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SOYER'S  
PANTROPHEON.







THE

ARTS AND CRAFTS

OF

THE EAST AND WEST

IN THE

ARTS AND CRAFTS OF THE WORLD

BY A. S. S. S.

THE EAST AND WEST

THE EAST AND WEST

THE EAST AND WEST

LONDON

THE EAST AND WEST

THE EAST AND WEST

THE EAST AND WEST





THE  
**PANTROPHEON**

OR,  
HISTORY OF FOOD,

And its Preparation,

FROM THE EARLIEST AGES OF THE WORLD.

By A. SOYER,

AUTHOR OF

"The Gastronomic Regenerator" and the "Modern Housewife, or Ménagère," &c.

EMBELLISHED WITH FORTY-TWO STEEL PLATES,  
ILLUSTRATING THE GREATEST GASTRONOMIC MARVELS OF ANTIQUITY.

LONDON:  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

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*The Author reserves his right of Translating this Work.*



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 Contents COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
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	Page
PANTROPHEON . . . . .	3
I.	
AGRICULTURE . . . . .	9
II.	
CEREALS . . . . .	19
III.	
GRINDING OF CORN . . . . .	23
IV.	
MANIPULATION OF FLOUR . . . . .	30
V.	
FRUMENTA . . . . .	41
VI.	
GRAINS: SEEDS . . . . .	46
VII.	
VEGETABLES . . . . .	49
VIII.	
DRIED VEGETABLES . . . . .	53
Beans . . . . .	53
Haricots . . . . .	55
Peas . . . . .	56
Lentils . . . . .	57

	Page
IX.	
KITCHEN GARDEN . . . . .	59
Cabbage . . . . .	60
Beet . . . . .	62
Spinach . . . . .	63
Mallows . . . . .	64
Asparagus . . . . .	64
Gourd . . . . .	66
Turnips . . . . .	67
Carrots . . . . .	68
Blit (a sort of Beet) . . . . .	68
Purslane . . . . .	68
Sorrel . . . . .	69
Brocoli . . . . .	69
Artichoke . . . . .	70
Pompion . . . . .	71
Cucumber . . . . .	72
Lettuce . . . . .	74
Endive . . . . .	75
Onions . . . . .	76
Leeks . . . . .	77
Melon . . . . .	77
Radish . . . . .	79
Horse-Radish . . . . .	80
Garlic . . . . .	81
Eschalots . . . . .	82
Parsley . . . . .	82
Chervil . . . . .	84
Water-Cresses . . . . .	84
X.	
PLANTS USED IN SEASONING . . . . .	86
Poppy . . . . .	86
Sesame . . . . .	86
Sow-Thistle . . . . .	87
Orach . . . . .	87
Rocket . . . . .	87
Fennel . . . . .	88
Dill . . . . .	88
Anise-Seed . . . . .	88
Hyssop . . . . .	88
Wild Marjoram . . . . .	89
Savory . . . . .	89

## PLANTS USED IN SEASONING continued—

Thyme . . . . .	89
Wild Thyme . . . . .	89
Sweet Marjoram . . . . .	89
Pennyroyal . . . . .	90
Rue . . . . .	90
Mint . . . . .	90
Spanish Camomile . . . . .	90
Cummin . . . . .	91
Alisander . . . . .	91
Capers . . . . .	91
Asafetida . . . . .	91
Sumach . . . . .	92
Ginger . . . . .	92
Wormwood . . . . .	93

## XI.

FRUITS . . . . .	95
------------------	----

## XII.

STONE FRUIT . . . . .	97
Olive Tree . . . . .	97
Palm Tree . . . . .	100
Cherry Tree . . . . .	102
Apricot Tree . . . . .	103
Peach Tree . . . . .	104
Plum Tree . . . . .	105

## XIII.

PIP FRUIT . . . . .	106
Quince Tree . . . . .	106
Pear Tree . . . . .	107
Apple Tree . . . . .	108
Lemon Tree . . . . .	109
Orange Tree . . . . .	110
Fig Tree . . . . .	112
Raspberry Tree . . . . .	115
Currant Tree . . . . .	115
Strawberry Plant . . . . .	115
Mulberry Tree . . . . .	116

## XIV.

<b>SHELL FRUIT</b> . . . . .	117
Almond Tree . . . . .	117
Walnut Tree . . . . .	118
Nut Tree . . . . .	120
Pistachio Tree . . . . .	120
Chestnut Tree . . . . .	121
Pomegranate . . . . .	122

## XV.

<b>ANIMAL FOOD</b> . . . . .	123
Rearing of Cattle . . . . .	127
Markets . . . . .	128
Butchers . . . . .	129

## XVI.

<b>ANIMALS</b> . . . . .	133
The Pig . . . . .	133
The Ox . . . . .	142
The Lamb . . . . .	146
The Kid . . . . .	148
The Ass . . . . .	150
The Dog . . . . .	150

## XVII.

<b>POULTRY</b> . . . . .	152
The Cock . . . . .	153
The Capon . . . . .	154
The Hen . . . . .	155
The Chicken . . . . .	156
The Duck . . . . .	158
The Goose . . . . .	159
The Pigeon . . . . .	162
The Guinea Hen . . . . .	163
The Turkey Hen . . . . .	163
The Peacock . . . . .	166

## XVIII.

	Page
MILK, BUTTER, CHEESE, AND EGGS . . . . .	168
Milk . . . . .	168
Butter . . . . .	170
Cheese . . . . .	173
Eggs . . . . .	175

## XIX.

HUNTING . . . . .	179
The Stag . . . . .	182
The Roebuck . . . . .	184
The Deer . . . . .	184
The Wild Boar . . . . .	185
The Hare . . . . .	188
The Rabbit . . . . .	189
The Fox . . . . .	190
The Hedgehog . . . . .	190
The Squirrel . . . . .	190
The Camel . . . . .	190
The Elephant . . . . .	191

## XX.

FEATHERED GAME . . . . .	193
The Pheasant . . . . .	194
The Partridge . . . . .	195
The Quail . . . . .	196
The Thrush . . . . .	197
The Blackbird . . . . .	199
The Starling . . . . .	200
The Flamingo . . . . .	200
Fig-Pecker, or Beccafico . . . . .	201
The Ortolan . . . . .	203
The Ostrich . . . . .	203
The Stork . . . . .	204
The Sea-Swallow . . . . .	204
The Wood-Hen, Bustard, Water-Hen, and Teal . . . . .	206
The Woodcock, Snipe, Curlew, Crow, Turtle Dove, and Lark . . . . .	207

