

THE DINER-OUT.

There are three classes of people who dine out—the people we must ask and like; the people we must ask and do not like; and the people we do not like and need not ask. Of these three the last are the diners-out *par excellence*—the guests of election. The former two are guests of necessity, accompanied by annoyance or pleasure as it may chance; debtors and creditors rather than chosen friends: people who buy with a ball and are paid by a dinner—who sow in a *soirée* and reap an *At Home*. But the favourite diner-out is in another category altogether. For him rival hostesses bid against each other, and offer bribes of the kind they think will touch him most nearly. Some ask him—simple commoner as he is, with a garret for his bedroom, and his club for his address—to meet the highest and grandest of their titled friends and merchant princes, “angels unawares” being possible to all men. Some, mindful of his adoration of beauty, and his presumed need of a rich wife, tell him that he shall sit next to the beautiful bride or the fascinating heiress who has taken the town by storm and turned as many heads as she has captured hearts. Others, knowing his zeal and his critical acumen in the direction of the sauce boats, quietly hint at the new *chef* whose field day this is to be, and they think he will not be disappointed; and others again give private information as to the particular vintage, and that seal, they have decided to dispense. All dangle some bright inducement before him as the conclusive reason why he should bestow himself on them, and not on any other—that is, why he should make their dinners go well by his ready wit, his lively talk, his inexhaustible fund of anecdote, and the tact that is equal to any emergency for his own part, coupled with the good nature which is ready to extricate anyone else out of a dilemma.

And when he has accepted, and is fairly caught, he never fails the unwritten programme he has been asked to fulfil. That part of the table where he sits he all alive with sparkling fun and ready humour. If the rest of the company are dull, as it may well happen—more likely indeed than not—he and his laughing *convives* make a kind of moral oasis in a prandial desert. You hear their words of amused surprise flash through the clatter of the plates and knives, and wish you had some better part than the share allotted you of talking against time with a monosyllabic partner, who has not even life enough to evince any interest in his or her dinner. You catch tantalising fragments of some rare jest or well-seasoned anecdote, and lose the rest in the ponderous tones of your next but one neighbour, asking, across the bulk of florid matronhood that intervenes, if you have read the last new squib on the Government—you being an ardent supporter thereof—or if you have watched the strange fluctuations of Spanish and the unaccountable depression of Egyptians? while you, not having a son besides your salary, know as little of the Stock and Share List as you do of hieroglyphics, and care to about the same amount. But you enjoy wit and fun and humour at all points, and could act chorus to a drama of jests without the faintest sense of fatigue, how long soever it might last. Sitting down, then, in the midst of the heavy respectability and brainless substantiality of the party, you envy the fortunate ones who have had seats assigned them near the diner-out. He is the sun, and they are the favoured planets; while you are only a poor neglected asteroid pushed out into the dark, neither shining nor shone upon.

The diner-out is a man of exquisite attire and faultless manners. The raw recruits of society copy his coat, his embroidery, his necktie, down to the amount of leather toecap he patronises in his boots. His jewellery is always of the simplest kind and in the best taste; and he changes it with the seasons—save in such instances, which are rare, when he has inherited a diamond or two of notable size and purity, and then he wears nothing else, and is known by his studs as a soldier by his buttons. Else he is great in plain chased gold; and no one looks too narrowly at the work. He is a man of perfect breeding, and without convictions. On one side of him sits a rabid Tory, on the other a furious Radical. Without committing himself to either he manages to appease both, and the cleverness with which he can soothe these excited partisans is real genius in its way. If he does it by no other method than leaning a little back in his chair, half shutting his eyes, while he joins the tips of his fingers together, saying, with a pleasant if deprecating smile, “Do you think any good was ever done by arguing politics over a vol-au-vent? Had we not best agree to differ as to the merits of this bill, and join hands in praising this Steinberger?” his admirers are ready to swear that no man ever showed such tact as he, and that but for him the whole dinner would have been a *fiasco*. So far, indeed, he is right. People do not go to a dinner party to argue about politics, and party passion is like poison to the digestion. But, living in public as he does, and his *métier* that of smoothing and softening, it is not surprising that his convictions become at last as elastic as down and as limp as ironed silk, and that even his most intimate friends cannot catalogue him? How can he have fixed principles, he whose life is passed in “making himself agreeable” to men of all parties and women of all faiths, to people of all shades of opinion, and givers of dinners of all grades—provided only that these have sufficient gastronomic education to secure a favourable *menu*, and that the host understands the orderly progression of the wines? His business is to tell good stories, not to testify; and a brilliant pun coming at the right moment, and just when there is an awkward pause in the dishes that brings the colour into the cheeks of the hostess, is more his idea of duty than any exposition of moral sentiments or political opinions. He is not one of those lions whose roar is mighty, and the fear of whose fame oppresses the small deer with inward awe and outward submission. He is only a tame poodle kind of lion, who has neither fangs nor claws; a scented, clipped, and curled lion with whom a child might play—if the father and mother revered Brillat-Savarin as he deserves; a lion who likes his venison on the turn, and his buffalo hump à la Bechamel; a lion who sits up and begs in the prettiest manner possible at the skirts of those dispensers of bread who dispense with grace, liberality, and judgment.

