fitzherbert, as a medallion of the head of King George IV., found under the drawing-room floor proves, and converting them into a hotel and restaurant. It has proved so successful in Jules' case that he is now adding on to his hotel and restaurant, building at the same time a nice little suite of rooms with bow-windows for himself and his wife. As you walk down Jermyn Street from St James's Street towards Lower Regent Street, the Maison Jules is on the right-hand side. You cannot miss it, for an illuminated terrestrial globe and the name above the doorway catch your eye. A little ante-room is separated from the restaurant by a glazed screen to keep off draughts. The restaurant itself, a long room running the whole width of the house, is all white, with a little raised ornamentation on its walls, with gilt capitals to the white pillars, and on the marble mantelpiece a clock and candelabra of deep blue china and ormolu. At the end of the room

a big window, which is almost a wall of glass, is cloaked by lace curtains. There is a second room running at right angles at the back, which either can be used as part of the restaurant or can be partitioned off.

Jules himself will welcome you as you come into the restaurant. I have known him for many years, having first made his acquaintance when he was manager at the Berkeley, when his hair was of lustrous brown, and I have always been one of his supporters at the hotel in Piccadilly and at the Savoy—when he became manager there, and now in Jermyn Street, where, with his wife and his daughter, who has married the *chef de cuisine*, and his son, who is following in his father's footsteps, he controls the restaurant and the hotel. The girth of his waist may have increased a little, possibly to match the bow-windows of those new rooms, since I have known him, and his hair is now powdered with grey, but his good-natured, round, rosy face, and his eyes, which almost close when he smiles, remain the same. He is always so pleased to see me that I find that a dinner at the Maison Jules does me more good than most tonics do.

The people who dine at the Maison Jules are all pleasant and well-to-do, and all the men wear dress clothes. Some of the men are grey-haired people like myself who have followed Jules in all his migrations; but the restaurant is by no means a home of rest for the elderly, for on the last occasion that I dined there one of the prettiest of the younger generation of actresses was being entertained at the next table to mine; and young as well as elderly diners appreciate the bonhomie that seems to be in the atmosphere at the Maison Jules. The dinner of the house is an eight-shilling one. The dinner I ate when I last dined *chez* Jules is quite a fair specimen of the evening meal;

Hors d'œuvre.
Consommé aux Quenelles.
Crème Américaine.
Suprême de Sole Volga.
Riz de Veau Souvaroff.
Médailon de Bœuf Algérienne.
Poularde à la Broche.
Salade.
Haricots Verts au Beurre.
Mousse aux Violettes.
Friandises.

The *crème Américaine*, a pink thick soup, was excellent, and so was the cold dish of sole, with jelly and a little vegetable salad. The *mousse aux violettes* was an ice with crystallised violets on the top; and the *riz de veau* and the *poularde*—for which Jules wished to substitute a partridge—were both excellent of their kind. When Jules, before I left, came to me and told me that some gentlemen a little farther down the room had told him that there was absolutely nothing to criticise in the dinner, I was not hard-hearted enough to tell him that the beans were stringy, which, to tell the truth, they were. Otherwise I agreed with the gentlemen farther down the room. The wine list is a well-chosen one, and there is in the cellar some 1820 Martell brandy, landed in England in 1870, which used to be the pride of the old St James's Restaurant, and the whole of which Jules bought at the sale.

A little farther down the street on the same side is a restaurant and hotel controlled by another old acquaintance of mine in the restaurant world. The restaurant is Bellomo's, and the hotel of which it forms a part is Morle's Hotel. In the days when I thought it my duty to do my share of drinking, at the Café Royal, a particularly excellent cuvée of Cliquot Vin Rosé, the waiter who was in charge of the table at which I usually sat, and who attended to

all my wants with admirable intuition, was not at all one of the lean kind, and to identify him from his fellows I always called him, and wrote of him as, "the fat waiter." He prospered and ran up the tree of promotion, as good waiters do at the Café Royal, so that in his later development he became *maître d'hôtel* in charge of the grill-room, and wore a frock-coat and a black tie. But the anxieties of his new position in no way caused him to grow thin. A year or two ago a friend wrote to me saying that he and some others had found the money to set up Bellomo, whom, of course, I remembered at the Café Royal, in a restaurant of his own in Jermyn Street, and hoped that I would go and see how he prospered there. I went, not feeling quite sure who Bellomo was, and found my fat waiter of old, now a plump proprietor. His restaurant, which consists of two rooms thrown into one, has walls with a light shade of pink on them, and at night is lit by electroliers with pink shades. A few steps lead from the front to the back. The restaurant is a cosy little establishment, and the two dinners which are served there—one a three-and-six one and the other a five-shilling one—are invariably well cooked, for M. Bellomo has brought the good Café Royal traditions with him to his new home. This is a typical menu, a winter one, of Bellomo's three-and-six dinner:

Hors d'œuvre.
 Consommé Rothschild
 or
 Thick Mock Turtle.
 Filet de Sole Chauchat.
 Carré de Mouton Niçoise.
 Oie roti.
 Salade.
 Glacé Mont Blanc.
 Gaufrettes.

.
 Farther along the street and on the opposite side

is Les Lauriers, which takes its name from the two little evergreen trees which stand in tubs at its door, and which is higher and more airy than most of the restaurants of its size, for at some time or another the entresol has been thrown into the rooms on the ground floor. Les Lauriers consists, like most of the Jermyn Street restaurants, of two rooms joined together with a space screened off by the door to form a tiny ante-room. Its walls are panelled and painted cream colour, and lamps with pink shades hang from the ceiling. The green carpet and the dark wooden chairs at the three rows of tables give a comfortable look to the place. The proprietor is M. Giolitto, who was a head waiter at the Savoy before he came to Jermyn Street to make his fortune. A very comfortable clientele patronises Les Lauriers, and there are two dinners provided for them, one a short dinner which is served until a quarter to eight, and the other a more elaborate one, priced 3s. 9d. and 5s. 6d. respectively. The last time I dined at Les Lauriers I, feeling rich, indulged in the longer dinner. This was the menu :

Melon Cantaloup
or
Driver's Royal Natives.
Consommé Viseur or Crème Doria.
Homard froid, Sœ. Mayonnaise
or
Aiguillettes de Turbot en Goujons.
Tournedos à la Florentine.
Perdreau rôti sur Canapé.
Petits Pois à la Française.
Salade.
Ananas Master Joe.
Mignardises.

It was a well-cooked dinner, and I do not wonder that M. Giolitto was able to tell me that his restaurant flourishes exceedingly.

XLII

THE MEN WHO MADE THE SAVOY

IF I were to attempt to give you all the early history of the ground on which the Savoy stands I should have to delve back to Tudor times, and the Savoy Palace and the politics of that very turbulent period. For me, however, the past history of the Savoy begins with the time when the Savoy Theatre was built on reclaimed ground and opened in 1881. The offices of the theatre were in Beaufort House, which stood on the hill, and beside the theatre was a space of rough waste land, much like the County Council's wilderness in Aldwych. On this unoccupied land Mr D'Oyly Carte put up a shed to house the electric light plant for the theatre, for the Savoy was the first theatre in London that used electric light. The Savoy Hotel and Restaurant eventually rose where the electric light shed first stood, and they were opened in 1889. The hotel and restaurant then faced the Embankment, and had no Strand frontage. To get to the restaurant one had either to do a glissade in a hansom down the steep Savoy hill to the side entrance which led into a courtyard, in the centre of which stood a majolica fountain, or to go to the front entrance opposite to the Embankment Gardens. The restaurant was smaller than it is now; it was panelled with mahogany; it had a red and gold frieze and a ceiling of dead gold. It was a very comfortable restaurant, and the mahogany walls gave it a homelike feeling,

though, of course, they absorbed a great deal of the light. The private rooms, named after the various Gilbert and Sullivan operas, were, as they are now, next to the restaurant. The grill-room was tucked away in the middle of a block of buildings. There was below the restaurant a *table d'hôte* dining-room, and on the garden level was a ballroom and its ante-rooms. The balcony was but half its present width. No block of buildings has been more greatly improved from time to time than the Savoy has been. There has hardly been a year without some adornment being added, and in 1904 the largest additions during the history of the hotel were completed, and the hotel and restaurant gained their Strand outlet.

It would be possible to write a history of the Savoy by taking note of the successive improvements and additions made to it. It would also be possible to tell the history of the great restaurant by an account of some of the eras of great dinners, the period, for instance, when the South African millionaires were spending money like water during the great "boom," and the period of freak dinners, when Caruso sang from a gondola to diners sitting by a canal in Venice, which was really the flooded courtyard; and when, on another occasion, the same space was turned into a Japanese garden for a Japanese dinner. I was a guest at some of these great dinners, at the Rouge et Noire one which two magnates of the financial world gave to celebrate a great *coup* at Monte Carlo, when all the decorations of the table, all the flowers, as much of the napery as was possible, reproduced the two colours, when the waiters wore red shirts and red gloves, and the number on which the money was won was to be found everywhere in various forms on the table. And I was bidden to the return banquet, a white and green one, which strove to outdo the luxury of the former one,

whereat fruit-trees bearing fruit grew apparently through the table, and each chair was a little bower of foliage.

But I prefer to chat concerning the men who made the history of the house. Not the men who pulled the strings behind the scenes, the Board of Directors and their admirable managing director, Mr Reeves Smith, but the men whom the public saw or heard of in the restaurant, the general managers, the managers of the restaurant, and the chefs. The managers whom I knew were Ritz, Mengay, Pruger, Gustave, and now Blond. In the restaurant were Echenard, Joseph, Jules, Renault, and now Soi. The chefs have been Escoffier, Thouraud, whom Joseph brought over with him from Paris, Tripod, and now Rouget; and most of these I knew well.

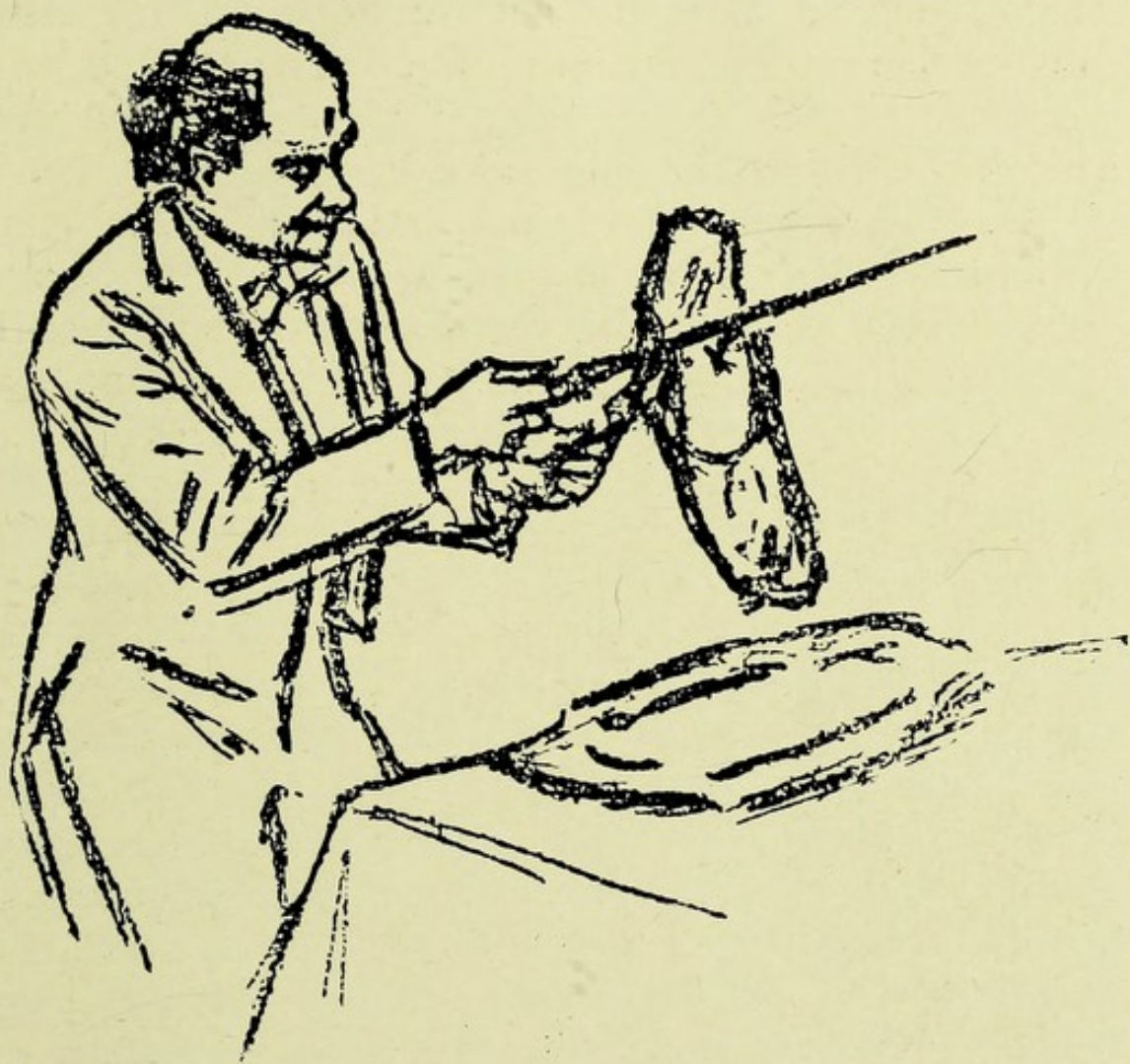
When Mr D'Oyly Carte was putting in order the organisation of the newly opened Savoy Hotel, he, at Monte Carlo, asked M. Ritz, who was then at the Grand Hotel there, to come to London and take charge of the Savoy Restaurant. M. Ritz came and brought M. Escoffier with him to make history in the kitchens. When M. Ritz permanently took over the management of the hotel and the restaurant he asked M. Echenard, the proprietor of the Hotel du Louvre at Marseilles, to come to London and assist him in the restaurant. This triumvirate worked admirably together. M. Ritz, thin, nervous, splendidly neat, knowing all his patrons and their tastes, was a great *maître d'hôtel* as well as a great manager. The saying which he constantly quoted, "The customer is always right," he acted up to. If some ignorant diner found fault with one of M. Escoffier's most exquisite creations it would be swept away without a word and something suited to a lower intelligence and an uncultivated palate substituted for it. If an old and valued customer

had come into the restaurant and had ordered for dinner, tripe and onions and sausages and mashed potatoes, M. Ritz would have greeted such an order as though it were a flash of genius, and would probably have sent out to the nearest cab shelter for the dishes.

During the early days of the Savoy M. Ritz was quietly teaching the English with money to spend that a good dinner is not of necessity a long dinner, and that a few dishes exquisitely cooked are better than a long catalogue of rich dishes. M. Echenard, looking like a Spanish hidalgo, quite understood the ways of his two great colleagues—for MM. Ritz and Escoffier are two of the greatest men in gastronomic history—and backed them up nobly. The cholera year in Marseilles took M. Echenard back to his hotel in the south, and he has prospered exceedingly there, being now the proprietor of the Reserve and the hotel just below it on the Corniche, as well as the Louvre. MM. Ritz and Escoffier have since made the fortunes of other London restaurants.

When the Ritz-Escoffier regime at the Savoy came to an end the directors bought the Restaurant Marivaux in the street by the side of the Opéra Comique in Paris, and brought over M. Joseph, the presiding genius of that restaurant, to take charge of the Savoy Restaurant. The Marivaux had a unique reputation in the Paris of that day for its cookery. Joseph came, bringing with him his chef, M. Thouraud. Joseph was, I think, the most inspired *maitre d'hôtel*, with the exception, perhaps, of Frederic of the Tour d'Argent, I have ever met. The Savoy Restaurant was rather too large for his system of management, for he liked to take a personal interest in each dinner that was progressing in his restaurant and to give it his constant supervision. He was born of French

parents in Birmingham, and his one great amusement was that northern sport, pigeon flying. He had pleasant brown eyes and bushy eyebrows, he wore all that remained of his hair rather long, and had a tiny moustache. He was quite wrapped up in his profession, and, as he told me once, looked at his boots the whole time that he took his afternoon constitutional walk, that he might think of new dishes. Whenever any novel idea occurred to him he tried it at home in his own little kitchen before asking M. Thouraud to make experiment on a larger scale. To see Joseph carve a duck was to see a very splendid exhibition of ornate swordsmanship, and his preparation of a *canard à la presse* was quite sacrificial in its solemnity. There was in his day a dinner given at the Savoy at which Madame Sarah Bernhardt was the chief guest, and most of the other people present were "stars" of our British stage. Joseph cooked before them at a side table most of the dishes of the dinner, and told me that he did so because he wished to show actresses and actors, who constantly appeal to the imagination of their audiences, that there was something also in his art to please the eye and stimulate the imagination. When I asked why he never went to the theatre, he told me that he would sooner see six gourmets eating a well-cooked dinner than watch the finest performance that Madame Bernhardt and Coquelin could give. Joseph had quite a pretty wit and facile pen. This was the *jeu d'esprit* that he once wrote in a young lady's album:—"C'était la première côtelette qui coûta le plus cher à l'homme—Dieu en ayant fait une femme." And he wrote for me a little essay on the duties of a *maître d'hôtel* that was very sprightly in style. He was even a greater believer than M. Ritz in the short dinner, and declared that we in England only tasted our dinners and did not eat them. Three dishes he



JOSEPH CARVING A DUCK
After a drawing by Paul Renouard

considered quite enough for a good dinner, and this was a tiny feast which he ordered for me on one occasion when I took a lady to dine at the Savoy :

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

The *panier fleuri* he carved himself at table from an orange.

Joseph became homesick, for he was a thorough Parisian, and went back eventually to the Marivaux, but he soon after died.

The directors of the Savoy Company, which owns the Berkeley and Claridge's as well as the Savoy Hotel, brought jolly, genial, rosy-faced M. Jules, under whose rule the Berkeley had prospered exceedingly, from that white-faced hotel to the Savoy, and his rule on the Thames Embankment was as successful as it had been in Piccadilly. It was during his managership that the additions that were to give the entrance on to the Strand were planned, and, I fancy, were begun, and when M. Jules left the Savoy to make for himself a restaurant and hotel in Jermyn Street, M. Renault, from the Casino at Biarritz, came to the Savoy Restaurant, and the quick-witted M. Pruger became general manager.

This was a period of great activity and of many alterations in the building. No Savoy manager has ever had more brilliant inspirations for great feasts than M. Pruger had. The gondola dinner was one of his ideas and he always thought of something novel and amusing for the Christmas and New Year's Eve parties. M. Renault is now in Rome at the hotel there owned by the Savoy Company ; M. Pruger was

tempted away to America to manage a mammoth restaurant on modern lines, but came back from New York to take over the management of the Royal Automobile Club when its great club-house in Pall Mall was opened. M. Gustave, of the russet beard, who had steered the newly built Café Parisien of the Savoy to great success, next became manager of the hotel, and that brings us down to the history of to-day, for when he resigned his appointment M. Blond, the present manager, succeeded him.