	XXI.	Page
FISH		210
Sturgeon		216
Red Mullet		218
Sea-Eel		220
Lamprey		222
Sea-Wolf		223
Scarus, or Parrot-Fish		223
Turbot		224
Tunny		225
Conger-Eel		226
Eel		227
Pike		228
Carp		229
Eel-Pout		229
Trout		230
Gold Fish		230
Whiting		230
Cod Fish		231
Perch		232
Scate		233
Salmon		233
Sepia, or Cuttle-Fish		234
Swordfish		234
Shad		234
Rhombo, or Rhombus		235
Mugil		235
Mackerel		235
Haddock		236
Tench		236
Dragon Weaver		237
Loligo		237
Sole		237
Angel-Fish		237
File-Fish		237
Pilchard		238
Loach		238
Gudgeon		238
Herring		239
Anchovy		240
SHELL-FISH		241
Oysters		242
Sea-Hedgehog		245



## SHELL-FISH continued—

Page

Mussel . . . . .	245
Scallop . . . . .	246
Tortoise . . . . .	246
Sea-Crawfish . . . . .	247
Lobster . . . . .	247
River Crayfish . . . . .	248
Crab . . . . .	248
Frogs . . . . .	249

## XXII.

THE COOK . . . . .	251
THE KITCHEN . . . . .	259

## XXIII.

SEASONINGS . . . . .	266
Salt . . . . .	267
Brine . . . . .	268
Digestive Salts . . . . .	269
Garum . . . . .	269
Honey . . . . .	273
Sugar . . . . .	275
Cinnamon . . . . .	275
Cloves . . . . .	276
Pepper . . . . .	277
Verjuice . . . . .	277
Vinegar . . . . .	278
Truffle . . . . .	279
Mushrooms . . . . .	282

## XXIV.

PASTRY . . . . .	284
------------------	-----

## XXV.

WATER . . . . .	293
-----------------	-----

## XXVI.

BEVERAGES . . . . .	299
Tea . . . . .	306
Coffee . . . . .	310
Chocolate . . . . .	312

	Page
XXVII.	
DRINKING CUPS . . . . .	316
XXVIII.	
WINE . . . . .	322
LIQUEUR WINE . . . . .	332
XXIX.	
REPASTS . . . . .	339
XXX.	
VARIETY OF REPASTS . . . . .	354
XXXI.	
THE DINING-ROOM . . . . .	363
XXXII.	
THE TABLE . . . . .	368
THE TABLE SEATS . . . . .	372
XXXIII.	
THE SERVANTS . . . . .	376
XXXIV.	
THE GUESTS . . . . .	380
XXXV.	
A ROMAN SUPPER . . . . .	386
—	
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES . . . . .	399
MODERN BANQUETS . . . . .	401
TABLE OF REFERENCES . . . . .	413
TABLE OF RECIPES . . . . .	444
INDEX . . . . .	449

## List of Illustrations.

	Page
PLATE A.	
FRONTISPIECE—PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR.	
PLATE B.	
HEAVEN AND EARTH.	
PLATE B.*	
VICTUA, OR THE GODDESS OF GASTRONOMY.	
PLATE I.	
EGYPTIAN LABOURERS.—No. 1, Egyptian Labourer. No. 2, Sketch of a Plough. No. 3, Basket. No. 4, Egyptian with Sickle, drawn by Horses . . . . .	12
PLATE II.	
GREEK AND ROMAN PLOUGHS.—Nos. 1 and 2, Greek and Roman Ploughs. No. 3, Plough, turned once or twice. No. 4, Plough, as used by the Gauls . . . . .	14
PLATE III.	
AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS.—No. 1, Plain Sickle. No. 2A, Plough, from the Georgics of Virgil. No. 3, Scythe. No. 4, Spade. No. 5, Pick- axe. Nos. 6 and 7, Mattocks . . . . .	16
PLATE IV.	
ALCINOUS'S HAND-MILL . . . . .	23
PLATE V.	
JUMENTARIE MILLS . . . . .	26

	Page
PLATE VI.	
PLAUTUS'S HAND-MILL . . . . .	27
PLATE VII.	
CAPPADOCIA BREAD.—No. 1, Loaf of Bread. No. 2, Pastry Mould. No. 3, Cappadocia Bread. No. 4, Mould for ditto . . . . .	38
PLATE VIII.	
SCALES AND WEIGHTS . . . . .	130
PLATE IX.	
VARRO'S AVIARY . . . . .	198
PLATE X.	
APICIUS AND EPICURUS . . . . .	201
PLATE XI.	
REMAINS OF KITCHEN STOVES.—No. 1, Kitchen Stove. No. 2, Stock Pot. No. 3, Ditto. No. 4, Ladles. No. 5, Brazier . . . . .	259
PLATE XII.	
STOCK POTS AND BROKEN STEW-PAN . . . . .	261
PLATE XIII.	
KITCHEN UTENSILS.—No. 1, Boiler, of Bronze. No. 2, Flat Saucepan. No. 3, Kettle. No. 4, Gridiron. No. 5, Trivet . . . . .	262
PLATE XIV.	
CHAFING-DISH AND SILVER CUP.—No. 1, Chafing-Dish. No. 2, Silver Cup	263
PLATE XV.	
SPOON, FORK, KNIFE, SIMPULUM, &c.—No. 1, Roman Silver Spoon. No. 2, Brass Knife. No. 3, Simpulum. No. 4, Ditto. No. 5, Fork . . . . .	264
PLATE XVI.	
ROMAN SILVER KNIFE-HANDLE, SILVER SPOON, AND DEEP DISH.—No. 1, Silver Knife-handle. No. 2, Spoon. No. 3, Dish . . . . .	265
PLATE XVII.	
ROMAN AND EGYPTIAN PAILS.—No. 1, Pail, of Bronze. No. 2, Pail, with Two Handles (Egyptian) . . . . .	297
PLATE XVIII.	
DRINKING-CUPS.—No. 1, Drinking-Cups (Shaded). No. 2, Ditto, Pig's Head and Dog's Head . . . . .	316