Sometimes, but more rarely, the diner-out by vocation is a woman. At the best she is not so successful as the man. Nature, which makes all nice women more retiring than not—and a woman who was not nice would not be a favourite dinner guest—has shortened the tether and dimmed the sparkle of the lady conversationalist, as she has neither shortened nor dimmed with men. An anecdote with just a dash of doubtful spice, that would come well enough from a man's lips, would sound gross and shocking from a woman's. Those fine shades

of *double entendre* which a man who knows his business can give with such a light touch and delicate hand, are sure to be laid on with too much emphasis by a woman; or she shows herself too conscious of her second intention, so that no way of escape for timid modesty by pretending not to see is possible, as it always is by the nonchalant crafty ease of a man. And if she does not show herself conscious, then she is set down as hard and bold, and no better than she should be—at least in mind if not in deed. But to tell anecdotes that shall be well seasoned, yet not too much so—to have salt in one's jests, yet not to make them briny—can anything be more difficult? Even in our days, when doubtful subjects are considered bad taste, and however wittily presented are apt to raise more frowns than smiles, it is almost impossible to avoid them in the trade of a professed dinner-table conversationalist. And this is one of the reasons why women are not so successful in their trade as their fathers and brothers; and why for one favourite dinner guest in petticoats there are half a dozen in broad cloth.

We must except, however, pretty women, when the hostess is not jealous, and cares more for her dinner than for herself. Pretty women who dress well and have nice little speeches and pleasant smiles at command, who are amiable and not spoilt, and whose consciousness of beauty has not made them indifferent to please, are always at a premium. They enliven the end where they sit much as a beautiful flower or a dainty little melody might; and the men near them are charmed, if the women feel eclipsed and look askance at their evident triumph. Women of notorious sympathy also go down well and often in the list; they make a good audience, and are safe for bores. And those whose only forte is an ultra-magnificence of attire; or those who are famous for that light, touch-and-go, easy prattle which is so like a soap bubble or a chameleonic shuttlecock; those who have made themselves a name and are lionesses in their own way, even if they are of odd appearance and eccentric manners; and those who are ready to come at a moment's notice, and who do not give themselves airs of offended pride if, being lone women in their degree, and not dinner creditors at any time, they are asked to fill up a vacant space not originally assigned to them—all these are dinner guests of frequent invitation, and all may be trusted to bring their store of small talk and good humour, of beauty or of sumptuousness, as their contribution. For we ought never to forget that we all owe our best to our hostess, and that the duty of the guest is to aid, as far as he is able, in making the party pleasant to every one with whom he comes in contact. Society has its requirements other than the rigour of costume; and to help our hostess with our fellow-guests is one of the first duties in the catalogue. He or she who does that best by any lawful means whatsoever, is the hero or she who is invited most frequently and welcomed most heartily; who is the favourite dinner guest of his—or her—circle, and the one whom all dinner-givers desire to see at their board.—*Queen.*

Dramatic Notes.

Elwin Booth is making a Western tour.
Ben De Bar has been playing “Falstaff” at St. Louis.
Rabinstein plays in Montreal to-night and on Monday.
Charlotte Thompson was playing last week at Savannah, Ga.
Wagner's “Tannhauser” continues to increase in popularity at Brussels.

