

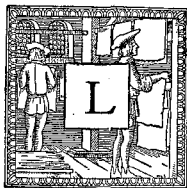
pects of our life, the imagination to create large and lasting characters, the technical training and the critical application to develop a mastery of structure, and the serious literary purpose to achieve an enduring ideal of writing. Thus succinctly stated in summary, this criticism seems an excessively severe arraignment of the work of our younger playwrights. We must hasten, therefore, to remember that each of them has been free of many of the faults which have been enumerated as prevalent among the group considered as a whole, and that most of them at moments have risen superior even to the merits that have been indicated as characteristic of them all.

And if our rising playwrights have not yet developed a national drama that is worthy of the name, we must remember also that the outlook for the future—even for the immediate future—is very hopeful. There is an opinion prevalent at present among the dramatists and the dramatic critics in London that the next great development of drama in the English language will take place in America rather than in England. The opinion is based on the almost unlimited opportunities offered to new playwrights by the multiplicity of our theatres, on the high

degree of education and intelligence that is common to our audiences throughout the country, and on the inexhaustible richness of our national life in themes hitherto unexploited on the stage. This is a fair statement of the opportunity that stands before us, and of which we have not yet availed ourselves. We have not written nearly enough good plays to fill our thousands and thousands of theatres; we have written down to our audiences instead of up to them; and the great themes that lie latent in our national life we have scarcely touched at all. Yet there is real promise in such plays as *The Great Divide* and *Paid in Full*, *The Fortune Hunter* and *The Fourth Estate*, *The Nigger* and *A Woman's Way*, Miss Marion Fairfax's *The Builders* and Mr. Avery Hopwood's *This Woman and This Man*. Some of the playwrights now before us may develop the technical mastery and the penetrant vision, the high seriousness and the imagination, the art and the message, that must go to the making of the next American dramatist; and if not, others surely will arise. The conditions are ripe, and all that is needed is the men; and it is one of the miracles of destiny that when great work is ready to be done, the necessary men arise to do it.

THE MENU IN MODERN FICTION

BY EDNA KENTON



LIKE clothes, food in fiction is valuable for atmosphere, colour, tone—the touch that makes the page alive. It may also aid greatly in the interpretation of life. Never was a more illuminating line penned than the one given to Lord Steyne when the rascally old nobleman said to Becky, plotting for the Gaunt House cook's transference to her own little home in Curzon Street: "Gad, I dined with the king yesterday, and we had neck of mutton and turnips." The serving of meals, the tinkling of ice in tall glasses, the chill of

salads, and the savour of roasts and entrées, as well as the listed courses themselves, may, like clothes, come to give less of colour than of philosophy. If it be true, and modern dieticians assert it, that man is what his food is, the matter of menus in the developing of character may well become of prime importance in fiction.

There is a recent novel, *The History of Mr. Polly*, whose author, H. G. Wells, seems to have felt this deep, peptic truth. In the second paragraph of the first chapter he strikes the keynote of Mr. Polly's predestined career: "He was sitting on a stile between two threadbare-looking

fields, and suffering acutely from indigestion. He suffered from indigestion now nearly every afternoon of his life, but as he lacked introspection, he projected the associated discomfort upon the world." This is what he had just eaten:

Cold pork from Sunday and some nice cold potatoes, and Rashdell's Mixed Pickles, of which he was inordinately fond. He had eaten three gherkins, two onions, a small cauliflower head and several capers. And then there had been cold suet pudding to follow, with treacle, and then a nice bit of cheese; it was the pale, hard sort of cheese he liked; red cheese he declared was indigestible. He had also had three big slices of greyish baker's bread, and had drunk the best part of a jugful of beer. And Mr. Polly sat on the stile and hated the whole scheme of life—which was at once excessive and inadequate as a solution. He hated Foxbourne, he hated Foxbourne High Street, he hated his shop and his wife and his neighbours—every blessed neighbour—and with indescribable bitterness he hated himself.