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

xv

	Page
PLATE XVIII.A	
DRINKING-CUPS.—No. 3, Ram's Head. No. 4, Boar's Head . . .	317
PLATE XIX.	
DRINKING-HORNS.—Nos. 1 and 2, Drinking-Horns. No. 3, Horn, Aztec's Head . . . . .	318
PLATE XX.	
CRYSTAL VASE . . . . .	319
PLATE XXI.	
MURRHINE CUP . . . . .	321
PLATE XXII.	
RELICS FROM HERCULANEUM.—No. 1, Wine Press. No. 2, Diogenes. No. 3, Beast of Burthen (a toy) . . . . .	325
PLATE XXIII.	
COLUM NIVARUM . . . . .	327
PLATE XXIV.	
VESSELS FOR HOLDING WINE.—No. 1, Amphora. Nos. 2 and 3, Smaller Dolium. No. 4, Long-neck Bottle . . . . .	328
PLATE XXV.	
VASES FOR WINE.—No. 1, Large Vase. No. 2, Glass Vase. No. 3, Glass Bottle, with Cup . . . . .	363
PLATE XXVI.	
VASES FOR WINE.—No. 1, Glass Vase. No. 2, Ditto. No. 3, Etruscan, Three Handles. No. 4, Large Silver Vase. No. 5, Cantharus . . .	364
PLATE XXVI.A	
CURIOUS ORNAMENTAL TERRA-COTTA CUPS.—No. 1, Goose. No. 2, Teapot. No. 3, Jupiter's Head . . . . .	365
PLATE XXVI.B	
HOUSE OF BRUNSWICK'S VASE . . . . .	366
PLATE XXVII.	
VASES FOR WINE.—No. 1, Etruscan Flat Vase. No. 2, Marble Vase. No. 3, Metal Vase. No. 4, Greek Etruscan Drinking Vase . . .	370
PLATE XXVIII.	
PROCILLATOIRES AND TRICLINIUM.—No. 1, Procillatoires. No. 2, Triclinium	378

	Page
PLATE XXIX.	
ROMAN SUPPER . . . . .	386
PLATE XXX.	
No. 1, Greek Etruscan Vase. No. 2, Greek Terra-Cotta Vase. No. 3, Etruscan Terra-Cotta Vase. No. 4, Glass Amphora, for Falernian Wine. No. 5, Terra-Cotta Amphora, for Falernian Wine . . .	390
PLATE XXX.*	
CRATER, OR DRINKING CUP . . . . .	391
PLATE XXXI.	
No. 1, Curious Silver Dish. Nos. 2 and 3, Silver ditto . . . . .	392
PLATE XXXII.	
NERO AND HELIOGABALUS . . . . .	398
PLATE XXXIII.	
YORK BANQUET . . . . .	404
PLATE XXXIV.	
WILD BOAR A LA TROYENNE, AND THE HUNDRED GUINEA DISH . . .	406
PLATE XXXV.	
THREE SILVERED GLASS CUPS . . . . .	407



THIS WORK

Is Dedicated by the Author

TO THE

GENIUS OF GASTRONOMY.











# PANTROPHONE.

---

"I did feast with *Cæsar*."

SHAKESPEARE.—"*Julius Cæsar*," Act iii., Sc. 3.

"Dis-moi ce que tu manges,  
Se te dirai ce que tu es."

BRILLAT-SAVARIN.—"*Physiologie du Gout*."

---

THANKS to the impressions received in boyhood, Rome and Athens always present themselves to our minds accompanied by the din of arms, shouts of victory, or the clamours of plebeians crowded round the popular tribune. "And yet," said we, "nations, like individuals, have two modes of existence distinctly marked—one intellectual and moral, the other sensual and physical; and both continue to interest through the lapse of ages."

What, for instance, calls forth our sympathies more surely than to follow from the cradle that city of Romulus—at first so weak, so obscure, and so despised—through its prodigious developments, until, having

become the sovereign mistress of the world, it seems, like Alexander, to lament that the limits of the globe restrict within so narrow a compass its ungovernable ardour for conquest, its insatiable thirst of *opima spolia* and tyrannical oppression. In like manner, a mighty river, accounted as nothing at its source, where a child can step across, receives in its meandrous descent the tribute of waters, which roll on with increasing violence, and rush at last from their too narrow bed to inundate distant plains, and spread desolation and terror.

History has not failed to record, one by one, the battles, victories, and defeats of nations which no longer exist; it has described their public life,—their life in open air,—the tumultuous assemblies of the forum,—the fury of the populace,—the revolts of the camps,—the barbarous spectacles of those amphitheatres, where the whole pagan universe engaged in bloody conflict, where gladiators were condemned to slaughter one another for the pastime of the over-pampered inhabitants of the Eternal City—sanguinary spectacles, which often consigned twenty or thirty thousand men to the jaws of death in the space of thirty days!

But, after all, neither heroes, soldiers, nor people, can be always at war; they cannot be incessantly at daggers drawn on account of some open-air election; the applause bestowed on a skilful and courageous *bestiarius* is not eternal; captives may be poignarded in the Circus by way of amusement, but only for a time. Independently of all these things, there is the home, the fire-side, the prose of life, if you will; nay, let us say it at once, the business of life—eating and drinking.

It is to that we have devoted our vigils, and, in order to arrive at our aim, we have given an historical sketch of the vegetable and animal alimentation of man from the earliest ages; therefore it will be easily understood why we have taken the liberty of saying to the austere Jew, the voluptuous Athenian, the obsequious or vain-glorious senator of imperial Rome, and even to the fantastical, prodigal, and cruel Cæsars: "Tell me what thou eatest, and I will tell thee who thou art."

But, it must be confessed that our task was surrounded with difficulties, and required much laborious patience and obstinate perseverance. It is easy to penetrate into the temples, the baths, and the theatres of the ancients; not so to rummage their cellars, pantries, and kitchens, and study the delicate magnificence of their dining-rooms. Now it was there, and there alone, that we sought to obtain access.

With that view we have had recourse to the only possible means:

we have interrogated those old memoirs of an extinct civilisation which connect the present with the past; poets, orators, historians, philosophers, epistolographers, writers on husbandry, and even those who are the most frivolous or the most obscure—we have consulted all, examined all, neglected nothing. Our respectful curiosity has often emboldened us to peep into the sacred treasure of the annals of the people of God; and sometimes the doctors of the Primitive Church have furnished us with interesting traits of manners and customs, together with chance indications of domestic usages, disseminated, and, as it were, lost in the midst of grave moral instruction.

The fatigue of these unwonted researches appeared to us to be fully compensated by the joy we experienced on finding our hopes satisfied by some new discovery. Like the botanist, who forgets his lassitude at the unexpected sight of a desired plant, we no longer remembered the dust of fatigal volumes, nor the numberless leaves we had turned over, when by a happy chance our gastronomic enthusiasm espied a curious and rare dish.

Thus it is that this work—essay, we ought to call it—has been slowly and gradually augmented with the spoils of numerous writers of antiquity, both religious and profane.

We have avoided, as much as possible, giving to this book a didactic and magisterial character, which would have ill-accorded with the apparent lightness of the subject, and might have rendered it tedious to most readers. We know not whether these researches will be considered instructive, but we hope they will amuse.