XLIII

THE DUTIES OF A *MAÎTRE D'HÔTEL*

I HAVE mentioned in the previous chapter that Joseph wrote me a sprightly letter on the duties of a *maître d'hôtel*. This is it :

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 ; dites 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 deviner avec tact ce qui peut plaire à celui-ci et ne pas plaire à celui-là, est un problème à résoudre 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 de 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 énormément 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 faire 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 inapprécié 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 de 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 entraînent 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 ? ou avec la pêche à la cardinal, qu'accompagne si bien le doux parfum de la framboise, légèrement acidulé d'une cuillerée de jus de groseille. Notre grand Carême qualifiait certains plats le "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.*

XLIV

THE SAVOY TO-DAY

AFTER the Houses of Parliament, the Law Courts, the National Gallery, St Paul's and Westminster Abbey, the Savoy Hotel is probably the building that the well-to-do Londoner knows best. He cannot walk or drive down the Strand without his eye being caught by its milk-white frontage on that tumultuous street, and by the stern-faced gilded warrior above the courtyard entrance who leans on a shield that bears an heraldic bird, which I have no doubt is a very noble eagle, but which looks as though it had been plucked. When he comes home from abroad he, if he is looking to the right as he crosses the railway bridge to Charing Cross, sees the garden front of the hotel, with its balconies and many windows, and its flag aflutter, and recalling many good dinners in the past, looks forward to many others in the immediate future.

All the preliminaries to a dinner at the Savoy are pleasantly dignified. The drive into the courtyard, the cessation of noise as the wheels of car or carriage come upon the india-rubber paving under the glazed roof, the cream and dark green marbles of the entrance front, the trellis and flowers outside the Café, all contribute to pleasant anticipation; and once inside the doors, the hall panelled with dark woods, the glimpse through a long window of the light-coloured reading-room, and the progress down a flight of crimson-carpeted stairs, with walls of

buff and brown marble on either side, form the first stage of the diner's progress to the restaurant.

Servants in the handsome state livery they wear in the evening—French grey and dark blue—take one's coat and hat, and it always gives me a moment of gratification that I am such an old habitué that it is not considered necessary to give me a ticket. Then if one is a host there is nothing to do except to sit in one of the comfortable chairs in this ante-chamber and to look alternately up the crimson stairs to see whether one's guests are arriving and down another flight of stairs across the great lounge to the crystal screen of great panes framed in gilt metal which is the transparent barrier between the restaurant and its approaches.

The lounge—crimson under foot, with walls light cream in colour, good copies of portraits by British old masters in panels alternating with looking-glass doorways; with pillars of buff marble, veined with brown and having gilt capitals, and bronze amorini and sculptured groups of the Graces as supports for electroliers—is a delightful room, as one realises after dinner when the hour of coffee has come. The band, wearing in the evening their uniform of dark blue, the leader distinguished by a silver sash—in the daytime they are in crimson—are in a corner of the lounge close against the crystal screen that their music may be heard in the restaurant. Arched entrances in the eastern wall lead into the Winter Garden, another great hall with a glazed ceiling, with roses climbing up trellis-work, and with a great recess, up a broad flight of stairs, with pillars of green marble and a gilded fountain against its wall. The *salon de verdure*, as it is grandiloquently called, is above the new ballroom, the two great apartments occupying the space where the courtyard used to be.

My guests of the particular night I am describing were my friend and old comrade, Pitcher, the editor of *Town Topics*, and his wife and his pretty daughter. I had determined that they should eat a typical Savoy dinner, and had been at some pains to obtain a really representative feast. Before I went away on my travels in the summer I had interviewed M. Blond, the general manager (who was brought back when he was half-way to Rome two years ago to take up the management of the Savoy), in his sanctum, telling him that when in the autumn I intended to write a couple of chapters concerning the Savoy, I should like to give a dinner including some of the specialities of the cuisine, and that I should like to have something descriptive to say as to such of the dishes of which the Savoy is proud that were not included in my little feast. We took into our conference M. Rouget, the Maître-Chef of the Savoy, who looks the genial, burly, contented person that the head of a great kitchen should be, and we chatted over new dishes and dishes with new names (which are not the same thing), and he gave me some particulars of his kitchens and of the great army of cooks employed in the Savoy, there being as many as two hundred and ten in the brigade.

When, being back again in London, I carried out my intention of asking my editor to dinner, M. Soi, the manager of the restaurant, came into counsel. When I had made up my mind on the important matter whether my dinner should cost twelve-and-six or fifteen-and-six a head, and had stated that I should like the more expensive feast, I added that I hoped that no beef would be included in the menu, for Pitcher had been complaining of preliminary symptoms of gout. M. Soi on the day we were to dine—

a Sunday—submitted to me a menu which I duly initialled as approved.

My guest and his wife, looking as young as her pretty daughter, duly arrived to the moment. M. Soi, young and good-looking, with a light moustache—he was under Ritz in various restaurants, and has been at the Grand Hotel in Rome as restaurant manager, going in the summer to the Palace Hotel at St Moritz, before three years ago he came to the Savoy—received us at the entrance, and we were piloted to a table a comfortable distance away from the band, from which the ladies had a full view of the room, full, as it always is, with good-looking people, the softer sex all being in frocks that gave my lady guests plenty to talk about. I gave my guests the menu, which, of course, I had previously seen, to look at, as soon as they had settled down, and I used my eyes to take in my surroundings.

Though I regret the disappearance of the mahogany panelling, which is stowed away somewhere in the hotel, as one regrets the loss of an old friend, the pleasant buff colouring of the present restaurant, with its frieze of raised decoration and the electric light thrown up on to the ceiling and reflected down, which is most comfortable to the eye, make for lightness; and light as distinguished from glare is an aid to good spirits in a restaurant. The balcony of to-day, twice the width of the old balcony, and fitted with a long awning for use on sunshiny days—an awning which cost an almost incredible sum of money—is in request both at lunch and dinner and supper-time; and at lunch it has the supreme advantage of commanding the one great view in Central London, the river and the gardens and the Houses of Parliament grouping into a splendid picture, only spoiled by the blot of the unlovely railway bridge.

This was the menu of the Savoy dinner that M. Soi considered typical :

Délices de Sterlet.
Blinis de Sarrasin.
Consommé de Terrapine en Tasse. Kapusniack.
Suprême de Sole Divine.
Diablotin Cancalaise.
Filet de Perdreau Bonne Bouche.
Croquettes de Marrons.
Noisette d'Agneau de Galles Eldorado.
Fond d'Artichaut Clamart.
Poularde soufflée Savoy.
Salade Cornelia.
Poire de Paris Tosca.
Frivolités.
Canapé Esperanza.

—and as the accompanying wine I had ordered some sherry with the *caviar*, a magnum of Pommery and some Mattoni water.

A most admirable dinner it was, rather long, perhaps, to my taste, but it would have been difficult to get enough distinctive dishes into a shorter menu. The *sterlet caviar* on the little Russian pancakes made an admirable *hors d'œuvre*; the *consommé* was of turtle, but much lighter than the usual turtle soup; the *kapusniack* is a Russian soup, in which leeks, celery, turnips, onions, mushrooms, pig's ear, crushed tomatoes and cabbage seasoned with vinegar play a part, and it is served with cream stirred into it, and with those little *patés* of which the Russians are so fond when broken into the soup. The sole was garnished with fried oysters covered with bread-crumbs, and the *filet de perdreau*, which was the supreme triumph of the dinner, consisted of grilled *suprêmes* of partridges and grilled rashers of bacon dipped in *poivrade* sauce. The *noisettes* were the one plain dish of the dinner, but the asparagus ends tucked away in the hearts of artichokes gave it its

cachet. The cold chicken filled with a *mousse* of *foie gras* was a very noble dish, and tiny mushrooms, formed from some kind of *mousse*, which apparently grew amidst the truffles, and slices of chicken breast which surrounded the white bird adorned with Pompeiian drawings, were a very happy idea. The nuts soaked in Kummel which we found in the interior of the pears, which were served with a red currant ice, was another happy idea much appreciated by the ladies, and the *canapé esperanza* proved to be soft roes on toast.

This dinner takes a very high place amongst the many good dinners I have eaten in my time in the Savoy Restaurant. My bill came to £5, 2s.

Some of the Savoy specialities for which there were not room in one dinner menu are *huîtres Baltimore*, which are oysters grilled with bacon; *bortsch Polonaise*, *homard Miramar*, *sylphide Savoy*, which is a very attractive way of serving lamb sweetbreads; *mignonettes d'agneau à la Delbi*, *soufflés belle de nuit*, which is a variant of the *soufflé surprise*, peaches and strawberry and vanilla ice being used in it; and the noble *bécasse à la Soi*, an invention of M. Soi, which is the breast of a woodcock served with a most delightful sauce on toast covered with *foie gras*.

I have mentioned the ballroom which has taken the place of the old courtyard and its fountain, and in which many of the great banquets given at the Savoy are held. It is a fine room, light grey in colour, splendidly spacious, and when lighted up its colour shows off the ladies' dresses to perfection. My only objection to it as a banqueting-room was that the white light, which is admirable for a ballroom, was rather too glary for a dining-room. This has now been obviated by lessening the light when dinners are given in the room. If the Savoy could find some means of shading the lamps with pink or putting on

pink glasses to the lamps on the occasion of banquets, it would, I think, please those like myself who think that the best light for a dining-room is a pink one.

I asked M. Blond to give me the menu of any recent Savoy banquet of which the management was especially proud, not that I have not preserved many menus of many great dinners, but that I wished to shift the responsibility of selection on to his shoulders. This is the menu of the banquet and wines he has sent me as being typical of great Savoy feasts:

Caviar de Belouga.
Blinis à la Gouriew.
Queue de Bœuf à la Française.
Crème Germiny.
Filets de Sole à l'Aiglon.
Suprême de Volaille à l'Aurore.
Côte d'Agneau de Lait au Beurre Noisette.
Pommes Lorette.
Velouté Forestière.
Délice de Strasbourg à la Gelée de Vin du Ehin.
Bécassine Double Flambée à l'Armagnac.
Perles du Porigord.
Cœurs de Laitues Suzette.
Asperges Vertes de Paris.
Comices Toscane.
Soufflé Pont l'Evêque.
Corbeilles de Fruits.

WINES.

Schloss Johannisberg Cabinet, 1893.
Veuve Clicquot, 1904.
Magnums Pommery and Greno (Nature), 1904.
Chât. Haut Brion "Cachet du Château," 1888.
Cockburn's 1890 (Bottled 1893).
Croft's 1881 (Bottled 1884).
Hennessey's 70 year old Cognac.

Many of the dishes included in this great dinner I hope I may meet at a future time at Savoy banquets.

XLV

THE RESTAURANT DES GOURMETS

DINING one wet night in September at the Restaurant des Gourmets in Lisle Street I told the young manager, with whom I chatted, that it must be ten years since I dined there, and that at that time M. Brice was the proprietor. The manager's reply was that fourteen years ago M. Brice sold the restaurant to its present proprietors. I looked up the date of my last visit to the Gourmets when I got home, and found that it was in 1898. It was a queer little place of very eatable food at extraordinarily cheap prices when first I made its acquaintance. It then occupied the ground floor of one of the little houses in Lisle Street, the street in which is the stage door of the Empire Theatre, and Mr George Edwardes' offices at the back of Daly's Theatre. The outside of the restaurant in those days did not look inviting. The woodwork was painted leaden grey, and a yellow curtain hung inside the window to screen the interior from the view of the public. The glass of the door was whitened and "Entrée" written across it in black paint. There were as many little tables, to hold two or four, as could be crammed into the little room; the benches by the wall were covered with black leather, the walls were grey, with wooden pegs all round on which to hang hats and coats, and, here and there, notices on boards "La Pipe est interdite." By the window was a long counter, on which were

bowls of salad and stacks of French loaves, and a metal coffee-making machine. By this counter stood a plump Frenchwoman in black with an apron, who shouted orders down a lift, and up the lift came presently in response the dish called for. M. Brice, a little Frenchman with a slight beard and wearing a grey cap, came and sat on a chair by the table and told me who the star guests were amongst the people of all nationalities who filled all the space on the chairs and benches. The *chef d'orchestre* of the Moore and Burgess Minstrels at St James's Hall was one of the celebrities; another, a gentleman wearing a red tie, was a journalist who contributed articles on Anarchists to the newspapers; there were some Frenchmen who were big men in the green-grocery line, and came over occasionally to Covent Garden; and the greatest celebrity of all was a clean-shaven, prosperous-looking person, the coachman of the Baron Alfred de Rothschild. My bill that evening totalled 2s. 7d., and for this I obtained *hors d'œuvre*, 2d.; *pain*, 1d.; *potage*, *paté d'Italie*, 2d.; *poisson*, 8d. (the expensive dish of my dinner, turbot and caper sauce); *gigot haricot*, 6d.; an *omelette*, 4d.; cheese, 2d.; and a pint of claret, of which M. Brice had purchased a supply at the sale of the surplus wines of the Café Royal, which cost me no more than 6d.

The front of the Restaurant des Gourmets to-day stretches across three of the houses in Lisle Street, and it has, besides the ground-floor rooms, quite a spacious restaurant on the first floor, made by throwing the three rooms of the houses into one. Its ground-floor front is painted chocolate colour, and its principal entrance, between two of the houses, is quite imposing, has little Noah's Ark trees and a *chasseur* in buttons, stationed there to direct visitors to the different rooms and to call taxis. The

staircase, with brass edges to the steps and a brass rail, and with walls of white panelling, leads to the restaurant upstairs, and a little pay-desk, with an opening like those in a railway ticket office, faces one at the entrance, and it is here that every visitor pays his bill as he goes out. I looked in at all three downstairs rooms, which are bright with coloured papers on their walls, and found all the tables occupied, before I went upstairs into the larger restaurant. There I found a little table vacant, and sat down at it with grim apprehension that I might have what scanty hair I possess on the top of my head blown off, for just above it was a large electric fan. It was, however, not necessary, the night being cool, to set this going, and I ate my dinner in a calm atmosphere.

The Gourmets has become quite smart since Madame H. Cosson and her son succeeded M. Brice in the proprietorship. The upstairs restaurant is panelled with white woodwork above a green skirting, there are mirrors in the panelling, and the range of windows looking out on to Lisle Street have white lace curtains. There is a table in the middle of the room, and upon it fruits and big-leaved plants and a basket with bunches of grapes hung invitingly along the handle. Two big stands of Austrian bentwood for hats and coats are placed as sentinels on either side of this table. There is a round-faced clock on the wall to tell the time, and at intervals notices to say that all drinks must be paid for in advance, which means, I suppose, that the Gourmets has not yet obtained a wine and spirit licence. No notice forbidding pipes is now necessary. The waiters in dress clothes and black ties bustle about, and when I had given my order for *crème de laitue*, *cabillaud frit*, *poulet au riz*, *sauce suprême*, and pudding Gourmets, I looked round at my fellow-guests to see

if I could pick out any celebrities. There was no M. Brice this time to act as a "Who's Who in Lisle Street," and most of the people who were dining seemed to me to be young couples. Indeed from the tables in my vicinity a painter could have limned a series of pictures of the various stages of matrimony. At the table next to mine sat a young couple who were still in the holding hands state of love, who were thinking a great deal about each other and very little about their dinner, and who ordered anything that the waiter suggested to them; further on was a couple, each of whom was reading a newspaper, and next to them again a young husband and wife, who had brought out to dinner a pig-tailed little girl of six or seven, whose manners were most admirable, for she bade the waiter "Good-night" when she went away with all the grace of a duchess. Beyond these again was an elderly couple, who sat together at one side of a table, an affectionate Darby and Joan.

My soup when it came tasted rather too strongly of pepper, but the fried cod was excellent. The *poulet au riz* was all that it should be, and the pudding Gourmets was a simple version of the well-known pudding Diplome.

Prices have gone up a little at the Gourmets since my first visit there, owing, of course, to the general rise in the price of material. I was charged 3d. for the soup, 6d. for the cod; I had rushed into wild extravagance in ordering chicken, for that cost me 1s. 3d., and the price of the pudding Gourmets was 4d.

XLVI

THE MAXIM RESTAURANT

THERE may not appear at first blush to be any close connection between Wardour Street, that length of it which lies between Shaftesbury Avenue and Coventry Street, and the pleasant Austrian watering-place of Marienbad; but whenever I traverse the thoroughfare where the wax figures simper in Clarkson's, the wig-maker's, windows, and where the French library at one of the corners always keeps some passers-by in front of it looking at the illustrated papers and post cards, the china figures and the covers of the novels, there rises before me when I come to the Maxim Restaurant a vision of hills covered with pine-woods and of the Café Rubezahl, a castellated building of great red roofs and turrets and spires, high up on the green hill-side, the café at which the late King Edward often drank the good Austrian coffee of an afternoon during his annual August trip to the town of healing waters.

The Rubezahl was, in an indirect manner, the parent of the Restaurant Maxim in Wardour Street, for when the organisers of the Austro-Hungarian Exhibition at Earl's Court cast about for attractions which would be in keeping with the spirit of the exhibition it occurred very naturally to them that an Austrian restaurant where the admirable plain Austrian dishes could be eaten and where the Hungarian wines and the cool beer of Pileen could be drunk would be

a pleasant novelty; and such a restaurant was established opposite to the Welcome Club, and was eminently successful. And to manage this restaurant the son-in-law of the proprietor of the Rubezahl came from the Austrian Highlands, and when King Edward lunched at the restaurant and was given a typical Austrian meal of "cure food" he recognised M. Maximilian Lurion, the manager, and chatted with him concerning Marienbad and the Rubezahl. When Earl's Court had closed its doors for the winter M. Maxim Lurion was not unwilling to stay in London, and he, in conjunction with a British syndicate, thought that a site at the corners of Wardour and Gerrard Streets, which was then in the market, would be a suitable position for a restaurant. A small public-house carrying a licence was included in the purchase, and when everything else on the site was pulled down the business part of the old house of refreshment stood, looking like a saloon of the Wild West, amidst the ruins. When a name had to be found for the new restaurant, the shortened form of M. Lurion's Christian name was chosen, and the building became the Restaurant Maxim. No doubt Maxim's, in Paris, came by its name in a like manner, for Maximilian is a very usual name in central and eastern Europe.

Maxim's has always kept a clean face in a street not remarkable for smartness, and its white exterior, the touches of gilding on the wreaths that embellish its outer walls, its rows of mauresque white-curtained narrow windows on the first floor, its turret domed with silver, the flowers in its green and gold balconies, and the commissionaire in a well-fitting coat who stands by the front door, near the two large menus which set forth what is the dinner of the day, make it a pleasant feature of the street.

When the Maxim was first opened M. Lurion took

me over the establishment from garret to basement, and showed me how the coffee is made in Austria, though Austrian coffee never tastes so well in London surroundings as it does under the little trees of the hill-side cafés in Carlsbad or Marienbad, or in one of the open-air restaurants in the Prater of Vienna. The Maxim, however, did not at first fulfil the hopes of its promoters. Whether its name frightened people or whether it was too ambitious in its aims I do not know, but it soon changed hands.

