

TABLE-FORKS, HISTORICALLY HANDLED.

(From Chambers's Journal.)

I observed a custom in all those Italian cities and towns through which I passed, that is not used in any other country that I saw in my travels, neither do I think that any other nation of Christendom doth use it, but only Italy.

So writes the old English traveller Thomas Coryate, in that book of his, quaintly entitled Crudities, and published in the year of grace 1611. In 1608, Thomas has been travelling through France, Italy, Switzerland, and parts of Germany; and in his Crudities appear the results of the tour.

It is neither more nor less than the use of forks at table. Thomas Coryate is struck, and amused withal, by the observance in Italy of a custom which he believes—and he is an experienced traveller—not Christendom at large can elsewhere show an example of.

Snapper up of unconsidered trifles; and all, with one consent, all England over, called his Furrier for his pains.

We can fancy the Latin sobriquet, with its why and wherefore, mightily relished by King James, paraking without fork, whether iron or silver, of his regal repast, and cracking jokes, right regal and pedantic, at the expense of Furrierous Thomas, and to the delectation, as in duty bound, of his majesty's faithful and forkless guests.

Mark with what scorn that other deals your stint Of bread in mouldy fragments, had as flat; Fragments your lab'ring griddle cannot bite; But your lord's bread, how far, how fine, how white!

Have I deceived this from you too? for all My pains at court, to get you each a patent, Gilliland, For what?

Meercraft. The laudable use of forks. Brought into custom here as they are in Italy, To the sparing of napkins, &c.

Beckmann, to whom we owe our information on this as on so many other matters, in the History of Inventions, after remarking that in France, at the close of the sixteenth century, forks even at court were entirely new, and that they had not found their way into Sweden, adds: 'But it must appear strange enough that Thomas Coryate, the traveller, should see forks for the first time in Italy, and in the same year be the first person to use them in England—'

Attempis have made to show that the ancients must have known and used table-forks, or something equivalent; and dictionaries are appealed, and Greek and Latin nouns-substantive are adduced, to prove the point.

The knight has his friend in a street 'in the height of Venice,' and sees fit, himself an old traveller, to set down a few particulars, fit to be known of your crude traveller,

Then must you learn the use And handling of your fork at meals, The metal of your glass (these are main matters With you Italian).

Meercraft. Upon my project of the forks. Sledge. Forks! What be they?

marks, can scarcely be understood in the same ironical sense as one to be found in the writings of a later instructor in convivial gallantry, who advises that, in helping pigeons, the legs and pinions should be given to ladies, in order to afford them an opportunity of displaying their white and taper fingers in picking the small bones.

Even after Master Thomas Coryate had introduced table-forks amongst us, they must have worked their way very slowly into general use. They were still an object of waggery in 1647, when John Fletcher's Queen of Corinth was published, where the Tutor says, for instance:

And twofold doth express thy amorous courtier, As full as your fork-carving traveller Five years later—namely, in 1652, which is allowing more than forty years for Coryate's hobby to amble into notice—Hoylin, in his Cosmography, alludes to forks as still a comparative rarity.

Then must you learn the use And handling of your fork at meals, The metal of your glass (these are main matters With you Italian).

The use of forks at table seems to have been long considered a 'superfluous luxury.' They were forbidden in common with other pomps and vanities, auxiliary to the 'pride of life,' in various convents and religious houses.

At the time Beckmann wrote, they were still a rarity in many parts of Spain. 'And even yet,' he observes, 'in taverns, in many countries, particularly in some towns of France, knives are not placed on the table, because it is expected that each person should have one of his own—a custom which the French seem to have retained from the old Gauls.

For we doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose man, And the thoughts of men are widened; and, as a corollary to that proposition, the use of forks is spreading

[The late Lieutenant-General G. R. Ainslie, author of a work on the Anglo-French Coinage, and who lived much in France after the peace of 1815, used to assert that he had seen the introduction of knives and forks, and many other useful utensils, into that country.

of the puzzlement of the native gentry about a soap-dish, which some thought most probably a thing for making tea.—Ed.]

"Once there was a rich farmer in the country" (that is the way in which all old-fashioned stories used to begin when we were a boy, and our old cap was new)—once there was a rich farmer who had four or five orchards of apples, pears, peaches, and other like fruits.

"Well, let us leave it to Mr. B.—," said one; "he knows, because he has been a lawyer; he is a learned man, and a man who understands grammar."

"What is the question in dispute?" asked Mr. B.—, as he approached the corner of the fence which led along the road.

"Is it proper to say—would it be proper to say, to us, for example—we six—would it be proper for you, supposing a case, to say to all of us, 'Will you take a few apples and pears?'

"Certainly, Mr. B.—, certainly, and much obliged to you besides!" "I am very fond of apples!" "I affect no fruit so much as a good pear!" "I go in for apricots—the most delicious of all fruit that grows on a tree!"

"You flatter me by your preference," good-humouredly replied Miss S.—, to the surprise of all present.

"Not at all; I am entirely sincere," "Thee! I refer you to my father!" "Bravo!" exclaimed the gentleman.

THE POET COWLEY ON WAR.—A letter of William Cowper, containing the following passage, has just come to light:—'Wherever there is war there is misery and outrage, notwithstanding which it is not only lawful to wish, but even a duty to pray for, the success of one's country.

PROSPECT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AGE

The Proprietors of the Scientific Age respectfully give notice, that the Volume of their Journal will be published on the 1st of September next.

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Charlotteville, July 27, 1856

JUST RECEIVED, per S. STORE, a splendid LOT OF TEA, SUGAR which will be Sold Wholesale

Oct. 5.

NO LET with immediate notice, the corner of Great George street, occupied by Messrs. G. The cellar is 21 feet by 50 feet, the floor is 10 feet high, and is over 7 feet deep. It is in depth; also a front entrance shop and two other apartments second floor one room 24 feet 15 and two about 11 feet by nearly corresponding with the Harbours, the Rivers and the is also attached to the post and it is one of the best Mercantile or any other business may be obtained by application

July 14th, 1856.

PRESEHOLI FOR SALE, Lot 42, as 1 Township No. 55, town between Townships No. 55 and 56, of Land. It is near South side of the Island, a Wood. For further particulars

Recreation, Sept. 27th, 1856

TO ME: Camell Hair B. HASZARD & OWEN announcing to their received this day, a new lot of 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7, which the cent below former prices.

FOR \$: THAT beautifully situated as the Subscriber's estate is in a high state of cultivation years, the yearly rent is £1 are on the premises a large and an out-house for a Gran

Also, a small farm, 20 hold land, situate in Pine few chains of the Darnley tional properties are well person wishing to purchase enquire of

Charlotteville, 12th Sep