When we compare the cookery of the ancients with our own—and the parallel naturally presents itself to the mind—it often betrays strange anomalies, monstrous differences, singular perversions of taste, and incomprehensible amalgamations, which baffle every attempt at justification. Apicius himself, or perhaps the Cœlius of the 3rd century, to whom we owe the celebrated treatise "*De Opsoniis*," would run great risk—if he were now to rise from his tomb, and attempted to give vogue to his ten books of recipes—either of passing for a poisoner or of being put under restraint as a subject decidedly insane. It follows, then, that although we have borrowed his curious lucubrations, we leave to the Roman epicurean and to his times the entire responsibility of his work.

The reader will also remark, in the course of this volume, asserted facts of a striking oddity, certain valuations which appear to be exag-

gerated, some descriptions he will pronounce fabulous or impossible. Now, we have never failed to give our authorities, but we are far from being willing to add our personal guarantee ; so that we leave all those antique frauds—if any—to be placed to the account of the writers who have traitorously furnished them.

We think, however, that most persons will peruse with some interest (and, let us hope, a little indulgence) these studies on an art which, like all arts invented by necessity or inspired by pleasure, has kept pace with the genius of nations, and became more refined and more perfect in proportion as they themselves became more polite.

It appears that the luxury and enchantments of the table were first appreciated by the Assyrians and Persians, those voluptuous Asiatics, who, by reason of the enervating mildness of the climate, were powerless to resist sensual seductions.

Greece—"beloved daughter of the gods"—speedily embellished the culinary art with all the exquisite delicacy of her poetic genius. "The people of Athens," says an amiable writer, whom we regret to quote from memory, "took delight in exercising their creative power, in giving existence to new arts, in enlarging the aureola of civilisation. At their voice, the gods hastened to inhabit the antique oak ; they disported in the fountains and the streams ; they dispersed themselves in gamesome groups on the tops of the mountains and in the shade of the valleys, while their songs and their balmy breath mingled with the harmonious whisperings of the gentle breeze."

What cooks ! what a table ! what guests ! in that Eden of paganism—that land of intoxicating perfumes, of generous wines, and inexhaustible laughter ! The Lacedæmonians alone, those cynics of Greece, threw a saddening shade over the delicious picture of present happiness undisturbed by any thought of to-morrow.

Let us not forget that an Athenian, not less witty than nice, and, moreover, a man of good company, has left us this profound aphorism : "*La viande la plus délicate est celle qui est le moins viande ; le poisson le plus exquis est celui qui est le moins poisson.*"

Rome was long renowned for her austere frugality, and it is remarked that, during more than five centuries, the art of making bread was there unknown, which says little for her civilisation and intelligence. Subsequently, the conquest of Greece, the spoils of the subjugated world, the prodigious refinements of the Syracusans, gave to the conquered nations,



says Juvenal, a complete revenge on their conquerors. The unheard-of excesses of the table swallowed up patrimonies which seemed to be inexhaustible, and illustrious dissipators obtained a durable but sad renown.

The Romans had whimsical tastes, since they dared serve the flesh of asses and dogs, and ruined themselves to fatten snails. But, after all, the caprices of fashion, rather than the refinement of sensuality, compelled them to adopt these strange aliments. Paulus Æmilius, no doubt a good judge in such matters, formed a high opinion of the elegance displayed by his compatriots in the entertainments; and he compared a skilful cook, at the moment when he is planning and arranging a repast, to a great general.

We were very anxious to enrich our "PANTROPHEON" with a greater number of *Bills of Fare*, or details of banquets; but we have become persuaded that it is very difficult, at the present day, to procure a complete and accurate account of the arrangement of feasts at which were seated guests who died two or three thousand years ago. Save and except the indications—more or less satisfactory, but always somewhat vague—which we gather on this subject from Petronius, Athenæus, Apuleius, Macrobius, Suetonius, and some other writers, we can do little more than establish analogies, make deductions, and reconstruct the entire edifice of an antique banquet by the help of a few data, valuable, without doubt, but almost always incomplete.

One single passage in Macrobius—a curious monument of Roman cookery—will supply the place of multiplied researches: it is the description of a supper given by the Pontiff Lentulus on the day of his reception. We present it to the amateurs of the magic art:

"The first course (*ante-cæna*) was composed of sea-hedgehogs, raw oysters in abundance, all sorts of shell-fish, and asparagus. The second service comprised a fine fatted pullet, a fresh dish of oysters, and other shell-fish, different kinds of dates, univalvular shell-fish (as whelks, conchs, &c.), more oysters, but of different kinds, sea-nettles, beccaficoes, chines of roe-buck and wild boar, fowls covered with a perfumed paste, a second dish of shell-fish, and purples—a very costly kind of crustacea. The third and last course presented several *hors-d'œuvre*, a wild boar's head, fish, a second set of *hors-d'œuvre*, ducks, potted river fish, leverets, roast fowls, and cakes from the marshes of Ancona."

All these delicacies would very much surprise an epicurean of the

present day, particularly if they were offered to him in the order indicated by Macrobius. The text of that writer, as it is handed down to us, may be imperfect or mutilated; again, he may have described the supper of Lentulus from memory, regardless of the order prescribed for those punctilious and learned transitions to which a feast owes all its value.

Let us, we would say, in addressing our culinary colleagues, avoid those deplorable *lacunes*; let us preserve for future generations, who may be curious concerning our gastronomic pomp, the minutiae of our memorable magic meetings, prompted, almost without exception, by some highly civilising idea—a love of the arts, the commercial propagandism, or a feeling of philanthropy. The Greeks and Romans—egotists, if there ever were any—supped for themselves, and lived only to sup; our pleasures are ennobled by views more useful and more elevated. We often dine for the poor, and we sometimes dance for the afflicted, the widow, and the orphan.

Moreover, a most important ethnographical consideration seems to give a serious interest to the diet of a people, if it be true, as we are convinced it is, and as we shall probably one day endeavour to demonstrate, that the manners of individuals, their idiosyncrasies, inclinations, and intellectual habits, are modified, to a certain extent, as taste, climate, and circumstances may determine the nature of their food; an assertion which might be supported by irrefragable proofs, and would show the justness of the aphorism: "Tell me what thou eatest, and I will tell thee who thou art."





V E S T A

## AGRICULTURE.

It is not, as is commonly supposed, the simple and unadorned work of the soil, which is the source of our food and clothing. It is a complex and diversified activity, involving the application of science, art, and industry, and the use of tools and machinery. It is a process which has evolved over centuries, and which continues to evolve as our knowledge and resources expand.