When one evening last summer I went to the Maxim to dine before going to one of the theatres in Shaftesbury Avenue, I found M. Ducker, the present manager, in the entrance hall near the cloak-room where hats and coats are left, and he told me all about the varying fortunes of the restaurant, who are its present proprietors, and of the struggle that was necessary to bring it to its present state of prosperity, for prosperous it now is, there being not a vacant table either on the ground floor or the first floor when I came in. While I talked to M. Ducker a couple, who had finished their dinner, rose from a table by the brass ornamental rail surrounding the oval opening which makes the restaurant on the first floor a balcony to the room below, a waiter slipped a clean cloth on to the table, and in a few seconds it was ready for my occupation. M. Ducker hoped I would have a good dinner, and left me to the care of the *maître d'hôtel*, and as the waiter covered the table with little dishes containing *hors d'œuvres* I looked at the menu, at my surroundings, and at the company. This was the menu of the half-crown dinner of the house, the arms of the establishment, three stags' heads on a shield, with a boar's head as a crest, and two stags as supporters, being at the top of the menu card :

Hors d'œuvre à la Russe.
Consommé Chiffonnette.
Crème Gentilhomme.
Suprême de Barbue Nicoise.
Carré de Pré-Salé Bourguignonne.
Pommes fondantes.
Poulet en Casserole.
Salade.
Glacé Chantilly.
Dessert.

In the upper restaurant of the Maxim, where I sat, the walls are papered deep red, with white woodwork and white classic ornamentation. There are mirrors on the walls, and on a large panel the arms of the house are displayed in proper heraldic colours. The cut glass electroliers, some hanging, some fixed to the ceiling, give light both to the upper and lower restaurants. The lower restaurant is panelled and is all white, red-shaded lamps on the tables and some palms making a contrast of colour. Down in the basement is a grill-room. The chairs are of white wood upholstered in green leather, and the carpets are a deep rose in colour. The little string band of the establishment plays in the upper restaurant, its leader, who is a talented violinist, standing close by the brazen railing so that his music shall be as well heard below as it is above.

Every table, as I have written, was occupied this evening in both the stages of the restaurant. There are two circular lines of tables above, one close to the railings, one against the walls, and the people who sat at them belonged to all the various grades of respectable London. At the table by the wall level with mine were a young man and a pretty girl. He was smoking a cigarette, she was drinking a cup of coffee, and they were evidently obtaining their evening's entertainment in listening to the music. At the table beyond them were a little lady whom I include

amongst my pleasant acquaintances, her husband and a friend. Four men, in dinner jackets and black ties, were at the table beyond them, and then other couples, young and old, and other little parties of three and four. Here and there were people, like myself, dressed to go to a theatre; but the Maxim is in the land of Bohemia, where there are no customs as to wearing clothes of ceremony. What chiefly struck me as to the diners at the Maxim was that they were all enjoying to the uttermost their half-crown's worth of dinner and music. There were smiling faces at all the tables, and the applause at the conclusion of each item of the band programme was very enthusiastic. The eating of satisfactory food and the drinking of sound wine are not the only dining pleasures that make glad the heart of an epicure, and to be amongst people who are enjoying themselves thoroughly is a delight that cannot be written down on a menu or contained between the covers of a wine list.

To come to the important matter of the dinner I ate at the Maxim, the *crème gentilhomme*, a thick green soup, flavoured, I fancy, with spinach, was excellent, and there was no fault to find with the fish and its pink accompaniment of tomatoes and shrimps. When I came to the next course a strange thing happened. I had noticed, and appreciated as a special personal compliment, the presence of a jar of caviare amongst the *hors d'œuvres*; but when, instead of *pré-salé* mutton, a tender *tournedos* of beef was put before me, a great fear came upon me that I was eating somebody else's specially ordered dinner, perhaps that of the manager himself. On consideration, when a plump roast chicken was brought me instead of a portion of the bird *en casserole*, I came to the conclusion that the manager had conspired with the cook to give me more than my half-crown's worth of food, and when a noble bowl of *fraises Melba* was placed before me

instead of the small *glacé Chantilly* I felt sure that I had been put on the "most-favoured nation" basis. But this overkindness was not needed, for, watching my neighbours, I saw that the mutton they ate looked toothsome; I would just as soon have been served my wing of a chicken from a white-metal *casserole* as from a plate, and I am quite sure that the temptation to eat too many strawberries and ice brought me near the deadly sin of greediness.

To anyone making a dining tour of the restaurants of London, I commend the Maxim Restaurant as a bright and cheerful place, in a neighbourhood where brightness is not the rule, where good-tempered, pleasant diners appreciate the food and the music they get for their half-crowns.

XLVII

BIRCH'S

No. 15 Cornhill, which dates back to about 1700, is a little slip of a building, old-fashioned in appearance and tall in comparison to its breadth, its ground area being just fifteen feet by thirty. This is Birch's, the famous little pastry-cook's shop, which for years almost unnumbered has supplied the Lord Mayor's Mansion House banquets and the great feasts at the Guildhall.

Its ground floor has an old-fashioned carved front with three windows with little panes, one of ground glass in the centre of each window setting forth that soups, ices and wine are to be obtained within. The woodwork of the front is curiously carved, the carving having reappeared in recent years, when coat after coat of paint was taken off, a section of the various layers being of as many colours as a Neapolitan ice. The double door of the little shop, unusual in shape, also has glass panels. There used to be on the woodwork of the door an old brass plate on which, in letters almost worn out by constant rubbing, the name of the proprietor was given as Birch, late Hornton. But some young bloods one night screwed this off and it has disappeared. Through the glass windows can be seen many wedding cakes, biscuits in tall glass cylinders and a royal crown which was probably part of the table decorations at some great feast.

The little shop has an atmosphere of its own.

Directly one goes into it one smells the good scent of turtle soup and Old Madeira, with an added aroma of puff pastry. The shop is divided into two parts by an open screen, and a counter runs its full length. There are old black bottles in glass cupboards, and decanters on shelves, and an old clock. The floor is saw-dusted, and men in white aprons bustle about attending to the wants of the customers. Tray after tray of pastry of all kinds is put on the counter and cleared within a few minutes of their appearance. Dignified City men, plate in hand, jostle each other to get a first chance at the macaroons, to obtain a still smoking bun, or a three-cornered puff fresh from the oven. Plates of sandwiches are put before customers to disappear with great rapidity. Whiskies and sodas, glasses of Old Madeira or Port or East Indian Sherry seem to be the favourite drinks. When a customer has eaten all he wants and drunk all he wants, he tells an amiable lady in black what he has taken, and she, being a lightning calculator, tells him in reply what he has to pay.

The soup-room on the first floor, to which a flight of narrow little steps ascends, has a calmer atmosphere. Here, in a room with walls the paper of which has been turned to a deep amber tint by the London atmosphere, gentlemen sup, sitting down, their plates of turtle soup or oxtail, and drink their wine with dignified composure. There are tall white wedding cakes under glasses in this room also. The servitors in white aprons are busy in the soup-room, though not quite as busy as downstairs amongst the jam puffs.

Up yet another Jacob's ladder of stairs is the ladies' room, which I fancy is used as a chapel of ease for the soup-room, though it is said that rich old widow ladies going quarterly to draw their income from the Bank of England always go into

Birch's for a plate of turtle soup and a glass of sherry. Yet one flight of stairs higher is the office of the firm of Messrs Ring and Brymer, who have owned Birch's since 1836. In this room, in old leather-covered books, are wonderful records of hecatombs of baked meats and roasted fowl served at City banquets without end. The two oldest members of the firm have died of late years. These two old gentlemen, Mr Ring and Mr Brymer, who looked like archdeacons in mufti, and had exactly the right dignity for men who provide and control the Lord Mayor's feasts, had both a wonderful memory for banquets that the firm had provided. I happened to mention one day in their presence that a forbear of mine, a banker and brewer, Alderman Newnham, had been Lord Mayor of London, and at once they said that in their books were the details of a feast given by the worthy old gentleman when he was sheriff, and taking down an old volume they showed me how many gallons of turtle soup, the number of sirloins of beef, and the quantity of fair white chickens, orange jellies and plum puddings that the old alderman paid for. It is a very cosy little room in which to lunch, this office of the firm, and the turtle soup, with its great squares of turtle flesh in it, a sole Colbert, a grouse pie, angels on horseback, and a big helping of that wonderful orange jelly, a clouded delicacy that has the flavour of the orange stronger than any other jelly made by any other pastry-cook, and which is a speciality of the house, taste all the better for being eaten in the little room on the walls of which are old Guildhall menus and old pictures of City feasts and portraits of city celebrities, and many letters from the great panjandrums of City companies, giving praise to Messrs Ring and Brymer for the excellence of the banquets supplied by them.

All the preparations for a Guildhall or a Company

banquet, except the cooking that goes on in the kitchens of the halls, used to be made in the kitchens below No. 15 Cornhill, and the houses on either side of it, and it used to be one of the free afternoon sights of the City to see the kitchen-men carrying out through the little entrance door the soup and the pastry, the jellies and the cakes for a City banquet. When two great insurance offices squeezed in on either side of the pastry-cook's shop, Messrs Ring and Brymer had to look for other kitchens, and they now have a house in Bunhill Row, where on the top storey there is a great kitchen for the cooking of the soup and other delicacies, and where in the basement the turtles spend their last sad days before being butchered to make a Lord Mayor's holiday. At Bunhill Row there is also a cosy little office with the arms of many of the City companies as its wall ornaments.

Old Tom Birch, who was the second of his line, the son of Lucas Birch who succeeded the Hornton dynasty, was a man of many interests and a great celebrity of the City. His Christian name was Samuel, but he was "Tom" in the mouths of all City men. He was Lord Mayor of London in 1814, the only pastry-cook who has ever attained to that high dignity. He was a great orator, and an enthusiastic supporter of Pitt; he was Lieut.-Colonel of the first regiment of Loyal London Volunteers raised at the time of the French Revolution, and he wrote several comedies which were performed at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. There is still extant a song of the day, which no doubt in its time had a great success in City circles, in which a Frenchman coming to London, and being taken round the sights, is surprised to learn that the colonel of a regiment he sees on parade is old Tom Birch, the pastry-cook; that a governor holding forth to the boys at St Paul's

School; that an orator in the Guildhall; and that the author of a comedy at Covent Garden, are all one and the same estimable old Tom.

A Lord Mayor's Guildhall banquet to-day has all the same outward pomp and gorgeousness that it had eighty or a hundred years ago. But a Lord Mayor's banquet, so far as good things to eat and to drink are concerned, is absolutely different to-day from what it was half-a-century ago. This is the menu of the feast that Messrs Ring and Brymer provided on Lord Mayor's day 1913 for the Guildhall banquet. The baron of beef is, of course, just as much a civic dish as is the turtle soup, but the dinner is, on the whole, quite a light one :

Turtle. Clear Turtle.
 Fillets of Turbot Duglère.
 Lobster Mousse.
 Turban of Sweetbread and Truffles.
 Baron of Beef.
 Salad.
 Casserole of Partridge.
 Cutlets Royale.
 Tongues.
 Orange Jelly.
 Italian Creams. Strawberry Creams.
 Maids of Honour.
 Princess Pastry.
 Ices. Dessert.

The wines for this occasion were : Punch. Sherry—Gonzalez. Hock—Rudesheim. Champagne—Clicquot, 1904; Bollinger, 1904. Moselle—Scharzberger. Claret—La Rose, 1899. Port—Dow's, 1896. Benedictine. Grande Chartreuse. Perrier. The cost of the dinner, including wine, came to about two guineas a head.

And now as a contrast I give you the menu of the banquet given in the Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day, 1837. This was a Royal entertainment. The menu

is a yard in length, and it comprises the dishes at the Royal table and the general bill of fare as well. I only give you the dishes served at the Royal table, which form an extraordinary mass of flesh, of fish, fruit, fowl, in season and out of season. The buffet, no doubt, held the dishes for which there was not room on the table. The wines served at this banquet are put down simply as Champagne, Hock, Claret, Burgundy, Madeira, Port, Sherry :

THREE POTAGES.

Potage de Tortue à l'Anglaise.
 Consommé de Volaille.
 Potage à la Brunoise.

THREE PLATS DE POISSON.

Turbot bouilli garni aux Merlans frits.
 Rougets farcis à la Villeroi.
 Saumon bouilli garni aux Eperlans.

THREE RELEVÉS.

Poulets bouillis, aux Langues de Veau Glacés, garnis de
 Croustade à la Macédoine.
 Noix de Veau en Daube décorée à la Bohémienne.
 Filet de Bœuf à la Sanglier en Chasse.

EIGHT ENTREMETS.

Ris'd'Agneau piqués à la Turque aux petits Pois.
 Sauté de filets de Faisans aux Truffes.
 Pâté chaud aux Bécassines à l'Italienne.
 Casserole de pieds d'Agneau aux Champignons.
 Sultanne de filets de Soles à la Hollandaise, garnis aux Ecrevisses.
 Timbale de Volaille à la Dauphine.
 Filets de Lièvre confis aux Tomates.
 Côtelettes de Perdreaux au Suprême.

BUFFET.

Potage à la Turque.
 Hoche-pot de Faisan.
 Tranches de Cabillaud.
 Eperlans frits.

Langue de Bœuf.
 Jambon à la Jardinière.
 Bœuf rôti. Mouton rôti.
 Agneau rôti. Agneau bouilli.
 Hanche de Venaison.
 Pierre grillé au Vin de Champagne,
 Petit Pâtes aux Huîtres.
 Croquettes.
 Côtelettes d'Agneau aux Concombres.
 Dindon rôti aux Truffes à l'Espagnole.

SECOND SERVICE.

THREE PLATS DE RÔTI.

Faisans.
 Bécasses.
 Cercelles.

THREE RELEVÉS.

Soufflet de Vanille.
 Pommes à la Portugaise.
 Gaufres à la Flamande.

FOUR PATISSERIES MONTÉES.

Vase en Croquante garni de Pâtisserie aux Confitures.
 Fontaine Grecque, garnie aux petit-choux.
 Vase de Beurre frais aux Crevettes.
 Fontaine Royale garnie de Pâtisserie à la Genévoise.

TWELVE ENTREMETS.

Crème d'Anana garnie.
 Gelée au Vin de Champagne garnie aux fruits.
 Homards à la Rémoulade.
 Mayonnaise de Poulet à l'Aspic.
 Fanchonettes d'Orange, garnies aux Pistaches.
 Compôte des Pêches, en petits Panniers.
 Tartelettes aux Cerises, en Nougat.
 Petites Coupes d'Amarids à la Chantilly.
 Culs d'Artichauts en Mayonnaise.
 Anguille au Beurre de Montpellier.
 Gelée au Marasquin, décorée.
 Gâteaux de Pommes en Mosaïque, à la Crème d'Abricôt.

BUFFET.

Poulets rôtis.
Bécassines rôties.
Canards Sauvages rôtis.
Tourte aux Pommes.
Tourte aux Cerises.
Beignets de Pommes.
Fondu de Parmesan.
Trifle à la Crème.
Plum Pudding.
Mince Pies.

No wonder our grandfathers mostly died of
apoplexy !

XLVIII

A CITY BANQUET

THE MERCERS' HALL

I do not think that of all the dinners I have eaten with various hospitable City Companies in their halls I could select a more representative one than one I ate with the Mercers. That we drank 1884 Pommery at the banquet shows that it did not take place yesterday.

If there was one City Company that I was anxious to dine with it was the Mercers, for most of my forbears 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 so did Sir Thomas Gresham, and there was Roundell Palmer in his judge's robes. But, preceded by someone 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 at 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," came in the deep bass tones of the toast-master from behind the Master's chair, and then all of us settled 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.

Hock.

Steinberg, 1883.

Tortue. Tortue claire.
Consommé printanière.

Salade de filets de soles à la
russe.

Saumon. Sauce homard.
Blanchaille.

Sauterne.
Château Yquem, 1887.
Champagne.
Pommery, 1884.

Burgundy.
Chambertin, 1881.

Claret.
Château Latour, 1875.

Port.
1863.

Ortolans en caisse.
Mousse de foie gras aux
truffes.

Ponche à la Romaine.

Hanches de venaison.
Selles de mouton.

Canetons.
Poulets de grain.
Langues de bœuf.
Jambons de Cumberland.
Crevettes en serviette.

Macédoines de fruits.
Gelées aux liqueurs.
Meringues à la crème.

Bombe glacé.

Quenelles au parmesan.

I always rather dread the length of a City dinner, but in the case of the Mercers a happy compromise seems to have been arrived at, 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 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 a special correspondent who had just returned from the Far East, where for a time he was a prisoner of war. Next to him was an ex-M.P. and next to him again one of the 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 toast-master'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 an M.P. 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 charming ladies and mere men 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.

XLIX

THE CAVENDISH HOTEL

A GREAT BRITISH WOMAN COOK

OFTEN enough during the past quarter of a century I have heard some hostess say reassuringly to someone whom she had asked to a dinner-party to meet someone else of the first importance: "Mrs Lewis is coming to cook the dinner." That short sentence has meant a great deal, for Mrs Lewis is the most celebrated woman cook that this or probably any other age has produced. I do not even except the great Mrs Glasse. If in England there was a *cordon-bleu* for women cooks Mrs Lewis would be a Grand Officer of the Order.

She is the proprietress of the Cavendish Hotel, which occupies three houses, 81 to 83 Jermyn Street, and it was to Jermyn Street that I went to make her acquaintance. I waited in the tea-room of the hotel, a room, round the walls of which hangs a line of photographs of some of the great ones of the world, and I wondered what kind of a lady it might be that I was presently going to meet, for though I had tasted Mrs Rosa Lewis's handiwork often enough I had never set eyes on her in the flesh.