Ambrose Thomas is about to bring out a new opera comique, entitled “Mina.”

Sir Michael Costa has completed Balfe's “Talisman,” which the latter left unfinished.

The Vokes Family have appeared during the week at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Pauline Lucca appeared last week with Miss Kellogg at Pike's Opera House, Cincinnati.

Signors Mario and Abruzzo, and Mrs. Dion Bondecault, sailed for Europe recently in the “Cuba.”

Johann Strauss's new operetta, “Le Carnaval de Rome,” is said to have won a complete success at Vienna.

The practice of hissing a dramatic performance was first introduced at the Théâtre Français on the 14th of January, 1683.

Lester Wallack's professional tour around the world, advertised in the London *Era*, turns out to be one of Mr. Nothman's jokes.

A drama based upon Eugène Sue's story, “The Wandering Jew,” is about to be produced at the Adelphi Theatre in London.

Signora Cucchi, the principal *danseuse* at San Carlo, Naples, has created a *furore* in the new ballet, “Dyablah,” in eleven tableaux.

Carlotta Leclercq has been playing at the Pittsburgh Opera House during the week. The English Opera Combination Troupe has also been at Pittsburgh.

Minnie Hanck is about to transfer her services from the Imperial to the Comic Opera House at Vienna. She has signed an engagement with the latter for three years.

It is rumoured in London that Lord Londesborough, who furnished the money for the production of “Babil and Bjeon,” at Covent Garden, is to become the permanent lessee of the St. James Theatre.

An odd novelty has made its appearance at the Paris Vaudeville in the shape of a translation into French verse of Aristophanes's “Plutus”—of course somewhat altered and adapted to the modern stage.

Mr. Gye is reported to be lying ill at Vienna. While returning from Italy he was suddenly seized with acute inflammation of the joints of the right foot, and has been unable to leave his bed for several days.

The superintendent of the Imperial Russian theatres has arrived in Paris to engage a great number of young and pretty women for a fairy spectacle to be entitled “Mouchehat,” to be given at St. Petersburg.

Six new theatres are being built in Vienna for the great Exhibition—City Theatre, Opera Comique, Court Theatre, Residence Theatre, Academy Theatre (for French plays of the higher order), and International Theatre.

The manager of the Vienna Theatre has given Dumas \$1,600 for the right to produce “La Femme de Claude.” M. Bellotti Bon, manager of the Théâtre Commedia, at Milan, offered \$300 for the same privilege, and was refused.

At the conclusion of her last performance in St. Petersburg,

Adelina Patti had the honour of shaking hands with the Czar of all the Russias. On the same occasion she was presented with a diamond coronet, valued at \$7,000.

Signo Aramburo, Mr. Mapleson's new tenor, has appeared in Edinburgh; and, according to the Edinburgh and Glasgow critics, he is a really valuable addition to the slender stock of operatic tenors. His voice is pronounced “remarkably sweet, pure, tender, and even superb.”

According to the papers, those always reliable chronicles of the time, Adelina Patti was so overcome by the warmth of her reception on the occasion of her farewell performance in St. Petersburg that she fainted, and Mme. Nilsson-Rouzeau, for getting her marriage, begged her manager to be allowed to remain in that city a while longer, because the people of the Russian capital were her “betrothed.”

In New York Almásy and the Opera Bouffe Company made their appearance on Thursday at the Academy of Music. At the Fifth Avenue Theatre the week opened with “Divorce,” and at the Union Square Theatre with “Frodo Frodo.” “Monte Christo” will be produced at the Grand Opera on the 25th inst.; it is stated that Mr. Fechter is to receive \$1,000 for each performance during a four week's engagement. Fechter's Theatre, owing to some difficulty with the contractor, etc., is not to open so soon as was anticipated.

TORONTO ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE.—Last week the attraction at this Theatre, was Miss Little Eldridge, in the plays, “Ella” and “Mignon.” This lady, though young, displays a good amount of dramatic talent, which we have no doubt time will improve. In both plays she was very successful, particularly in the character of Ella, and was loudly applauded each evening. Mr. Vernon as “Bob” the frank and open-hearted sailor, and Mr. Tannhill as “Joe Chirrup” the blind sailor, were also very good in the rendering of their parts, while Mr. Melville as “Salvo” the showman, was very humorous as usual.

