Dinners and Their Objective Points

W. H. Roberts
Dinners and Their Objective Points

Dinners influenced by the caprices of fashion.

Man's feeding in the savage stage.

The ancient diners.

Roman dinners.

Dinners of our forefathers.

Points to be considered.

Knowledge of the nutritive value of foods - a necessity.

Simplicity.

Selection.

Preparation.
Dinners of the Objective Points.

The time for taking food, the selection, preparation, and proper distribution of it in appropriate meals are questions of considerable importance, notwithstanding the fact that they have been influenced by the caprices of fashion and the artificial habits of men. How much they have had to do with the modification of the human species and even the extinction of whole races of men is certainly a problem of much interest.

Man in his savage condition finds with great irregularity. When he finds food plentiful, he eats...
from morning till night and knows no other pleasure than that of eating, drinking and sleeping. When food is scarce he is contented with one meal a day. In both cases the quantity of food consumed is always excessive.

Among civilized nations, and until comparatively recent times, there were but two meals a day, namely, dinner and supper. These were the meals of the Romans. The praefurnium, or dinner, being for the most part a light refreshment eaten while standing. It was taken about nine o’clock in the morning, and generally consisted of the cold remains of yesterday’s supper.

The grand meal of the day was supper, or, concubine which was taken about three or four o’clock in the afternoon and to which friends were invited. This was the ceremonial meal for which the wealthy and high families of Rome exhausted the resources of luxury and art.
The sums of money expended by the wealthy Roman Emperor this meal were enormous. Velleius is said to have spent as much as four hundred sextertias on his daily supper, and the celebrated feast to which he invited his brother cost no less than five thousand sextertiae. It consisted of two thousand different dishes of fish and over thousand of fowl, with other equally enormous meats. It is said the devotees of Libya, the shores of Spain, and the waters of Carpathia were diligently searched for the hairies to supply his table; and had he reigned long, he would, says Josephus, have exhausted the great opulence of the Roman Empire.

Such is an example of the luxury and extravagance of the ancient dinner. It was one of the ancient Gods,

Hardly less extravagance was the dinner foul for fathers, who in many ways copied closely, the
luxurious habits of the Romans. Even so late as the time of Holinshed, the famous chronicler of the sixteenth century, the manners of England were the subject of some comment. He tells us that "in the number of dishes and changes of meat the nobility do most excel. There is no day that passes over their heads wherein they have not only beef, mutton, veal lamb, kid, pork, venison, capon, pig, or so many of them as the season yields, but also some portion of the red and fallow deer, besides great varieties of fish and wild fowl, and many other delicacies." To have dined with one of them and to have tasted every dish must have been to yield to a conspiracy with a great deal of meat for the speedy suppression of natural health rather than the use of a necessary meal as a competent repast to sustain the body. Every fresh dish acted as a stimulus to whip the appetite on. The sense of satiety might come and go a dozen times,
We smile at the accounts given of the gastronomic prowess of the nations of the arid regions and the savages of South Africa; we reflect on the habits of our forefathers and their great variety of foods at one meal, eating as a source of pleasure merely with its greatsimplicity to one eat. But we, as a people of a far more advanced age, are surely less preposterous.

Simplicity of diet should be a point of first consideration, as the simplest foods are, as a rule, the most healthful. Variety is needed but the tendency is to supply our table with too many kinds, and to prepare each dish in a most elaborate manner, and thus in many homes the cooking of food has come to be the chief end of life.

In the selection of provisions, the best is generally the cheapest. But little attention is paid to this part of our preparation for eating. A half pound of good meat may be worth three times the amount.
of an inferior quality. It is not surprising that it had so long a question with the cook "what to prepare" for the meal and is still a question with so many housekeepers.

Something of a knowledge of the nutritive food elements that are contained in the different articles of diet is necessary if we are to be able to select wisely.

The purpose of food is to supply food and heat, to furnish material to repair the wastes that are constantly taking place in the body, and in childhood and youth the highest purpose of food is to promote a healthy growth of both body and intellect. The great diversity in the character of the tissues of the body makes it necessary that food should contain a variety of elements in order that each part or organ is replenished and nourished. Each of the different groups of elements have a particular work to perform, so it especially necessary that our food should contain some of each kind of elements.
apparent that great care should be made in the selecting of our food materials, and that a careful study of the nutritive values of the various foods is a matter of first importance in the selection of food.

That a great work has been done in the immediate past and is being done at present in right direction by those who have turned their attention to the cultivation and better development of this art or science, need scarcely be asserted.

The scientific world has been making and is making, and is making valuable contributions to the non-scientific. The result of these investigational and analytical work of these food products in the last thirty years, are constantly changing their grounds and the investigations like all scientific investigations—without opposition and warfare, have recognized principles and found
Theories that were formerly discredited and unknown. The object of these analyses had been to determine the proportion of nutrient and non-nutrient elements in all foods and by the aid of this knowledge to better our system of diet.

A knowledge of the proper preparation of foods is likewise essential since the fitness of a good material for body building depends upon its digestibility, its palatability, and its adaptability to the needs of the user, as well as their nutritive value. Past and present experience teaches me that "the first step in a reform is the recognition of the cause of a disease. Do we as Americans realize to the utmost that bad cooking is a source of harmfulness and great wastefulness? Are we men and women with more or less dyspepsia? Every is an important adjunct to meats. Good rich gravy
it like a strong savoury broth, both nourishing and palatable. But by a rich gravy is not meant a superabundance of fat. Gravy is not necessarily gravy. In fact, some of the finest and most savoury gravies are prepared from the leanest meat and extracts of beef devoid of fat. Marion Harland said some years ago, and it emphatically be said in many instances still, how often have I wished from the depths of my loathing stomach that certain well-meaning housekeepers at whose board I have sat as guest or boarder—who try beefsteak in lard and send home the table swimming in fat, upon the surface of whose soup floats herbs of oil the excuse the tomato with blubbery, and coat the lips and tongue of the eater with flaky scales—that these dear souls that believe in the old-fashioned cooking understood this simple law of digestive gravy.
Hundreds of us have dyspepsia but do not recognize it. With beds made with nerves that are upset, by any little sound, the buzzing of a fly, the crying of a child, the blowing of the wind, how unsuitable we are! Such is the condition of a vast number of our people to-day; breaking down in the prime of life.

To dine tastefully, both in regard to our food and surroundings is a consummation wished by all and because good dinner demand skilful preparation a great impetus has thus been given to scientific cookery.

Notwithstanding great care should be exercised in selection, preparation, and the cooking of food, as men should not be too thankful for his health when he is satisfying his hunger. It has been said: "Every thing agrees with you until it disagrees with you." Most dishes are especially wholesome for the eater, if their wholesomeness...
is taken for granted. But the best
fare will avenged itself on the
person who regards it with suspicion.
Enjoyment at the table so far as food
is concerned, is not possible without
proper confidence in the
sellers and cooks. The man who
have formed a habit of sour mistrust
there is travelling on a road
that leads downward, and may
perhaps end in madness. "All
monomaniacs, there is none
more truly pitiable than the
few wretched people who sniff
poison in every culinary savory and fear
death from a sauce."