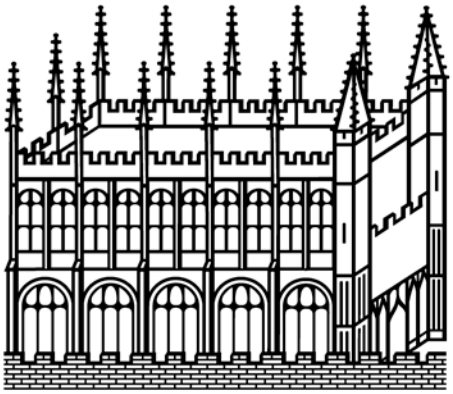

WALKER'S ART OF DINING

EDITED BY FELIX

SUMMERLY

MDCCCLXXXI

ARISTOLOGY, OR THE ART OF DINING.

ARISTOLOGY

OR

THE ART OF DINING

BY

THOMAS WALKER, M.A.

WITH PREFACE AND NOTES

BY

FELIX SUMMERLY

. . . . "with despatchful looks in haste
Eve turns, on hospitable thoughts intent,
What choice to choose, for delicacy best,
What order so contrived as not to mix
Tastes, not well joined, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change."
Book V. *Paradise Lost*.

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PREFACE.

1.

THE doctrines, in which the author of ARISTOLOGY expounded the first principles which should govern all dinners seem well worthy of reproduction at this time. They may rank even with Solomon's proverbs. The millionaire and the man whose dinner costs from one to five shillings should always hold them in remembrance in providing his dinner, which Walker called "one of our most important temporal concerns."

2. Thomas Walker, when he wrote these words in 1835, was a police magistrate at the Lambeth Court. He was a bachelor, and his doctrines appear to have been influenced somewhat by that imperfect state of existence. He preached especially the virtue of a simple style of dining. He was the son of a Manchester manufacturer, and born in 1784, and certainly a century ago Manchester banquets were very simple affairs compared with the state dinners given at Eccles, Didsbury, Higher Broughton, and the principal suburbs of Cottonopolis at the present day. The chief banker in Manchester before 1800 was a grocer and cheesemonger almost living in kitchen, parlour, and all; and the simplicity of those early times must have laid the foundations of Thomas Walker's faith in simplicity. He

took his degree of B.A. in 1808, and M.A. in 1811, at Trinity College, Cambridge: he ate the dinners which gave him his legal qualification in the Inner Temple before 1812, when he was called to the Bar. Many of the specimens of dinners related in this work were given in his chambers in the Temple.

3. In 1829 he was appointed a Metropolitan Magistrate. In May, 1835, he started a weekly periodical called the ORIGINAL, being the sole contributor, "published every Wednesday at 12 o'clock:" doubtless with that punctuality which he insisted upon as an inflexible canon for dining. He published twenty-nine numbers of this work, the last on the 2nd of December, 1835. In this number he says: "London living and authorship do not go on well together. My writings have latterly drawn upon me more numerous and cordial invitations than usual, which is a gratifying sign of approbation, but of somewhat ruinous consequences. Conviviality, though without what is ordinarily called excess, during the greater part of the week, and hard fagging during the remainder, with a sacrifice of exercise and sleep, must tell; and if I were to go on without interruption I must make myself a slave, with at the same time great danger of falling off. I have therefore determined to suspend my labours till the first Wednesday in March, and feeling the expediency of such a step, I think it best to take it at once." "It will be my aim, during the interval between this time and March, to put myself into the best state for renewing my labours with effect. Diet, sleep, and exercise are the chief points to be attended to, and difficult it is to attend to them in this metropolis. If one could but succeed in uniting the advantages of solitude with those of society, it would be glorious." Alas! it

was not given him to fulfil his engagement with his readers. He went to Brussels, and died there in a few weeks afterwards, on the 20th of January, 1836. I take the dates of his life from the "Biographical Dictionary," by Thompson Cooper, F.S.A., in preference to other similar dictionaries, one of which kills him in 1862! so difficult is it to be accurate even in a trifle. "ARISTOLOGY, or the Art of Dining" was not the only one of the subjects on which Walker wrote in the Original; "The Art of attaining High Health;" "Parochial Government;" "Pauperism"—were others, all well worth reading.

4. Whether or not Walker had ever read the *Physiologie du Goût* of *Anthelme Brillat Savarin*, published in 1825, his "Art of Dining" affords no positive evidence. It is likely he did, for there are strong analogies between the two works. Brillat Savarin was a judge of the Court of Cassation, and a member of many literary and scientific societies in France. His gastronomic philosophy, which was much more comprehensive and detailed than Walker's "Art of Dining," has been recently translated by R. E. Anderson, M.A., and the "fundamental truths of the science" given by Brillat Savarin may be found in the Appendix (B); other canons worth consulting also in Appendix (C), taken from Murray's "Art of Dining,"[1] which is more or less a compilation from the "Quarterly Review" of articles entitled *Gastronomy and Gastronomers*—written by one who enjoyed favourable opportunities of criticizing dinners of the highest quality.

5. There are forcible reasons why the doctrines of Walker for dining well should be well considered at this

[1] "The Art of Dining, or Gastronomy and Gastronomers." J. Murray, 1852.

period. The Education Department of the Privy Council makes under easy conditions, a public grant of two shillings a head on behalf of every girl who is reported by an inspector as having a knowledge of the "culinary treatment of food," which in English language means cookery. There is a National Training-School for Cookery at South Kensington, which trains teachers of cookery for Public Elementary Schools. It uses a cookery book so simple that almost an idiot may teach cookery by it. There are local centres for teaching cookery at Edinburgh and many northern towns. Two things, Walker says, stamp any dinner with glory—namely, excellent potatoes, with melted butter of the first quality. In the progress of the Art we may hope, by degrees, to see these two delicacies quite common. Since Walker's day the Corn Laws have been repealed, and millions of bushels of nourishing food made cheap for the toiling men and women. All the world is supplying us with food of every kind. Turtle and pine-apples do not cost a tenth of what they did a century ago. And the Society of Arts has lately organized a Food Committee of Landlords and Men of Science, to give the public increased knowledge of what science and the world are doing to supply food to them.

6. I have appended a letter I wrote some years ago, for reforming public dinners, which is based upon Walker's principles, and the work of reformation still remains to be done.

7. A golden rule for dining well, is, that you should feel after dinner lightsome, refreshed, with plenty of fire in you—not heavy, bloated, sodden, and beaten in spirit.

FELIX SUMMERLY.

The Feast of St. Valentine,
1881.

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS.

ARISTOLOGY,

OR THE ART OF DINING.

I.

ACCORDING to the lexicons, the Greek for dinner is Ariston, and therefore, for the convenience of the terms, and without entering into any inquiry, critical or antiquarian, I call the art of dining Aristology, and those who study it, Aristologists. The maxim, that practice makes perfect, does not apply to our daily habits ; for, so far as they are concerned, we are ordinarily content with the standard of mediocrity, or something rather below. Where study is not absolutely necessary, it is by most people altogether dispensed with ; but it is only by an union of study and practice, that we can attain anything like perfection. Anybody

can dine, but very few know how to dine, so as to ensure the greatest quantity of health and enjoyment—indeed many people contrive to destroy their health; and as to enjoyment, I shudder when I think how often I have been doomed to only a solemn mockery of it; how often I have sat in durance stately, to go through the ceremony of dinner, the essence of which is to be without ceremony, and how often in this land of liberty I have felt myself a slave!

There are three kinds of dinners—solitary dinners, every-day social dinners, and set dinners; all three involving the consideration of cheer, and the last two of society also. Solitary dinners, I think, ought to be avoided as much as possible, because solitude tends to produce thought, and thought tends to the suspension of the digestive powers.[1] When, however, dining alone is necessary, the mind should be disposed to cheerfulness by a previous interval of relaxation from whatever has seriously occupied the attention, and by directing it to some agreeable object. As contentment ought to be an accompaniment to every meal, punctuality is essential, and the diner and the dinner should be ready at the same time. A chief maxim in dining with comfort is, to have what you want when you want it. It is ruinous to have to wait for first one thing and then another, and to have the little additions

brought, when what they belong to is half or entirely finished. To avoid this a little foresight is good, and, by way of instance, it is sound practical philosophy to have mustard upon the table before the arrival of toasted cheese. This very omission has caused as many small vexations in the world, as would by this time make a mountain of misery. Indeed, I recommend an habitual consideration of what adjuncts will be required to the main matters; and I think an attention to this, on the part of females, might often be preventive of sour looks and cross words, and their anti-conjugal consequences. There are not only the usual adjuncts, but to those who have anything of a genius for dinners, little additions will sometimes suggest themselves, which give a sort of poetry to a repast, and please the palate to the promotion of health. As our senses were made for our enjoyment, and as the vast variety of good things in the world were designed for the same end, it seems a sort of impiety not to put them to their best uses, provided it does not cause us to neglect higher considerations. The different products of the different seasons, and of the different parts of the earth, afford endless proofs of bounty, which it is as unreasonable to reject, as it is to abuse. It has happened, that those who have made the gratification of the appetite a study, have generally done so to excess, and to the exclusion of nobler

pursuits; whilst, on the other hand, such study has been held to be incompatible with moral refinement and elevation. But there is a happy mean, and as upon the due regulation of the appetite assuredly depends our physical well-being, and upon that, in a great measure, our mental energies, it seems to me that the subject is worthy of attention, for reasons of more importance than is ordinarily supposed.

1. Note to p. 2.

[Few persons pay that attention to their digestion which nature calls for. To what Walker says, I add, *never read at meals.* Forbid the bringing in of letters. Dr. Thomas King Chambers says:— "The best employment after a hearty meal is frivolous conversation, accompanied by such gentle sauntering movements as are encouraged by a well-ventilated drawing-room or garden. Then is the time for those true games, where luck and skill are so combined as to have the character of game and not business." He also gives most excellent advice, whereby a good dinner may be repeated daily without damage to the health and with great enjoyment. "Ease of body is requisite for digestion. Muscular exertion should be avoided immediately before and immediately after all substantial meals. The repose previous need not be long; a nap of ten minutes, dressing and washing, are usually enough to prepare even an exhausted pedestrian or hard rider for a good dinner . . . . Sleep after dinner retards digestion, and allows the distended stomach to act injuriously on the circulation of the brain. It is proper only for very aged persons or invalids, and not always for them."—*Ed.*]

II.

THERE is in the art of dining a matter of special importance,—I mean ATTENDANCE,—the real end of which is to do that for you which you cannot so well do for yourself. Unfortunately this end is generally lost sight of, and the effect of attendance is to prevent you from doing that which you could do much better for yourself. The cause of this perversion is to be found in the practice and example of the rich and ostentatious, who constantly keep up a sort of war-establishment, or establishment adapted to extraordinary instead of ordinary occasions, and the consequence is that, like all potentates who follow the same policy, they never really taste the sweets of peace; they are in a constant state of invasion by their own troops. It is a rule at dinners not to allow you to do anything for yourself, and I have never been able to understand how even salt, except it be from some superstition, has so long maintained its

place on table. I am always in dread that, like the rest of its fellows, it will be banished to the sideboard, to be had only on special application. I am rather a bold man at table, and set form very much at defiance, so that if a salad happens to be within my reach, I make no scruple to take it to me; but the moment I am espied, it is nipped up from the most convenient into the most inconvenient position. That such absurdity should exist amongst rational beings, and in a civilized country, is extraordinary! See a small party with a dish of fish at each end of the table, and four silver covers unmeaningly starving at the sides, whilst everything pertaining to the fish comes, even with the best attendance, provokingly lagging, one thing after another, so that contentment is out of the question; and all this is done under pretence that it is the most convenient plan. This is an utter fallacy. The only convenient plan is to have everything actually upon the table that is wanted at the same time, and nothing else; as for example, for a party of eight, turbot and salmon, with doubles of each of the adjuncts, lobster-sauce, cucumber, young potatoes, cayenne, and Chili vinegar, and let the guests assist one another, which, with such an arrangement, they could do with perfect ease. This is undisturbed and visible comfort. I am speaking now only with reference to small parties. As to large ones, they have long been to me scenes of