Somehow my ideas of a successful petticoated ruler of the kitchen have always been associated with portliness, majesty, black silk, a heavy gold chain and cameo jewellery. I think that a boyish remembrance of my mother's cook in her church-going attire must

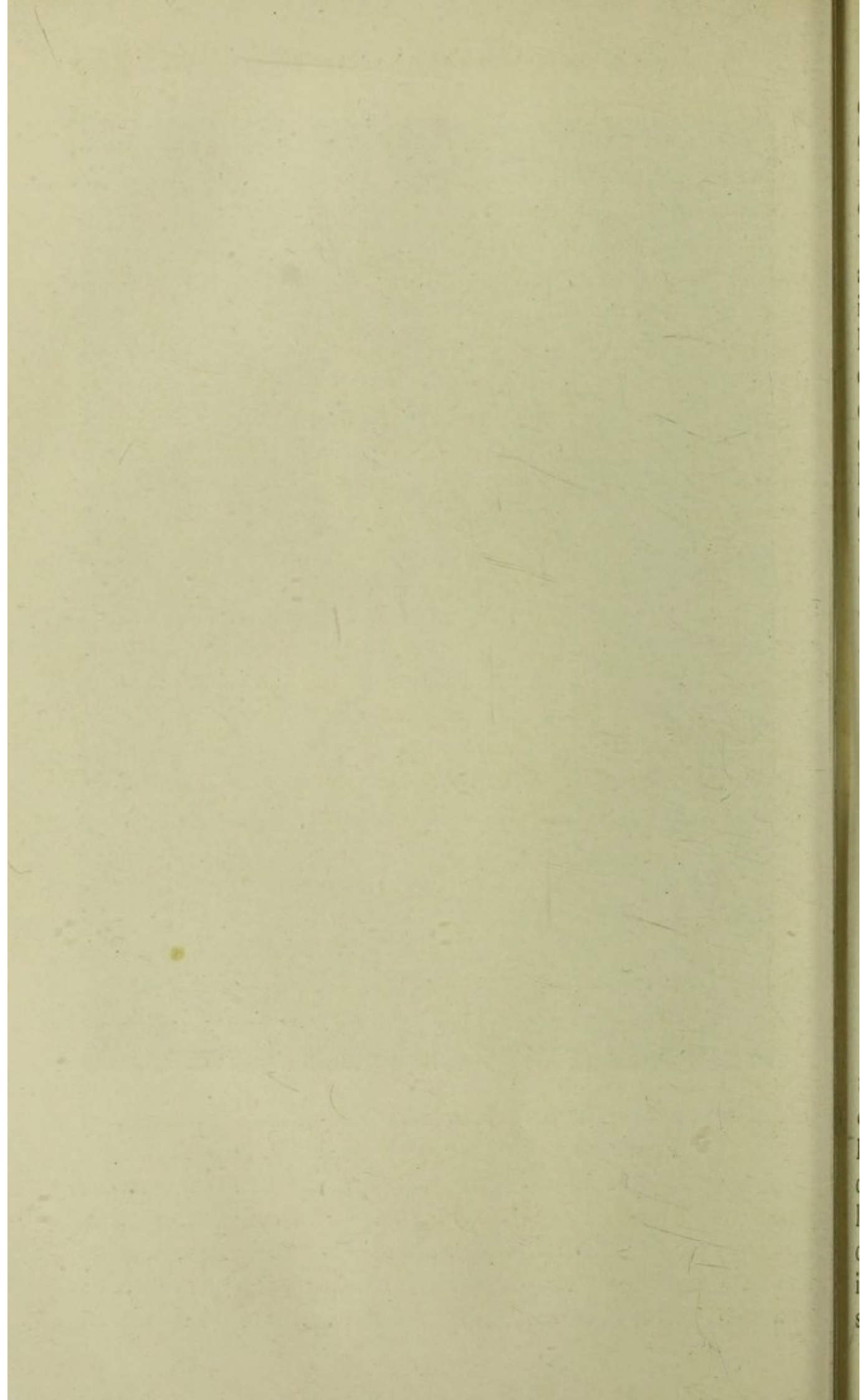
have left this impression on my mind. But these vague ideas were shattered and sent spinning into space when into the tea-room came a slim, graceful lady with a pretty oval face and charming eyes, and hair just touched with grey. She was wearing a knitted pink silk coat, and one of those long light chains that mere men believe were intended to support muffs. She was arm in arm with one of the prettiest of the young comediennes of to-day, and when she told me that amongst the people she had asked to lunch was an ex-Great Officer of the Household, a young officer of cavalry, and an American editor, I began to feel that at last I was moving in Court circles, and instead of formulating the questions that I intended to ask about cookery began to babble of great houses and coroneted personages just as though I was a newsman getting together my column of society gossip.

But Mrs Lewis brought me back to Jermyn Street and my object in going there by telling me at the lunch-table in the grey dining-room that all the members of her kitchen brigade are girls, that she was going presently to take me down to show me them at work, and that Margaret, who is twenty-six years old, was responsible for the lunch we were going to eat, even to the *pommes soufflées*, and she further declared her entire belief that it was more satisfactory to have an accomplished woman cook than an accomplished chef in a kitchen; for the women are more resourceful, are less apt to make difficulties, and grumble less at their work, but that, on the other hand, they are as a rule more extravagant than the men cooks, for they do not understand the economic side of kitchen finance.

And very excellent indeed Margaret's handiwork proved to be. Our first dish was of grilled oysters and celery root on thin silver skewers, and then



MRS. LEWIS



came one of those delicious quail puddings which are one of Mrs Lewis's inventions and for which King Edward had a special liking. There was a whole quail under the paste cover for everyone at table, with a wonderful gravy, to the making of which go all sorts of good things and which when it has soaked into the bottom layer of paste makes that not the least delicate part of the dish. Had not a turn of the conversation taken Mrs Lewis off to a description of how beautiful the twins just born to a member of the aristocracy are, I should have liked to have heard more concerning King Edward's tastes in cookery, for no one, except, perhaps, M. Ménager, who was his Majesty's chef, knew them better than did Mrs Lewis, to whom many an anxious hostess entertaining Royalty for the first time has looked as her sheet-anchor. A turn of the conversation brought up the name of the Duke of Connaught, who, I know, has the same admiration for Mrs Lewis's handiwork that the late King so often expressed. Another appreciative monarch for whose appetite Mrs Lewis has catered is the Kaiser, for she ruled the kitchen at Highcliffe Castle during the Emperor's stay there of three weeks. A personal gift of jewellery marked H.I.M.'s approval.

Mrs Lewis lays it down that three dishes are the right number at any lunch, for she, like all other really great authorities on gastronomy, is opposed to a long menu; but she, as great authorities sometimes do, broke her own rule in giving us, after the quail pie, a dish of chicken wings in bread-crumbs and kidneys before the pears and pancakes, an admirable combination, with which our lunch ended. After lunch Mrs Lewis took the little gathering that had congregated about the lunch-table for coffee down in the lift to her kitchen, a splendidly airy and spacious one, running the full length of the three

houses, and with its windows opening out on a courtyard at the back. It is as cheerful and light and as well ventilated a kitchen as I have seen anywhere. The rooms which should be cold for the keeping of provisions are just at the right temperature, the lines of pots and pans shine brilliantly, and bustling about were half-a-dozen girls of all ages, from the light-haired Margaret, head of the kitchen, to a little girl of fourteen, the youngest recruit, all wearing the white caps that men cooks wear, which form a very becoming head-dress. And Mrs Lewis, talking of "my girls," as she calls them, told me that she was a year younger than the youngest of them when she first, with a pig-tail of hair down her back, began to learn the art of cookery in the kitchen of the Comtesse de Paris, and she added that she could show me the character she received from her first place when, as a beginner, she was earning the large sum of a shilling a week. Her second place was with the Duc d'Aumale at Chantilly, and the first kitchen over which she had complete rule was that of the Duc d'Orleans, when he was at Sandhurst. She at one time controlled the kitchen of White's Club, and Mr Astor, both at Hever and in London, puts his kitchens in Mrs Lewis's charge when he gives his great parties.

No cook with her training completed leaves Mrs Lewis's kitchen for another place at less than £100 a year, but her girls are never anxious to go elsewhere, which I can quite understand, for they seemed a very happy family down in that cheerful, airy kitchen.

And presently in the tea-room I gained Mrs Lewis's undivided attention for a minute or two and drew from her some opinions as to the changes in dinners that she had noticed since she first began to rule the roast. One difference is a matter of finance, that people in Victorian days were quite content to pay

three guineas a head for a dinner, but that now hostesses bargain that their dinners shall not cost them more than a guinea a head. Dinners have become much shorter, but people in society have a greater knowledge of gastronomy than they used to possess. In past days a small jar of compressed caviare was all that was needed for a dinner-party; nowadays a large bowl or jar of the fresh unpressed caviare is required. People were satisfied at one time with half a stuffed quail, but now a whole roasted quail is the least that can be set before any one person. Again, in times now past, a sliced truffle went a long way, whereas now each individual guest likes to have a whole truffle "as big as your fist" offered her or him.

And, making the most of my opportunity, I asked Mrs Lewis what was the time-table of her day when she went out to cook one of those dinners that have made her so famous. It is a very long day's work. She is at the market at five A.M. to buy her material; at seven her staff is ready to help her in her own kitchen, and she begins with the last dishes of the dinner, preparing the sweets and ices; next she turns to the cleaning and preparation of the vegetables, and then to the materials for the soup and the making of the cold dishes. By one o'clock the meats and birds are all prepared for the cooking, and at six all the things to be cooked at the house where the dinner is to be given are put in hampers and taken over there.

To step for an evening into command of a kitchen, very often over the heads of one or two men cooks, is not always an unmixed pleasure, and Mrs Lewis, who has a very keen sense of humour, told me some of her experiences in some kitchens which will make very amusing reading if ever she writes her reminiscences, as she should do. Sometimes she is asked to build up a tent for some great dinner, which she

is ready to do, and she often furnishes it, and ornaments its walls with china and pictures. Sometimes when a host or hostess wishes to entertain many guests to dinner and a ball Mrs Lewis takes a big vacant house and furnishes it for one night, in all the rooms that are seen, as completely as though its owners were still occupying it. "I have made almost as much in the past year out of my gold chairs and my china as I have out of my pots and pans," she told me. She has a little army of devoted waiters who have been at her call for twenty years and who are always ready to serve under her banner.

A menu of one of Mrs Lewis's ball suppers, at Surrey House, may well find a place here. She, I believe, first made the great discovery that young men who have danced an evening through prefer eggs and bacon and Lager beer in the small hours of the morning to *paté de foie gras* and champagne :

Chaud.

Consommé de Volaille.
Cailles Schnitten.
Poussin à la Richelieu.
Poulet grillé, Pommes soufflées.

Froid.

Petites Crabes. Homard. Truite au Bleu.
Poularde en Gelée.
Dindonneaux Hezedia.
Canard pressé en Parfait.
Bœuf et Agneau à la Mode.
Mousse de Jambon en Belle-Veu.
Asperges.
Fraises du Bois Monte Carlo.
Mélange de Fruits.
Pâtisserie.
Café Noir
(à deux heures).
Grenouilles à la Lyonnaise.
Œufs pochés au Lard.
Rognons grillés.
Pilsener Lager Beer.

She has cooked dinners for the regiments of the Household Cavalry when they entertained a sovereign ; when a good fellow, now dead, kept open-house for all his friends in the club-room during Warwick Races, Mrs Lewis undertook the difficult task of providing the best of lunches for an unknown number, and she has contracted for many of the feasts of the great Government Departments.

Mrs Lewis has the artist's appreciation of a critical judgment of her handiwork, but to cook a dinner for people who cannot understand its excellences is, in her opinion, like "feeding pigs on mushrooms." There is not one iota of jealousy in Mrs Lewis, for when I told her that in my opinion she held, as a woman ruler of the kitchen, a parallel position to that which M. Escoffier holds as a man, she told me how much she admires the great French Maître-Chef, not only as a great cook, but as a great gentleman.

Before I left the Cavendish Hotel Mrs Lewis showed me some of the rooms, and when I was loud in praise of the perfect taste and the happy combination she has achieved of keeping all the charm of the fine old chambers and yet adding to them all the modern conveniences, she laughed, told me that she had been her own architect, added that it was not an expensive education that had enabled her to do all this, and likened herself in her apprentice years to the little girl of fourteen whom we had seen down in the kitchen.

L

THE RÉUNION DES GASTRONOMES

OF clubs formed for the noble purpose of eating good dinners—clubs that have no club-houses—there are very many. Sometimes there is a literary tinge as an excuse for the dinners, sometimes a Bohemian, sometimes a Masonic. But there are two dining clubs that deserve especial recognition in a Gourmet's Guide, for they are clubs of professional gourmets whose business concerns the organisation of good feeding. One of these clubs, which held its annual dinner this year in the new banqueting-room of the Piccadilly Hotel, is the Réunion des Gastronomes. This association consists of proprietors, managing directors and managers of hotels, restaurants and clubs. It holds meetings to discuss and take action in all matters which concern the prosperity and welfare of the gastronomic art, and once a year its members and their guests banquet at one of the hotels or restaurants which are represented by members of the Réunion. I have been fortunate enough to be a guest of late years at many of these banquets, and look back with pleasure to the feasts held at the Hyde Park Hotel, at the Café Royal, at Prince's Restaurant, and other temples of gastronomy.

Two lifts take banqueters down from the entrance hall of the Piccadilly Hotel to the ante-chamber of the new banqueting-room somewhere down in the bowels of the earth. The new rooms are below the grill-room, and the Piccadilly must have almost as much

depth below the street level as it has height above it. The ante-room is classic in its ornamentation, is white, or a very light grey, in colour, and its decoration is elaborate. Here, between eight o'clock and half-past eight, some three hundred Gastronomes and their guests assembled, and I received a warm welcome from Mr Louis Mantell, of the National Liberal Club, the hon. secretary of the society, and from Mr J. L. Kerpen, of the Hyde Park Hotel, the president of the society, who was wearing his jewel of office, hung by a gold chain round his neck. Colonel Sir William Carington, the hon. president of the society, was to have taken the chair at the dinner, but a bereavement prevented him from being present, and the president of the year presided in his place. I found pleasant familiar faces all about me. There were, amongst many others, Mr Judah of the Café Royal, M. Soi of the Savoy, M. Kramer of the Carlton, M. Jules from Jermyn Street, M. Gustave from the Lotus Club, Mr George Harvey from the Connaught Rooms, M. Luigi of Romano's, Mr Edwardes, M. Pruger from the Automobile Club, M. Boriani from the Pall Mall, Messrs Harry and Dick Preston up from Brighton, and scores of other pleasant acquaintances. At the half-hour punctually, a young toast-master with a most majestic voice announced that dinner was served, and the three hundred of us made our way next door into the new great banqueting-room that was receiving its gastronomic baptism.

It is a fine spacious room, though its construction is rather curious, for, no doubt owing to exigency of space, the roof of a portion of it is comparatively low, though the major part is quite lofty. It must, however, have admirable ventilation, for at no period during the evening did the room become uncomfortably warm or the atmosphere uncomfortably smoky. The colouring of the walls is of stone with

a slight tinge of chrome. Round a portion of the hall runs a gallery with a handsome railing of black and gold, and a double staircase at the end of the room leads up to this gallery. The ceiling is ornamented with fine paintings of gods and goddesses in the clouds; there are large mirrors on one side of the room and, in spite of the different heights of portions of the ceiling, the acoustic properties of the great hall are excellent. An admirable band, the leader of which I think I remember as a solo violinist on the stage, played us in to dinner and made music during dinner, there being loud calls for M. Boriani, the Caruso of the gastronomic world, when a selection from *La Bohème* was played.

A long table ran the whole length of the room, and smaller ones branched off from it like the prongs of a rake. The tables were decorated with flowers of all shades of crimson and flame colour, and the effect was quite beautiful. This was the menu of the dinner, and the manager of the Piccadilly and the chef were both warmly congratulated on a most admirable feast. Following the menu are the wines which accompanied it:

Caviar Frais d'Astrakan.

Blinis.

Tortue Claire.

Délices de Sole au Coulis d'Ecrevisses.

Selle de Chevreuil Grand Veneur.

Purée de Marrons.

Suprême de Volaille Princesse.

Neige au Champagne.

Reine des Prés en Cocotte.

Salade Trianon.

Rocher de Foie Gras à la Gelée au Porto.

Vasque de Pêches aux Perles de Lorraine.

Corbeille d'Excellence.

Croûte Piccadilly.

Fruits.

Moka.

Zeltinger Auslese, 1906.

Niersteiner Rollaender, 1911.

Volnay, 1903.

Ernest Irroy and Co., 1906.

Giessler and Co., 1906.

Bouquet Fils, 1906.

Château Pontet Clanet, 1895.

La Grande Marque

(60 years old).

Specially selected for the Gastronomes' Dinner.

Liqueurs.

The crawfish sauce with the filleted sole was of a most delicate taste; the venison admirable; the *volaille princesse* a most dainty dish of fowl, and the quail, the "Queen of the Fields," admirably plump little fellows. The *foie gras*, served in the shape of a circular fort, I did not taste, for I had already dined very well. The *vasque de pêches* was one of those combinations of fruit and *confitures* and ice that are now so popular.

With the coffee came the Royal toasts, and then the cigars, and as the smoke curled up and the liqueurs were brought round the musical programme which had been arranged commenced. A gentleman in Highland costume assured us that the joys of lying in bed were greater than the joys of getting up in the morning, and a young lady with a fascinating dimple sang "You Made Me Love You," to the three hundred of us.

"The Guests" was the next toast, to which Dr O'Neill responded, thanking the professors of gastronomy for the patients who so often came by means of *gourmandise* into the hands of his profession. Then after "Snooky Ookums," by another fascinating lady, who wore a large red feather in her hair, there was a little ceremony which delighted the Gastronomes and their guests very much. It was a presentation of a handsome silver-gilt cup on behalf of the Réunion des Gastronomes to their hon. secretary, Mr Louis

Mantell, to whose cheery management of the feasts so much of their success is due. The whole company united in singing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," so as to give Mr Mantell time to collect his thoughts before acknowledging his Christmas box in the shape of a cup.

Some good stories from Mr Cooper Mitchell, a little more oratory, though speeches at the Gastronomes' banquet are always kept within the shortest space, and with more songs, a very merry evening ended. If future banquets in the Piccadilly banqueting-hall are all nearly as successful as the first one held there it will become a hall of good will and good fellowship as well as a hall of good cheer.

LI

THE LIGUE DES GOURMANDS

SAINT FORTUNAT has deposed Saint Laurent from his position as Patron Saint of Cooks. Saint Laurent was an impostor in the matter of *gourmandise* for he owed the proud position he occupied for so many centuries as the Patron of the Chefs to the exceedingly uncomfortable position in which he met his martyrdom. He was broiled on a gridiron. Saint Fortunat not only thoroughly enjoyed good things to eat and drink, but wrote excellent Latin verses in praise of gastronomy, some of which M. Th. Gringoire, the secretary of the Ligue des Gourmands and the editor of the *Carnet d'Epicure*, a clever Parisian journalist who has settled in London, has translated into flowing French verses. Saint Fortunat was the father-confessor to the Queen-Saint Radegonde and to Saint Agnes, and these two ladies, the first of the *cordons-bleus*, prepared *ragoûts* and *friandises* for the holy man, who thanked them in poetry. He died in the odour of sanctity as Bishop of Poitiers.

The Ligue des Gourmands, which is the association of the great French chefs in London, and whose president is Maître Escoffier, the eminent chef of the Carlton, celebrates the feast day of the Saint, in December, by a banquet in his honour. The dinner in 1913 was the second of the St Fortunat banquets and the fourteenth feast held by the Ligue.

The Ligue has branches pretty well all over the

world wherever there are French cooks. If London, under the presidency of M. Escoffier, takes the lead with sixty members, Paris comes a good second with forty-three members, and Marseilles, New York and Montreal tie for third place, with twelve members each. Brussels has a group of six members, and there is a forlorn hope of five devoted French chefs in the heart of the enemy at Berlin. Delhi and Dakar, Constantinople and Ajaccio, Bombay and Gumpoldskirschen, Lowestoft and Lahore, Shanghai and Syracuse, Yokohama and Zurich, and a hundred other towns are advance posts of the Ligue, and wherever there is a group of the leaguers they and their guests eat the St Fortunat dinner, the menu of which is composed by M. Escoffier, and the *recettes* of the especial dishes in which are sent in advance to the members before the Saint's day. In 1813 the most important dinner of the Ligue next to that held at Gatti's was the one at Paris, where the leaguers dined together at Paillard's and sent congratulations to their brethren in London.