Before his marriage Mr. Polly had feasted upon "cold beef and pickles or fried ham and eggs, two pints of beer and two bottles of ginger beer." When he went back to attend his father's funeral, he ate "a simple supper of ham and bread and cheese and pickles and cold apple tart and small beer." For the funeral dinner there were: "two large cold-boiled chickens and a nice piece of ham, some brawn and a steak and kidney pie, a large bowl of salad and several sorts of pickles, and afterward came cold apple tart, jam roll and a good piece of Stilton cheese, lots of bottled beer, some lemonade for the ladies, and milk for Master Punt; a very bright and satisfying meal."

After this the wedding feast, which, like the funeral dinner, included ham and steak and kidney pie; then years of Miriam's cooking, of breakfasts "with an egg underdone or overdone, or a herring raw or charred, and coffee made Miriam's way and full of little particles." At last Mr. Polly was "less like a human being than a civil war. His system, like a confused or ill-governed democracy, had been brought to a stage of perfect clamour and disorder, demanding now evil and in-

scrutable internal satisfactions, such as pickles and vinegar and the cracklings on pork, and now vindictive and external expression, war and bloodshed throughout the world." Fire and bloodshed followed. Mr. Polly broke the entire decalogue, undetected, coldly exultant. Why? Ask dieticians and Mr. Wells.

Another author whose employment of foodstuffs seems philosophically premeditated rather than incidental is John Galsworthy. In *Fraternity*, there is a butler in Cecilia's home who amounts to nothing until interpreted as he plies the carving knife. As witness:

So Stephen and Cecilia sat down and their butler brought in the bird. It was a nice one, nourished down in Surrey, and as he cut it into portions the butler's soul turned sick within him—not because he wanted some himself, or was a vegetarian, or for any sort of principle, but because he was by natural gifts an engineer and deadly tired of cutting up and handing birds to other people and watching while they ate them.

Old Mr. Stone, that faithful Brother to Life, wanders through strange pages, sustained by hot milk, cocoa, and vegetables. He is an unexpected dinner guest at Cecilia's, and his daughter groans over the main dish, filet of beef, when she realises her father is to be present. It is sure to bring out the dreaded philosophy of the old man, whose words of Universal Brotherhood are sounding brass in the ears of his descendants. He is served to new potatoes creamed, and to beans, but between beans and beef, potatoes and poulet, he traces the analogy of endless relationship. It sounds like rambling insanity, of course, and it is hideously pathetic.

In *The Man of Property* there is a little dinner for four, of which Mr. and Mrs. Soames, June and Bosinney partake immediately after some startling discoveries on both sides. For several pages the dinner is served, in elaborate courses and silence. There is soup, "excellent, if a little thick"; fish—fresh sole from Dover; champagne; cutlets, each pink-frilled about the legs; spring chicken, asparagus salad; apple charlotte, sherry very dry; olives from France; Russian caviar; German plums; Egyptian cigarettes; Turkish coffee; and brandy pale and old. There

is also an evening at Richmond, where: "The feature of the feast was unquestionably the red mullet. This delectable fish, brought for a considerable distance in a state of almost perfect preservation, was first fried, then boned, then served in ice, with Madeira punch in place of sauce, according to a recipe known to a few men of the world."

In Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday*, the remarkable club at breakfast is described throughout a chapter entitled "The Feast of Fear." Some of the men ate cold pheasant or Strasbourg pie. The secretary, who was a vegetarian, ate half a raw tomato and drank three-fourths of a glass of tepid water. The old Professor ate "such slops as suggested sickening second childhood." President Sunday ate like twenty men, a dozen crumpets, a quart of coffee.

O. Henry's relentless dissections of the forty and fifty-cent tables d'hôte, cheap à la carte restaurants, and ditto boarding-houses, are worthy of study. In "The Country of Elusion" he tells of how one Bohemia came to be, after one glad, drunk night when the proprietor moved the tables into the back yard among the family wash, and enthroned himself among the evening diners.

When André came to his senses, he took down his sign and darkened the front of his house. When you went there to dine you fumbled for an electric button and pressed it. A lookout slid open a panel in the door, looked at you suspiciously, and asked if you were acquainted with Senator Herodotus Q. McMillian, of the Chickasaw nation. If you were, you were admitted and allowed to dine. If you were not, you were admitted and allowed to dine. You know how the Bohemian feast of reason keeps up with the courses. Humour with the oysters, wit with the soup; repartee with the entrée, brag with the roast; knocks for Whistler and Kipling with the salad, songs with the coffee; the slapsticks with the cordial.

