

Now, you must admire, gentlemen, the intelligence which presided at the confection of this truly royal bill of fare. It is the deed of a thorough "*gourmet*" and also of a friend who aims at your most perfect gastronomic welfare and of a physician who attended to all the requirements of hygiene.

"But," some of you will say, "your bill of fare contains indigestible ingredients: I never can taste such and such dish without experiencing the most violent indigestion." Let us explain ourselves.

There are no indigestible aliments, in the etymological sense of the word. All eatable substance is digested, more or less completely, if you like, and more or less rapidly, but it ends always by going through. The word "indigestible" is relative and if any one hears again in a rather disagreeable fashion, of what he has eaten, it is because this unfortunate individual is ill, or the privileged possessor of some peculiar idiosyncrasy which departs from the general rule.

But as I consider you all as I wish you to be, that is, perfectly sound and devoid of all caprices as far as your material organization is concerned, I am convinced of having found for the composition of this repast, the most agreeable and most nutritive aliments.

I said "agreeable" because we never do well but what we do with pleasure. In fact, let you sit down to table with an anxious and pre-occupied mind, the stomach will pout for your paying such a little attention to the fulfilment of its functions and will punish you with indigestion, for having diverted, for the benefit of the brain, the concentration of energy which it has a right to claim when it is its turn.

A meal may be a regular work, but that work must be recreative and one cannot exaggerate the importance of dining in good company, and, besides, food must be artistically prepared in order to be palatable and stimulate the appetite. This accounts for my calling forth all the secrecies of culinary art to impart to my bill of fare the most irreproachable character.

At last, you must remark that the dishes are numerous and varied in order to supply the tissues of organism with the whole scale of the elements they want, for their intimate rebuilding. In fact, all aliments do not possess the same nutritive value and the same digestibility and the most nutritious are not always those we digest the most easily.