M. Jean Richepin, the great French poet, is bracketed with M. Escoffier in the presidency of the Ligue, and many of the dishes that M. Escoffier has invented for the feasts of the Gourmands are named after celebrities in art and letters. The *fraises Sarah Bernhardt*, which was the surprise dish of the first dinner of the Ligue, has become a household word in all the restaurants of all the nations. M. Escoffier is no believer in keeping his inventions as *secrets de la maison*, and his *recettes* for the dinners of the Ligue are always published both in French and English, in the *Carnet d'Epiqueure*, which is the mouthpiece of the Ligue.

In this open-handedness and open-mindedness, M. Escoffier is very wise. I always assure ladies who ask me to obtain for them recipes of various

dishes, and remind great chefs when I beg *recettes* from them, that it is not so much the ingredients of a dish as the hand of the cook that makes a masterpiece. No painstaking amateur, following exactly the directions given by a master of the art, ever reproduces a *chef-d'œuvre*, any more than an amateur painter, copying the work of some great master of the brush is able to obtain that master's effects.

The dish that M. Escoffier had invented for the Diner St Fortunat in 1913 was the *cochon de lait St Fortunat*, with *pommes Aigrettes* and *sauce groseille au Raifort*.

We, the hosts and the guests, began to assemble at eight o'clock in the ante-room half-way up the great staircase on the King William Street side of the Adelaide Gallery. The great cooks are not so selfish as many other banqueters are, for they welcome ladies to their feasts, and very pretty indeed are most of the chef's wives and daughters, and cousins and aunts, who grace these feasts. No one, unless he knew who the members of the Ligue are, would tell by seeing them as they gathered for their banquet what their profession is. M. Escoffier, the president, with thoughtful eyes and gentle expression, looks, as I have, I know, before said, like an ambassador or some great painter or sculptor. M. Cedard, the King's chef, who is usually at these feasts, but who was absent from this one, looks like an attaché of an embassy; M. Malley, of the Ritz, has the appearance and the aplomb of an officer of Chasseurs à cheval, and so on through the whole list. Some of them, of course, are the plump and rosy gentlemen that artists love to draw presiding over pots and pans, but great cooks are not all run into one mould, either in figure or in intellect. And the guests of the Liguers vary in type, as the Liguers themselves do. I shook hands on Saturday night with distinguished soldiers and their wives, with

bon-vivants, with proprietors of restaurants, with representatives of the great champagne firms of Rheims, with journalists and authors who are epicures, with doctors who do not practise themselves in the matter of diet all that they preach to their patients.

The banqueting-room at the Adelaide Gallery holds comfortably one hundred and fifty diners, and we must have been quite that number, for more gourmets wished to make trial of the sucking-pig of the Saint than it was possible to find room for, and though as many tables as possible had been put into the space M. Gringoire had to refuse tickets to would-be diners who had postponed the request until the eleventh hour.

Soon after half-past eight, which is the dinner-hour of the Ligue—for the great chefs like to see the dinners from their kitchens well under way before they change from their professional white clothing into dress clothes—we streamed up the stairs from the ante-room into the banqueting hall—a fine room, with a musicians' gallery occupied for the occasion by an Hungarian orchestra in hussar uniform, and with, for this especial occasion, the French and the English flags draped together at each end of the room. A long table ran the full length of the room, and from it jutted out smaller tables, each presided over by an officer of the Ligue.

When we were seated I could see some faces of well-known chefs whom I had missed in the press downstairs. There were there, besides the names I have already mentioned, M. Aubin, of the Russell Hotel; M. Espezel, of the Union Club; M. Briais, of the Midland Hotel; M. Grunenfelder, of the Grand Hotel; M. Vicario, of the Carlton; M. Muller, of the Hyde Park Hotel; M. Görog, who was one of the four founders of the Ligue; M. Genie, of Prince's Restaurant; M. Ferrario, of Romano's;

M. Vinet, who was for many years chef at "The Rag"; Mr Coumeig, chef to the Duchess of Marlborough; and M. Saulnier, *sous-chef* of the Piccadilly, a rising star. If all these names are not French names, those amongst the chefs of the Ligue who were not born in France have, by adopting the cult of the Haute Cuisine Française, become naturalised Frenchmen in gastronomy.

There are various little ceremonies observed at the dinners of the Gourmands, one of them being that at the commencement of dinner a member of the Ligue rises and reminds his fellow-members that only French wine should be drunk at these banquets. Another little ceremony is that each dish in turn is announced by the toast-master—of course, for this occasion a Frenchman—who rolls his "r's" with fine resonance as in a thunderous voice he tells us what we are going to eat.

This was the menu with Escoffier's signature appended to it:

Crêpes au Caviar frais.
Huîtres pimentées.
Croûte au Pot à l'Ancienne.
Turban de Filets de Sole au gratin.
Chapon fin à la Toulousaine.
Cochon de Lait Saint-Fortunat.
Pommes Aigrettes.
Sauce Groseille au Raifort.
Bécassines Rosées.
Salade Lorette.
Pâté de foie gras.
Biscuit glacé Caprice.
Mignardises.

The caviar and the little pancakes are always delightful, and the *croûte au pot à l'Ancienne*, in its delicate plainness, always makes an excellent beginning to a dinner. The *gratin* with the sole made it a rather drier dish than fish dishes usually are, and I

know that this was the criticism passed on it by the president of the Ligue, but it was very excellent to the taste. The *chapon*, with its rich sauce, was admirably cooked, and served in dishes with at either end heads of fowls admirably reproduced by the sculptors in the kitchen, and then to a triumphal march from the band a little sucking-pig, its crackling golden from the fire, was brought in processionally and shown to the chairman of the feast and the guests in general before it was carried out to be carved. And very admirable the flesh of this piglet and his companions was when brought to table, with round each dish apples in their skins, the top of each apple being cut off to serve as a little lid. A sharp-tasting sauce, in which the flavours of red currant and horse radish mingled, formed an agreeable bitter-sweet. What the various ingredients were that formed the admirable stuffing of the little pigs I do not exactly know, but there were barley and chestnuts amongst them, but, like all good stuffing, one flavour after another chased each other over the palate. M. Escoffier's own criticism on his own creation was that a sucking-pig is more suited for a *petit comité* than for a large gathering; but, though I quite agreed with him that the right party in numbers to eat a sucking-pig is just that number that one sucking-pig will satisfy, I think it very hard luck if greater numbers were to be prevented by this very fine distinction between a dish for a dinner-table and a dish for a banqueting-table from eating a very great delicacy. The snipe and salad, the *pâté de foie gras*, served on a great bed of crust, and an admirable ice, finished the banquet. Then came the after-dinner ceremonies and songs, which at these feasts are varied and lively. The toast of "The King" and "The President," with the two National Anthems, was followed by a little discourse in honour of the Patron Saint by the

chairman, who coupled the name of the saintly patron of gastronomy with those of his two *continuateurs*, the great poet and the great chef, and to this speech M. Escoffier replied with great modesty. The toast of "The Ladies" next brought all the male guests to their feet, and then followed the hymn to St Fortunat, sung by a gentleman from the musicians' gallery, with orchestral accompaniment, the guests taking up the refrain :

"Saint Fortunat, honneur à toi,
O notre chef ! O notre roi !
Saint Fortunat !"

If the leaguers were a little slow in picking up the air and paid very little attention to the time, the heartiness with which they chorused the Saint's name made amends for any other shortcomings. "The Ligue," "The Visitors," "The Press"—for whom Mr John Lane, of *The Standard*, returned thanks—and "The Cuisine and Wines of France" were toasted by various orators, some of whom spoke in English, some in French. And then M. T. Fourie, the chef of the Adelaide Gallery, bearded, and blushing in his white uniform of the kitchen, was called up to the high table that the president of the Ligue and the chairman of the dinner might shake him by the hand and congratulate him on the admirable feast which he had prepared. This is a very pretty little ceremony always observed at these feasts, and a very right one, for at most banquets the chef who has been the cause of so much pleasure to the guests is not asked to come in person to receive the thanks which are so legitimately due to him.

After this ceremony the concert, an Anglo-French one, commenced. Mademoiselle Suzanne Ollier, Miss Marianne Green and Miss Winifred Green, of the Gaiety, Mademoiselle Bianca Briana, and Miss

Mabel Martin all sang charmingly, and were presented with bouquets on behalf of the Ligue, and M. Siffre, the president of the Club Gaulois, sang "Margot" quite excellently, without an accompaniment. He was presented with a cabbage stuck on a fork, for the leaguers dearly love their little jokes at their banquets. At last the band played the *Père la Victoire* march and the National Anthem, and the dinner came to an end.

In gratitude to M. Escoffier, the president, to M. Th. Gringoire, the secretary, and to all the members of the Ligue for being permitted in their company to taste for the first time the sucking-pig of St Fortunat—a dish that will go the round of the globe—let me quote a few words appropriate to the occasion from Charles Lamb's prose Hymn of Praise in honour of roast pig :

"Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices."

LII

THE CAVOUR RESTAURANT

FOR AULD LANG SYNE

I HEAD this chapter "For Auld Lang Syne," for the future of the Cavour Restaurant has been, since the death of Philippe, who brought the restaurant into celebrity, uncertain. The Cavour has been put up of late years once to public auction and bought in, and there have been rumours without number that this, that and the other actor-manager was going to purchase the building.

In spite of all these rumours, the Cavour still continues in the hands of Mrs Dale, who was manageress under Philippe in old days, and to whom he left the property, just as it used to be in Philippe's time, which is to say that it is one of the best bourgeois French restaurants to be found in London.

Every Londoner knows the white-faced restaurant almost next door to the Alhambra in Leicester Square. It is one of the few restaurants that still retains a bar, though it is nowadays called a buffet, and the three-and-six dinner which is served in the restaurant is still as it used to be, a most excellent meal, unstinted, well cooked, and all its material of excellent quality.

The bar of the buffet has always been a favourite resort of actors, and it was there that I first heard Arthur Roberts tell the story of "The Old Iron

Pot," a tale the success of which led to the invention of the game of "Spoof," that masterly feat of bamboozling the guileless which gave amusement in the eighties to all Bohemia and added a new word to the English language. The Old Iron Pot figured largely in a tale which Arthur Roberts never wearied of telling to "Long Jack" Jarvis, another actor. No one ever heard the beginning of the tale, for it was always well in progress when the victim of the harmless pleasantry came on the scene. Arthur was so intent on the story, the other conspirator so immensely interested, that the new-comer was at once interested also, dispensed with all greetings, and tried vainly to understand all the ramifications of the story into which new characters seemed constantly to come, and which all revolved round an old iron pot. Jack Jarvis apparently thoroughly understood the story, occasionally asked questions, and now and then corrected Arthur Roberts as to the relationship of the various characters, and the other listener very soon found himself pretending that he too comprehended all the twists and turns.

Somehow or another, in those days the spirit of harmless practical joking seemed to be in the atmosphere of the Cavour bar. Perhaps it was, because in the days when Leicester Square was a waste ground with the damaged equestrian statue of George the Third in its midst some practical jokers sallied out one night from the little restaurant which occupied the site of the bar, to play the best practical joke of the last century. They painted the statue's horse with red spots, put a fool's cap on the statue's head, and a long birch broom in the hand which should have held a field-marshal's baton.

Philippe was the one and only waiter in those days at the little restaurant which was kept by a Frenchman and his wife. Next door, and extending

behind the restaurant, was a tin shanty, where judge and jury entertainment was held and *poses plastiques* were exhibited. It was a disreputable place, for Brookes, who was its proprietor, and who had been associated with "Baron" Nicholson at the Coal Hole, had not the Baron's wit, though he had the same flow of doubtful oratory.

When the old couple died, and Philippe succeeded to the business, he soon bought up the tin shanty and the ground belonging to it, built the Cavour as it now is, the bar occupying the site of the original restaurant, and made a little garden on the space now occupied by a cinema show.

Of this little garden Philippe was very proud. He liked to be able to go out of his restaurant and pick a bunch of mignonette to give to any lady, and he grew some vegetables and oranges there as well as flowers. He had an eye also to the main chance, for when anyone pointed out to him that he was wasting a valuable site by making a garden of it, he nodded his head, and replied: "The earth he grow more valuable every day."

Philippe, short, grey-haired, with a little close-clipped moustache, always wearing a turned-down collar and a black tie, had a very distinct personality of his own. He was a first-class man of business, was up every morning at five o'clock to go the rounds of the market, riding in one four-wheeled cab, with another one following behind, into which he put his purchases and brought them home with him. He had no love for teetotalers, and he budgeted for the very liberal dinner of the house on the understanding that his customers should drink wine therewith. When he found that some of the guests were drinking only water, he used at once to send a waiter to them or to talk to them himself, and to tell them that he would charge them sixpence extra.

After a time he found it entailed less loss of temper to notify this on the bill of fare, and the Cavour menu still bears the legend: "No beers served with this dinner. Dinner without wine, sixpence extra."

The restaurant of the Cavour is a large white room, with a smaller room, also white, running back from it. Access to the big room is obtained from Leicester Square by a narrow corridor decorated with allegorical figures of the various months of the year—awful daubs, whoever it was who painted them. The big room is lighted from above by a sky-light, and there are large globes of electric light in the ceiling. There are many large mirrors let into the walls, and down each side of the room run brass rails for hats and coats. There is oil-cloth on the floor, with strips of carpet over it in the gangways. The waiters go to a bar near the entrance door for the wine and other drinkables, which are served out there by Mrs Dale, or by her deputy. Some of the waiters, mostly French, were in the restaurant for many years under Philippe, but there is a new manager now with a curled-up black moustache.

If any of the habitués wish to entertain guests to an elaborate dinner at the Cavour, the custom is to pay five shillings instead of three-and-six, and certain extra dishes are put into the dinner of the day for this price. The ordinary dinner, however, is so good that these additions are hardly needed. This is the menu of a three-and-six dinner I ate at the Cavour this winter. It is served from five to nine, so as to meet the convenience of all the patrons of the restaurant, from the actor who makes a hurried meal before going to the theatre, to the City man who comes in very late after a day of hard work and goes home after his dinner:

Hors d'œuvre variés.

Soup.

Consommé de Volaille à la Royal.

Crème à l'Indienne.

Fish.

Boiled Turbot au Sauterne.

Fried Fillet of Plaice.

Grilled Herring.

Entrée.

Filet Mignon aux Haricots panachés.

Calf's Head à la Reine.

Roast.

Chicken.

Quails on Toast

Salad. Cheese. Dessert.

There was a fine selection of *hors d'œuvre* to choose from, and plenty of each, not the one sardine looking lonely in a little dish, the two radishes and the potato salad that so often are the sole representatives of the first course at cheap dining-places. I was given a big plateful of good thick mulligatawny soup, and when I had eaten the very liberal helping of boiled turbot, excellently firm, I felt that I had finished quite a good dinner. However, I summoned up enough appetite to dispose of the little *vol au vent* put before me, the pastry of which was noticeably excellent, and then attacked a quail, which was quite a good bird, even if it had not those layers of fat which distinguish a "special" quail on a club dinner list from the ordinary one. A scoop from an excellent Stilton cheese ended my repast.

It may be selfish to hope that Mrs Dale may not sell her property to be converted into a theatre, but the Cavour dinner is such a good meal of its kind that I should be sorry if it disappeared from the map of London That Dines.

LIII

VERREY'S

IF I compare Verrey's in Regent Street to Borchardt's in the Französische Strasse of Berlin, I am paying Verrey's a high compliment, for Borchardt's is the classic restaurant of the German capital, run on good French lines by a German proprietor.

Mr George Krehl the First, founder of Verrey's as a restaurant, was born near Stuttgart, and came over from Germany in 1850; and the recent manager of the restaurant, Mr Stadelmaier, is also German born, for he, like Mr Krehl, came from near Stuttgart, and he, before he went to Egypt, to Paris, to Düsseldorf and elsewhere, to become a cosmopolitan, served his apprenticeship in gastronomy under old Mr George Krehl at Verrey's.

But French—French of the second empire—Verrey's is, particularly at dinner-time. At lunch-time the restaurant is always quite full of ladies who shop in Regent Street, and of their escorts, and the rooms on the first floor are also given over to lunchers—and even then, sometimes, would-be customers have to wait a little while to obtain tables. Therefore the luncheon menu is adapted to the wants of ladies who are probably in a hurry, for though there is a very full list at lunch-time of delicacies that can be ordered, there are also several entrées and several joints always ready.

It is, however, at dinner-time that Verrey's enjoys the peaceful, unhurrying atmosphere that always should surround a classic restaurant, and which is so

thoroughly in keeping with the old bow-windows with small panes of the café, which look out on to Regent Street. A little corridor leads from the street to a tiny waiting-room—a comparatively recent addition, for it used to be the old still-room, a room which is so small that the round table of ormolu with a china plaque in its centre, on which is a portrait of Louis XV., and smaller oval plaques all about it, almost fills all the available space.

The restaurant, lighted from above, used in old Mr Krehl's days to be known as the Cameo Room, for on the centre of each of its panels was a medallion in the style of Wedgwood. I rather wish that this old decoration had been retained, but I remember the pride with which Mr George Krehl the Second showed me the new Oriental decorations—decorations which still remain—the silvered roof with mirrors reflecting it, the electric lights on the cornice with great shells to act as reflectors, an electric clock shaped like a star, and the panels of old gold Oriental silk. Time has mellowed the gorgeousness of this Eastern setting, which in its first bloom I thought a little too *voyant*, and the dark carpet and the dark wood and upholstery of the chairs, all keep the scheme of colouring a restful one. The napery at Verrey's is the good thick napery of the classic restaurant. Its glass is thin; its silver is heavy—all trifles which are important as adding to the delight of a good dinner. The lights at the tables are wax candles, with pink shades, in old silver candlesticks, and there is a Japanese simplicity in the two great bunches of flowers in glass vases, one of which is on a dark wooden stand in the centre of the room, and the other on the sideboard. There are flowers also, in glasses, on all the tables.

It adds to the pleasure of dining at Verrey's to be known and to be recognised by the old servants who

have been in the restaurant as long as I can remember it. There is an old head waiter, a fine specimen of a Briton—portly, with little side whiskers, dignified and unhurrying, who might have stood as a model for that Robert whose wit and wisdom used to enliven the pages of *Punch*, who always remembers my name and all my gastronomic history. And the head waiter in the café, who now has a full head of grey hair, I remember when he first came to Verrey's a youth with the blackest of black hair. Mr Stadelmaier, though he looks on the right side of forty, remembers how young Mr George Krehl, in the days of his father's rule, one day took me out into the yard at the back of the house to show me his dogs and the kitchen which looks out on to this open space, and the last time I dined at Verrey's brought me in from the yard, to look at a delightful little Samoyede puppy, looking like one of the woolly toy dogs in the shops, for he too, like Mr George Krehl the younger, is a breeder of prize dogs, and has established a club for the owners of sleigh dogs.

Mr Stadelmaier has now left Verrey's and is manager of Kettner's.

The patrons of Verrey's at dinner-time are some of them grey-headed, for I am sure that all its old patrons always return to their first love; but there are young couples as well, and the restaurant, though it is quiet, is by no means dull. It has this distinction, rare amongst modern restaurants, that it has never surrendered to the modern craze for music during meals, and it is possible to talk to a neighbour at the dinner-table without raising one's voice to a shout. I fancy that Mr Albert Krehl, the survivor of the two sons of old Mr George Krehl, would as soon think of introducing gipsy music into the restaurant as they would of engaging Tango dancers to do "the Scissors" in and out of the tables.