Here is what the McCaskeys should have eaten one night, if they had not quarrelled, in "Between Rounds":

"Pig's face, is it," said Mrs. McCaskey, and hurled a stewpan full of bacon and turnips at her lord.

Mr. McCaskey was no novice at repartee. On the table was a roast sirloin of pork, garnished with shamrocks. He retorted with this, and drew the appropriate return of a bread pudding in an earthen dish. A hunk of Swiss cheese accurately thrown by her husband struck Mrs. McCaskey below one eye. When she replied with a well-aimed coffeepot the battle, according to courses, should have ended. But Mr. McCaskey was no fifty-cent table d'hôte—finger bowls were not beyond the compass of his experience. Triumphantly he sent the graniteware wash-basin at the head of his matrimonial adversary. Mrs. M. dodged in time. She reached for a flatiron, with which, as a sort of cordial, she hoped to bring the gastronomical duel to a close.

There is a restaurant on Sixth Avenue which owned a waiter "with a voice like butter-cakes and an eye like the cherry in a Manhattan cocktail. Its crockery and atmosphere were thick; its soup and napery thin." At Bogle's, on Eighth Avenue, there were "two rows of tables in the room, six in a row. On each table is a caster-stand containing cruets of condiments and seasons. From the pepper cruet you may shake a cloud of something tasteless and melancholy, like volcanic dust. From the salt cruet you may expect nothing." Also upon each table stands the counterfeit of that benign sauce made "from the recipe of a nobleman in India." . . . "Meantime, Aileen would be performing astounding feats with orders of pork and beans, pot roasts, ham-and-sausage-and-the-wheats, and any quantity of things on the iron and in the pan and straight up and on the side."

And here is Sara, in *Springtime à la Carte*, copying bills of fare in return for three meals a day, "brought her by a waiter, an obsequious one if possible."

To-day there were more changes on the bill of fare than usual. The soups were lighter; pork was eliminated from the entrées, figuring only with Russian turnips among the roasts. The gracious spirit of spring pervaded the entire menu. Lamb, that lately capered on the greening hillsides, was becomingly exploited with the sauce that commemorated its gambols. The song of the oyster, though not silence, was *diminuendo con amore*. The frying pan seemed to be held inactive behind the

beneficent bars of the broiler. The pie list swelled; the richer puddings had vanished; the sausage, with his drapery wrapped about him, barely lingered in a pleasant thanatopsis with the buckwheats and the sweet but doomed maple.

There are two little books, more or less illuminating as caricatures, *The Maison de Shine* and *At the Actor's Boarding House*, by Helen Green, wherein food figures largely. Johnny McDuff seeks out Emma, the slavey, one night, and speaks: "I seen the butcher boy bringin' in chickens to-day and I'm Johnny at the rathole to-night fur some of the white meat, see! I didn't git nothin' but the bone of a leg last time. What is they fur dessert?" "Appil and leming pie, but take the leming, 'cause the appil is bum," replies Emma, placing bread and sad-looking pickles on the table.

"Steak, poke chops an' ham an' aigs?" asked Emma of a bride one morning, and Mrs. de Shine, hearing the bride say distinctly "Ham and eggs," motioned violently. "If she wants twq she can have 'em, Emmar, this once. I want her to like it here." Under the eggs, when they were brought in, nestled coily an inch or two of true Fourteenth Street ham. It was hard and brittle and good for the teeth.

Prunes, pound cake, cottage pudding, and bread pudding figure largely on the menus at the *Maison de Shine*. "Porkin beans or cornbif an' cabbitch" comprise that part of a dinner where roasts should figure. Milk is furnished for the coffee. Canned peas are given throughout the year, and toast is offered when there is a superabundance of stale bread, for, as Mrs. de Shine remarked, "This way they think they're gettin' a favour did 'em." On the same principle pie is not often forthcoming. "It's this way," explains the landlady. "A lot of people say, feed 'em on pie and they don't eat s'much meat. My experience is that you can give seven dollars' worth of pie and it's like a—her doover, as the French say—they eat more meat than before, an' that's why I don't have it."