despair in the way of convivial enjoyment. A system of simple attendance would induce a system of simple dinners, which are the only dinners to be desired. The present system I consider strongly tainted with barbarism and vulgarity, and far removed from real and refined enjoyment. As tables are now arranged, one is never at peace from an arm continually taking off or setting on a side-dish, or reaching over to a wine-cooler in the centre. Then comes a more laborious changing of courses, with the leanings right and left, to admit a host of dishes, that are set on only to be taken off again, after being declined in succession by each of the guests, to whom they are handed round. Yet this is fashion, and not to be departed from. With respect to wine, it is often offered, when not wanted; and when wanted, is perhaps not to be had till long waited for. It is dreary to observe two guests, glass in hand, waiting the butler's leisure to be able to take wine together, and then perchance being helped in despair to what they did not ask for; and it is still more dreary to be one of the two yourself. How different, where you can put your hand upon a decanter at the moment you want it! I could enlarge upon and particularize these miseries at great length; but they must be only too familiar to those who dine out, and those who do not may congratulate themselves on their escape. I have been speaking

hitherto of attendance in its most perfect state: but then comes the greater inconvenience, and the monstrous absurdity of the same forms with inadequate establishments. Those who are overwhelmed with an establishment are, as it were, obliged in self-defence to devise work for their attendants, whilst those who have no such reason ape an example which, under the most appropriate circumstances, is a state of restraint and discomfort, but which, when followed merely for fashion's sake, becomes absolutely intolerable. I remember once receiving a severe frown from a lady at the head of her table, next to whom I was sitting, because I offered to take some fish from her, to which she had helped me, instead of waiting till it could be handed to me by her one servant: and she was not deficient either in sense or good breeding; but when people give into such follies, they know no mean. It is one of the evils of the present day, that everybody strives after the same dull style—so that where comfort might be expected, it is often least to be found. State, without the machinery of state, is of all states the worst. In conclusion of this part of my subject, I will observe, that I think the affluent would render themselves and their country an essential service if they were to fall into the simple, refined style of living, discarding everything incompatible with real enjoyment; and I believe, that if the history of

overgrown luxury were traced, it has always had its origin from the vulgar rich—the very last class worthy of imitation. Although I think a reduction of establishment would often conduce to the enjoyment of life, I am very far from wishing to see any class curtailed in their means of earning their bread; but it appears to me that the rich might easily find more profitable and agreeable modes of employing the industrious, than in ministering to pomp and parade.

I had written thus far for my last number, according to my promise in my last but one; but there was not even space enough to notice the omission. I now wish to add about a page, and as, like other people I suppose, I can write most easily upon what is freshest in my mind, I will give you, dear reader, an account of a dinner I have ordered this very day at Lovegrove's, at Blackwall, where if you never dined, so much the worse for you. This account will serve as an illustration of my doctrines on dinner-giving better than a long abstract discourse. The party will consist of seven men beside myself, and every guest is asked for some reason—upon which good fellowship mainly depends; for people brought together unconnectedly had, in my opinion, better be kept separate. Eight I hold to be the golden number, never to be exceeded without weakening the efficacy of concentration. The dinner is to consist of turtle, followed by no other

fish but white-bait, which is to be followed by no other meat but grouse, which are to be succeeded simply by apple fritters and jelly ; pastry on such occasions being quite out of place. With the turtle of course there will be punch,[1] with the white-bait champagne, and with the grouse claret: the two former I have ordered to be particularly well-iced, and they will all be placed in succession upon the table, so that we can help ourselves as we please. I shall permit no other wines, unless, perchance, a bottle or two of port, if particularly wanted, as I hold variety of wines a great mistake. With respect to the adjuncts, I shall take care that there is cayenne, with lemons cut in halves, not in quarters, within reach of every one, for the turtle, and that brown bread-and-butter in abundance is set upon the table for the white-bait. It is no trouble to think of these little matters beforehand, but they make a vast difference in convivial contentment. The dinner will be followed by ices, and a good dessert, after which coffee and one glass of liqueur each, and no more, so that the present may be enjoyed rationally without inducing retrospective regrets. If the master of a feast wishes his party to succeed, he must know how to command, and not let his guests run riot, each according to his own wild fancy. Such, reader, is my idea of a dinner, of which I hope you approve ; and I cannot help

thinking that if parliament were to grant me £10,000 a year, in trust, to entertain a series of worthy persons, it would promote trade and increase the revenue more than any hugger-mugger measure ever devised.

1. Note to p. 10. PUNCH,

[is certainly too strong and tasteful with turtle soup, thick or thin, and it is barbarous and old-fashioned to drink it. It impairs the sensibility of the palate for all wines afterwards. Even any wine at this stage of the dinner should be avoided. If you must drink wine, perhaps fine Madeira or sherry is least objectionable.—*Ed.*]

III.

I SHALL begin this article with stating that the dinner at Blackwall, mentioned in my last number, was served according to my directions, both as to the principal dishes and the adjuncts, with perfect exactness, and went off with corresponding success. The turtle and white-bait were excellent; the grouse not quite of equal merit; and the apple-fritters so much relished, that they were entirely cleared, and the jelly left untouched. The only wines were champagne and claret, and they both gave great satisfaction. As soon as the liqueurs were handed round once, I ordered them out of the room; and the only heresy committed was by one of the guests asking for a glass of bottled porter, which I had not the presence of mind instantly to forbid. There was an opinion broached that some flounders water-zoutcheed, between the turtle and white-bait, would have been an improvement,—and perhaps

they would. I dined again yesterday at Blackwall as a guest, and I observed that my theory as to adjuncts was carefully put in practice, so that I hope the public will be a gainer.

In order to bring the dinner system to perfection according to my idea, it would be necessary to have a room contrived on the best possible plan for eight persons, as the greatest number. I almost think six even more desirable than eight; but beyond eight, as far as my experience goes, there is always a division into parties, or a partial languor, or sort of paralysis either of the extremities or centre, which has more or less effect upon the whole. For complete enjoyment a company ought to be One; sympathizing and drawing together, listening and talking in due proportions—no monopolists, nor any ciphers. With the best arrangements, much will depend upon the chief of the feast giving the tone, and keeping it up. Paulus Æmilius, who was the most successful general and best entertainer of his time, seems to have understood this well; for he said that it required the same sort of spirit to manage a banquet as a battle, with this difference, that the one should be made as pleasant to friends, and the other as formidable to enemies, as possible. I often think of this excellent saying at large dinner-parties, where the master and mistress preside as if they were the humblest of the guests, or as if they

were overwhelmed with anxiety respecting their cumbrous and pleasure-destroying arrangements. They appear not to have the most distant idea of the duties of commanders, and instead of bringing their troops regularly into action, they leave the whole army in reserve. They should at least now and then address each of their guests by name, and, if possible, say something by which it may be guessed who and what each person is. I have witnessed some ridiculous and almost incredible instances of these defects. I remember once at a large dinner-party at a great house, the lion of the day not being called out once, and going away without the majority of the company suspecting who he was. On a similar occasion, as a very distinguished man left the drawing-room, a scarcely less distinguished lady inquired who that gentleman was, who had been talking so long to her,—though she had sat opposite to him at dinner. It appears to me that nothing can be better contrived to defeat its legitimate end, than a large dinner party in the London season,—sixteen, for instance. The names of the guests are generally so announced that it is difficult to hear them, and in the earlier part of the year, the assembling takes place in such obscurity, that it is impossible to see. Then there is often a tedious and stupefying interval of waiting, caused perhaps by some affected fashionable, some

important politician, or some gorgeously-decked matron, or it may be by some culinary accident. At last comes the formal business of descending into the dining-room, where the blaze of light produces by degrees sundry recognitions; but many a slight acquaintance is prevented from being renewed by the chilling mode of assembling. In the long days the light is more favourable, but the waiting is generally more tedious, and half the guests are perhaps leaving the park, when they ought to be sitting down to dinner. At table, intercourse is prevented as much as possible by a huge centre-piece of plate and flowers, which cuts off about one-half the company from the other, and some very awkward mistakes have taken place in consequence, from guests having made personal observations upon those who were actually opposite to them. It seems strange that people should be invited, to be hidden from one another. Besides the centre-piece, there are usually massive branches to assist in interrupting communication; and perhaps you are placed between two persons with whom you are not acquainted, and have no community of interest to induce you to become so, for in the present overgrown state of society, a new acquaintance, except for some particular reason, is an encumbrance to be avoided. When the company is arranged, then comes the perpetual motion of the attendants, the

perpetual declining of what you do not want, and the perpetual waiting for what you do, or a silent resignation to your fate. To desire a potato, and to see the dish handed to your next neighbour, and taking its course in a direction from you, round an immense table, with occasional retrograde movements and digressions, is one of the unsatisfactory occurrences which frequently take place; but perhaps the most distressing incident in a grand dinner is, to be asked to take champagne, and, after much delay, to see the butler extract the bottle from a cooler, and hold it nearly parallel to the horizon, in order to calculate how much he is to put into the first glass to leave any for the second. To relieve him and yourself from the chilling difficulty, the only alternative is to change your mind, and prefer sherry, which, under the circumstances, has rather an awkward effect. These and an infinity of minor evils are constantly experienced amidst the greatest displays, and they have from sad experience made me come to the conclusion, that a combination of state and calculation is the horror of horrors. Some good bread and cheese, and a jug of ale comfortably set before me, and heartily given, are heaven and earth in comparison. I must not omit to mention, amongst other obstacles to sociability, the present excessive breadth of fashionable tables (*v.* p. 86) for the purpose of holding, first, the cumbrous ornaments and

lights before spoken of; secondly, in some cases, the dessert, at the same time with the side-dishes; and, lastly, each person's cover, with its appurtenances; so that to speak across the table, and through the intervening objects, is so inconvenient as to be nearly impracticable. To crown all, is the ignorance of what you have to eat, and the impossibility of duly regulating your appetite.[1] To be sure, in many particulars you may form a tolerably accurate guess, as that, at one season, there will be partridges in the third course, and at another, pigeons, in dull routine. No wonder that such a system produces many a dreary pause, in spite of every effort to the contrary, and that one is obliged, in self-defence, to crumble bread, sip wine, look at the paintings, if there are any, or if there are not, blazon the arms on the plates, or, lastly, retreat into oneself in despair, as I have often and often done. When dinner is over, there is no peace till each dish in the dessert has made its circuit, after which the wine moves languidly round two or three times, and then settles for the rest of the evening, and coffee and small talk finish the heartless affair. I do not mean to say that such dinner-parties as I have been describing have not frequently many redeeming circumstances. Good breeding, wit, talent, information, and every species of agreeable quality, are to be met with there; but I think these would appear to much

greater advantage, and much oftener, under a more simple and unrestrained system. After curiosity has been satisfied, and experience ripened, I imagine most people retire from the majority of formal dinners rather wearied than repaid, and that a feeling of real enjoyment is the exception, and not the rule. In the long run, there is no compensation for ease; and ease is not to be found in state and superabundance, but in having what you want when you want it, and with no temptation to excess. The legitimate objects of dinner are to refresh the body, to please the palate, and to raise the social humour to the highest point; but these objects, so far from being studied, in general are not even thought of, and display and an adherence to fashion are their meagre substitutes. Hence it is, that gentlemen ordinarily understand what pertains to dinner-giving so much better than ladies, and that bachelors' feasts are so popular. Gentlemen keep more in view the real ends, whereas ladies think principally of display and ornament, of form and ceremony—not all, for some have excellent notions of taste and comfort; and the cultivation of them would seem to be the peculiar province of the sex, as one of the chief features in household management. There is one female failing in respect to dinners, which I cannot help here noticing, and that is, a very inconvenient love of garnish and flowers, either natural

or cut in turnips and carrots, and stuck on dishes, so as greatly to impede carving and helping. This is the true barbarian principle of ornament, and is in no way distinguishable from the "untutored Indian's" fondness for feathers and shells. In both cases the ornament is an encumbrance, and has no relation to the matter on which it is placed. But there is a still worse practice, and that is pouring sauce over certain dishes to prevent them from looking too plain, as parsley and butter, or white sauce over boiled chickens. I cannot distinguish this taste from that of the Hottentot besmearing himself with grease, or the Indian with red paint, who, I suppose, have both the same reason for their practice. To my mind, good meat well cooked, the plainer it looks the better it looks, and it certainly is better with the accessories kept separate till used, unless they form a part of the dish. In my next number I shall give my ideas of what dinners ought to be.