The history of agriculture is a long and varied one, extending from the earliest days of human existence to the present. It is a story of discovery, innovation, and progress. From the simple tools and techniques of the early farmers to the sophisticated machinery and scientific methods of the modern era, agriculture has always been a dynamic and ever-changing industry. It is a testament to the human spirit and our ability to overcome adversity and create a better world for ourselves and for future generations.

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## I.

# AGRICULTURE.

EVERY nation has attributed the origin of agriculture to some beneficent Deity. The Egyptians bestowed this honour on Osiris, the Greeks on Ceres and Triptolemus, the Latins on Saturn, or on their king Janus, whom, in gratitude, they placed among the gods. All nations, however, agree that, whoever introduced among them this happy and beneficial discovery, has been most useful to man by elevating his mind to a state of sociability and civilization.<sup>1</sup>

Many learned men have made laborious researches in order to discover, not only the name of the inventor of agriculture, but the country and the century in which he lived; some, however, have failed in their inquiry. And why? Because they have forgotten, in their investigation, the only book which could give them positive information on the birth of society, and the first development of human industry. We read in the Book of Genesis that: "The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it."<sup>2</sup> And, after having related his fatal disobedience, the sacred historian adds: "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."<sup>3</sup>

Would it be possible to adduce a more ancient and sublime authority?

If it be asked why we take Moses as our guide, instead of dating the origin of human society from those remote periods which are lost in the night of ages, we invoke one of the most worthy masters of human science—the illustrious Cuvier—who says:—

"No western nation can produce an uninterrupted chronology of

on tillage and sowing, and also on the gathering of olives, on the tithes which were paid to the priests, and the portion set aside for the poor. They also mention some species of excellent wheat, barley, rice, figs, dates, &c., which were gathered in Judea.<sup>14</sup>

The soil of this delicious country was astonishingly fertile,<sup>15</sup> the operation of tillage was easy, and the cattle here supplied a greater abundance of milk than anywhere else;<sup>16</sup> we will just remark that even the names of several localities indicate some of these advantages. For instance, Capernaum signified a beautiful country town; Gennesareth, the garden of the groves; Bethsaida, the house of plenty; Nain was indebted for its sweet name to the beauty of its situation; and Magdela, on the borders of the sea of Galilee, to its site, and the happy life of its inhabitants.

Next to the Hebrews, in agriculture, came the Egyptians, a strange and fantastical people, who raised the imperishable pyramids, the statue of Memnon, and the lighthouse of Alexandria, and who yet prayed religiously every morning to their goddess—a *radish*, or their gods—*leek* and *onion*.<sup>17</sup> Whatever there may be of folly and rare industry in this mixture, we cannot but agree that the art of agriculture was very ancient in Egypt, as the father of the faithful—Abraham—retired into that country at a time of famine;<sup>18</sup> and, later, the sons of Jacob went there also to purchase corn.<sup>19</sup>

We know that the Romans called this province the granary of the empire, and that they drew from it every year twenty million bushels of corn.<sup>20</sup> If we are to believe the Egyptians, Osiris, son of Jupiter (and hence a demi-god of good family), taught them the art of tilling the ground by aid of the plough.<sup>21</sup> This instrument, we may easily believe, was much less complicated than ours of the present day; there is no doubt that in the beginning, and for a great length of time afterwards,

#### DESCRIPTION OF PLATE No. I.

No. 1. Represents an Egyptian labourer tilling the ground with a pickaxe of a simple form; drawn at Thebes, by Mons. Nectoul, member of the commission of the French expedition in Egypt, from paintings in the subterranean vaults of Minich.

No. 2. Is a sketch of the plough, which a great number of Egyptian figures hold as an attribute; this was taken from the subterranean vault of Eibeithya; it represents the plough guided by a labourer, and drawn by oxen tied by the horns, and whipped by a second labourer, whilst a third, placed by the side of the oxen, throws before them the seeds which are to be covered by the ploughed earth.

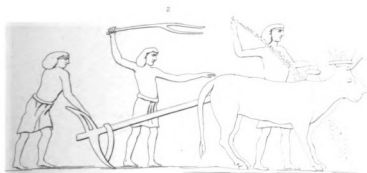
No. 3. A basket to carry the seeds. On the tombs of the kings of Thebes is seen painted a sower, with a basket like this, an attribute which is seen hanging on the back of the divinity Osiris.

No. 4. Represents an Egyptian with a sickle, much like in shape to a scythe; and Denon, of the French expedition, proved that corn was also cut with a scythe.











it was nothing but a long piece of wood without joint, and bent in such manner that one end went into the ground, whilst the other served to yoke the oxen ;<sup>22</sup> for it was always these animals which drew the plough, although Homer seems to give the preference to mules.<sup>23</sup>

The Greeks, clever imitators of the Egyptians, pretended that Ceres taught them the art of sowing, reaping, and grinding corn ; they made her goddess of harvest, and applied themselves to the labour of agriculture with that rare and persevering ability which always characterised these people, and consequently was often the cause of many things being attributed to them which they only borrowed from other nations.<sup>24</sup>

The Romans, future rulers of the world, understood from the first that the earth claimed their nursing care ; and Romulus instituted an order of priesthood for no other object than the advancement of this useful art. It was composed of the twelve sons of his nurse, all invested with a sacerdotal character, who were commanded to offer to Heaven vows and sacrifices in order to obtain an abundant harvest. They were called *Arvales* brothers ;<sup>25</sup> one of them dying, the king took his place, and continued to fulfil his duty for the rest of his life.<sup>26</sup>

In the palmy days of the republic, the conquerors of the universe passed from the army or the senate to their fields ;<sup>27</sup> Seranus was sowing when called to command the Roman troops, and Quintus Cincinnatus was ploughing when a deputation came and informed him that he was appointed dictator.

Everything in the conduct of the Romans gives evidence of their great veneration for agriculture. They called the rich, *locupletes*, that is, persons who were possessors of a farm or country seat (*locus*) ; their first money was stamped with a sheep or an ox, the symbol of abundance : they called it *pecunia*, from *pecus* (flock). The public treasure was designated *pasqua*, because the Roman domain consisted, at the beginning, only of pasturage.

