

their time, and insisted that no matter what the genius, the refined tastes, or the inclinations of the great Sarah Bernhardt might be, in order to portray truthfully and historically the role of Theodora, she must positively eat with her fingers!

This argument is perfectly valid; at Rome, Byzantia, as well as in Greece, there were no forks in vogue, except, as the French express it, those used by father Adam. The most famous hero of antiquity was reduced to the state of commonplace men before a piece of meat or of fish, to transfer which to his mouth, he knew of only one way, namely, between his thumb and index finger.

Forks made their appearance about the tenth century. We find mention that a certain father Galveston, a favorite of Edward II, had sixty-nine silver spoons and three forks. But, it is added, that these three forks were intended solely for the eating of pears.

Queen Clemence, of Hungary, in 1328, was the possessor of thirty spoons and one fork, and Queen Anne of Bourbon, had one of gold which was inherited by Charles V, King of France. This king himself, owned seven or eight, according to an inventory made in 1580. The one left him by will he subsequently had ornamented with precious stones.

The silverware of Chancellor Duprat, which an expert declared to be worth 88,848 pounds, a considerable amount in those days (1586,) included only one fork, while it contained two dozen spoons.

The inventory of the possessions of the Prince of Condé, (1588) records but one fork. It is described as silver coated with gold, but was reserved exclusively for the use of the prince.

The first inventory in which a number of forks are mentioned is that of Gabrielle d'Estrées, (1599). It includes twenty, of which eight were made of silver, the others being of iron with coral handles. But these forks were used only for toasting bread, and Gabrielle, like the Prince of Condé, sovereigns and common people, all ate with their fingers.

It is a strange fact that the introduction of forks for table service, at first provoked scandal. A curious pamphlet attacking the minions of Henry III, speaks indignantly in the following strain: "In the first place," says the anonymous writer, "they never touch meat with their fingers, but use forks, which they raise up to the mouth while stretching out the neck. They eat their salad with forks,

for it is forbidden to touch meat with the fingers, no matter how difficult it may be, and they prefer touching their lips with this little instrument than with their fingers."

Before the introduction of the fork, there existed a sort of code of fine manners for the use of persons of culture. Among other things it is ordained that when something is offered at table, it is proper to take it with three fingers, and also, it is considered a breach of fine manners to touch one's nose with the hand in which the meat is held.

At the present time in certain countries the fingers constitute the only forks in use. The Turks and Arabs still adhere to this primitive custom; in China two little sticks are employed wherewith the favorite rice is eaten. But, in general, the fork in one shape or another is now used, and it is not the lack of this instrument, but the tempting viand to plunge it into, which is a desideratum.—*Exchange*.

TRIBUNALS OF COMMERCE.

Some thirteen years ago, the writer brought before the Dominion Board of Trade the question of the desirability of establishing Tribunals of Commerce, on the French system in this country, and considerable discussion of a very favorable character, both in the press and in the Board of Trade followed. No steps were taken of a practical character, much to our disappointment. The reason did not lie very deep. Once discussing the matter at the time with a very prominent counsel learned in the law, since deceased, he, after fully admitting all the advantages of the system, and the great saving both of money and time to commercial men likely to result from its establishment, quietly set me back by asking: "And who, then, will pay me my \$25,000 a year? You can't have this Court in Canada, my young friend."

I am encouraged, however, by noticing the successful introduction of a reform almost as important in its character, both in Ottawa and Toronto, of the partial adoption of the Torrens' system of registering land titles, and in the hope that the same liberality which has induced the legal profession to permit the introduction of that system, may be extended so as to permit the greatest boon which the Legislature could extend to the merchants of Canada by the establishment of Tribunals of Commerce.

In favor of their establishment I would briefly urge three principal grounds:—

1. Because of the *absolute success* of the system in France, where there now exists over 100 such Tribunals.

2. The *great need*, owing first to the fact that customs of trade are not expressed in law; second, to the necessity of rapid adjustment. As affairs are at present, in the great majority of cases which would be submitted to a commercial court, any kind of a settlement is accepted in preference to coping with the difficulties and delays of the present system.

3. The *principle of special courts* has been found necessary and advantageous in other directions, such as probate, admiralty, divorce, bankruptcy and railways.

It will be argued that there are existing now facilities for arbitration which should cover the ground, but every one probably knows who has had to deal with ordinary arbitrations that they are not possessed of sufficient powers, have not the advantage of sufficient practice, nor are they in any sense equivalent to a court presided over by a legal assessor and assisted by experienced merchants who would value, as they are found to do in France, the honorable judicial position conferred on them by their associates in trade.

Now what does this court accomplish for the trader? Just this: It enables him to deal with a difference immediately—the case coming on as rapidly as the parties can be notified. It is then immediately dealt with and decided when the evidence is on the spot, and if not on the spot, the rules enable any distant evidence to be taken with great simplicity and inexpensiveness.

The custom of trade is determined by the commercial judges, and has the effect of law.

No lawyers are permitted to practice in the courts, and every party to a suit is supposed to deal with his own case. In France, however, the practice is, to some extent, to employ an agent who devotes himself to commercial cases, and whose charges are a matter of agreement with the client, and not recognized by the court.

The forms are as simple as those of an ordinary commercial arbitration, and in purely commercial cases the decision is final.

The advantages over the present system are very positive:—

1st. They make it possible to adjust