1. Note to p. 17. BILL OF FARE.

[In Walker's days the French fashion of a *menu* or bill of fare was not generally introduced: now it is common; and there should be a clearly written list of the dishes with English names between each guest. There are many pretty devices for holding cards—Cupids made by Mintons in white porcelain.—*Ed.*]

IV.

IN the article in my last number on the "Art of Dining," I promised to give this week my ideas of what dinners ought to be. I shall begin with repeating a preceding passage:—

"In order to bring the dinner system to perfection according to my idea, it would be necessary to have a room contrived on the best possible plan for eight persons, as the greatest number. I almost think six even more desirable than eight; but beyond eight, as far as my experience goes, there is always a division into parties, or a partial languor, or a sort of paralysis either of the extremities or centre, which has more or less effect upon the whole. For complete enjoyment, a company ought to be One; sympathizing and drawing together, listening and talking in due proportions—no monopolists, nor any ciphers." I am now supposing the whole object to be the perfection of dinner-parties, without reference to number

of family or acquaintance, and without reference to display or any other consideration; but I suppose every other consideration postponed to convivial enjoyment alone. Spacious and lofty rooms destroy, or at least weaken, that feeling of concentration which is essential to perfect fellowship. There is a sort of evaporation of one's self, or flying off into the void, which impairs that force of attention necessary to give and receive complete enjoyment. A party, to use a familiar phrase, should be, as it were, boxed up, comfortably packed, with room enough, but not to spare, or, as the French revolutionists used to have it, should be "one and indivisible." Those who have dined in the very small rooms, called *cabinets particuliers*, at the *restaurants* at Paris, must have remarked the beneficial influence of compactness in promoting hilarity, and banishing abstraction and restraint; but those rooms have no other desirable qualification but their smallness, which is often extreme, and they have not been originally contrived for the purpose for which they are used, yet they have a capability of producing more of a festive disposition than is to be found amidst space and display. Dining-rooms in London are in general, I think, very tasteless and uninspiring in themselves, and, when set out, they are decorated, after the barbarian style, rather for display, than with reference to their use.

From the architect to the table-decorator, there seems to be a total absence of genius for the real objects to be aimed at. Justness of proportion, harmony of colouring, and disposition of light, are the most desirable qualities in any room, but especially in a dining-room, without any individual ornaments or objects to distract the attention; so that the moment one enters, there may be a feeling of fitness, which is productive of undisturbed satisfaction, and disposes the mind to the best state for enjoyment. Attention should be directed to produce an effect from the whole, and not by the parts. For this reason light should be thrown in the least observable manner, and not ostentatiously from ornamental objects. There should be the pleasing effect of good light, with the least perception whence it comes. There is no art in lighting a table by cumbrous branches; but there is in throwing a light upon it, like some of Rembrandt's paintings, and the effect is accordingly. The first is vulgar; the latter refined. In the same manner light from windows should be admitted only with reference to the table; and during dinner the view should be shut out to prevent distraction. With respect to the proportions of a room, they should be studied with reference to the table, which, as I have said, should in my opinion be of the size to accommodate not more than eight persons. In point of width, I would not have more space than

necessary for the convenient circulation of the least possible number of attendants (*v.* p. 35). In point of length, there should be room for a sideboard at one end, and a sufficient space from the fire-place at the other; so that the length of the room would be somewhat greater than the width. In respect to height, it should be proportioned to the length and width, and therefore the height would not be considerable. A high room is certainly not favourable to conversation, because it is contrary to the principle of concentration; and the prejudice in favour of height arises from its effect considered with respect to large parties, and to overloaded tables. I would have the door in the side, at the end near the sideboard, and the windows on the side opposite. As to colouring, the same rule ought to be observed as in everything else, that is, to study general effect. To suit all seasons best, I think the walls ought to be of rather a sober colour, with drapery of a warm appearance for cold weather, and the contrary for hot. Perhaps it may be thought by many, that all these particulars are very immaterial, and that the consideration of them is very trifling; but my opinion is, that in all our actions, whether with reference to business or pleasure, it is a main point, in the first place, to produce a suitable disposition; and as dining is an occurrence of every day of our lives, or nearly so, and as our health and spirits depend in a great measure upon our vivid en-

joyment of this our chief meal, it seems to me a more worthy object of study than those unreal occupations about which so many busy themselves in vain. But I am forgetting an important matter in the dining-room ; I mean the due regulation of the temperature,[1] upon which comfort so much depends, and from want of attention to which, there is annually so much suffering both from heat and cold. In hot weather the difficulty is the greatest, and is best to be overcome by attention to ventilation and blinds. In winter there is little difficulty, with due care and no stinginess, which latter is apt to appear both in having the fire only lighted just before dinner, and in not keeping it up properly to the end of the party ; and I do here protest against the practice I have often witnessed, of letting the fire actually go out in cold weather before the guests. There is nothing more cheerless, or of more inhospitable appearance. On the other hand, a bright blazing fire has a very inspiring effect on entering the dining-room, and is an object worthy of special attention to those who wish their parties to succeed. Moreover, in such a room as I have described, the opening after dinner on a dreary day to admit a cheerful fire would be a very inspiring moment with an agreeable party brought into perfect unison by a well-imagined, well-executed repast—a scene to kindle equally attachment to one's friends, and love

of one's country. The cultivation of the fire-side is one of the greatest import, public and private.

Having said, I think, everything I have to say as to the arrangement of the dining-room till I come to the table, I will here dedicate a word or two to its necessary appendage, the kitchen, which I would have literally an appendage, and not, as at present, a distant and unconnected establishment. As I said before, I am now supposing the whole object to be the perfection of dinner parties, without reference to any other consideration, and therefore I put aside custom, fashion, and prejudice, as enemies to the true theory and practice, and I boldly advance my own opinions. I must beg the reader to bear in mind, that I am speaking in reference to small parties, and that I am an advocate for dinners which, as nearly as can be calculated, are just enough, and no more. I speak not of the bustle of preparation for twelve, sixteen, or twenty people, with about four times as much as they can possibly consume, and with a combination of overpowering heat and disagreeable scents. I have in view a quiet little kitchen, without noise, or annoying heat, or odour, save some simple savoury one, provocative of the appetite, and incapable of offending the most fastidious. Such an establishment would I have immediately adjoining my dining-room, and communicating with it by an entrance close to the sideboard, closed

during the process of dinner by a curtain only, so that the dishes could be brought in without noise, or current of air, or constant opening or shutting of a door. As Matthew Bramble, in "Humphrey Clinker," talks, in his delights of the country, of eating trout struggling from the stream, I would have my dishes served glowing, or steaming, from the kitchen-stoves—a luxury not to be compensated, and a quality which gives a relish, otherwise unattainable, to the simplest as well as the most highly-finished dishes. Let those who have sense and taste conceive a compact dinner, quietly served in simple succession according to such an arrangement, with everything at hand, and in the best possible state, and compare it with a three-course repast, imported under cover, in tedious procession, from under ground. In my next I shall treat of the table, the dinner, and the mode of conducting it.

1. Note to p. 24. REGULATION OF THE TEMPERATURE.

[This is a difficult subject in most houses, and at present generally neglected. *At all times* fresh air should be let direct into the room, and a ventilator fixed in the chimney to let out the vitiated air. *Faute de mieux*, the window should be opened at the *top and bottom* ever so little. A simple method of obtaining pure fresh air is by one of Stevens's Patent Ventilators let into the outer wall at about 5 ft. 6 in. from the floor. With proper care the temperature may be kept at 65°, except in the heat of summer. In the winter a blazing fire should welcome the guests.—*Ed.*]

V.

TO those who are the slaves of custom or fashion, or who have never thought for themselves, the doctrines on the art of dining laid down in my last number must appear startling, absurd, or impossible to be carried into practice, except in a very limited number of cases. The simple style I propose is as different from the ornamented and cumbrous one now in vogue, as the present cropped, unpowdered, trousered mode of dress is from that of a gentleman's in the middle of the last century, when bags, swords, buckles, and gold lace were universally in use, and I might be thought as much out of the way in my notions by some, as any one would have been in the year 1750, who should have advocated the dress of 1835. But simplicity and convenience have triumphed in our dress, and I have no doubt they will equally do so in time in our dinners. With respect to the practicability of my system,

I lay down rules which I think the sound ones, with a view to their being approached as nearly as circumstances will permit. For instance, I am of opinion a party, to be the most satisfactory, should not exceed eight persons, and therefore I would keep as near that number as possible. I think it is a very material point to have a dinner served up quite hot, and therefore I would have a kitchen as close to the dining-room as conveniently it could be. I differ from those who like large parties, and who think the kitchen ought to be remote, and I frame my rules accordingly, and would bring my practice as near my rules as circumstances would allow. I should prefer two small parties simply regaled to one large one with an overloaded repast, and I would make all my arrangements with reference to the style I think best, and keep to it as strictly as I could. As it appears to me that the more intent we are upon what we are doing the greater is our enjoyment, I have dwelt, in the article in my last number, upon the means of preventing distraction at the dinner-table—not that I mean all that I have said always to be adhered to, but I give it by way of guide and specimen. I endeavour to exhibit the true philosophy of dining, leaving the practice to be modified according to tastes and circumstances ; and as I am decidedly of opinion that the true philosophy of dining would

have great influence upon our well-being, bodily and mental, and upon the good ordering of our social habits, I think it well worth serious attention. The above observations apply as well to what I am going to say as to what I have said; the application of my rules must depend upon circumstances.

I concluded the article on dining in my last number with promising to treat, in the present, of the table, the dinner, and the mode of conducting it. A great deal of the pleasure of a party depends upon the size of the table being proportioned to the number of those sitting at it. The other day, when dining alone with a friend of mine, I could not help being constantly sensible of the unsocial influence of too large a table. The circular form seems to me to be the most desirable, and as tables are now made with tops of different sizes to put on as occasion requires, those who think it worth while can adapt their table to their party with what precision they please. According to my system of serving the dishes in succession, the only thing to be considered in the size of the table is convenient room for sitting, so as neither to be crowded nor to be too far apart. For any number not exceeding four, I think a square or oblong table quite as comfortable as a round one. With respect to setting out a table, everything should be brilliantly clean, and nothing should be placed upon it except what is wanted;

and everything wanted, which can conveniently be upon the table, should be there, so as to dispense as much as possible with attendance,[1] and thereby avoid the trouble of asking for things, and the frequent occurrence, even with the best arrangements, of having to wait. I rather think the best mode of lighting a table has not yet been discovered. I think it desirable not to have the lights upon it, nor indeed anything which can interrupt the freest communication between the guests, upon which sociability greatly depends. The art of throwing the most agreeable light upon a table is well worth cultivating. Instead of those inconvenient and useless centre-pieces which I have already denounced, I would have a basket of beautiful bread, white and brown, in the middle of the table, with a silver fork on each side, so that the guests could help themselves, which would be perfectly easy with a party not exceeding eight, which limit I understand in all I say. I would have the wine placed upon the table in such manner as to be as much as possible within the reach of each person, and I hold stands for the decanters to be impediments, and coolers also, except, perhaps, in very hot weather. If the wine is served at a proper temperature, it will in general remain so as long as ought to be necessary; but it is often set upon the table before it is wanted, for show. As I am an enemy to a variety of wines,