After the taking of Carthage, the books of the libraries were distributed to the allied princes of the republic, but the senate reserved the twenty-eight books of Mago on agriculture.<sup>28</sup>

We shall briefly point out the principal processes of this art in use among the Greeks and Romans, or at least those which appear to us most deserving of interest. Like us, the ancients divided the land in *farrows*, whose legal length (if we may so term it) was one hundred and

thirty feet.<sup>29</sup> Oxen were never allowed to stop while tracing a furrow, but on arriving at the end they rested a short time; and when their task was over they were cleaned with the greatest care, and their mouths washed with wine.<sup>30</sup> The ground being well prepared and fit to receive the seed, the grain was spread on the even surface of the furrows, and then covered over.<sup>31</sup>

The primitive plough, already mentioned, was of extreme simplicity. It had no wheels, but was merely furnished with a handle, to enable the ploughman to direct it according to his judgment; neither was there any iron or other metal in its construction. They afterwards made a plough of two pieces, one of a certain length to put the oxen to, and the other was shorter to go in the ground; it was similar, in shape, to an anchor. Such was the style of plough which the Greeks used.<sup>32</sup> They also very often employed a sort of fork, with three or four prongs, for the same purpose.<sup>33</sup> Pliny gives credit to the Gauls for the invention of the plough mounted on wheels. The Anglo-Norman plough had no wheels;<sup>34</sup> the ploughman guided it with one hand, and carried a stick in the other to break the clods.

The Greeks and Romans had not, perhaps, the celebrated guano of our days, though we would not positively assert it; but they knew of a great variety of manures, all well adapted to the various soils they wished to improve. Sometimes they made use of marl, a sort of fat clay;<sup>35</sup> and frequently manure from pigeons, blackbirds, and thrushes, which were fattened in aviaries<sup>36</sup> for the benefit of Roman epicures. Certain plants, they thought, required a light layer of ashes, which they obtained from roots and brushwood;<sup>37</sup> others succeeded best, according to their dictum, on land where sheep, goats, &c., had grazed for a long time.<sup>38</sup>

When the harvest season arrived, they joyfully prepared to cut the corn, with instruments varying in form according to the locality or the fancy of the master. In one place they adopted the plain sickle,<sup>39</sup> in another that with teeth.<sup>40</sup> Sometimes they mowed the corn, as they did the meadows, with a scythe;<sup>41</sup> or else they plucked off the ears with a kind of fork, armed with five teeth.<sup>42</sup> A short time after the harvest, the operation of thrashing generally began. Heavy chariots, armed with

#### DESCRIPTION OF PLATE No. II.

No. 1 & 2. Greek and Roman plough, made of several pieces; the first taken from the "Miscellan. Ercudit." of Spon, the second from an engraved stone in the gallery of Florence.

No. 3. Plough, made of one crooked piece of wood, turned once or twice.

No. 4. Plough, as used by the Gauls, furnished with wheels.



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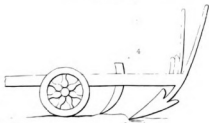
## DESCRIPTION OF PLATE V. - B.

No. 1 & 2. Greek and Roman plough, made of a crooked yoke; the first taken from the "Mural-  
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No. 3. Plough, made of one crooked piece of wood, turned into a share.

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111 Tolant del

111 Tolant del



pointed teeth, crushed the ears: Varro calls this machine the "Carthaginian chariot."<sup>43</sup> Strabo asserts that the ancient Britons carried the corn into a large covered area, or barn, where they thrashed it; adding that, without this precaution, the rain and damp would have spoiled the grain.<sup>44</sup> At all events, this kind of thrashing in barns, with flails and sticks, was not unknown to other countries; Pliny speaks of it,<sup>45</sup> and Columella describes it;<sup>46</sup> we may add that the Egyptians were also very probably acquainted with this method, since the Jews, who had submitted to their power, employed it themselves.<sup>47</sup> When the corn had been thrashed, winnowed, and put into baskets very similar to our own of the present day,<sup>48</sup> they immediately studied the best means of preserving it: some preferred granaries exposed to a mild temperature, others had extensive edifices with thick brick walls without openings, except one hole only, in the roof, to admit light and air.

The Spaniards, Africans, and Cappadocians, dug deep ditches, from which they excluded all moisture; they covered the bottom and lined the sides with straw, then put in the grain, and covered it up. The ancients were of opinion that corn in the ear could, by this means, be preserved a great number of years.<sup>49</sup>

If it is desirable to keep corn for any length of time, choose the finest and best grown. After having worked it, make a pile as high as the ceiling will permit. Cover with a layer of quicklime, powdered, of about three inches thick; then, with a watering-pot, moisten this lime, which forms a crust with the corn. The outside seeds bud, and shoot forth a stalk, which perishes in winter. This corn is only to be touched when necessity requires it. At Sedan, a warehouse has been seen, hewed out of the rock and tolerably damp, in which there had been a considerable pile of corn for the last hundred and ten years. It was covered with a crust a foot thick, on which persons might walk without bending or breaking it in the slightest degree.

Marshal Vauban proposed eating corn in soup, without being ground; it was boiled during two or three hours in water, and when the grains had burst, a little salt, butter, or milk, was added. This food is very nice, not unwholesome, and might be employed when flour is scarce, heated, or half-rotten.—DUTOUR.

The Chinese instituted a ceremony which had for its base to honour the profession of agriculture: every year, at the time of ploughing the

fields, the emperor with all his court paid a visit to his country residence near Peking, and then marked out several furrows with his plough.

In 1793, the National Convention of France instituted also a similar fête; and the president of the local administration of his county was to mark out a furrow.

In 1848 a grand republican procession took place through Paris, to the Champ de Mars, wherein agriculture played a prominent part.

The first treatise on agriculture was printed in 1538; and its importance has been so much felt from that period, that there are now in France more than one hundred and twenty societies of agriculture, who distribute prizes to encourage discoveries for the improvement of this science.

We have, in our days, the Royal Agricultural Society of England, which also awards prizes;\* and through such institutions all information can be obtained on the successive progresses made in that indispensable art, which may be said to have arrived to such a degree of perfection, that future generations may find some difficulty in improving upon it. One great evidence of which is, the immense number of samples of agricultural produce, machines, and implements of husbandry, which great and the glorious Exhibition of 1851 has ushered to the world.