Verrey's has so far acknowledged the tendencies of to-day towards a *table d'hôte* dinner that it offers its patrons, if they wish it, a dinner at seven-and-six. But it is true to its old traditions in that although it offers this dinner, no dish of the dinner is cooked until the order has been given, and it is practically a dinner *à la carte* selected for the diner at a settled price. This is the menu of one of these dinners :

Hors d'œuvre Variés.
Consommé Duchesse.
Crème de Volaille.
Suprême de Sole Regina.
Filet de Bœuf Jussieuse.
Pommes Château.
Faisan rôti.
Salade d'Endive.
Celeri braisé au jus.
Parfait de Vanille.
Friandises.
Croûte Baron.

But to eat a dinner ordered by somebody else, because I am too lazy to order it myself, is to me just as unsporting as it is to land a fish that somebody else has hooked, so that when I dine at Verrey's I pay M. Schellenberg, the *chef de cuisine*, who is an Alsatian, the compliment of giving careful consideration as to which of his *plats* I shall order, and I generally like to include in my dinner some of Verrey's specialities, of which there are quite a number. The last time I dined there I was given an excellent *bortsch* soup, one-and-three—it is the custom at Verrey's to charge for a half-portion, which is ample for one person, a little more than half what is charged for a whole portion, which suffices for two ; *sole à la Verrey*, a filleted sole with an admirable sauce, which is one of the secrets of the house, but in which the taste of ketchup is discernible, two shillings ; and a *soufflé Palmyre*, two

shillings. This with a pint of good claret was a dinner not to be despised.

I asked Mr Stadelmaier whether the Queen's Hall and the Palladium, two neighbouring places of music and entertainment, had brought the restaurant many customers. The concerts at the Queen's Hall, he told me, had done so, and he said that people going to the Palladium, when it gave a one-house variety entertainment, used often to dine at Verrey's, but that its present "two houses a night" policy did not send diners to the restaurant.

There is an abundance of history behind Verrey's, and if a careful record had been kept of the great dinners given in the rooms on the first floor, such a record as the Café Anglais in Paris kept, it would make very interesting reading. One of the merriest dinners probably ever given in those upper rooms was the one at the time of the late Victorian revival of road coaching, at which most of the guests were well-known whips. Every man at this dinner was presented with a pink waistcoat, and as after dinner most of the men went on either to music halls or theatres, the appearance in the boxes of the young bloods wearing pink waistcoats astonished the audiences, who thought that a new fashion was being set. A quieter dinner, but an even more distinguished one, was that at which King Edward, when he was Prince of Wales, was present. This was its menu :

Œufs à la Ravigote.

(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.

Many distinguished men have dined in the Cameo Room—Tennyson, the Poet Laureate, was a great crony of Mr George Krehl the elder, and he kept all kinds of mementoes of the poet. Mr Gladstone was another frequenter of the Cameo Room, and he liked to talk to Mr Krehl of the revolutionary days of '48 in Germany.

The tragedy which is associated with the name of the house was the fate of the beautiful Miss Fanny Verrey. Verrey, from whom the restaurant takes its name, was a Swiss confectioner, who came over from Lausanne in the second decade of the last century and established his shop in Regent Street. To add to the attractions of his establishment he brought over from Lausanne his pretty young daughter, who was engaged to a Swiss pastor. She was young and lively and beautiful; she chatted with her father's customers, and learnt English by talking with them; the bucks of those days made her a toast; and Lord Petersham wrote some verses in honour of "The Pretty Confectioner," in which he dubbed her "Wild Switzerland's Queen," and ended one of the verses with these lines:

"Thy mind—brightest gem—is the Temple of Love;
But bright as thou'rt fair—thou'rt pure as a dove";

which shows that his lordship, though his sentiments were praiseworthy, was not a great poet. The fame of Miss Verrey's beauty drew crowds not only into the shop, but outside it, and spiteful and jealous rivals spread rumours concerning Miss Verrey's lightness of behaviour, which were entirely untrue. The crowds outside the shop became such a nuisance

that the authorities interfered in the matter. Mr Verrey removed his daughter from the shop, and she kept to her room to avoid public notice. The turmoil, the unmerited scandal, and the lampoons in the papers so affected the girl's health that she pined away and died. But even then her memory was not respected, and as a good example of the want of taste of the time—the year was 1828—this riddle was published in one of the papers: “Why was Miss Verrey's death like a window front?” *Answer*: “Because it is a paneful case.”

At one period Verrey's was known as the Café François ; but I can find no particulars concerning it under this title. I also think that Verrey must at some time or another have occupied another shop in Regent Street, for some of his advertisements, notably one of Howqua's teas, “as patronised by their Majesties,” were issued from 218 Regent Street, whereas Verrey's to-day occupies 229 Regent Street.

LIV

THE CATHAY RESTAURANT

樓花探

IN full view of all who pass to and fro through Piccadilly Circus, there shines on one of the tall houses which encircle it the announcement that the upper part of the building is occupied by the Cathay Restaurant, which modestly on its menu describes itself as a "pioneer, first-class, Chinese restaurant."

As I take into my descriptive net every manner of eating-house, so long as the food and drink to be obtained there is good of its kind, I experimented in the first days of this year of grace, at lunch-time, on the Cathay Restaurant, and found that it has selected in its very long *carte du jour* those Chinese dishes which are palatable to the European, as well as to the Chinese taste.

Chinese food is no novelty to me, for during the five years that I was quartered in the Far East—at Penang, Singapore and Hong-Kong—I was frequently one of the guests at feasts given by Chinese merchants, and learned by experience which were the dishes that one could safely eat and which were the Chinese delicacies that it was wise to drop under the table. A Chinaman, when he wishes to be very polite at table, takes up with his chop-sticks some

especially dainty morsel from his own plate and pops it into the mouth of his European neighbour at table. A kindly young Chinaman once thus put into my mouth a slip of cold pig's liver wrapped round a prune, and I do not think that I ever tasted any nastier combination.

Two Chinese banquets at which I was a guest remain very clearly marked in my memory. One was given by a rich Chinaman at Penang, on the occasion of the marriage of his son, to all the European officials and the officers of the garrison and the leading British merchants. It was a feast at which the dishes were alternately Chinese and European ones, and by each man's and by each lady's dish, for the ladies were also invited, were chop-sticks, and knives and forks and spoons. One Chinese dish I remember at this feast as being quite excellent—a salad of vegetables and of small fish of all kinds. All the guests ate quite heartily both of the European dishes and the Chinese dishes, but that night nearly all the Europeans who had been to the banquet believed that they had suddenly been stricken with Asiatic cholera. I was one of the happy exceptions, and I suppose that I must have skipped whatever was the dish that worked such havoc amongst my fellow-guests.

Messengers from half the bungalows in the leafy lanes of Penang were sent off post-haste to the civil surgeon, begging him to come at once to the bedside of unhappy sufferers, and each messenger as he arrived at the civil surgeon's house received the news that the doctor believed himself to be in the throes of the same dread Asiatic disease, and did not think that he would survive the dawn. Nobody, however, did die, and two or three days later all the aristocracy of Penang, looking even paler than Europeans always are in that land of lily-white complexions, and very

shaky about the knees, gathered together at a cricket match and discussed the matter. Somebody had already gone to the Chinese merchant and had told him of the havoc that his banquet had made. He was profoundly grieved, pointed out that none of his Chinese guests had suffered the slightest inconvenience, and laid the blame on the European dishes, which he had procured as a compliment to his white guests, saying that he "always mistrusted the cookery of the barbarians."

The other unforgettable feast was given by the head Shroff, the native cashier, of one of the banks in Hong-Kong. I had been talking at the house of one of the bankers as to my experiences of Chinese dishes, and had rather decried the cookery of the Flowery Land. I had (I was afterwards told) been especially sarcastic as to the Chinaman's partiality for puppy-dog, and more or less ranked all Chinese dishes with the detestable rat soup which a Chinaman sold in the early mornings just outside the barrack gates to the coolies on their way to their work. The orderly officer going to inspect rations always had to pass the unsavoury cauldron from which the soup was ladled out, and, in the hot weather, the only thing to do was to put a handkerchief to one's nose and run past it.

Some little time after these conversational flourishes of mine the banker asked me if I would like to eat a real, well-cooked Chinese dinner, for the head Shroff of his bank had asked him to honour him with his company at his villa in Kowlun—which is where the "Mr Wu's" come from—and had told him that he would be delighted if he would bring some of his European friends. The dinner, which consisted chiefly of fish, was an excellent one, the all-pervading taste of soy not being too persistent, and I was especially delighted with a white stew of what my

host said was Cantonese rabbit, which I thought quite the most tender and the fattest rabbit I had ever tasted. When the dinner was over, the banker told me that the "Cantonese rabbit" to which I had given such unlimited praise was really a Cantonese edible puppy, fattened on milk and rice. After that incident I found that whenever I dined out in Hong-Kong, conversation always seemed to turn on to Cantonese puppies, and I was gently chaffed for at least six months as to my sudden conversion to the delights of baby chow as a *pièce de résistance*.

I found, however, neither puppy-dog nor rat on the *carte du jour* of the Cathay Restaurant.

The restaurant is on the first floor above a bank. A commissionaire stands at the outer portals, and there is a lift for the benefit of anyone who is too lazy to walk up a single flight of stairs. The restaurant itself is hardly sufficiently Oriental in appearance to be a Cockney's beau ideal of a Chinese restaurant. It is just what a progressive restaurant for Chinamen in Peking would be, for though the food is Chinese food, cooked by a Chinese cook, the appearance of the restaurant is almost European, an exaggerated copy of a French restaurant, with here and there Chinese touches which redeem the place from tawdriness. There is on the wall a paper with a pattern of gold fleurs-de-lis, the carpet is crimson, the chairs and tables are of European make, the waiters are of European nationalities and wear dress clothes. But a strip of good Chinese embroidery is hung along that side of the restaurant where the serving-room is behind a glassed screen; there are porcelain vases on the two mantelshelves; a great Chinese ornament of carved wood, gold and crimson and black, hangs by a ribbon just inside one of the windows; the big curtains to the windows are of old gold Chinese silk, and the little curtains, also of

Oriental silk, are lilac in tint. The manager of the restaurant is a Chinaman with short-cut hair, and he wears the same neat, dark garments that all European managers assume. I sat down at one of the tables, asked the young Italian who came to wait on me to show me a *carte du jour* and the menu of the set lunch, if there was one, and then looked round at the people who were taking their meal there.

The Chinese in London certainly patronise their own restaurant, for quite half the people who were eating luncheon were Celestials. There were two young Chinese boys in the charge of a grey-haired English lady. There were several young Chinamen whom I mentally put down as students. An older Chinese gentleman had brought his wife out to lunch; and before I left, a party of Chinese gentlemen came in, whom, from the respect shown to them by the manager, I judged to be secretaries of the Chinese Embassy—the Chinese Ambassador, whom I know by sight, was not amongst them.

Nowadays when Chinese gentlemen and ladies wear European clothes, and the men have their hair short, one has to look at their faces to detect the difference between them and Europeans.

There were some Londoners lunching in the restaurant. A party of ladies in furs were enjoying the novelty of the Chinese dishes; two youngsters, whom I took to be medical students, were ordering various dishes from the *carte du jour*, and were cross-examining the waiter keenly as to the cooking arrangements and how the delicacies were imported from China; and two schoolgirls, one of the flapper age and one younger, came into the restaurant giggling and looking round as though they expected a pantomime Chinaman to spring up before them or to jump round a corner.

The menu of the day at the Cathay is on a large

folding mauve card, and the dishes are both in Chinese characters and in English letters with an explanation in English below each name. The first division is for chop sueys and noodles. A chop suey is to the Chinese what Irish stew is to the English and a *ragoût* is to the French. Pork is its foundation, and chicken livers and chicken gizzards, celery, mushrooms, peas, onion, garlic, peppers, oil and salt all go into it. Noodle is any paste dish, and macaroni or vermicelli would be described on a Chinese menu as a noodle.

Of the dishes on the card, Loo min is noodle in Pekinese style. Lat chew chop suey is chop suey with green chutney. Chop suey min is chop suey with noodle, and so on. There is a little list of dishes which are ready, and a longer list of dishes which will take some minutes to prepare, such as fried crab and Chinese omelet; fried rice with meat, mushroom, egg and vegetables; sliced jelly-fish with pickle; and soyed pork. Some especial dishes are on the menu for which a day's notice must be given, one of these being birds'-nests with minced chicken and another shark's fin with sliced chicken, ham, bamboo shoots, etc. At the end of the list comes the catalogue of teas, pastries and sweets, pickled onions being included in this category.

After looking down the *carte du jour*, I turned my attention to the set luncheon, and first of all took up the card on which it was written in Chinese. In case you may be able to read Chinese fluently I reproduce this card on the next page.

The first word on this only means menu. The first dish is a soup of chicken, ham, bamboo shoots and mushrooms. The second dish is fried chicken liver and vegetables, and the last dish is simply roast pork.

I opted for this half-crown meal, and as a

preliminary, the waiter put a tiny cup of soy and a Chinese porcelain spoon by the side of the European knives and forks and spoons which were already on the table. A wine list was offered me, but I preferred, as I was going to eat Chinese meats, to drink Chinese tea with them, and ordered a cup of Loong Cheng. The plates used at the Chinese restaurant

上午全餐

三絲湯

炒鷄什

燒肉

are, like the cutlery, of European pattern, but the dishes in which the soups and the meats are brought to table are Chinese ones of all kinds of shapes and ornamented with Chinese paintings. My soup, with tiny strips of bamboo in it and morsels of chicken flesh, tasted very much like the chicken broth that one is given when one is ill and on a low diet. The fried chicken and vegetables were quite good eating, and the taste of the bamboo shoots in it was

particularly pleasant to the palate. The roast pork I shied at, and asked instead to be given a plate of chow chow, an admirable sweet which I have known ever since boyhood, for one of my uncles, who was Consul at Foo Chow, used to send home to all his small nephews presents of this delicacy. The tea was excellent, and doing as the Chinese do, I did not spoil its taste by adding either sugar or milk to it.

Altogether my luncheon at the Chinese Restaurant was quite a pleasant experiment, and I can advise any gourmets who would like to test the cookery of the Far East in comfortable surroundings to follow my lead.

LV

THE WHITE HORSE CELLARS

A LITTLE glass canopy with a clock above it juts out into Piccadilly, and a tall commissionaire stands at an entrance where some stairs dive down, apparently into the bowels of the earth. Where the stairs make their first plunge there is above them on the wall the device of a white horse—a fine prancing animal, somewhat resembling the White Horse of Kent.

The stairs, with oak panelling on either side of them, give a twist before they reach the bottom, where is the modern restaurant that occupies the site of what were originally known as the New White Horse Cellars, but which are now called the Old White Horse Cellars, probably on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, for they have been modernised out of all recognition since the days when Charles Dickens recorded the departure of Mr Pickwick from these Cellars on his coach journey down to Bath.

The Old White Horse Cellars were originally on the Green Park side of Piccadilly, and their number was 156, as some way-bills to be seen at the present White Horse Cellars testify. This ground is now occupied by the Ritz Hotel. Strype mentions the original cellar as being in existence in 1720.

On the staircase walls of the New White Horse Cellars is a little collection of prints and way-bills, caricatures, etchings, old bills of Hatchett's Hotel, posters and advertisements from *The Times* and other papers of the hours at which the coaches for the west

started. In this curious little gallery of odds and ends are some documents relating to the old cellar on the other side of the road. But the White Horse Cellars were under Hatchett's in the great coaching days, from the year of the battle of Waterloo to 1840. It was from Hatchett's that Jerry, in Pierce Egan's book, took his departure when going back to Hawthorn Hall, and said farewell to Tom and Logic, and it was in the travellers' room of the White Horse Cellars, a title that was used alternatively with "Hatchett's," that Mr Pickwick and his friends sheltered from the rain, waiting for the Bath coach.

Hatchett's in Dickens's time was not the comfortable house that I knew in the eighties, when the revival of stage-coaching was at its height. Indeed, there could not be a picture of greater discomfort than Dickens sketched in a few words when he wrote: "The travellers' room at 'The White Horse Cellar' is, of course, uncomfortable; it would be no travellers' room if it were not. It is the right-hand parlour, into which an aspiring kitchen fireplace appears to have walked, accompanied by a rebellious poker, tongs, and shovel. It is divided into boxes for the solitary confinement of travellers, and is furnished with a clock, a looking-glass, and a live waiter, which latter article is kept in a small kennel for washing glasses, in a corner of the apartment." Dickens's word picture of the scene at the start of the coach at half-past seven on a damp, muggy and drizzly day is a fine pen-and-ink sketch, and Cruikshank, in one of his caricatures, "The Piccadilly Nuisance," shows very much the scene as Dickens described it, with the orange-women and the sellers of all kinds of useless trifles on the kerb; the coaches jostling each other, passengers falling off from them, and the pavement an absolute hustle of humanity.

Cruikshank's various drawings and caricatures pre-

serve the appearance of Hatchett's of the old days in the memory better than any word pictures could do. The bow-windows of the old hotel with many panes of glass in them; the stiff pillared portico, with on it the name "Hatchett's," and a little lamp before it, and above it the board with the inscription, "The New White Horse Cellar. Coaches and waggons to all parts of the kingdom." Above this board again was a painting of an old white horse. I fancy that the title of the Cellars, when they were on the other side of the way, must have been taken from some celebrated old horse—though Williams, who was the first landlord of the original cellars, is said to have given them their name as a compliment to the House of Hanover, and that it was the white horse, not the cellar, that was old.

There are various other legends with respect to the horse that gave Hatchett's its title, one of them being that Abraham Hatchett, a proprietor of the tavern, had an old white horse with a turn of speed which had won him many a wager against more showy animals.

The entrance to the Cellars below Hatchett's, in the old days, was down some very steep stairs just in front of one of the bow-windows, and an oval notice, hanging from a little arch of iron, directed people down into the depths to the booking-office.

My reminiscences of Hatchett's are of the later revivals of road coaches; the days of old "Jim" Selby, the famous coachman who, though everybody called him "old," died a comparatively young man. His grey hair and his jolly, fat, rosy face gave him an appearance of being older than he really was. Those were the days when the late Lord Londesborough and Captain Hargreaves, Mr Walter Shoolbred, Captain Beckett, Baron Oppenheim and Mr Edwin Fownes were well-known whips, and when "Hughie"

Drummond, and the host of other good fellows and lively customers in whose veins the red blood flowed in a lively current, who drank old port and despised early hours, were the men about town. "Hughie" Drummond taking old "Jim" Selby out to dinner after the arrival of the "Old Times" from Brighton and changing hats with him, which generally took place early in the evening, is one of my remembrances of Hatchett's. And many a time have I split a pint with "Dickie-the-Driver," the oldest in standing amongst my friends, then not the least lively of the young fellows, before climbing up on to the coach at Hatchett's to go down to the Derby. For many years eight of us, always the same men, went down by coach from Hatchett's on Derby Day, always with "Dickie" driving out of London and the last stage on to the downs, and our gallop down and up the hill on the course was a really breakneck performance.