I think one wine-glass only most convenient at dinner, nor do I think in general that water-glasses for the wine-glasses are of much use. I like to simplify as much as possible; and instead of the supernumeraries we now see I would have one or more sets of cruets upon the table, according to the size of the party, and containing those things which are continually wanted, and which it is desirable to have at hand. When they are to be asked for, they are not used half so much as when they are within reach. Whatever dish is placed upon the table, it ought to be preceded by all its minor adjuncts, and accompanied by the proper vegetables quite hot, so that it may be enjoyed entirely and at once. How very seldom this is fully experienced, for want of previous attention, or from the custom of sacrificing comfort to state and form! I suppose I hardly need add, that I am an advocate for the use of dumb-waiters; and the smaller the party is the more they are desirable, because attendants are a restraint upon conversation and upon one's ease in general, in proportion to the limited number at table. I will conclude this part of my subject with recommending, in the arrangements of the dining-room, and the setting out of the table, Madame de Staël's description of Corinne's drawing-room, which, she says, was "simply furnished, and with everything contrived to make conversation easy and the circle compact,"

fore its arrival, without bustle or omissions. In dinners of few dishes they ought to be of rather a substantial kind ; but, when composed of variety, the dishes should be of a lighter nature, and in the French style. It must be confessed that a French dinner, when well dressed, is extremely attractive, and, from the lightness felt after a great variety of dishes, it cannot be unwholesome ; though I do not think, from my own experience and observation, that the French mode of cookery is so favourable to physical power as the English. If I might have my choice, I should adopt the simple English style for my regular diet, diversifying it occasionally with the more complicated French style. Although I like, as a rule, to abstain from much variety at the same meal, I think it both wholesome and agreeable to vary the food on different days, both as to the materials and the mode of dressing them. The palate is better pleased, and the digestion more active, and the food, I believe, assimilates in a greater degree with the system. The productions of the different seasons and of different climates point out to us unerringly that it is proper to vary our food ; and one good general rule I take to be, to select those things which are most in season, and to abandon them as soon as they begin to deteriorate in quality. Most people mistake the doctrine of variety in their mode of living. They have great

variety at the same meals, and great sameness at different meals. Let me here mention, what I forgot before, that after the dinner on Christmas-day, we drank mulled claret—an excellent thing, and very suitable to the season. These agreeable varieties are never met with, or even thought of, in the formal routine of society, though they contribute much, when appropriately devised, to the enjoyment of a party, and they admit scope for invention. I think, in general, there is far too little attention paid to varying the mode of dining according to the temperature of the seasons. Summer dinners are for the most part as heavy and as hot as those in winter, and the consequence is, they are frequently very oppressive, both in themselves, and from their effect on the room. In hot weather they ought to be light, and of a cooling nature, and accompanied with agreeable beverages well iced, rather than with pure wine, especially of the stronger kinds. I cannot think there is any danger from such diet to those who use it moderately. The danger, I apprehend, lies in excess from the pleasure felt in allaying thirst and heat. The season in which nature produces fruit and vegetables in the greatest perfection and abundance, is surely that in which they ought to be most used. During the summer that cholera was the most prevalent, I sometimes dined upon pickled salmon, salad, and cider, and

nothing else ; and I always found they agreed with me perfectly, besides being very agreeable. Probably, if I had taken them in addition to more substantial food, so as to overload my appetite, it might have been otherwise, and yet that course would have been adopted by many people by way of precaution. In hot weather the chief thing to be aimed at is, to produce a light and cool feeling, both by the management of the room, and the nature of the repast. In winter, warmth and substantial diet afford the most satisfaction. In damp weather, when the digestion is the weakest, the diet ought to be most moderate in quantity, but rather of a warm and stimulating nature ; and, in bracing weather, I think plain substantial food the most appropriate. By studying to suit the repast to the temperature, the greatest satisfaction may be given at the cheapest rate. Iced water is often more coveted than the richest wine.

One of the greatest luxuries, to my mind, in dining, is to be able to command plenty of good VEGETABLES,[1] well served up. But this is a luxury vainly hoped for at set parties. The vegetables are made to figure in a very secondary way, except, indeed, whilst they are considered as great delicacies, which is generally before they are at their best, and then, like other delicacies, they are introduced after the appetite has been satisfied ; and the manner of

handing vegetables round is most unsatisfactory and uncertain. Excellent potatoes, smoking hot, and accompanied by melted butter of the first quality, would alone stamp merit on any dinner; but they are as rare on state occasions, so served, as if they were of the cost of pearls. Everybody of genuine taste is delighted with a display of vegetables of a superior order; and if great attention was bestowed upon that part of dinners instead of upon the many other dishes, dinners would be at once more wholesome and more satisfactory to the palate, and often less expensive. I have observed, that whenever the vegetables are distinguished for their excellence, the dinner is always particularly enjoyed; and if they were served, as I have already recommended, with each dish, as they are most appropriate and fresh from the dressing, it would be a great improvement on the present style. With some meats something of the kind is practised, as peas with duck, and beans with bacon, and such combinations are generally favourites; but the system might be much extended, and with great advantage, by due attention. With respect to variety of vegetables, I think the same rule applies as to other dishes. I would not have many sorts on the same occasion, but would study appropriateness and particular excellence. There is something very refreshing in the mere look of fine vegetables, and the entrance

of a well-dressed dish of meat, properly accompanied by them and all their adjuncts, would excite a disposition to enjoyment much greater than can the unmeaning and unconnected courses now placed before our eyes. This is a matter of study and combination, and a field for genius. It is a reasonable object of attention, inasmuch as it is conducive to real enjoyment, and has nothing to do with mere display. In French cookery, vegetables meet with attention much more proportionate to their importance than in ours, and appropriateness in serving them is much more studied.

I think I have now said all I had to say respecting dinners. My object has been to point out what I consider to be the true philosophy, and to put people upon the right scent of what ought to be done, rather than to particularize it. Those who wish to succeed, can only do so to much extent, by first getting into the right course, and then thinking for themselves, with such aids as they can derive from observation, and the best treatises on cookery. The chief point to be aimed at, is to acquire a habit of thinking only of the real object of dining, and to discard all wish for state and display in a matter which concerns our daily employment of health and pleasure. I consider my observations on the art of dining as part of what I had to say on attainment of high health, from the necessary dependence of our

health upon the judicious and satisfactory manner in which we make our principal meal. I think the art of dining, properly understood, is especially worthy the attention of females of all classes, according to their respective means. It comes peculiarly within the province of domestic economy, and is indeed one of its most important features. But females ought to be especially on their guard in this essential affair, not to divert their views from realities to show, to which they have a strong propensity. There are many things in which they can indulge their taste for ornament, provided it is not carried too far, with advantage to themselves and to the satisfaction of others; but in the article of dinners it is misplaced, because destructive of something of much more importance; and the realities, when in full force, have quite sufficient attractions without any attempt to heighten them by "foreign aid." In conformity with my dislike to show or display in everything connected with dinners, I prefer a service of plain white ware—the French manufacture, I believe, or an imitation of it—to plate or ornamented china.[2] There is a simplicity in white ware, and an appearance of cleanliness and purity, which are to me particularly pleasing; besides which, it is, I always think, indicative of a proper feeling, and a due attention in the right direction. As to desserts, I am no great friend to them. I enjoy fruit much

more at any other time of the day, and at any other meal; besides which, I think they are unwholesome from being unnecessary. At any rate, I would have them in great moderation, and confined to a few kinds of ripe fruit. Preserved fruits are in my opinion cloying after dinner, and I believe injurious to the digestion of a substantial meal, and confectionery I think still worse. Desserts are made instruments of show as much or more than dinners, and though, unlike dinners, they cannot well be spoiled by it, yet it makes them a perpetual source of temptation to excess. It is most unphilosophical to set things before people, and to tell them they need not take them unless they please. Contentment and safety mainly depend upon having nothing before us except what we ought to take.

I purpose in my next number coming to a conclusion on the subject of the art of dining. My remaining topics are, wine, the means of limiting dinners to small parties, and the effect of such limit upon the mode of carrying on society in the most convenient and agreeable manner. It seems to me, that great improvements are practicable, at least with those who prefer real enjoyment to mock, and who like ease and liberty better than state and restraint.

1. Note to p. 40. Vegetables.

[Generally speaking, too much meat is eaten in proportion to vegetables. To preserve health generally, the proportion of meat consumed during the day ought to be as one to five parts for the well working of the inward mechanism of many persons. But constitutions differ and require different proportions, just as steam boilers require different quantities of coal. If need be, these proportions should be settled by the medical adviser of the reader. And it is to be hoped that he has made the Science of Diet his study. Very much disease is generated or promoted by inattention to diet. One of the best books I know is Sir Henry Thompson's "Food and Feeding," and the greatest magician of a doctor in directing the machinery of the human body by proper diet is, in my opinion, Dr. Andrew Clark.—*Ed.*]

2. Note to p. 43. Ornamental Pottery.

[Certainly food can be examined best on a plate of white china—and all fine food is worth inspection by any man of taste. What pictures are suggested by red mullet; by a cut of five-year-old mutton with the "Pope's eye;" by a little snipe; by fine asparagus; by early potatoes; by all fruits!—but the picture is all destroyed on a plate on which forms and colours are scrambled over. Real peaches on painted pictures of peaches is vile. I have a plate before me with two heads of a woodcock at the top of the rim, the tail at the bottom, and the wings at the sides—white in the centre—a mad design! It gives me an indigestion, and is only fit to be put in a Chamber of Horrors. If you *will* have a pattern, there is nothing so harmless as a fine old blue-and-white porcelain of the willow pattern.—*Ed.*]

VII.

BEFORE I proceed to the topics I propose to discuss in this article, I wish just to add one observation to what I have said in a former number on the introduction of delicacies at dinner. I have there observed that "delicacies are scarcely ever brought till they are quite superfluous, which is unsatisfactory if they are not eaten, and pernicious if they are." Frequently when I have expressed my sentiments on this subject in conversation, the objection made has been, that it would be difficult, or too expensive, if delicacies were introduced in the early part of dinner, to provide enough. The answer is, that it is not necessary to have a sufficient supply for each guest to make a dinner upon, but enough to afford each a reasonable portion before the appetite is palled. For instance, at a party of six persons, if the dinner consisted of soup, fish, a joint, and three woodcocks, I maintain it would be

much better to serve the woodcocks before the joint, both on the score of enjoyment and of health—of enjoyment, because a delicacy, when the appetite is nearly satisfied, loses a great part of its relish, and is reduced to the level of plainer food whilst the appetite is keen—of health, because it is much more easy to regulate the appetite when the least tempting dishes are brought last. By serving delicacies first,[1] people would dine both more satisfactorily and more moderately, and entertainments would be less costly and less troublesome. I have often seen a course of game taken away, nearly or quite untouched, which would almost have dined the party, and much more agreeably than on the preceding dishes. The truth is, and a melancholy one too, that set dinners are managed more with a view to the pageant than the repast, and almost in every particular, besides that of delicacies, there is a sacrifice of enjoyment to an unmeaning and vulgar-minded style. Let us hope that some daring and refined spirits will emancipate us from such barbarous thraldom, and that we may see a rivalry of inventive genius instead of the present one of cumbrous pomp. Simplicity, ease, and sound sense are making progress in many things relating to our way of living; and surely they will not be excluded from one of the most important of our temporal concerns.