Previous to the arrival of the Romans, the ancient Britons paid but little attention to agriculture. Their intestine discords left them scarcely any leisure to cultivate their fields, or apply themselves to the improvement of an art which flourishes only in peaceful times. They reared a great number of cattle; but their chief corn was barley, of which they made their favourite drink. They put the grain in the ear into barns, and beat it out as they wanted it. Those inhabitants of the island who were the least civilized subsisted solely on milk and the flesh of animals,

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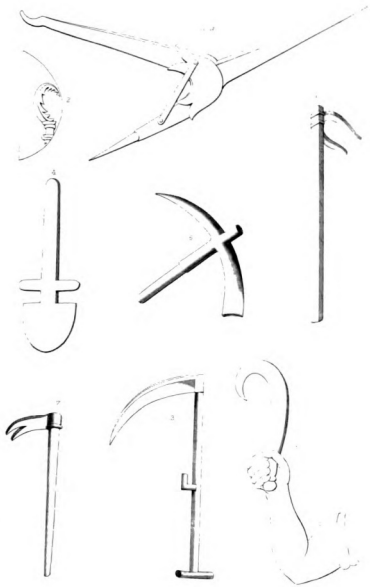
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No. 4. A spade; its handle is supplied with a double cross-bar, fixed at a little distance off the spade, to support the foot; it is still so used in Italy and the southern parts of France.

No. 5. A pickaxe, as it was found engraved on the various sarcophagi; the pick end was sometimes flattened, and then called pick-axe.

Nos. 6 and 7. The mattocks; the first was drawn from an engraved stone in the "Monumenta Antiq." of Winckelman.

No. 2 A. Represents a plough, composed according to the "Georgics" of Virgil.



F. E. Tolant, del.

1888



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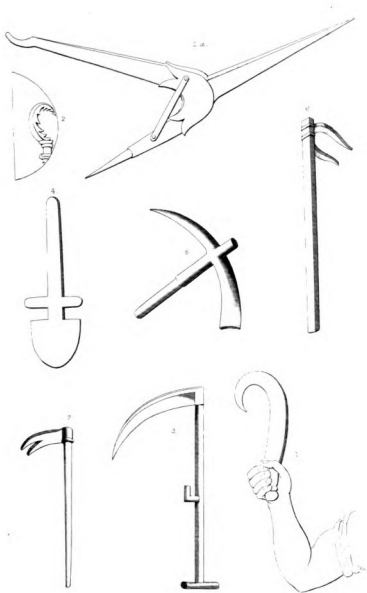
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*P. T. & Volant, del.*

*Cutter & Root, del.*



which they had learned to master by their skill.<sup>28</sup> But the people of this nation, for which Heaven had in reserve such a brilliant destiny, knew how to endure hunger, cold, and fatigue, without a murmur. A Briton passed entire days immersed to the neck in the stagnant waters of a marsh; a few roots sufficed for his nourishment, and, if we are to believe Dio, his frugal habits enabled him to appease the craving of his stomach with an aliment composed of ingredients no longer known, and of which he took each time, at long intervals, a quantity not exceeding in size that of a bean.<sup>29</sup>

Let us add that the art of gardening was known rather early in Great Britain, and that marl was employed to manure the land.<sup>30</sup>

The Anglo-Saxons employed themselves diligently in the cultivation of the soil; they established farms, sowed grain, and reared cattle. The fleece of their sheep furnished them with precious wool, which they spun, and then converted into sumptuous clothing.<sup>31</sup>

Strutt gives us a curious detail of rural occupations at that epoch. We will cite the original text:

“January exhibits the husbandman in the fields at plough, while his attendant, diligently following, is sowing the grain.

“February. The grain being put into the earth, the next care was to prune their trees, crop their vines, and place them in order.

“March. Then we follow them into the garden, where the industrious labourer is digging up the ground, and sowing the vegetables for the ensuing season.

“April. Now, taking leave of the laborious husbandman, we see the nobleman regaling with his friends, and passing the pleasant month in carousings, banquetings, and music.

“May brings the lord into the field to examine his flock, and superintend the shearing of the sheep.

“June. With this month comes the gladsome time of harvest. Here are some cutting down the corn, while it is, by others, bound up in sheaves and laid into the carts, to be conveyed to the barns and granaries; in the meantime they are spirited up to their labours by the shrill sound of the enlivening horn.

“July. Here we find them employed in lopping the trees and felling of timber, &c.

“August. In this month they cut down the barley with which they made their old and best beloved drink (ale).

"September. Here we find the lord, attended by his huntsmen, pursuing and chasing the wild boars in the woods and forests.

"October. And here he is amusing himself with the exercise of that old and noble pastime, hawking.

"November. This month returns us again to the labourers, who are here heating and preparing their utensils.

"December. In this last month we find them thrashing out the grain, while some winnow or rather sift it, to free it from the chaff, and others carry it out in large baskets to the granaries. In the meantime, the steward keeps an account of the quantity, by means of an indented or notched stick."<sup>4</sup>

Agriculture was always protected with paternal solicitude by a prince, whose name will ever remind us of the sanguinary day of Saint Bartholomew. Here is a textual passage from the edict issued by Charles IX., the 18th October, 1571.

"We have commanded and ordained, and do hereby command and ordain, that no man engaged in the cultivation of land, by himself, his servants, and his family, with intent to raise grain and fruit necessary for the sustenance of men and beasts, shall be liable to the process of execution for debt, nor on any account whatsoever, neither in his own person, nor his bed, horses, mares, mules, asses, oxen, cows, pigs, goats, sheep, poultry, ploughs, carts, waggons, harrows, barrows, nor any other species or kind of cattle or goods serving in the said tillage and occupation. \* \* \* The said husbandmen being under our protection and safeguard, seeing that we have so placed them and do place them by these presents."<sup>5</sup>

## II.

### CEREALS.

THE nomenclature which the Romans have left us of their various kinds of corn is so obscure and uncertain, that some modern writers are continually contradicting each other, and, by these means, have raised doubts which render our task more difficult, instead of enlightening us on the subject.

We shall do all in our power to avoid the censure which we take the liberty of passing upon them.

"*Triticum*," wheat, or corn; "*Blé*," from the ancient Latin word "*Bladus*," which signifies fruit or seed. The botanist Michaux has discovered in Persia, on a mountain four days' journey from Hamadan, the place where wheat (a species known as *spelt*, from the Latin *spelta*) is indigenous to the soil, from which we may presume that wheat has its origin in that country, or some part of Asia not far from Persia. This grain was more cultivated formerly than it is now; nevertheless, it is still gathered in Italy, Switzerland, Alsace, in the Limousin and in Picardy, to make bread, with spelt, a greater quantity of leaven, and, above all, a little salt. This bread is white, light, savoury, and keeps moist for several days.—PARMENTIER.

*Robus*, a variety of corn heavier than triticum, and remarkable for its brilliant polish.

Every year, on the 25th of April, an appeal was made to the god Robigus, to prevent the mildew from corrupting this fine specimen of corn. This festival was founded by the great king, Numa Pompilius.<sup>1</sup>

*Siligo*, a beautiful quality of wheat, of great whiteness, but lighter in weight than the preceding kind.<sup>2</sup>

*Trimestre*, a kind of siligo, sown in Spring, and which was ready for reaping three months afterwards.

