

glance indifferently at your filet mignon bordelaise and demi-julienne spuds, or Mallard and stuffed egg-plant, or veal roast and candied yams. You eye suspiciously the vin ordinaire, recalling some unpleasant adventure with the red ink of today or last night, literally. You positively sniff at the salad: alligator pear or water cress (de cresson de fontaine) or head lettuce with French dressing. You are sick if a pastry, or sherbet, or charlotte russe, or some other delicacy is shoved before you. Only your café noir and cognac hold any allurements now, and these in the medicinal sense. Pousse café, bah! Suississe, out! You totter from the board bloated, taut, sweating. You swear a terrible oath under your beard and smirk painfully at a pink gargoyle somewhat suggesting your hostess.

God be thanked, mother doesn't lay it on after this fashion. With mother now it's like this—Soup: tomato, vegetable, gumbo crêole, oyster stew on "Fridays and days of abstinence." Fish: now and then. Entrées: lamb or pork chop, veal roast, roast beef. Vegetables: cauliflower with butter sauce, spinach with toast, corn fritters, egg-plant, asparagus with drawn butter, snap beans, butter beans, red beans, cow peas, green peas, squash cakes, corn on the cob, stuffed tomatoes, potatoes in variety—but not all at once; in season, my dear. Everything in season. Salad? Well, head lettuce, alligator pear, sliced tomatoes. Dessert: apple meringue, bread pudding, peaches and cream, figs in their time, watermelon, or fruit etceteras, brought up with a fine syrupy demi-tasse, brewed and dripped by Nancy Johnson in the famous manner. And the estimable lady next door doubtless has her own ideas on the subject. Monsieur Alciatore, proprietor of Antoine's restaurant, has his ideas also. And also Madame Begué's anonymous successor, and the anonymous successor to Monsieur Maylie's thriving establishment. Ferd Alciatore of the Louisiane, the Galatoire Frères, and Count Cazenave of Le Foyer du Gourmet, have theirs, too. The American dinner? New Orleans answers we eat as we must, or please, or please to please.

What Alabama Offers

By CLEMENT WOOD

THE private households of moderate means in Alabama are of two classes: first, the Negro field cabins and the mountain and mill-town white houses; second, the more prosperous white and Negro families. The typical dinner for the Negro field or furnace hand, and the white mill hand or mountaineer, would be about the same:

Sow-belly (fat white pork)

Turnip greens and pot liquor (the latter the water in which the greens are cooked)

String beans, snap beans, boiled onions, or some other cooked vegetable in season

Corn pone (baked of corn-meal, salt, and water)

Coffee, with "long sweetening"—or molasses

You need not ask for the soup, fish, or dessert courses. There are none. For the rare dinner of state, there might be fried chicken, or possum "an' taters."

In the more prosperous families you will get the most opulent meal that I have yet encountered in America. Leave soup for thin souls, and fish for the seaboard; although, of course, Mobile would specialize in "Kubeyon," properly spelled "Court Bouillon" (baked redfish with a thick Creole tomato sauce), alternating with broiled pompano. The ordi-

nary home dinner, with a respected relative or a guest present, would be something like this:

Fried young chicken

Beaten biscuits and corn pone

(An eccentric addition would be persimmon bread or sweet potato bread)

Stewed okra. Turnip greens

Mashed yams with pecans and cream

Rice

Coffee with cream

Fig preserves. Crab-apple jelly. Quince preserves

Garden tomatoes, with sugar and vinegar

Ambrosia, or Syllabub

(Ambrosia is equal parts of orange, pineapple, and cocoanut, served in orange baskets; syllabub is whipped cream, sweetened and flavored with vanilla)

Lady Baltimore cake

(Before Volstead's day, scuppernong or muscadine wine would be added; with a mint julep before the meal. A homelier dessert would be molasses pie, with molasses biscuits for the children)

Compared to such a meal, or to barbecued lamb, or gamey Southern venison, the boiled New England dinner is as tasteless as the realism of Henry James.

The "Dutch" Tradition

By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

THERE being, happily, no such thing as a typical American, it follows that there can be no typical American dinner. I think of Connecticut's oyster-stuffing for turkey as a little more alien than garlic used to be, and I'm sure that Connecticut would consider my scrapple of doubtful patriotism. Therefore, I may but contribute to *The Nation's* symposium the menu of such a dinner as average Pennsylvanians of moderate means "get up" when they want to dine—as on a Sunday afternoon—rather well and altogether "natively":

Fruit Salad

Roast Ribs of Pork, Apple Sauce, Mashed Potatoes, Sauerkraut, and Real Beer

Mince Pie (laced, not with brandy, but moonshine whiskey), and Cheese

Coffee

Some smuggled liqueur

Dining in New Mexico

By ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT

THE New Mexican, like other Americans, orders his life with reference to eating. Among the Pueblos religion itself, as Frank Cushing once said, is an insurance against future meals, and I have never fared more hospitably in the pleasant land of France than in this arid corner of our country, where the very cattle are scrawny and athletic like the cowboys, and every scrap of vegetable food—save the nuts and sunflower seeds and wild grasses and cactus fruit, the wild currants and plums which the aboriginal inhabitants used exclusively until the development of corn—has to be won, not only by the sweat of the brow, but by the most cunning ditching, terracing, and entreating of scanty waters. In discussing the real American dinner, I must, however, present three menus: Indian, Spanish-American, and plain United States.