A matter suggests itself to me here, which it is expedient not to pass over ; I mean the practice of persons in different stations of life, or enjoying different degrees of affluence, in their intercourse with each other, all adopting, as far as they are able, the same style of entertainment. The formal, stately style is certainly not that of the greatest enjoyment, but it is tolerable only when it is adequately kept up, and with a disciplined establishment. Those who maintain large establishments feel a necessity to find them employment to prevent greater inconveniences, but for those who have only a moderate household to go out of their way for the purpose of badly imitating what is rather to be avoided altogether, is the height of folly. I do not know anything more unsatisfactory than a state occasion, where the usual mode of living is free from all state. It excites my pity, and wearies me ; and I cannot be at my ease whilst I am conscious that the entertainers are giving themselves trouble, and suffering anxiety to a greater degree than it is probable they can be recompensed, and are perhaps incurring expense which is inconvenient, and for which some comfort is to be sacrificed. In whatever style people live, provided it is good in its kind, they will always have attractions to offer by means of a little extra exertion well directed within their own bounds, but when they pass those bounds, they

forego the advantages of variety and ease. It is almost always practicable to provide something out of the common way, or something better than common; and people in different situations are the most likely to be able to produce an agreeable variety. The rule generally followed is to think what the guests are accustomed to, whereas it should be reversed, and what they are not accustomed to should rather be set before them, especially where the situation of the entertainer, or his place of residence, affords anything peculiar. By adopting such a course, persons of moderate income may entertain their superiors in wealth without inconvenience to themselves, and very much to the satisfaction of their guests—much better than laboured imitations of their own style. Contrast should be aimed at, and men used to state and luxury are most likely to be pleased with comfort and simplicity. We all laugh at the idea of a Frenchman in his own country thinking it necessary to treat an Englishman with roast beef; but it is the same principle to think it necessary to entertain as we have been entertained, under different circumstances. There are people in remote parts of the country, who, having the best trout at hand, and for nothing, send for turbot at a great expense to entertain their London guests; and instances of the like want of judgment are innumerable. In general it is best to give strangers

the best of the place ; they are then the most sure to be pleased. In entertaining those who are in a different class from ourselves, it is expedient to provide for them what they are not used to, and that which we are most in the way of procuring of superior quality. Many people, from their connection with foreign countries, or with different parts of their own, are enabled to command with ease to themselves what are interesting rarities to others, and one sure way to entertain with effect is, as I have before recommended, to cultivate a good understanding with those with whom we deal for the supply of the table. By way of illustration of what I have said, on the subject of plain choice dinners, I give an account of one I once gave in the chambers of a friend of mine in the Temple, to a party of six, all of whom were accustomed to good living, and one of whom was bred at one of the most celebrated tables in London. The dinner consisted of the following dishes, served in succession, and with their respective adjuncts carefully attended to. First, spring soup from Birch's on Cornhill, which, to those who have never tasted it, I particularly recommend in the season, as being quite delicious ; then a moderate-sized turbot, bought in the city, beautifully boiled, with first-rate lobster sauce, cucumber, and new potatoes ; after that, ribs of beef from Leadenhall-market, roasted to a turn, and smoking from

the spit, with French beans and salad ; then a very fine dressed crab ; and lastly, some jelly. The owner of the chambers was connected with the city, and he undertook specially to order the different articles, which it would have been impossible to exceed in quality ; and though the fish and beef were dressed by a Temple laundress, they could not have been better served, I suppose principally from the kitchen being close at hand, and her attention not being distracted ; and here I must remark that the proximity of the kitchen was not the least annoyance to us in any way, or indeed perceptible, except in the excellence of the serving up. The beef deservedly met with the highest praise, and certainly I never saw even venison more enjoyed. The crab was considered particularly well introduced, and was eaten with peculiar zest, and the simplicity of the jelly met with approval. The dessert, I think, consisted only of oranges and biscuits, followed by occasional introductions of anchovy toast. The wines were champagne, port, and claret. I have had much experience in the dinner way, both at large and at small parties, but I never saw such a vividness of conviviality, either at or after dinner, which I attribute principally to the real object of a dinner being the only one studied ; state, ornament, and superfluity being utterly excluded. I hold this up as an example of the plain, easy style of enter-

taining. There was nothing which anybody may not have with the most moderate establishment and the smallest house, perhaps not always in exactly the same perfection as to quality of materials, but still sufficiently good, with a little trouble and judgment.

It is the mode of dinner that I wish to recommend, and not any particular dishes or wines. Common soup made at home, fish of little cost, any joint, the cheapest vegetables, some happy and inexpensive introduction, like the crab, and a pudding, with sherry and port, provided everything is good in quality, and the dishes are well dressed, and served hot, and in succession, with their adjuncts, will ensure a quantity of enjoyment which no one need be afraid to offer, and so it will be with any combination in the same style ; but then it is absolutely necessary not to overdo the thing on the one hand, and, on the other, to direct the attention entirely in the right course ; to think nothing of display or fashion, but only of realities, and to dispose everything for comfort and ease. Such dinners admit of an endless variety of combination, and by more or less additional expense, often very trifling, may be made greatly sought after. There is one precaution, which I would recommend to those who step out of the common way in entertaining, and that is, to make some mention of what they

mean to do at the time they give their invitation, otherwise a sort of disappointment may be sometimes felt, which is destructive of that disposition to be pleased, which guests ought to feel. For instance, speaking from my own experience, I greatly prefer small parties to large ones, and simple dinners to overloaded ones; but it has happened to me that if, from the style of the invitation, I have made up my mind to a state party, I have been disappointed at finding a small one, though I should have preferred it in the first instance; and so it might be to invite any one to a simple dinner, however excellent, without giving some notice. There is often a little art in giving an invitation, not only so as to prevent disappointment, but to prepare the invited for any particular circumstance, in order that they may come with the proper disposition, created by anticipation. I recollect at the dinner I have above described, I stated in my invitations, verbal and written, what I meant to attempt, and the names of the party. As the success of it so strongly illustrates my positions in favour of compactness of dining-room, of proximity of kitchen, of smallness of party, of absence of state and show, of undivided attention to excellence of dishes, and to mode of serving them in single succession, I am tempted to add the names here by way of authentication, and to show that my guests were competent judges, not

to be led away from want of experience. The party consisted of Lord Abinger, then Sir James Scarlett, Sir John Johnstone, the present member for Scarborough, Mr. Young, private secretary to Lord Melbourne, Mr. R. Bell, of the firm of Bell Brothers, who occupied the chambers, and acted as caterer, and lastly, my excellent friend, the late honourable George Lamb, whose good-humoured convivial qualities were held in high estimation by all who knew him, and who on this occasion outshone himself. I had seen him on many and many a festive and joyous occasion, both amidst the revelries of the northern circuit and in private society, but I never saw him, or any other man, in such height of glee. Such a scene could not take place at a table set out, however well, in the customary style. There could not be the same ease and inspiration, the same satisfaction and concentration of mind on what is to be done, the same sympathetic bringing together of a party over one thing at once. What is there in state and show to compensate for this enjoyment? They are the resources by which dulness seeks to distinguish itself, and it is a pity that those who are capable of better things should submit to such trammels. In proportion as the set-out is brilliant, I have observed the company is generally dull, and every ornament seems to me an impediment in the way of good fellowship. I must add a

word or two to what I have said respecting the mode of giving invitations, upon which, I think, more depends than at first sight appears. If a formal invitation on a large card, requesting the honour, &c., at three weeks' notice, were to be received, and the party should prove to be a small familiar one to a simple dinner, however good, some disappointment would almost unavoidably be felt, partly because the mind would have been made up to something different, and partly on account of the more laboured preparation. It is in general, I think, advisable to give some idea to the invited what it is they are to expect, if there is to be anything out of the common way, either as to company or repast; at any rate, it is expedient not to mislead, as some people are very much in the habit of doing, and then receiving their company with an apology, which throws a damp over the affair in the very outset. Now, instead of a formal invitation, let us suppose one to such a dinner as the undermentioned, couched in these words:—"Can you dine with me to-morrow?—I shall have herrings, hashed mutton, and cranberry tart. My fishmonger sends me word herrings are just in perfection, and I have some delicious mutton, in hashing which I shall direct my cook to exercise all her art. I intend the party not to exceed six, and observe, we shall sit down to table at half-past seven. I am asking as follows."

Now I should greatly prefer such an invitation to a formal one in general terms, and I suppose most other people would do the same. It would show an intentness and right understanding on the matter in hand, from which the happiest results might be expected, and the guests would go filled with the most favourable predispositions, which is starting at an advantage ; for at parties in general, it requires some time before they can be raised to anything like the proper tone of fellowship. Such a style puts dinner-giving within almost everybody's reach, and would induce a constant flow of easy hospitality, instead of a system of formal parties, "few and far between." The same mode is equally desirable in invitations to simple dinners of the most costly or rarest dishes, and in some respects more so, as the anticipations would be more vivid. I have heard it frequently objected to the simple style, that some of the guests, when there is little or no choice, may not be able to make a dinner ; but this objection is entirely obviated by particularizing, as above, what the dinner is to consist of, and those whom it does not please, can then decline the invitation. A simple dinner, well served, to a party of a similarity of taste, cannot fail to have peculiar success ; it makes perfect the union. These snug little parties, I must confess, have very much the air of being confined to bachelor ones, but I think them equally applicable

to a mixture of the sexes. Ladies are very apt to suppose that men enjoy themselves the most when they are not present. They are in a great measure right, but for a wrong reason. It is not that men prefer their own to a mixture of female society, but that females delight in a number of observances, and in forms, upon some of which I have already touched, and upon a certain display and undeviating order, which conspire to destroy that enjoyment which they seem to think they are debarred from. The fault is their own. If they will study my doctrines, and fall a little into the herring-and-hashed-mutton system, they will soon find a difference in their favour. In their management of dinners, let them think only of what contributes to real enjoyment. Such a system will afford them plenty of scope for the display of their taste in realities, instead of in vanities, which have no charms for men in the article of conviviality. If they wish to witness anything like the enjoyment I have described to have taken place at my dinner in the Temple, they must adopt something of the same course to ensure it. Side-dishes, centre-pieces filled with flowers, and such encumbrances and impediments are fatal to it. They may make their election, but they cannot have both. I rather believe they think their system necessary to keep up a proper degree of respect to themselves, and that without it men would become too careless and

uncivilized; but this I apprehend to be a mistake. There may be well-regulated ease without running into disorder and brutality, and whatever facilitates the social intercourse between the sexes, will of course increase refinement on the part of the men. I think it would be a vast improvement in society if the practice of familiar dining were introduced—parties not exceeding eight, without the trouble of dressing, beyond being neat and clean, with simple repasts, costly or otherwise, according to the means or inclinations of the givers, and calculated to please the palate, and to promote sociability and health. I will explain myself further on this head in my next number, till which I must defer the consideration of my remaining topics on the art of dining.

1. Note to p. 47. DELICACIES.

[The late Mr. John Sheepshanks, who gave his pictures to the Nation, always took his visitors to see his *best* pictures first, when their powers of appreciation were freshest. The same principle applies to delicacies.—I must add here a principle of good taste urged by Dr. T. King Chambers. He says:—" The forms of animals—in fact, anything which makes us remember that the food has been a living animal at all, should never be conspicuously displayed (especially a sucking-pig; pheasants decorated with their feathers, and even a calf's head whole.—*Ed.*), but rather covered with such vegetable garnish as is capable of harmonizing with the character of the dish."—*Ed.*]

VIII.

AS the season for fires[1] is approaching, or rather, from the wet weather, is arrived, I must make an observation or two upon that important head. A cheerful fire is our household sun, which I, for one, like to have ever shining upon me, especially in the coming months of November and December, when the contrast between that and the external fogs and mud is most striking and agreeable. A good fire is the next best substitute for a summer sun, and, as our summer sun is none of the brightest, we are wise to make the most of its successor. An Englishman's fireside has, time out of mind, been proverbial;[1] and it shows something of a degenerate spirit not to keep up its glories. There is an unfortunate race, who labour under a constant pyrophobia, or dread of fire, and who cannot bear the sight of it, or even the feel, except from a distance, or through a screen (*v.* p. 71). When we have to do with such, we must compromise

as well as we can between comfort and consideration; but I am speaking to the real enjoyers of the goods of life, without any morbid infirmity about them. A bright, lively fire I reckon a most excellent dinner companion, and in proper fire weather I would always have it, if I may so say, one of the party. For instance, two or three at each side of the table, one at the top, and the fire at the bottom, with the lights on the mantelpiece; but then, to have this disposition in perfection, the room should be something after the plan I have recommended in the fourth chapter (*v.* p. 24). Under such circumstances, I think if Melancholy herself were one of the guests, she could not but forget her state. A fire is an auxiliary at dinner, which diffuses its genial influence, without causing distraction. As Shakespeare says of beauty, "it is the sun that maketh all things shine;" and as Dryden sings after Horace,

> "With well-heap'd logs dissolve the cold,
> And feed the genial hearth with fires;
> Produce the wine that makes us bold,
> And sprightly wit and love inspires."

It may be supposed, from the way in which the fire is ordinarily treated during dinner, that it was a disagreeable object, or a common enemy. One or more persons are made to turn their backs upon it, and in that position screens are obliged to be added to prevent fainting. This is a perverse mode of

proceeding, arising partly from the ill adaptation of dining-rooms to their use, partly from the custom of crowding tables, and partly from the risk of oppressiveness, where there are large numbers and overloaded dinners, so that in this, as in most instances, one abuse engenders another, and the expediency of adhering to a rational system is clearly manifested. We are the creatures of habit, and too seldom think of changing according to circumstances; it was but the other day I dined where the top of the table was unoccupied; but though the weather was cold and wet, the master of the house maintained his position at the bottom with his back to the fire, protected by a screen. If I could have wheeled him round, "the winter of my discontent" would have been made "glorious summer," and I should have dined with complete satisfaction.