In William Locke's *Septimus* and *The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne* there is a good deal of high-class dining depicted, some of the foods outrageously combined,

however purposely. Carlotta, in *Marcus*, had a passion for hard-boiled eggs and lemonade. She also drank orangeade with her meals, imbibed grenadine syrup and soda and similar sweet stuffs with salts and sours. Septimus's order one night at Monte Carlo for absinthe, poached eggs and a raspberry ice might well make a self-respecting waiter commit the usual suicide following Monte Carloan depression. Again, Septimus, awaking late one day, said he did not care for breakfast. "Afternoon tea will do, with some bacon and eggs and things." Even a casual reader would call both Carlotta and Septimus irresponsible souls. In *Septimus* there is a dinner at Sypher's Club; oysters with lemon, *sole bonne femme*, partridge and orange salad, and champagne. There is also a description of *déjeuner* for Septimus and Zora on the terrace of the Hotel de Paris, which for pure ecstasy on the author's part is delightful:

Outside was the blazing sun, inside a symphony of cool tones; the pearl of summer dresses; the snow, crystal and silver of the tables; the tender green of lettuce; the yellows of fruits; the soft pink of salmon; the purples and topazes of wines. The one human being for you in the room is your companion. Between you are substances it were gross to call food; dainty mysteries of coolness and sudden flavours; a fish salad in which the essences of sea and land are blended in cool, celestial harmony; innermost kernels of the lamb of the salted meadows, where must grow the asphodel on which it fed, in amorous union with what men call a sauce, but really oil and cream and herbs stirred by a god in a dream; peaches in purple ichor chastely clad in snow, melting on the palate as the voice of the divine singer after whom they are named melts in the soul. Septimus had often looked at people eating like this, and had wondered how it felt.

Here is a bit of ironic dining from Mrs. Wharton's "The Other Two," where Waythorne, the third and latest husband, saw Varick, the second husband now divorced, at luncheon:

When Waythorne first saw him he had been helping himself with critical deliberation to a bit of Camembert at the ideal point of liquefaction, and now, the cheese removed, he was

just pouring his café double from its little two-storied earthen pot. He poured slowly, his ruddy profile bent above the task, and one beringed white hand steadying the lid of the coffee pot; then he stretched his other hand to the decanter of cognac at his elbow, filled a liqueur glass, took a tentative sip, and poured the brandy into his coffee cup.

That night Waythorne watched his wife pour coffee for him.

She set down the coffee pot, and reaching for the decanter of cognac, measured off a liqueur glass and poured it into his cup. Waythorne uttered a sudden exclamation.

"What is the matter?" she said, startled.

"Nothing—only I don't take cognac in my coffee."

"Oh, how stupid of me!" she cried.

Their eyes met and she blushed a sudden, agonised red.

Filson Young's *The Sands of Pleasure* is decorated with intimate disclosures of famous French cafés and restaurants. Richard and Lauder lunched at Marguery's, and had: *hors d'œuvres*, eggs, fish, fowl, salad, pastry, cheese, dessert, coffee, cognac. Richard learned to drink absinthe, which Marthe insisted on preparing for him, "teaching him how to pour the water drop by drop through the sugar on the perforated spoon."

Later Richard and Toni dined at the Tour d'Argent, and watched Frédéric prepare unnumbered dishes of *caneton à la presse*. "The deft way in which, as one duck after another was brought to him all hot and hissing, he laid the knife under the flesh and with a few masterly strokes removed all the meat; the crushing of the carcass beneath the handpress, and the spout of blood and essence or juice of duck from the little tap; the making of this juice into a wonderful sauce that kept simmering and bubbling on spirit lamps and was gradually ladled over the whole savoury dish—these were fascinating sights." To the epicure, but not to Toni, who, the novelty gone, was insulted that she should have been brought to so dingy and common a place.

