

in their means of earning their bread ; but it appears to me that the rich might easily find more profitable and agreeable modes of employing the industrious, than in ministering to pomp and parade.

I will give you, dear reader, an account of a dinner I have ordered this very day at Blackwell. This account will serve as an illustration of my doctrines on dinner-giving better than a long abstract discourse. The party will consist of seven men beside myself, and every guest is asked for some reason—upon which good fellowship mainly depends ; for people brought together unconnectedly had, in my opinion, better be kept separate. Eight I hold to be the golden number, never to be exceeded without weakening the efficacy of concentration. The dinner is to consist of turtle soup followed by no other fish but white-bait, which is to be followed by no other meat but grouse, which are to be succeeded simply by apple fritters and jelly ; pastry on such occasions being quite out of place. Of course there will be with the white-bait champagne, and with the grouse claret ; the former I have ordered to be particularly well-iced, and they will be placed in succession upon the table, so that we can help ourselves as we please. I shall permit no other wines, unless, perchance, a bottle or two of port, if particularly wanted, as I hold variety of wines a great mistake. With respect to the adjuncts, I shall take care that there is cayenne, with lemons cut in halves, not in quarters, within reach of everyone, for the turtle soup, and that brown bread-and-butter in abundance is set upon the table for the white-bait. It is no trouble to think of these little matters beforehand, but they make a vast difference in convivial contentment. The dinner

will be followed by ices, and a good dessert, after which coffee and one glass of liquor each, and no more, so that the present may be enjoyed rationally without inducing retrospective regrets. If the master of a feast wishes his party to succeed, he must know how to command, and not let his guests run riot, each according to his own wild fancy. Beyond eight persons at dinner, as far as my experience goes, there is always a division into parties, or a partial languor, or sort of paralysis either of the extremities or centre, which has more or less effect upon the whole. For complete enjoyment a company ought to be One ; sympathizing and drawing together, listening and talking in due proportions—no monopolists, nor any ciphers. With the best arrangements, much will depend upon the chief of the feast giving the tone and keeping it up. Paulus Æmillius, who was the most successful general and best entertainer of his time, seems to have understood this well ; for he said that it required the same sort of spirit to manage a banquet as a battle, with this difference, that the one should be made as pleasant to friends, and the other as formidable to enemies, as possible. I often think of this excellent saying at large dinner-parties, where the master and mistress preside as if they were the humblest of the guests, or as if they were overwhelmed with anxiety respecting their cumbersome and pleasure-destroying arrangements. They appear not to have the most distant idea of the duties of commanders, and instead of bringing their troops regularly into action they leave the whole army in reserve. They should at least now and then address each of their guests by name, and, if possible, say something by which it may be guessed who and what each person is.