The conservancy of fires[1] ought principally to fall within the superintendence of the female part of a family, because they are least seldom out of the way, and it is a subject of very great importance in the maintenance of domestic comfort, especially where the males, either from pleasure or business, are exposed to the vicissitudes of weather. Let any one call to mind the difference between two houses where good and bad fires are kept. To the labouring classes a good fire at meals is the greatest source of health and enjoyment; and at public-houses a

cheerful blaze seen through the windows, is a bait well understood to catch the labourer returning from his work to a comfortless home. If he once gets

> ——— "planted unco right,
> Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,"

there is no chance of his quitting, till, like Tam O'Shanter, he is compelled by necessity. The essential quality of a fire is to be bright without being too hot, and the best and quickest mode of restoring a neglected fire is to stir out the ashes, and with the tongs to fill up the spaces between the bars with cinders. If carefully done, it is surprising how soon this process will produce an effective and glowing fire.

Whilst I was writing the above, a friend of mine called to propose that we should dine together at the Athenæum, and he would send a brace of grouse he had just received. We dined very satisfactorily, but agreed that a perfect edition of our dinner would have been as follows:—First, a dozen and a half of small oysters, not pampered, but fresh from their native bed, eaten simply, after the French fashion, with lemon juice, to give an edge to the appetite. In about twenty minutes, the time necessary for dressing them, three fine flounders water-zoutcheed, with brown bread-and-butter—a dish which is better served at the Athenæum than anywhere I know. At a short interval after the flounders, the grouse,

not sent up together, but one after the other, hot and hot, like mutton chops, each accompanied by a plate of French beans. With the flounders half-a-pint of sherry, and with the grouse a bottle of genuine claret, which we get for three-and-sixpence a bottle; after which, a cup each of strong hot coffee. This is a style of dining, which made us think of the gorgeous, encumbered style with pity and contempt, and I give these particulars by way of study, and as a step towards emancipation. After my desultory manner I must here mention an instance of barbaric ornament I witnessed a short time since at a dinner which, substantially, was excellent. I had to carve a tongue, and found my operations somewhat impeded by a couple of ranunculuses stuck into it, sculptured, one in turnips, and the other in carrot. It was surrounded by a thin layer of spinach, studded with small stars, also cut in carrot. What have ranunculuses and stars to do with tongue and spinach? To my mind, if they had been on separate and neighbouring dishes, and unadorned, it would have been much more to the purpose.

At length I am come to the consideration of that important accompaniment to dinner—wine, in the management of which there is ordinarily a lamentable want of judgment, or rather a total absence of it. Besides an actual want of judgment, there is fre-

quently a parsimonious calculation on the one hand, or an ostentatious profusion and mixture on the other, both destructive, in their different ways, of true enjoyment. The art in using wine is to produce the greatest possible quantity of present gladness, without any future depression.[2] To this end, a certain degree of simplicity is essential, with due attention to seasons and kinds of food, and particularly to the rate of filling the glass. Too many sorts of wine confuse the palate and derange digestion. The stronger wines, unless very sparingly used, are apt to heat in hot weather, and the smaller kinds are unsatisfactory when it is cold. The rate at which to take wine is a matter of great nicety and importance, and depends upon different circumstances at different times. Care and observation can alone enable any one to succeed in this point. The same quantity of wine, drunk judiciously or injudiciously, will produce the best or the worst effects. Drinking too quick is much more to be avoided than drinking too slow. The former is positively, the latter negatively, evil. Drinking too quick confuses both the stomach and the brain; drinking too slow disappoints them. After long fasting, begin slowly and after a solid foundation, and quicken by degrees. After exhaustion from other causes than fasting, reverse this order. Small wines may be drunk with less caution as to rate than the fuller bodied. As soon as the

spirits are a little raised, slacken the pace, contrary to the usual practice, which is to quicken it. When the proper point of elevation is attained, so use the glass as just to keep there, whereby enjoyment is prolonged without alloy. The moment the palate begins to pall, leave off. Continuation after that will often produce a renewed desire, the gratification of which is pernicious. This state is rather an unfitness for leaving off than a fitness for going on. In respect to simplicity, I think four kinds of wine the very utmost ever to be taken at one time,[2] and with observance of what wines go well together; as sherry, champagne, port, and claret; but they should be drunk in uniform order, and not first one and then another, and then back again, which is a senseless and pernicious confusion. For my own part, I rather like one kind of wine at a time, or at most two; and I think more is lost than gained by variety. I should lay down the same rules as to wines, as I have already done as to meats; that is, simplicity on the same day, and variety on different days. Port only, taken with or without a little water, at dinner, is excellent; and the same of claret. I think, on ordinary occasions, such a system is by far the most agreeable. Claret, I mean genuine, undoctored claret, which, in my opinion, is the true taste, is particularly good as a dinner wine, and is now to be had at a very reasonable price. I would

not wish better than that given at the Athenæum at three-and-sixpence a bottle. Rhenish wines are very wholesome and agreeable, drunk simply without other wines: I do not think they harmonize well with champagne. As to seasons, the distinction is obvious that light wines are the best in summer; but then care should be taken, for the sake of health, that they are sound; and with much fruit, perhaps a little of stronger wine is advisable. In winter, generous wine is to be preferred, and it is a pleasant variety to have it occasionally spiced or mulled, especially in very dreary weather, or after severe exposure. In hot weather, beverages of various kinds, having wine for their foundation, and well iced, are very grateful. There is scarcely any luxury greater in summer than wine and water, cooled with a lump of ice put into it, though it is seldom practised in this country. In Italy, a plate of pure ice is regularly served during the hot season. In England, unfortunately, a great deal of money is wasted on excess, whilst simple luxuries are almost altogether neglected. The adaptation of wines to different kinds of food is a matter not to be neglected. The general rule is, to drink white wine with white meats, and red with brown, to which may be added, that light wines are most suitable to light dishes, or to the French style, and the stronger to substantial dishes, or the English style; but this latter rule has

many exceptions. I must not here pass over altogether the excellences of malt liquor, though it is rather difficult to unite the use of it judiciously with that of wine. When taken together, it should be in great moderation, but I rather prefer a malt-liquor day exclusively now and then, by way of variety, or to take it at luncheon. There is something extremely grateful in the very best table beer, and it is to be lamented it is so rarely to be met with in the perfection of which it is capable.[3] That beverage at dinner, and two or three glasses of first-rate ale after, constitute a real luxury, and I believe are a most wholesome variety. Good porter needs no praise, and bottled porter iced, is, in hot weather, most refreshing. Cider cup, lemonade, and iced punch in summer, and hot in winter, are all worthy of their turns; but I do not think their turns come as often as they ought to do. We go on in the beaten track, without profiting by the varieties which are to be found on every side.

What I have hitherto said has been with a view principally to individual guidance in the use of wine, though much of it may be applied to the management of parties. In the management of parties, so far as relates to wine, judgment, liberality, attention, and courage, are necessary; and calculation, inattention, ostentation, profusion, and excess, are the vices to be guarded against. I always take for granted, that whatever wine is produced, it is to be

good of its kind. Judgment is necessary in knowing what wines are suitable to the season, the food, and the description of guests; in what order to serve them, at what rate to drink, and when to stop. Liberality is necessary to furnish promptly and cheerfully the requisite supply; attention is necessary to execute what the judgment suggests; and courage is necessary to keep the erring, either from ignorance or refractoriness, in the right path, and to stop at the right point. The master of a feast should be master in deed as well as in name, and on his judicious and confident control depends for the most part real convivial enjoyment; but he should govern rather by imperceptible influence than by any outward demonstration, or appearance of interference. He should set the wine in circulation at the earliest fitting moment, for want of attention to which there is often a flagging at the outset. He should go on rather briskly at first, and should then contrive to regulate its pace according to the spirits of the party. He should cause the wines to be served in their proper order, and should preserve that order as much as in him lies, both by his own example, and by good-humoured recommendation. He should let his guests know what he intends, so that they may have an opportunity of regulating themselves accordingly; as, if he thinks proper to produce only a certain quantity of any particular

wine, he should say so. Uncertainty is fatal to convivial ease, and the re-introduction of any kind of wine, after other wines have intervened, is specially to be avoided. This error arises either from want of courage in allowing a violation of propriety, or from a calculation that there would be enough, when there turns out not to be enough, and then hesitating to supply the deficiency at the proper moment. He should be liberal as long as liberality is beneficial, and as soon as he perceives that the proper point to stop at is arrived, he should fearlessly act upon his perception. There is a liberal, hearty manner, which prevents suspicion, and enables the possessor to exercise his judgment not only without offence, but with approbation. Calculation, however studiously concealed, sheds a baneful influence over conviviality, which nothing can counteract. Inattention causes things either to go on wrong, or not to go on at all. Ostentation excites disgust or contempt, and destroys enjoyment for the sake of display, by introducing variety without reference to reason. Profusion produces the same effect from ignorance or mistaken liberality. There may be excess without variety, though it is not so probable. It is much more often the result of want of courage in the master of the feast, than of inclination on the part of the guests, and good government in the beginning is the surest guarantee of a temperate

termination. In what I have said, I have supposed the giver of an entertainment to have means at his command; but where it is not so, the plainest wines, provided they are sound, and are heartily and judiciously given according to the rules I have laid down, cannot fail to give satisfaction to the reasonable, and more satisfaction too than the most costly, with the many drawbacks which usually accompany them. They are for the most part exposed to the same fate that I have already described to await delicacies in food; that is, they are so mixed up and encumbered with other things as to be deprived of their relish, and reduced to the level of their inferiors, or even below. It is to be wished that those who are not in the way of giving costly wines would never attempt it; because they are only putting themselves to inconvenience, and their guests to greater. It is a very serious tax upon one's palate and veracity to be obliged to drink and pronounce upon compounds with names to which they have not the most remote pretension. What I have said heretofore about dinners applies equally to wines. Let people keep to their own proper style, and endeavour to excel in what is within their ordinary reach. A little extra attention and a little extra expense are then productive of satisfactory results, and they are sure to please others without any sacrifice of what is due to themselves. I have yet to make some particular observations on the use of

champagne, which I must defer, with two or three other topics, to my next number.

1. Note to pp. 59-61. FIRES.

[The art of heating houses and large spaces is progressing; but is still far from perfect. Wherever there is a supply of hot water from a kitchen range, besides giving hot water for the bath high up in the house, it might be so arranged as to give a temperature of about 65° throughout the house without cost in the winter. An example may be seen in Philbeach Gardens, S.W. Many ingenious and beautiful stoves in earthenware which economize heat and give open fireplaces, are beginning to be used, and the columns of the "Builder" make known where they can be obtained.—*Ed.*]

2. Note to pp. 64-65. WINE.

[These rules are excellent. I object to four kinds of wine at one dinner as a general practice, and I object to those named, which are old fashioned; new wines and new fashions have arisen in the last thirty years. With oysters take *Chablis* or *Sauterne*. After soup take a light *Sherry* of the Manzanilla kind, such as the "Sutherland" Sherry, which Mr. George Greig, India Buildings, Edinburgh, supplies privately at £10 the quarter-cask, costing only about twenty shillings a dozen when bottled! It will not give or increase the gout. Then let a fine Claret follow with the joints, and good Champagne close the dinner and dessert. Take no other wines, and all these in moderation, and then there will be no "future depression" but present gladness. Many kinds of good German, Hungarian, and even Colonial light wholesome wines have come into use since 1835.—*Ed.*]

3. Note to p. 67. BEER.

[A great change has taken place in the last fifty years in the home production of various kinds of beer, and the foreign importation of beer, through the International Exhibitions. Vienna beer, iced, is fascinating for a summer beverage– better, I think, for youth than old age. As a rule don't drink beer and wine at the same meal, especially the fine strong Burton Ales and London or Dublin Stouts, excellent at luncheons; such ambrosial ale of twenty years' brew, like nectar, which the late Mr. H. Drummond used to produce at Albury, is almost a relic of the past now, except at Oxford or Cambridge, where sage conservatism preserves it.—*Ed.*]

IX.