Here is a recipe for Turkish coffee, from Hichens's *Bella Donna*, worthy, except that precise quantities for all ingredients but the ambergris are lacking, to be

cut out and pasted in any family cook book:

There was a saucepan containing water, a brass bowl of freshly roasted and pounded coffee, two small, open coffee pots with handles that stuck straight out, two coffee cups, a tiny bowl of powdered sugar, and some paper parcels which held sticks of mastic, ambergris and seed of cardamom. Hamza poured water from the saucepan into one of the coffee pots, set it on the brazier and sank into a reverie. Presently there came from the pot a murmur. Instantly Hamza took it from the brazier and the bowl of coffee from the ground, let some of the coffee slip into the water, stirred it with a silver spoon, which he produced from a carefully folded square of linen, and set the pot once more on the brazier. Then he unfolded the paper which held the ambergris, put a carat weight of it into the second pot, and set that, too, on the brazier. The coffee began to simmer. He lit a stick of mastic, fumigated with its smoke the two little coffee cups, took the coffee pot and gently poured the fragrant coffee into the pot containing the melted ambergris, let it simmer for a moment, then poured it out into the two coffee cups, creaming, and now sending forth with its own warm perfume the enticing perfume of ambergris, added a dash of cardamom seed, and then, at last, looked toward Mrs. Armine. "Is it ready?" she asked. "Shall I put the sugar in?"

Later Barrodi gave a dinner to Mrs. Armine, consisting of a red soup—a Kaw-ur-meh—meat stewed in a rich gravy with little onions—leaves of the vine containing a delicious sort of force-meat, cucumbers in milk, some small birds pierced with silver skewers, spinach, and fried wheat flour mingled with honey. There was also a sherbet made of violets "by crushing the flowers of violets, making them into a preserve with sugar, and boiling them for a long time."

In *The Garden of Allah*, at Beni-Mora, Domini, for *déjeuner*, "ate slowly the large Robertville fish, which was something between a trout and a herring," and followed it with a ragout of mutton and peas and wine. Later she and Androvsky had a *déjeuner* at Sidi-Zerzour, red fish, omelette, gazelle steaks, cheese, oranges and dates, white wine and Vals water. Mr. Hichens pays scant attention to Eng-

lish foods, but the Egyptian varieties he knows, and describes to the last drift of spice.

Robert Chambers puts a brood of children into *The Younger Set*, who are so well taken care of that the suspicion arises that Mr. Chambers read deeply of dietetics and adolescence and "The Care and Feeding of Children" before he could have compiled the mother's mandates.

"Don't let the children eat too fast. Make Drina take thirty-six chews to every bite and Winthrop is to have no bread if he has potatoes. Master Billy takes supper by himself in the school-room, and NO marmalade." There is rice pudding on the nursery table, and cranberry sauce and milk with dinner at noon, and pink cream puffs and green mint paste are rewards of excessive merit.

In David Graham Phillips's *The Social Secretary* there is a breakfast served every morning at the politician's home, for which an old Southern cook was specially engaged. There were corned beef hash, hot corn bread, buckwheat cakes with maple syrup, and cigars. In another

novel of Mr. Phillips one recalls another breakfast of hash, "brown and not too dry," with coffee and corn muffins. From which one draws the irresistible conclusion that Mr. Phillips likes hash for breakfast, and disdains the small cup of coffee and the slim French roll.

But, all in all, if novels reflect the civilisation of the day, there is hope for a dyspeptic race, when we compare the fashions in menus of the present and the past. Five meats and one vegetable—and that potatoes—with two or three heavy puddings make up the menus of English classic fiction. In the modern novel there is a falling off in the quantity of meat; there is invariably a salad, often-times with a dressing "stirred by a god in a dream," with delicious vegetables, and a lack of heavy sweets. Physicians and nurses find much digestive trouble in their walks through life, but a casual survey of the menus of fiction lead one to the happy conclusion that the great reading public is not being led seriously astray in the matter of peptic morals by the latter-day novelists.

THE BOY AND THE MOTHER

BY HERMANN HAGEDORN

The Boy in the City.

All day long, all day long
Up and down the streets I go—
Not a face in all the throng
That I know!

Aching eyes and heavy feet,
All day long and days and days!
Oh, for something good to eat,
And a warm wood blaze!

Fields are grey and frosty now,
Trees are stripped, except maybe
For an apple on the bough
All forgot—like me.

In the house there's smell o' pine,
Where the fire cracks and roars,
And the sound of winds that whine
Under floors and doors!