It was from Hatchett's that "Jim" Selby started on his celebrated drive with the Brighton coach, "Old Times," to Brighton and back, for a wager of a thousand pounds to five hundred against his accomplishing the journey in eight hours. On the coach were: Selby himself, driving; Captain Beckett, whom we all called "Partner"; Mr Carleton Blyth, who still sends yearly from Bude his greeting of "Cheero" to his old friends; Mr "Swish" Broadwood, Mr "Bob" Cosier, Mr A. F. M'Adam, and the guard. Harrington Bird's picture of the coach during the galloping stage, with the horses going at racing pace, gives an idea of how Selby drove on that day when he had a clear road. The coach reached the "Old Sip" at Brighton, having done the first half of the journey in just under four hours; stayed there only long enough to turn the coach round and to read a telegram from the old Duke of Beaufort, who was most keenly interested in the revival of

coaching, and who was a very good man himself on the box seat—and then started again for London, reaching the White Horse Cellars ten minutes under the stipulated time and forty minutes within the record. I was one of the men amongst the crowd that gathered to see the return of the coach and to cheer old “Jim” Selby, who brought his last team in no more distressed than they would have been doing their journey under ordinary circumstances. How highly respected Selby was by all coaching men was shown by the long string of stage-coaches, every coach on the road having suspended its usual journey, which followed his body to the grave.

In those days the bill of fare at Hatchett’s was roast beef or boiled mutton and trimmings; duck and green peas, or fowl and bath-chap. There was an inner sanctuary then called “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” which was the bar parlour, into which only the most favoured patrons of the house were admitted, and Miss Wills, the manageress, used to keep any unruly spirits very much in order.

When Hatchett’s was rebuilt and changed its name it changed hands very frequently, though the White Horse Cellars always remained a restaurant. The Cercle de Luxe, a dining club, at one time occupied the upper floors of the building, and then it became the Avondale Hotel, with M. Garin as manager and M. Dutruz as chef. Since then the rooms have been put to many uses, and are now, I see, once again in the market.

It is the memory of what Hatchett’s and the White Horse Cellars have been in their old days—memories that haunt me like the sound of a horn afar off on one of the great roads—that makes me disinclined nowadays to eat a French dinner in what was a home of good English fare; and whenever I lunch or dine in the White Horse Cellars to-day I always, for the sake

of old times, order a plate of soup, a mixed grill and a scoop from the cheese. The three-and-sixpenny dinner of to-day is, I have no doubt, a good one, and Mr Stump, the present manager, is most courteous and anxious to oblige. I look at the menu when I am in the restaurant, but for the old sake's sake I keep as close to the meals of old days as the resources of the establishment allow me to do.

The White Horse Cellars of to-day is a modern, up-to-date restaurant, below the level of the ground, though the ventilation is so excellent and the lighting arrangements so good that one never has the sensation of being in a cellar. Half-way down the staircase, just where the little picture gallery commences, a door leads into a buffet. One's great-coat and hat are taken at the bottom of the stairs, and then one enters quite a lofty room with a groined roof, and with cosy nooks and various extensions of the bigger room, which, I fancy, have been thrown out under the sidewalk above. The walls of the restaurant are of cream colour; the ornamentation is in the style of Adams, and there is deep rose colour in the arches of the roof. Many mirrors reflect the vistas and give the rooms the appearance of being more extensive than they really are: a string band is perched up in a little gallery; there are palms here and there, and a bronze galloping horse in a recess does something to recall the old horsey days of Hatchett's.

There are many little tables, each with its pink-shaded lamp, in this restaurant, and it has a chic clientele, the "Nuts" of to-day appearing to patronise it just as much as the bucks and the bloods, the swells, and the "whips" of the last two generations used to. I see pretty actresses sometimes dining at Hatchett's, and it is a very cheerful restaurant in which to take a meal. It is, I believe, always crowded at supper-time, and the Glorias, the two excellent dancers

who appear earlier in the evening on the Empire stage, dance the Tango, at midnight, in and out of the little tables.

But to me the charm of the White Horse Cellars is that I can live again in memory, when lunching or dining there, those joyous days of youth and fresh air, when a jolly coach-load used to start from before its door for a day of delight in sitting behind good horses driven by a good whip, listening to the music of the shod hooves and the guard's horn, receiving a greeting from everyone along the road, and feeling that no king on a throne is happier than a man riding behind a picked team on a good coach. Motor cars have their uses and their pleasures, but they seem to have killed the fuller-blooded joys that came with coaching.

LVI

THE MONICO

THE MONICO, in Piccadilly Circus, which is both café and restaurant, is an establishment which has been brought to its present prosperity by Swiss industry and Swiss thrift. The original M. Monico, the father of the present proprietors of the restaurant, came from the same village in the Val Blegno, in the Italian provinces of Switzerland, as did the Gattis. M. Monico was with that Gatti, the great-uncle of the present Messrs Gatti, who sold *gaufres* and penny ices in Villiers Street, and who when Hungerford Market was swept away and Charing Cross Station built established the Gatti's restaurant under the arches.

About fifty years ago, just at the time that MM. A. and S. Gatti were establishing themselves in the Adelaide Gallery, young M. Monico, who died only three years ago, was also making an independent start on the road to fortune. Looking about for a site on which to build a café he had found, off Tichborne Street, a large yard where coaches and waggons stood, and round which was stabling for horses. This yard he leased, and built on its site the Grand Café with the present International Hall above it. M. Monico had intended to put up a tall building, but the neighbours objected to this; he was obliged to alter his plans, and in consequence, whereas the café is a very high room, the International Hall above it is rather squat in its proportions. Those were the days in

which billiards was a game much in favour, and in the International Hall above the café M. Monico established a number of billiard-tables. When the craze for billiards died away the long upper room, with its arched ceiling, became a banqueting hall. Fifty years ago the licensing magistrates looked with just as much suspicion on any new enterprises in restaurants as they do at the present day, and the Monico could not at first obtain a licence to sell wines and spirits. This, however, was later on granted to M. Monico.

I fancy that there must have been a good deal of the Italian combative spirit in old M. Monico, for he seems to have been at loggerheads with more than one of his neighbours. To-day, when you have gone in under the glass canopy with two gables which protects the Piccadilly Circus entrance, when you have passed the little stall for the sale of foreign newspapers and have come into the café which acts as an ante-room to the great gilded saloon, you will notice that part of this café has a solid ceiling and that the other half is glazed over. The glazed-over portion was, in old M. Monico's time, an open space, and into this open space a neighbour, a perfumer, had the right to bring carts and horses in the course of his business. This right the perfumer exercised on occasion, to the great annoyance of M. Monico, and the present Messrs Monico recall with a smile how the perfumer would often bring in a great van with two horses to deliver a couple of small packages that any messenger boy could have carried.

The clearing away of a block of houses when Piccadilly Circus was given its present proportions gave the Monico its entrance on to that centre, and when Shaftesbury Avenue was driven through the network of small streets in Soho, M. Monico and his sons obtained a second frontage for their restaurant

and built the block which contains the grill-room, the buffet and banqueting-rooms, now topped by the new masonic temple, the latest addition to the Monico.

The Monico of to-day is one of those great beehives of dining-rooms that cater for every class of diner. It has its little café and its big *à la carte* dining-saloon, its grill-room, its banqueting-rooms and its German beer cellar down in the basement. It has two marble staircases, one leading down to Piccadilly Circus and one to Shaftesbury Avenue, and its big saloon, the original café, is as gorgeous a hall as gilding can make it. Its walls are of gold and mirrors and raised ornamentation, with the windows high up, and with a golden balcony for the musicians. It has a gilded ceiling and its pilasters are also golden. An orchestra plays in this room, whereas in the grill-room those who like their meals without orchestral accompaniment can eat them in peace. Up and down the great gilded room walk four *maîtres d'hôtel* in frock-coats and black ties, and a battalion of waiters are busy running from tables to kitchen. The bill of fare in the gilded chamber is a most comprehensive one, and any man of any nationality can find some of the dishes of his country on it. It is a beer restaurant as well as a wine restaurant, and the simplest possible meal, very well cooked, can be eaten there as well as elaborate feasts.

The grill-room is less gorgeous in its decorations, though its buff marble pillars and walls are handsome enough. It is in this room that the *table d'hôte* dinners at half-a-crown and three-and-six are served, and it is here that many men of business feed, and feed excellently well. Not many days ago I lunched in the grill-room, my host being a gourmet who knew all the resources of the establishment, and I enjoyed the *sole Monico*, a sole with an excellent white sauce; a

woodcock *flambé* and a salad of tender lettuce which, like the beautiful peaches with which we finished our repast, must have been grown in some Southern, sunshiny clime. I also enjoyed the cheese *fondue*, made, I think, from the *recette* that Brillat Savarin set down in his "Physiologie du Goût."

The Monico has gained special celebrity for its banquets, and the requests for dates for such feasts made to the Messrs Monico have been so overwhelming that they have turned the Renaissance Saloon, which used to be devoted to a *table d'hôte* dinner, into a banqueting-room, and have redecorated it for its new uses.

It remains in my memory that men who were present at the banquet given to Lord Milner in the International Hall of the Monico before he left England to take up his duties as Pro-Consul in South Africa, and who talked to me afterwards of the feast, told me that it was the best public dinner, best served and best cooked, that they had ever eaten, and last year, when I dined at the Poincaré dinner of the Ligue des Gourmands, which was held in the Renaissance Room (the occasion on which M. Escoffier's "creation" of the *poulet Poincaré* was first disclosed to a discriminating gathering), I thought then that M. Sieffert's (the *chef*) handiwork was worthy of all the praise lavished on it, and that M. G. Ramoni, the manager, had arranged most admirably all the details of the banquet. The Renaissance Room now quite justifies its title, for its decoration of peacock blue panels and frames of gilded briar, with strange birds perched on the sprays, somewhat suggests Burne-Jones and the colouring of his school.

As a specimen of a Monico banquet I cannot do better than give you one eaten by that famous Kentish cricketing club, the Band of Brothers, the menu of

whose dinner bears their badge in dark and light blue,
and has also a bow of their ribbon :

Huîtres de Whitstable
Fantaisie Epicurienne.
Tortue verte en Tasse.
Turbotin poché, Sauce Mousseline.
Julienne de Sole Parisienne.
Mousse de Volaille Régence.
Côtelettes d'Agneau Rothschild.
Pommes Anna.
Punch Romaine.
Bécassine sur Canapé.
Salade de Laitue.
Escalope de Homard Pompadour.
Pêche Flambé au Kirsch.
Paillettes au Parmesan.
Fruits.
Corbeillé de Friandises
Café.

VINS.

Amontillado.
Marcobrunner, 1904.
Bollinger and Co., 1904.
Lanson, 1906.
Martinez Port, 1896.
Grand Fine Champagne, 1875.

Many of the banquets given at the Monico are masonic ones, and the new temple at the top of the house on the Shaftesbury Avenue side is a very splendid shrine, with walls of marble and a dome round which the signs of the zodiac circle, and with doors and furniture of great beauty.

LVII

THE ITALIAN INVASION

THE plains of Lombardy, the pleasant mountain land of Emilia and the champaign that surrounds Turin, are studded with comfortable villas, the property of successful Italian restaurateurs who have made a comfortable little fortune in London and who go to their own much-loved country to spend the autumn of their days. Every young North Italian waiter who comes to England believes that in the folds of his napkin he holds one of these pleasant villas, just as every French conscript in Napoleonic days thought that he, amongst all his fellows, alone felt the extra weight of the field-marshal's baton in his knapsack. No race in the world is more thrifty and more industrious than are these North Italians, and they rival the Swiss in their aptitude for making considerable sums of money by charging very small prices.

Spain and Great Britain are usually classed together as the two countries in which the natives know least of economy in housekeeping and cookery, and the Italians, spying the wastefulness of the land, have descended on England as a friendly invading force, whereas the Swiss have taken Spain in hand. There is no Spanish town in which there is not a *café Suizio*, and there are very few English towns in which an Italian name is not found over a restaurant, which is often a pastry-cook's shop as well.

I have in preceding chapters written of some of the restaurants owned by Italians in London, but

were I to deal at length with all the well-managed restaurants, large and small, controlled by Italians in London, I should have to extend the size of my book to very swollen proportions, so I propose to mention briefly those Italian restaurants at which at one time or another I have lunched or dined with satisfaction.

One of the largest Italian restaurants is the Florence, in Rupert Street, which the late M. Azario, a gentleman of much importance in the London Italian colony, made one of the most successful moderate-priced restaurants in London. He was decorated with an Italian order, and when he died, not long ago, he was much mourned by his countrymen. Madame Azario (who is now Madame Mainardi and who has appointed her husband, whom I remember at the Savoy, to the supreme command of the establishment), to whom he left the restaurant, has made some changes in it, bringing it up to date. It now has a lounge where hosts can wait for their guests, and it has fallen a victim to the prevailing craze for Tango dancing at supper-time. Its three-shilling dinner is a most satisfying one at the price. The Florence is not too whole-heartedly Italian to please diners of other nationalities, but when an Italian gives a lunch or a dinner to his fellow-countrymen or to those who love the cookery of Italy, it can be as patriotic in the matter of dishes as any restaurant in Italy. This is the menu of a lunch given to one of the most Italian of Englishmen. It is a capital example of an Italian meal, and there is a little joke tucked away in it, for the "Neapolitan Vanilla" is another way of writing garlic:

Antipasto Assortito.

Ravioli alla Fiorentina.

Trotta à l'Italiana.

Scalloppine di Vitello alla Milanese.

Asparagi alla Sant'Ambrogio.

Pollo alla Spiedo.

Insalata Rosa alla Vaniglia di Napoli.

Zabaglione al Marsala.

Formaggio.

Frutta.

Chianti.

Barolo vecchio.

Asti naturale.

Caffè.

Liquori.

One of the first established and one of the best of the Italian restaurants is Previtali's, in Arundel Street, that little thoroughfare that runs up into a cul-de-sac square, off Coventry Street. It was said a while ago that this little square and its approach were to be eaten up by a new great variety theatre, but I see that the ground is now advertised as being for sale. Below the great board which announces this is a smaller one, which tells that Previtali's is to remain where it is till September 1915, when it will find other quarters. Its *table d'hôte* luncheon costs half-a-crown, and its *table d'hôte* dinners are priced at three-and-six and five shillings, the latter giving such a choice of food that not even a starving man would ask for more when he had gone through the menu. Previtali's has an excellent cellar of Italian wines.

Many of the restaurants owned by Italians in London have a clientele that suits the size of the house, and they do not cry aloud by bold advertisements for fresh guests. Such a quiet, unassuming restaurant is the Quadrant, in Regent Street, the windows of which keep their eyes half closed by pink blinds which shut off the view of the interior from passers-by. Messrs Formaggia and Galiardi cater there for very faithful customers, and I always look with interest as I pass at the menu of the half-crown dinner which is written in a bold hand and shown in a small frame by the window. It is

always a well-chosen meal, and on the occasions that I have eaten at the Quadrant, I have been well satisfied with its fare. It was at the Quadrant that a gourmet with a taste for strange foods gave me a lunch of land-crabs which had been imported with much difficulty from either Barbadoes or the West Indies, and which Mr Formaggia's chef had cooked strictly in accordance with the recipe that came with them. They had, I remember, rather a bitter taste, but perhaps land-crabs, like snails, are not to everybody's taste.

In Soho, the Italian restaurants jostle the French restaurants in every street. Perhaps the best known of the Soho restaurants owned by Italians is the Ristorante d'Italia, whereof Signor Baglioni is the proprietor, which thrusts out an illuminated arum amidst the electric globes and glittering signs of Old Compton Street. My memories of the half-crown *table d'hôte* dinner there is of food excellently cooked under the superintendence of an erstwhile *chef de cuisine* of the Prince of Monaco, of the noise of much talking in vehement Italian, of rather close quarters at little tables laid for four, and of a menu of rather portentous provender.

The most Italian of any restaurant that I have discovered in my explorations in Soho is the Treviglio in Church Street, a little restaurant that might have been lifted bodily from a canal-side in Venice or a small street in Florence. It is whole-heartedly Italian, and puts to the forefront of its window a list of the specialities of Italian cookery on which it prides itself. It is a favoured haunt of the Italian journalists in London, and that, I think, can be taken as a certificate that its cookery is not only thoroughly Italian but is also good Italian. Signori Pozzi and Valdoni are its proprietors.

Pinoli's is a restaurant in Lower Wardour Street

that offers almost as much at its two-shilling *table d'hôte* dinner as some other restaurants do at twice or more that price.

A quiet, flourishing restaurant owned by an Italian, Signor Antonio Audagna, who began life as a waiter at Romano's, is the Comedy Restaurant, in Panton Street, Haymarket. It is a comfortable restaurant, with cream walls and oval mirrors and pink-shaded lamps, and its back rooms are on a higher level than those of its Panton Street front. Its customers are very faithful to it, and, as its proprietor once told me, "when the fathers die the sons take their places as customers." There was some time ago a proposal to extend it so as to give it a front to the Haymarket, but that plan came to naught, and the Comedy goes on just as before in its old premises. This is a menu of the Comedy *table d'hôte* dinner, and its proprietor apparently took a hint from Philippe of the Cavour for the menu bears the legend, "No beer served with this dinner":

Hors d'œuvre Varies.
 Queue de Bœuf Printanière
 Crème Chasseur.
 Sole à la Bourguignonne.
 Noisette de Pré-Salé Volnay.
 Spaghetti al Sugo.
 Foulet en Casserole.
 Salade.
 Glacé Comedy.
 Dessert.

Another quiet restaurant with a faithful clientele is Signor Pratti's, the Ship, in Whitehall. His *table d'hôte* dinners are half-a-crown and three-and-six, and his eighteenpenny lunch, I fancy, brings to the restaurant many of the hard-worked gentlemen from Cox's Bank, just across the way, and from the Admiralty, which is suitably just behind the Ship.

Signor Pratti, if I remember rightly, fines teetotalers by charging them sixpence extra.

From Hampstead to Surbiton, from Richmond to Epping, the little Italian restaurants flourish. One gourmet whom I know, with a delicate taste in Italian wines, makes pilgrimages regularly to Reggiori's, opposite King's Cross Station, because he gets there a particular wine which this restaurateur imports; while I take an almost paternal interest in Canuto's Restaurant in Baker Street. The rise of that restaurant from a very humble place, that put out two boards with great sheets of paper on them, giving the dishes ready and the dinner of the day, to a rather haughty little restaurant with a very beautiful window and the *carte du jour* and the menus of *table d'hôte* dinners behind the glass in frames of restrained gorgeousness, typifies the gradual advance in social splendour of the long street that leads to Regent's Park.

LVIII

THE HYDE PARK HOTEL

NEWLY engaged couples are rather kittle cattle to entertain at any meal. There was once a pretty young widow who was about to marry a charming young man, and I asked the pair to lunch with me one day at the Savoy and was very particular to secure a table in the balcony, for I thought that the view over the Gardens and up the Thames to the House of Lords and Westminster Abbey would harmonise very well with love's young dream. And it did harmonise only too well with it, for the pretty widow sat with her face in her two hands gazing up the river with far-away eyes while the grilled lamb cutlets grew cold and the *bomb praliné* grew warm, and the charming young man sat opposite to her with hands tightly clasped, gazing into her face and thinking poetry hard the while. Conversation there was none on that occasion. I do not believe that the couple knew in the least whether they were eating sole or cream cheese, and I still have such remnants of good manners that were instilled into me in the days of the nursery that I felt that I was doing an impolite thing to eat heartily while my guests were neglecting their food. I often subsequently wondered whether in the days when I fell desperately in love at least once in every six months, I behaved in public as much like a patient suffering from softening of the brain as did that nice young man on the day he lunched with me at the Savoy.