I CONCLUDED the article on the "Art of Dining" in my last number with promising to make some observations on the use of champagne. Of whatever materials composed, I never knew a party that could be said to go off ill where there was a judiciously liberal supply of good champagne. I say judiciously liberal, because there may be too much as well as too little, though the error, comparatively speaking, is seldom on the side of excess; but I have seen, when a party has been raised to what I call the champagne point of conviviality, that an extra quantity has caused a retrograde movement, by clogging the digestive powers. In this, as in all other matters relating to the table, but here especially, much must depend upon the eye, the judgment, and the resolution of the master. He must have liberality to give, attention and skill to regulate, and courage to stop. There are two

classes of dinner-givers, to whom I do not address myself on this subject, because I know it would be in vain. The first is that class who began their career and had their habits formed during the war, when champagne was double the price it is now. They gave it then like drops of blood, and I have never yet seen an instance of liberalization. The second class is that who merely give it as a part of their state, and deal it out to the state prisoners round their table only to tantalize them. I have no hope, then, of producing any effect except upon those who date their assumption of table government on this side the battle of Waterloo, and who have or are capable of acquiring the same contempt of show that I myself have.

To give champagne fair play it ought to be produced at the very beginning of dinner, or at any rate after one glass of sherry or madeira. Any other wines rather unfit the palate for it. The usual mode is, as with other delicacies, to produce it after the appetite is somewhat palled, and I have often thought it particularly ungallant and ungracious, where there are ladies, to keep it back till a late period of dinner, and such a practice often presents an absurd contrast of calculation and display. According to my doctrines, the champagne should be placed upon the table, so that all may take what they like, when they like, till the presiding genius

pronounces in his own mind that there has been enough, which is not difficult to a practised eye. This supposes a supply at discretion up to the champagne point, which is very agreeable on particular occasions, or now and then without any particular occasion, but would not be convenient to most people, or even desirable, if convenient. I am far from objecting to a limited supply, even the most limited—that is, one glass round; but I do object to the period when it is usually served, and to the uncertainty with which it is served. Where it is handed round, and meant to be so only once, twice, or any greater fixed number of times, to which limits there can be no objection, the rule I would lay down is, that it should be handed round after the first glass of sherry, and if more than once, without any other wine between, and that it should be contrived to notify beforehand what the supply will be. It might be thought rather awkward to make the communication. That, I think, would depend on custom and tact. I am sure I should have no hesitation in making it, and, at any rate, the awkward effects often arising from uncertainty would be much greater. What can exceed the awkwardness of two persons who are going to take wine together beating about the bush to get each the other to propose champagne—a scene I have frequently witnessed between the best

bred people? What can exceed the awkwardness of asking for it when there is no more, or of waiting till a fresh supply is brought, contrary to the original intention? All these awkwardnesses are the consequences of uncertainty, and are much at variance with the ease that is essential to conviviality. An annunciation that there is champagne without limit, or that it will be handed round once or twice, or oftener, saves these embarrassments. If it is placed upon the table, I would make a similar annunciation, as indeed I always do, that there is to be one bottle or two, or more, or at discretion. Then people know what they are about, and are at their ease, for want of which there is no compensation. By means of previous annunciation, even the entertainers of the old school, and the men of state, might make their calculation available to a satisfactory purpose. The advantages of giving champagne, with whatever limit, at the beginning of dinner, are these: that it has the greatest relish, that its exhilarating quality serves to start the guests, after which they seldom flag, and that it disposes people to take less of other wines after, which is a relative and sometimes even an absolute, saving to the pocket of the host, and it is undoubtedly a saving to the constitutions of his guests. With wines, as with meats, serving the most delicate first, diminishes consumption,—a desirable effect in all respects. I know

that a couple of glasses round of champagne at the beginning of dinner will cause a less consumption, and with better effect than the same quantity, or more, at a later period; and where there are ladies, the portion they choose to take is most grateful to them upon this plan, and often the only wine they wish to accept. At the present price of champagne, if it is judiciously given, I believe it is on many occasions little or no additional expense, and its effect is always contributive of exhilaration. By promoting exhilaration it promotes digestion, and by diminishing the consumption of other and perhaps stronger wines is consequently favourable to health. No other wine produces an equal effect in increasing the success of a party; and a judicious champagne-giver is sure to win the goodwill and respect even of those who can command it at pleasure, because a great deal depends upon the mode of dispensing it. If it is handed round often, it should not be handed round quick, at least after the second glass, but at such intervals as the host points out. If it is placed upon the table within every one's reach, his nicely regulating power is necessary to give it sufficient, but to restrain over-circulation. As the only anxiety of many, who give parties regardless of expense, is that they should go off well, I must repeat that they cannot fail, if there is a liberal supply of good champagne, heartily given. Of course there will

be various degrees of success depending upon various circumstances, but champagne can always turn the balance to the favourable side, and heartiness in giving will compensate for many defects in other particulars. I must here add, that in little *fêtes champêtres* champagne has great efficacy, and is a specific against that want of spirit that not unfrequently occurs; also on any convivial occasion, where there is an absence of something desirable in the way of comfort or convenience, or where any disappointment has happened, champagne is the most powerful auxiliary in remedying the omission, and making it forgotten. In short, where champagne goes right, nothing can well go wrong. I think it quite a waste to produce it unless it is iced, or at least of the temperature of cold spring water, and in hot weather its coldness is one of its most effective qualities. The less it is mixed with other wines the better it agrees with any one, and the objectionable effects attributed to it are often in reality the result of too much combination with other liquids. Taken simply and in due quantity, I think there are few constitutions to which it would not be beneficial, and I have frequently seen invalids who I have thought would have been all the better for an alterative course of it.

With respect to the kind of champagne to be preferred, that depends, I think, upon the occasion.

The kind I have been alluding to throughout this article is the sparkling. I know many people affect to hold it in utter contempt in comparison with the still; but I suspect not a few of them do so to show their grandeur and their learning, rather than from their real taste. Undoubtedly still champagne, generally speaking, is a higher class of wine, and in a more perfect state than the sparkling; but it is almost as difficult to compare the two, as it would be to compare champagne with port. Still champagne is suitable to a grave party, talking over matters of state. But the sparkling is much better adapted to give brilliancy and joyousness, and for that purpose I believe would be preferred by almost everybody. Its very appearance is inspiring. In wines there is about the same difference between these two, that in poetry exists between "Paradise Lost" and "The Rape of the Lock." When sparkling champagne is opened the cork should not fly out as from a bottle of soda-water; when it does, it marks that the wine is in too crude a state, and has not been sufficiently fermented. I think its good qualities are the most effective when it is somewhat more active than merely creaming; when it has a certain liveliness, combined with flavour and coldness, which makes it, according to my taste, delightfully grateful. I believe I am now come to the end of the observations I had to make upon the use of champagne. I will here

supply a slight omission in the proper place on the subject of desserts. I have stated that I was no great friend to them, but I must mention that the most eligible mode I ever saw of serving them was by grouping the fruit upon a low wooden plateau, which was placed in the middle of the table. It was the least trouble in setting on, it left the greatest space, and had the richest and most tasteful appearance. I doubt whether after dinner is a proper time to serve ice, that is, if dinners are arranged, as I have recommended in a former number, according to the season. I am rather inclined to think that ice would be better alone, and later in the evening. It certainly spoils the palate for a time for wine, and is principally grateful, before the dessert, in counteracting the heating and oppressive effects of overgrown repasts.

My next topic is the means of limiting dinners to small parties, and the effect of such limit on carrying on society in the most convenient and agreeable manner. The apparent impediments to small parties are large families and numerous acquaintance. I shall here assume that small parties are the most desirable if attainable, and that the system I advocate of moderate repasts, whether simple as to the number of dishes, or varied, and totally free from state and ostentation, is the best. In such a system the trouble of cooking and serving

would be much less than in the present mode of entertaining company, and the whole business less complicated and anxious, and, as far as acquaintance are concerned, one party might be divided into two without any increase of household care, but the reverse. If it is considered necessary to have a numerous company on the same day, I should think it advisable to divide them into two or more tables; because, as it is impossible there should be an unity of party at a table above a certain size, there is the best chance of it by such divisions as may each secure an unity. By an unity I mean where there is general conversation only, instead of particular or partial. It is absurd to call that one party which is broken into many, but which sits at one table. Sociability would be much promoted by at once forming it into divisions at different tables.[1] I have heard of this being practised at ball-suppers with the greatest success, and I do not see why there should not be equal success at dinners. It is always to be borne in mind that setting out a dinner-table is a far less operose business, according to my doctrines, than according to prevailing custom, and that setting out and serving two tables for eight persons each, would not be so much trouble as it now is to set out and serve one table for sixteen; whereas, in the former case, there would be two agreeable parties, instead of one dull one in the latter. The same principle applies

most strongly where there is a large family. Division of tables on occasion of entertaining company would then in my opinion be particularly convenient and advantageous; and I should think that often dinners at different hours of the day, according to the avocations or inclinations of a large family, and their intimacies, would greatly promote its well-being. It might suit some to dine at one hour and some at another, and to entertain their particular friends in an easy way, with a reunion of the whole in the evening, when numbers may meet advantageously. A free, simple style of living would admit of this without difficulty. Suppose, for instance, one part of a large family dining at four o'clock, with or without any strangers, and another at seven, according to their previous arrangements, and all meeting in the drawing-room, or disposing of themselves according to their different pursuits. One of the great advantages of a simple, stateless style of living is, that it admits of so much liberty in various ways, and allows of many enjoyments which the cumbrous style totally prevents. I think it would be the perfection of society if there were a constant current of small dinner-parties for the purpose of enjoyment only, and a general mixing up on easy terms in the evening, according to each person's circle of acquaintance. I have heard people say that they have tried to get evening society, accord-

ing to the French manner of droppers-in, but that they have never been able to succeed. The truth is, that no individual, or small number of individuals, will ever make such a plan succeed for long together. It must be the general custom in order to have permanent and complete success. I have frequented houses in that way at times, but always found it more irksome than agreeable, simply from the uncertainty of finding the inmates at home, and the repeated disappointments of finding them out. These objections would vanish if the custom of receiving in an evening were general, because if one family was not at home, another would be, and a person in search of society would be sure to find it somewhere, instead of returning unsuccessful. It is an annoyance to prepare, and make up one's mind, for society, and then not to meet with it. The temptation to remain at home is too strong to venture upon a speculation, where there are so many chances against success. But if any one had a number of acquaintances in the same quarter, who received in an evening, an inclination for society might always be gratified with sufficient certainty to induce the attempt. Some visible sign, indicating whether they received at any house on any given evening, or whether the number was full, would save trouble to visitors, and would ensure complete privacy, whenever desired, or society to the extent

desired, and not beyond. It would be a great improvement in the world, and a great advantage to the rich, if they would spend that portion of their means, which they dedicate to social intercourse, in procuring real enjoyment for their visitants, rather than in that state and display, for which no reasonable person cares, or which, it may be more truly said, every reasonable person dislikes and despises. If, for instance, a rich man were to give simply excellent dinners, and provide his guests with accommodation at places of public amusement,[2] he would give them more satisfaction than by inviting them to the most sumptuous entertainments, and would most likely much increase his own enjoyment. Such a practice would tend greatly to improve public amusements, and would add to their interest by giving brilliancy to the scene. There are many ways in which those who have a command of means, have opportunities of rendering social intercourse with them peculiarly advantageous and interesting to persons of smaller fortunes; but as it is, in general, the richer the host the duller the entertainment, principally because expense is lavished in the wrong direction, without taste, or invention, or rational end.

In order to make a dinner go off well, a good deal often depends upon the giver's mode of receiving his company. In the first place, he should always be

ready ; he should receive cordially, so as to let his guests feel inspired by an air of welcome ; and he should set them well off together by the introduction of suitable topics. It is usually seen that the host receives his guests almost as if they were strangers to him, and, after a word or two, leaves them to manage for themselves as well as they can, by wandering about, or turning over books, or some resource of that sort, if they happen not to be well known to some of the company ; and even persons who are in the habit of meeting, often seem to be actuated by a feeling of mutual reserve, for want of being well started by the host. It frequently requires some time after the dinner has commenced, to take off the chill of the first assembling, and in respect to individuals, it sometimes never is taken off during the whole party. During dinner it is expedient for the head of the feast to keep his eye upon everything around him, and not to occupy himself exclusively, as many do, with those immediately near, or, what is worse, to sink into fits of abstraction or anxiety. The alacrity and general attention of the host furnish the spring from which the guests usually take their tone, and where they are not well known to each other, it is good to address each frequently by name, and to mention subjects on which they have some common interest. There is also much tact required in calling into play diffident or

reserved merit, and in preventing too much individual monopoly of conversation, however good. In order to have perfect success, the guests must be capable of being well mixed up together, and the host must be capable of mixing them, which unfortunately few are ; but many are much more capable than they appear to be, if they would turn their attention to the subject. These latter observations are more applicable to large parties than to small ones, but they do apply to both.