Dinner is the evening meal in the Pueblo country—usually there are only two—and when you enter a house in the pueblo of Zuni, for instance, you are always greeted: "Enter, sit and eat!" The repast is set out on the earth floor before the three-cornered fireplace in decorated pottery bowls, the family, probably ten or twelve people of several generations, squatting around it. So long as the chief males or guests of the family are not there, nobody begins to eat. When all are gathered, every person, including the children, selects a morsel of every kind of food, breathes on it, and says this "grace": "Receive, (oh, souls of) my ancestry, and eat; resuscitate by means of your wondrous knowledge, your hearts; return unto us of yours the water we need, of yours the seeds of earth, of yours the means of attaining great age." With this the offering is thrown on the fire and the meal begins. Cushing's first name as a real Zuni, He-Who-Eats-From-One-Bowl-With-Us-With-One-Spoon, is indicative of Zuni table manners. Nowadays the guest is likely to be offered a metal spoon and white cup, and granite-ware coffee pots and iron frying pans prevail. But *en famille*, the one earthen spoon, the gourd dipper floating on top of the *olla* are common, and the food in the bowl is much as it has always been.

Infallibly a stew of meat joints and another of *frijoles* (succulent brown beans) seasoned with plenty of *chile colorado* (red pepper meal), onion, and salt, and probably some spicy herb. For a relish, if there are guests, stuffed sheep intestines or a skewer of broiled meat, or a blood pudding—close to the French *boudin*—cooked in a large intestine. For vegetables, "in season," fried or roast or baked squash, boiled pumpkin, green corn on the cob. For bread—a most important item—*he'we* or wafer bread, something like our dry breakfast foods in consistency, made by cooking a thin paste of red or blue or yellow corn meal on a hot stone and then rolling it. Sometimes puffy little brown loaves of wheat flour as well, baked in the round outdoor oven of sun-dried brick, common to both Indian and Spanish villages. In the melon or peach seasons there is an abundance of juicy fruit, and dried melon rind is often baked in a sort of tart as an extra delicacy. But on the whole the Indian meal is without sweets.

Now let us approach a Spanish house in a mountain valley not occupied by descendants of the Conquerors, but by simple "Mexican" people. If the family is alone, we shall be welcomed to little but *frijoles*, a bowl of *chile*, red or green, and a pile of *tortillas*—a sort of pancake of white flour browned on top of the stove—and a pot of coffee, brewed and re-brewed. In the corner is a sack of piñon nuts—a tiny nut which is taken into the mouth in quantity and cracked with the teeth, the shells being ejected from one corner of the lips while the rich kernel is still being chewed. There will perhaps be another sort of flat pancake of blue meal, served in layers with red *chile* sauce between, or rice cooked with onion and *chile*. On feast days there will surely be a rich sweet chocolate drink, white bread baked in the round ovens, *chile con carne* (with meat), bread pudding soaked in spiced syrup, stewed dried apricots or peaches, a custard with bananas in it. The Mexicans are charmingly ready to share their last *tortilla* and their *fiesta* goodies with American neighbors, but a Spanish servant lass, brought up to abstemiousness at home, eats less than the proverbial mouse in the rancher's house. "What pigs they must think us!" said one of my white neighbors.

The bountiful American farm dinner in my valley is not so different from that of New England. Fried or roast meat, several kinds of excellent vegetables, macaroni baked in a glass dish—for the mail-order houses keep us up to date—preserves of various rich species, flaky hot biscuits, pie, coffee, and cheese. The American rancher would scorn to borrow recipes from the Pueblos, but *tortillas*, "Spanish rice," and *chile* are not unknown to his table. If there is one article of diet common to all races in New Mexico, it is this same *chile colorado*, which hangs in flaming strings from the roof beams against the red brown walls of the houses, like the flag of an exotic civilization. *Chile* keeps the palate keyed up to the climate and the mountains: it is a spice of the devil to counteract the dominant presence of God on the peaks.

For the Indian's Sake

Washington, December 14

ON behalf of the American Indian a majority of the committee of one hundred citizens recently appointed by Secretary Work met at the Department of the Interior in Washington on December 11 and 12 to discuss and debate. The Secretary welcomed them and asked their advice and their criticisms of the Indian Bureau. The Indian Commissioner was equally frank in requesting the judgment of the committee upon his work, and the Board of Indian Commissioners was well represented in what was, in its personnel, a truly remarkable gathering of the friends of the Indian. It was no slight achievement to have brought into one room men and women of the caliber of General H. L. Scott, W. J. Bryan, Herbert Welsh, John Collier, Bernard M. Baruch, Warren K. Moorehead, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Mary W. Roe, Edith N. Dabb, Margaret McKittrick, Maud Wood Park, and Mrs. H. A. Atwood of California, together with many distinguished representatives of the various missionary activities. That there were discordant elements here represented everybody knew. The best achievement of the conference was that the discussions were conducted in excellent spirit, despite the infliction of the most incompetent and bemuddling chairman who ever presided over any such gathering, and that as they progressed many differences were ironed out. In the case of the Pueblo Indians, for instance, the very mention of whom at the outset of the conference sent cold shivers of apprehension down every spine, there came about a nearer approach to a union among the friends of these people than had seemed possible. Secretary Work may not have had in mind a welding of the reform forces as a primary purpose of this gathering but it seemed none the less to tend in that direction.

Not that it reconciled all the divergencies of opinion. These will doubtless last as long as there remains an Indian to be helped. For, where it is not a question of the correct technique of aiding them, as in the case of the Pueblos, the divergencies are due to varying philosophies of life and conceptions of democracy. That was strikingly illustrated in some of the debates which brought out with disheartening clearness how superficial is the democracy of many Americans. Mr. Bryan spoke well on behalf of the Indians' fundamental right to citizenship and the ballot, but the same old arguments advanced against the enfranchisement of Negroes and of women were heard once more. General Scott was, for example, deeply concerned lest the "buffalo