The managers keep up the attractions, and this week the talented actor Mr. Tom Rigg, appears in “Shin Fane.”

From London we learn that a new play, “The Stone Jug,” which is simply Jack Sheppard's story told down, with the names of the characters altered, has been produced at the Adelphi. Wycherly's “Country Girl,” as altered by Garcia, has been revived at the Charing Cross Theatre. An extravaganza on the theme of “King John” or “Magna Charta,” is to be put on the boards at the Strand. The Easter novelty at the Gaiety is a new burlesque, founded on the opera of “Martha.” Jerrold's comedy of “The Prisoner of War” will also be revived. At the Philharmonic the new opera-bouffe of “Fleur de Lys” takes the place of the long-lived “Genevieve de Brabant,” which has nearly reached its four hundred and fiftieth night.

Forrest the actor, to use a slang word, was extremely apt to “bally” all in the theatre, from the manager downwards. But he once met his match. It was when he was playing at the old Broadway Theatre, near Peel Street. His pieces were followed by an exhibition of lions by their tamer, a certain Herr Driesbach. Forrest was one day saying that he had never been afraid in all his life—could not imagine the emotion. Driesbach made no remark at the time, but in the evening, when the curtain had fallen, invited Forrest home with him. Forrest assented, and the two, entering a house, walked a long distance through many devious passages—all dark—until finally Driesbach, opening a door, said, “This way, Mr. Forrest.” Forrest entered and immediately heard the door slammed and locked behind him. He had not time to express any surprise at this, for at the same moment he felt something soft rubbing against his leg, and putting out his hand touched what felt like a cat's back. A rasping growl saluted the motion, and he saw two fiery glaring eyeballs looking up at him. “Are you afraid, Mr. Forrest?” asked Driesbach, invisible in the darkness. “Not a bit,” Driesbach said something; the growl deepened and became hoarser, the back began to arch and the eyes to shine more fiercely. Forrest held out two or three minutes; but the symptoms became so terrifying that he owned in so many words that he was afraid. “Now let me out, you infernal scoundrel,” he said to the lion tamer, “and I'll break every bone in your body.” He was imprudent there, for Driesbach kept him, not daring to move a finger, with the lion rubbing against his leg all the time until Forrest promised not only immunity, but a champagne supper into the bargain.

Art and Literature.

Mr. Anthony Trollope starts a new serial story in the April number of the monthly *Fortnightly*.

A cantata, by Rabinstein, founded upon Goethe's “Wilhelm Meister,” has just been published at Leipzig.

Mr. Layard has contributed to the *Revista de Espana* an article on the painter Velasquez, which is stated to have been received with much approval in Spanish artistic and literary circles.

Mr. Froide is preparing a series of brilliant articles for *Scribner's Monthly* on monastery life in England in the older time. He will disclose what a great abbey of those days really was.

The works of Rouget de Lisle, who wrote the “Marseillaise,” are about to be re-edited. The “Marseillaise” is the only one of his songs which is generally known, but in 1825 he published fifty French songs at his own expense, at his residence, 21, Passage Saunier, in Paris. The most important of these are “Le Chant de Roland,” “La Vengeance,” “Le Vengeur,” “Le Chant du Combat,” and “La Mort de Kéiser.”

The *Daily Telegraph* has received a telegram from Mr. George Smith, who is now at Mossoul prosecuting his search for Assyrian records, stating that, thanks to the exertions of Sir Henry Elliot, the English Ambassador at Constantinople, the Turkish Government has sent orders to the Governor-General of Bagdad, directing that Mr. Smith may be permitted to commence operations at once, and he has already made several discoveries.

OUR DIGESTIVE ORGANS.—The result of much scientific research and experiment has within the last few years enabled the medical profession to supply to the human system, where impaired or inactive, the power which assimilates our food. This is now known as “Morson's Pepsine,” and is prescribed as wine, globules, and lozenges, with full directions. The careful and regular use of this valuable medicine restores the natural functions of the stomach, giving once more strength to the body. There are many imitations, but Morson and Son, the original manufacturers, are practical chemists, and the “Pepsine” prepared by them is warranted, and bears their labels and trade-mark. It is sold by all chemists in bottles 3s., and boxes from 2s. 6d., but purchasers should see the name

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