I have now come to the conclusion of what occurs to me on the subject of " Aristology, or the Art of Dining and giving dinners," which subject the reader will perceive I have treated in the most familiar, and perhaps in too careless a way. I have written off-hand, as matter suggested itself from the stores of experience. I have always advanced what I thought to be right, without the slightest fear of being sometimes wrong; and I have given myself no thought as to exposure to ridicule, or anything else. My object is in this, as in every other subject on which I touch, to set my readers to think in the right track, and to direct them in their way as well as I can. I consider what I have said on the " Art of Dining " to be a part of my observations on the " Art of Health."

1. Note to p. 80. Arrangement of Table.

[The table or tables must be arranged according to the size of the room and the nature of the banquet. The introduction of speeches and the acoustic properties of the room also govern the local arrangements of the tables. For a social party of about twenty, perhaps one round table answers the best. When the guests number more than that number, separate round tables for parties of ten combine the advantages of sociality with state effect.

[Such an arrangement of such tables, displaying high taste and simplicity, excellence in the cookery, a limited but sufficient variety of dishes, inspiring confidence in eating all, fine wines appropriate to each dish, make a whole of refined enjoyment in perfection which is not to be seen in many mansions. A triumphant example of such success is given by an English nobleman standing in the first rank of European diplomatists, who unites to a high culture common to his order, and pre-eminent in himself, the keenest appreciation of the value of the industrial arts and commerce, and friendship with those engaged in them. He divides his guests into parties of ten or so, at each of which may be found a ducal president. Every one selects the table he has a fancy for. And if men only are present, cigars conclude the banquet.

[A banquet of three hundred or more guests demands the powers of a first-rate general to ensure its success and make it enjoyable rather than dull and tedious. The attendance requires especial care and previous drill. An essential point is that every one should have an equally good dinner and choice of the same dishes, few rather than numerous, and scientifically contrasted and equally well cooked. Suitable wines should be within the reach of every one. A trumpet should herald each toast rather than an auctioneer's hammer, and I prefer instrumental to vocal music, which stops conversation and exacts silence on all. See my letter on City dinners (p. 88).—*Ed.*]

2. Note to p. 83. Amusement.

[After a dinner the suggestion that the host should take his guests,

when not too many, to the opera or theatre is excellent. It is a fashion not uncommon on the Continent, but little known in England. Ten seats previously bespoken and carriages ready would be a great improvement over a long dawdle at the wine, besides being much more healthy to the guests and economical to the host.—*Ed.*]

APPENDIX A.

THE LORD MAYOR'S DINNERS.

THE following letter was addressed to the editor of the "Times," and published 19th Oct., 1864, and the remarks made, apply some of the sound principles laid down in Walker's "Art of Dining."

"SIR,

"You recently announced that a City Committee had been appointed to superintend the coming feast of the Lord Mayor's induction to office. I should like to suggest to this Committee the idea that these Corporation dinners require a reform, are really very bad, and not creditable to the wealth of the City, whilst they do not gratify the majority of the visitors who eat them. A fine illuminated *menu* is placed before each guest, but it is notorious that, after serving the turtle soup, it is a mere scramble to get anything else named on the *carte*.[1] I once had to dine off green peas only, although tempted with a long list of all sorts of things which it was impossible to obtain. Nothing could I get but peas, while I appealed in vain to every waiter who came within reach.[2] The way in which public

[1] Unless you sit at the head table.

[2] The waiters are not properly drilled and kept to their respective

dinners are given at the Hôtel de Ville at Paris offers some useful suggestions to any valiant reformer in the City. On one occasion,[1] when I dined with 600 people at the Hôtel de Ville, every guest obtained a first-rate dinner, of excellent quality and variety, and admirably served. And the method of it was this:—A complete dinner of soups, fish, *entrées*, *pièces de resistance*, game, &c., was provided for *eight* persons. The dishes were admirably contrasted with each other. The wines were appropriate to each course. I counted that my glass was changed sixteen times. There were four waiters to every eight persons, who attended to them, and no others. This dinner for eight was perfect, and the secret of giving every other person of the company the same advantages simply consisted in repeating the same perfect dinner as many times over as there were parties of eight to be provided for. I advise the City Committee for the next Lord Mayor's Day to follow this example.[2] Let them provide for a party of eight persons, the two turtle and another (say white) soup, the turbot and another fish, two *entrées*, the venison and roast beef, the sweets and the ices. Let them avoid

districts. They should be marshalled with discipline as strict as that of a regiment, and the comfort of visitors would be greatly promoted. A hint for bringing in the viands might be taken from the great Swiss inns—where the dishes are handed from waiter to waiter, each standing still, and so the rushing about of waiters in fetching and carrying, is avoided.

[1] 1 Aug., 1851, when the municipality of Paris invited the Lord Mayor and London corporate authorities, the British Commissioners, Jury, Committees, and Exhibitors of the Great Exhibition to a week's *fête* at Paris, and Earl Granville made a brilliant speech in French like a native.

[2] Arrange the tables as may be thought best. An experiment of numerous tables to hold eight persons is worth a trial.

the riot and uncertainty of a hundred other dishes named in a *menu*, and stick to these, and then multiply the fixed dishes by the parties of eight invited. Instead of placing before every one a bottle of burning sherry, and handing round only disturbing champagne, let them select a glass of appropriate wine to go with each dish, and offer it to the guest following each dish. Let them insist that each set of waiters attend only to their own party of eight, and not wander off to distant Common Councilmen with the prime cuts of turbot and venison. By following this simple method they may inaugurate an epoch of reform in civic dinners, which is extremely needed.

"Your faithful servant,

"FELIX SUMMERLY."

APPENDIX B.

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF THE SCIENCE.

From "Gastronomy as a Fine Art," translated from "Physiologie du Goût" of Brillat Savarin, by R. E. Anderson, M.A.

"I.

BUT for life the universe were nothing, and all that has life requires nourishment.

"II. Animals feed, man eats; the man of sense and culture alone understands eating.

"III. The fate of nations depends upon how they are fed.

"IV. Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are.

"V. In compelling man to eat that he may live, Nature gives appetite to invite him, and pleasure to reward him.

"VI. Good living is due to that action of the judgment by which the things which please our taste are preferred to all others.

"VII. The pleasures of the table are common to all ages and ranks, to all countries and times; they not only harmonize with all the other pleasures, but remain to console us for their loss.

"VIII. It is only at table that a man never feels bored during the first hour.

"IX. The discovery of a new dish does more for the happiness of the human race than the discovery of a planet.

"X. A drunkard knows not how to drink, and he who eats too much, or too quickly, knows not how to eat.

"XI. In eating, the order is from the more substantial to the lighter.

"XII. In drinking, the order is from the milder to that which is stronger and of finer flavour.

"XIII. To maintain that a man must not change his wine is a heresy: the palate becomes cloyed, and, after three or four glasses, it is but a deadened sensation that even the best wine provokes.

"XIV. A last course at dinner, wanting cheese, is like a pretty woman with only one eye.

"XV. Cookery is an art, but to roast requires genius.

"XVI. In a cook, the most essential quality is punctuality; it should be also that of the guest.

"XVII. It is a breach of politeness towards those guests who are punctual when they are kept long waiting for one who is late.

"XVIII. He who receives friends without himself bestowing some pains upon the repast prepared for them, does not deserve to have friends.

"XIX. As the coffee after dinner is the special care of the lady of the house, so the host must see that the liqueurs are the choicest possible.

"XX. To receive any one as our guest is to become responsible for his happiness during the whole of the time he is under our roof."

APPENDIX C.

From Murray's "Art of Dining."

"1.

LET not the number of the company exceed twelve, that the conversation may be constantly general.

"2. Let them be so selected that their occupations shall be varied, their tastes analogous, and with such points of contact that there shall be no necessity for the odious formality of presentations.

"3. Let the eating-room be luxuriously lighted, the cloth remarkably clean, and the atmosphere at the temperature of from thirteen to sixteen degrees of Réaumur.

"4. Let the men be *spirituels* without pretension—the women pleasant without too much coquetry. [Hard to accomplish.—*Ed.*]

"5. Let the dishes be exceedingly choice, but limited in number, and the wines of the first quality, each in its degree.

"6. Let the order of progression be, for the first (the dishes), from the most substantial to the lightest; and for the second (the wines), from the simplest to the most perfumed [rather opposed to Walker's ideas].

"7. Let the act of consumption be deliberate, the dinner being the last business of the day; and let the guests con-

sider themselves as travellers who are to arrive together at the same place of destination.

" 8. Let the coffee be hot, and the liqueurs chosen by the master.

" 9. Let the saloon be large enough to admit of a game of cards for those who cannot do without it, and so that there may notwithstanding remain space for post-meridian colloquy.

" 10. Let the party be detained by the charms of society, and animated by the hope that the evening will not pass without some ulterior enjoyment [Walker suggested adjourning to the theatre or opera I think].

" 11. Let the tea be not too strong; let the toast be scientifically buttered, and the punch carefully prepared.

" 12. Let not the retreat commence before eleven, but let everybody be in bed by twelve.

" If any one has been present at a party uniting these twelve requisites, he may boast of having been present at his own apotheosis."

APPENDIX D.

Publications on Dining, &c., recommended by the Editor as well worthy of study.

I.

FOOD AND FEEDING, by Sir Henry Thompson, F.R.C.S., &c., with an Appendix. London: F. Warne and Co. Crown 8vo, pp. 407. Price 2*s.* 6*d.* [Very readable and most instructive.]

II.

HOST AND GUEST, by A. V. Kirwan, of the Middle Temple, Esq. London: Bell and Daldy, York Street, Covent Garden. Price 10*s.* 6*d.* [Full of curious historical information, but out of print.]

III.

GASTRONOMY AS A FINE ART. A translation of the "Physiologie du Goût" of Brillat Savarin, by R. E. Anderson, M.A. A new edition. London: Chatto and Windus, Piccadilly. Crown 8vo, pp. 280. Price 2*s.* 6*d.* [An indispensable book to the dinner student.]

IV.

LITTLE DINNERS: HOW TO SERVE THEM WITH ELEGANCE AND ECONOMY, by Mary Hooper, Professor of Domestic Economy, Crystal Palace School of Art, &c. 14th edition. London;

C. Kegan Paul and Co. 8vo, pp. 265. Price 5*s*. [Suggestive for moderate households, and practical.]

V.

KETTNER'S BOOK OF THE TABLE. A manual of Cookery—practical, theoretical, historical. London: Dulau and Co., Soho Square. 1877. Crown 8vo, pp. 500. Price 1*s*. [Justly critical by one who has had practical experience; and it is amusing too.]

VI.

THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK FOR THE NATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR COOKERY. Containing the Lessons on Cookery which constitute the ordinary course of instruction in the school, with lists of utensils necessary, and lessons on cleaning utensils. Compiled by R. O. C. from the course of practice in the National Training School. Sixth thousand. London: Chapman and Hall (Limited), 193, Piccadilly. 1881. 8vo, pp. 463. Price 8*s*. [This work is especially for the use of the teacher. The rules are so precise and detailed, that anyone who can read, and is handy, practical and obedient, may cook by its directions.]

VII.

Preparing for publication.

THE TEXT BOOK FOR EXAMINATIONS IN FOOD AND COOKERY, prescribed by the Education Code to be part of Domestic Economy, and to be taught to Girls in Public Elementary Schools: being a Companion to the Handbook for the National Training School for Cookery. Compiled from authorities with questions and answers by L. M. C. London: George Bell and Sons, York Street, Covent Garden. 1881.

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