One of my nephews, a young soldier doctor, is going to do a very sensible thing in marrying an exceedingly nice girl early in his career, and as he is on leave in London it seemed to me that it would be a pleasant thing to ask him and the young lady to lunch or dine with me. Though I did not for a moment believe that the presence of his intended would cause him to neglect his food, I was not prepared, after my previous experience, to put the young lady to the tremendous trial of the view of the Thames from the Savoy balcony, and I decided that dinner, not lunch, should be the meal.

As I was curious to see whether a little dinner at the Hyde Park Hotel was as well cooked as the great banquets are in that flourishing establishment, I asked them to dine there with me one Sunday evening, and gave Mr Kerpen, the manager of the hotel, warning of our coming, asking him to suggest to M. Müller, the *chef de cuisine*, that I should like one or two specialities of his kitchen included in a very short menu.

If lunch had been the meal to which I invited the young couple the Hyde Park Hotel dining-room would have been a spot as inducive to day dreams as are the balconies at the Savoy and the Cecil, for the view the Hyde Park Hotel commands over the Park is one of the most beautiful and most varied in London. A strip of garden lies between the Hotel and the Ladies' Mile, and beyond that is the branch of Rotten Row that runs up past the Knightsbridge Barracks. Beyond that again are green lawns and clumps of rhododendrons and other flowering shrubs, and the grassy rise up to the banks of the Serpentine, the glitter of the water of which and the big trees about it closing in the landscape. The carriages go rumbling past; there are generally some riders in the Row and there is

always movement on the footpath, and it seems to be one of the duties of the regiment of Household Cavalry at Knightsbridge to supply as a figure in the immediate foreground either a young orderly officer in his blue frock-coat setting out or returning from his rounds on a big black charger, or a rough-riding corporal in scarlet jacket teaching a young horse manners. The view up the river to Westminster may have a dreamy beauty on a sunshiny day, the vista of the long walk in the Green Park, down which the windows of the Ritz dining-room look, may have more sylvan beauty, but the outlook of the Hyde Park Hotel has more colour and more variety than those of the other big hotels I have mentioned.

The Hyde Park Hotel was one of Jabez Balfour's speculations, and for a time it was a great pile of flats before it became technically an hotel. It had a fire, and I fancy that it was after the fire that M. Ritz was consulted as to its redecoration—for he had a great talent and indisputable taste in suggesting the ornamentation of large rooms—and that the Hyde Park Hotel became the exceedingly comfortable, quiet, luxurious house it is to-day.

In the big hall, with its dark-coloured marbles and handsome fireplace, I found the young couple waiting for me. They were before their time and were in holiday spirits, which reassured me, for no laughing girl is likely to slip suddenly into day dreams. After I had given my hat and coat to the dark-complexioned servitor in blue and gold Oriental dress, who looks like a very good-natured Othello, we waited for a while in the big cream and green drawing-room—a room so fresh in colour that it does not suggest an environment of London atmosphere, though it looks out on to Knightsbridge. At the quarter past eight we went into the big dining-room, and M. Binder, the

maître d'hôtel, showed us to the table in a corner by a window which had been set for us.

The Hyde Park Hotel dining-room is an exceedingly handsome hall of mahogany, with panels of gold and deep crimson brocade; its pillars are of deep red wood with gilt Corinthian capitals; a band plays in a gallery above the crystal service doors and the colours of the panels are echoed in carpet and curtains and upholstery. In its comfortable colouring the Hyde Park Hotel dining-room reminds me very much of what the Savoy dining-room used to be before its beautiful mahogany panelling was taken down and the colour of the walls and ceiling changed to cream.

I soon found that I was not either to be silent or to have the conversation all to myself, for the young people laughed and chatted away, and I found myself comparing descriptions of the Curragh as it was in the seventies, when we used to lie in bed in the huts and watch the marking at the butts through the cracks in the walls, with the Curragh of to-day when the last of the Crimean wooden huts are about to disappear. The reading of the menu, however, was gone through with due solemnity, and the young lady knew that an important moment in her life was about to approach, for she was going to taste caviare for the first time. This was the menu of our dinner:

Caviar Blinis.
Crème d'Asperges.
Sole à la H.P.H.
Selle d'Agneau de lait pöelée.
Haricots verts aux finesherbes.
Bécassines Chasseur.
Salade.
Pêches Petit Duc.
Comtesse Marie.
Friandises.
Dessert.

The young soldier doctor watched his bride-that-is-to-be eat her first mouthful of caviare and little angle of the Russian pancake with interest and some curiosity. If she did not like the delicacy there would be no caviare for him in the days of their honeymoon, while if she took a violent fancy to them it might strain the resources of a very young establishment to provide caviare at two meals a day. She took her first mouthful, considered, and said that she liked it; but did not express any overwhelming attachment to it, so I think that so far as caviare is concerned it will be eaten with appreciation in the household-that-is-to-be but will not appear every day at table. The soup was an excellent thick cream; the sole was one of the specialities of the kitchen put by the *chef de cuisine* into the menu, and a most admirable sole it is. It is a *mousse* of chicken sandwiched between fillets of sole, and lobster and oysters and, I fancy, mushrooms also, have their part in this very noble dish. The tiny saddle of lamb was the plain dish of the dinner; the snipe were given a baptism of fire before they were brought to table. The peaches were another dish that is a speciality of the house. With the *bar-le-Duc* currant jelly about the peaches there was mingled some old Fine Champagne, while the ice and the vanilla cream that went with it were served separately, as is the modern fashion, which is a great improvement on sending up the ice in a messy state with the fruit. The wine we drank was Clicquot 1904. I was charged half-a-guinea a head for our dinner, which was excellent value for the money: altogether an admirable dinner, admirably cooked, and I sent my compliments to the chef.

The other people who had dined had gradually melted away; the band had left its gallery and we could hear its strains coming from some distant

room. The young people chattered away about theatres and dances and we might have sat at table until midnight had not the *maître d'hôtel* suggested that we might like to look at the other rooms on the ground floor before going into the smoking lounge, where the band was playing and where a lady was presently to sing. We walked through a charming little ante-room with golden furniture, into the great pink banqueting-room which is used for dances and balls as well as for great feasts. It is the part of the Hyde Park Hotel with which I am most familiar, and I told the young people, who were more anxious to know which way the boards ran and whether it was a good floor for dancing than they were for descriptions of banquets, how at one of the dinners of the Gastronomes in this fine room the table decorations were so arranged as to be high above the diners' heads and that the air seemed full of flowers and how M. Müller had invented for that feast the beau-ideal of a vegetable *sorbet* — *tomates givrees*. I had thoughts of giving them details of a wonderful banquet given at the hotel by the Society of Merchants, but I am sure they would not have had patience to listen, so what I abstained from telling them then, lest they might think me a gluttonous old bore, I here set down for your consideration, for you can skip it if you will, whereas the two young people would, I am sure, have been kind enough to listen and to pretend to appreciate its beauties :

Cantaloup Grande Fine Champagne.

Caviar.

Consommé Florentine.

Crème de Pois frais.

Filets de Truite Saumonée au Coulis d'Ecrevisses.

Volaille de la Bresse Châtelaine.

Selle de Behague à la Provençale.

Aubergines au Beurre Noisette.

Cailles Royales à l'Ananas.
Pommes Colerette.
Dodines de Canard à la Gelée.
Cœurs de Laitues aux Œufs.

Pêches Framboisées.
Friandises.
Dessert.

VINS.

Sandringham Sherry.
Schloss Volkrads, 1904.
Pommery and Greno, 1900.
Château Brane Cantenac, 1899.
Sandeman's, 1884.
Marett Gautier, 1830.
Liqueurs.

Then we went into the big room, a room of mahogany, and views of lake and river and sea painted on the panels, which is the room most used by the people who live in the hotel, where the papers and great arm-chairs are and where a man can smoke comfortably, and we listened to the little orchestra and to a young lady who sang us songs sentimental and songs cheerful until it was time for my nephew to do escort duty in taking the young lady back to the northern heights where she lives.

LIX

YE OLDE GAMBRINUS

THE one thing in the world that the friends of Germany do not tell us poor Englishmen is to be obtained better in the Fatherland than on this side of the Channel is things to eat, though of course Munich beer has been held up to our brewers for generation as an example of what they should brew. Perhaps it is for this reason that there are fewer German restaurants in London in comparison with the size of the German colony than there are French and Italian restaurants in comparison with the colonies of those countries.

Yet good, simple German cookery is quite excellent of its kind. A German housewife knows how to make a goose into many delectable dishes which an English housewife knows nothing of, and the German tarts are excellent things amongst dishes of pastry.

There are one or two German restaurants in Soho, and Mr Appenrodt in his restaurants considers the tastes of his fellow-countrymen, but the best known London restaurant devoted entirely to German and Austrian cookery is the Olde Gambrinus, in Regent Street, and it was an Italian, little Oddenino, who appreciated the long-felt want of the Germans in London and who gave them a restaurant in which they can imagine that they are once again back in their own country, eating German foods and drinking German drinks.

The Gambrinus has entrances both in Glasshouse Street and in Regent Street. The Regent Street

entrance echoes the decoration of that of its big brother, the Imperial Restaurant, a few paces farther along the street, and its marble pillars and revolving door do not suggest the entirely German surroundings we are in as soon as we have crossed the threshold. A comparatively narrow room, panelled half-way up its height with dark wood and with two rows of tables, is the first portion of the restaurant we see on entering from Regent Street, and it is here that those good Germans sit who do not want to eat a meal but wish to drink their "steins" of beer. Above the panelling on the walls are the heads of many deer and wild beasts from all parts of the world, and the first impression that this gives to anyone who does not know the Gambrinus is that it is a Valhalla for the denizens of some Wonder Zoo. In the midst of these heads of the wild things of the woods and the plains is that of a fine dog. No doubt he was the chosen companion of some mighty hunter, and one hopes that he was not like the rest, a spoil of the chase.

After this first narrow room there comes a wider one with an arched roof, glazed with bottle-glass, and then the main restaurant itself, which has the appearance of a baronial hall. Its floor is of wooden blocks; there are many little tables in it, and chairs with backs of dark leather, and it is panelled like the entrance, with dark wood. Any chair not occupied is at our disposal, and we have found seats, and a waiter has put in front of us the big sheet with the menu of the day on it and a picture in blue of a crowned gentleman with a long white beard astride on a beer cask and drinking from a foaming tankard. We will order our dinner first and then look at our surroundings.

For every day in the week there are special dishes: four soups, one of which is generally *bouillon mit ei*; three meat dishes and a fruit dish. There is a list of *hors d'œuvre*, amongst them *Berliner rollmops* and

Brabant sardellen, Nürnberger ochsenmaul salat and Bismarck herring. There is a column in print of cold dishes in which various German sausages are given the place of honour, and then, written in violet ink, many ready dishes beyond those sacred to the day, and another list of dishes which can be had to order.

As the most typical German dishes amongst those of the day let us order goose soup with dumplings, roast veal and peas, and pear tart, and we cannot do better than wash this down with two large glasses of light-coloured Munich beer.

The waiter takes our orders, and from a pile of rounds of wadding put down by us two with some blue printing on them, which shows that we are going to drink Munich beer, whereas had we elected for the beer of Pilsen we should have been given rounds of wadding with red on them.

On all the seats at all the tables are Germans of all types. Dark-haired Germans from the south, looking almost like Italians, and the typical fair-haired Teutons of the north with fat necks and hair cropped to a stubble. Anyone who thinks that the German *fraus* and *frauleins* resemble at all the unkind caricatures the French make of them should see the pretty ladies who accompany the worthy Germans who eat their dinners at the Gambrinus. They are as fresh and charming, as well dressed and as daintily mannered as the ladies who go to any restaurant of any other nationality.

The windows that give on to Glasshouse Street are of the glass that looks as though the bottoms of wine bottles had been used, and in the centre of each window is an escutcheon with armorial bearings. At one side of the room is a gallery of dark wood, and on the front of this is also a wealth of heraldry. The heads of animals of all kinds, which seemed a little strange in the *brasserie* by the entrance, seem quite in

place in the big hall which has all the appearance of the dining-room of some old baronial castle converted into a German inn. On the side opposite to the gallery is a long counter under two arches of dark wood. On this counter are many beer mugs, and fruit in baskets, and on a series of shelves all the *delicatessen* which are recorded on the *spiese karte*. On the wall at the back of the two arches hang the beer mugs which belong to the customers, rows upon rows of them forming a background of coloured earthenware and glass. By the side of this long counter is another, where a pretty girl sits and hands out to the waiters the liqueur bottles and keeps the necessary accounts.

If the trophies of the chase in the *brasserie* are various they are infinitely more various in the big hall, for the Herr Baron must have hunted on all the continents and did not disdain to add monsters of the deep to his trophies, for a spiky fish, looking like a marine hedgehog, dangles from the ceiling, and below it is one of those curious things which sailors call mermaids and the right name of which is, I believe, manati. He was a collector of curios also, this imaginary baron, for a curious lamp in the shape of an eight-pointed star hangs above the gallery, there is a carved owl immediately below it and various other wood carvings in different parts of the restaurant, and on the broad shelf above the panelling are a wonderful variety of earthenware and china and pewter mugs and dishes and jugs and candlesticks in quantities that would set up half-a-dozen antique shops.

The heads of animals on the wall would supply material for an exhaustive lesson in zoology. There is the skull of an elephant, the head of a rhino, a bear grins sardonically on one side, and opposite to him a zebra appears to have thrust his head and neck through the wall. There are several boars' heads, an eagle with his wings spread dangles from the balcony,

and a black cock appears to be rising from a forest of liqueur bottles. There are horns or heads of half-a-hundred varieties of deer, from the wapiti and elk to those tiny little fellows with horns a couple of inches long who run about like rabbits in the German forests. There are antlers of red deer and fallow deer, and heads of wildebesste and hartebesste, and black buck and buffalo, and of many more that are beyond my knowledge of horned beasts.

There are in the room glass screens to keep off all draughts; there are bent-wood stands on which to hang coats and hats, and a staircase with a luxurious carpet on it and a brass rail leads down into the grill-room of the Imperial Restaurant next door.

But the waiter, who had already put down by our places two long sloping glasses of the clear cold beer, now brings us the plates of smoking goose soup, and excellent soup it is, with the suet dumplings, as light as possible, in it, and pieces of the breast of the goose. Why we English neglect the goose as a soup-maker I do not know, as indeed I do not know why we neglect the goose at all and consign him to the kitchen as a meal for the servants while the turkey is being eaten upstairs. The veal, which, I should imagine, is imported from Germany, is excellent, and the huge chop of it that is given to each of us must, I think, be an extra attention on the part of the management, for M. Oddenino has just come in and has taken a seat at a table in a recess, where he dines frugally every night so as to be within call of his restaurant next door, and he has called the attention of the little manager to our presence. So perhaps we are being given what in Club life is known as the "Committee-man's chop."

Our third venture is just as satisfactory as the two previous ones, for the great angle of open pear tart is in every way excellent. The bill presented at

the close of our meal is as moderate as the food was good. We have each in our meal consumed three shillings and three pence worth of well-cooked food and cold beer.

So again I ask, Why should the German *cuisine* in London be the Cinderella of the daughters of Gastronomy?

LX

MY SINS OF OMISSION

No one can be more aware than I am of the things I have left undone in writing of the restaurants of London, of the many interesting dining-places of which I have made no mention, of the eating-houses with historical associations that I have overlooked.

I have done no more than touch the hem of the garment of the City. As I write I recall that the Ship and Turtle, the Palmerston and other notable restaurants I have passed by without even a word, and that I have given only a line to Pim's and Simpson's, and the George and Vulture, each of which is worthy of a chapter.

The Liverpool Street Hotel, which I have singled out, is not by any means the only great railway hotel in London where the catering is excellent. I used at one time to dine every Derby night with the late Mr George Dobell at the St Pancras Hotel, and a better cooked dinner no one could have given me. The Euston Hotel had, and I have no doubt has, an admirable cellar of wines.

There is a chapter waiting to be written concerning the changes that have taken place in railway refreshment-room catering, with, as examples, the dining-rooms at the two Victoria stations and the *table d'hôte* dinner that is provided for playgoers at Waterloo.

The luncheons provided for golfers in the club-houses of the golf courses near London was another

subject to which I intended to devote a chapter, and yet another to the excellent luncheons that the racing clubs, following Sandown's example, provide for their members.

There are roadside and riverside inns that deserve mention besides those of which I have written.

Many of the large hotels that I have not mentioned deserve attention, but there is a certain similarity in the *table d'hôte* meals at all big hotels nowadays and the difference between the rank and file of them lies more in their situation and decoration than in their *cuisine*.

My excuse for paying a vague compliment to the big hotels in bulk will not hold good with respect to the many small hotels that I have not mentioned where the cookery is excellent. They at least have, each one, its distinct individuality. I can only plead that I have been frightened by their number. Almond's in Clifford Street, Brown's in Albemarle Street, where M. Perès is the chef, are two which occur to me as I write in which I have dined admirably, and I have no doubt that "Sunny Jim" will make the restaurant of the St James's Palace Hotel a favourite dining-place.

I feel that I have slighted Oxford Street and Holborn in having merely nodded as I passed by to some of the many restaurants, some of them important ones, that are to be found on the road from Prince Albert's Statue to the Marble Arch. My hope of making amends to them for this neglect lies in a hope that my book may run into more than one edition.

In the streets that branch off from Shaftesbury Avenue there are several restaurants for which I should have found room in this book. The Coventry is one, and the by-ways of Soho teem with little eating-houses waiting to be discovered and to become

prosperous and to possess globes of electric light and rows of Noah's ark trees in green tubs. I am not such a hardy explorer as I used to be, but I have gone through some terrible times in experimenting on some of the little restaurants in Soho—the ones that had better remain undiscovered.

Some of my correspondents have asked me why I only write of places that I can conscientiously praise, and why I do not describe my failures. My answer to this is that it is not fair to condemn any restaurant, however humble it may be, on one trial, and that, when I have been given an indifferent meal anywhere, I never go back again to see whether I shall be as badly treated on a second occasion. I prefer to consign to oblivion the stories I could tell of bad eggs and rank butter and cold potatoes, stringy meat and skeleton fowls.

It is so much better for one's digestion to think of pleasant things than to brood over horrors.

Adieu, or rather, I trust, au revoir.

P.S.—That changes have taken place in the personnel of the restaurants even in the space of time that it takes to pass the proofs of this book shows how difficult it is to keep such a publication right up to date. Most of the changes I have been able to note in their proper position, but the sale of Rule's by Mr and Mrs O'Brien to one of their old servants and the appointment of M. Mambrino to the managership of the Berkeley Hotel I must record here.