*Granea*, the grain merely deprived of its husk: it was boiled in water, to which milk was added.<sup>8</sup>

*Hordeum*, barley.<sup>9</sup> The flour of this corn was the food of the Jewish soldiers.<sup>9</sup> It was, with the Athenians, a favourite dish, but among the Romans an ignominious food. Augustus threatened the cohorts that, should they not fight bravely, he would punish every tenth man with death, and give the remainder barley for food.<sup>9</sup> This corn was certainly in use among the Egyptians in the time of Moses, since one of the plagues which afflicted that people was the loss of the barley in the ear before it came to maturity.<sup>7</sup>

*Panicum*, panic grass.<sup>8</sup> Certain inhabitants of Thrace and of the borders of the Euxine, or Black Sea, preferred this to all other food.<sup>9</sup>

*Millium*, millet, was used for making excellent cakes.<sup>10</sup>

*Secale*, rye.<sup>11</sup> Pliny thinks this grain detestable, and only good to appease extreme hunger.<sup>12</sup>

*Avena*, oats.<sup>13</sup> Virgil had but very little esteem for this grain.<sup>14</sup> The Romans cut it in the spring for the cattle to eat green; and the Germans, in the time of Pliny, took great care in its cultivation, and made a pulp of it which they thought excellent.<sup>15</sup>

*Oryza*, rice. Pliny<sup>16</sup> and Dioscorides<sup>17</sup> class it with the wheats; whereas Galeu, on the contrary, places it among vegetables.

Rice was rather scarce in Greece at the time when Theophrastus lived: it had lately been brought from India, 286 years before Christ.

The ancients considered it most nutritious and fattening.<sup>18</sup>

*Zea*, spelt, or rice wheat,<sup>19</sup> equally esteemed by Greeks and Latins.<sup>20</sup>

*Sesamum*, sesame. Pliny classes this among the seeds sown in March,<sup>21</sup> and Columella places it among the vegetables.<sup>22</sup> The Romans knew how to prepare this corn in a manner at once wholesome and agreeable. They made it into very dainty cakes, which were served at dessert,<sup>23</sup> whence sprang the saying *sesame cakes*, which was applied to those sweet and flattering expressions called honied words (in French, *paroles sucrées*).<sup>24</sup>

A people so restless and unmanageable as were the Greeks and Romans, when pressed by hunger, required that the greatest care should be exercised for the supply of corn, and the easy sale of this precious provision. Hence nothing could be wiser than their regulations on this subject.

One of the laws of the twelve tables punished with death the individual who had premeditatedly set fire to his neighbour's corn; and inflicted a fine or the whip on any one who caused so great a calamity by his imprudence.<sup>25</sup>

In Greece, a special magistrate, the "*Sitocome*," was charged with the inspection of the corn; and various officers, such as the *sitones*, the *sitophylaces*, and the *sitologes*, were appointed to watch over its purchase.

And lastly, public distributors, under the names of *siturches* and *sitometres*, were exclusively occupied with the allotment of corn;<sup>26</sup> they prevented any one from purchasing a greater quantity than was actually necessary for his wants. The law forbade the delivery of more than fifty measures to one individual.<sup>27</sup> The Roman government was so convinced that abundance of bread was one of the best means of maintaining public tranquillity,<sup>28</sup> that Julius Cæsar created two prætors, and two ediles or magistrates, to preside over the purchase, conveyance, storing, and gratuitous distribution of wheat.<sup>29</sup> For we know that this people of kings, powerful but frivolous, and careless of the morrow, submitted to the incredible follies of their rulers on the sole condition of being well fed and amused by them.<sup>30</sup> In the time of Demosthenes the common price of wheat in Greece was about 3s. 11d. the four bushels.<sup>31</sup> In Rome, during the republic, wheat was distributed to 60,000 persons.<sup>32</sup> Julius Cæsar desired that 320,000 plebeians should enjoy this bounty; but this number was afterwards reduced to 150,000,<sup>33</sup> or perhaps, according to Cassius, to 160,000.<sup>34</sup> Augustus fed, at first, 200,000 citizens, then only 120,000.<sup>35</sup> Nero, who always went to extremes either in good or evil, gave corn throughout the empire to 220,000 idle people, including the soldiers of the prætorian guard.<sup>36</sup> Adrian added to this list all the children of the poor: the boys to the age of 18, and the girls to that of 14. Finally, this liberality, more politic than generous, and so foreign to our present manners, was carried, under the Emperor Severus, to 75,000 bushels per day.<sup>37</sup> The bushel weighed twenty pounds of twelve ounces each.<sup>38</sup>

The Greeks esteemed highly the corn of Bœotia, Thrace, and Pontus. The Romans preferred that of Lombardy, the present duchy of Spoletta, Sicily, Sardinia, and a part of Gaul. Sardinia, Sicily, and Corsica, supplied them every year with 800,000 bushels of twenty-one pounds weight, which made them call those islands "the sweet nurses of Rome."<sup>39</sup>

Africa furnished 40,000,000 of bushels; Egypt 20,000,000, and the remainder came from Greece, Asia, Syria, Gaul, and Spain.<sup>40</sup>

The erudite are not agreed as to the aboriginal country of corn: some say it is Egypt, others Tartary, and the learned Bailly, as well as the traveller Pallas, affirm that it grows spontaneously in Siberia. Be that as it may, the Phocians brought it to Marseilles before the Romans had penetrated into Gaul. The Gauls ate the corn cooked, or bruised in a mortar; they did not know for a long time how to make fermented bread.

The Chinese attribute to Chin-Nong, the second of the nine emperors of China who preceded the establishment of the dynasties (more than 2,207 years B.C.), the discovery of corn, rice, and other cereals.

We find in the Black Book of the Exchequer, that in the reign of Henry I., when they reduced the victuals (for the king's household) to the estimate of money, a measure of wheat to make bread for the service of one hundred men, one day, was valued only at one shilling.<sup>41</sup>

But in the reign of Henry III., about the 43rd year, the price was mounted up to fifteen and twenty shillings a quarter.<sup>42</sup>

The ancients, as well as the moderns, caused wheat to undergo certain preparations to enable it to be transformed into bread, we shall enumerate in the following chapter the different processes by which they obtained flour, the essential foundation of the food of man.

*Cereals.*—This name has been given to all plants of the gramineous family, the fundamental base of the food of man. The *cereals*, properly speaking, are limited to wheat, rye, barley, and oats; however, there are others, such as canary grass, Indian corn, millet, rice, &c., &c. The immediate and most abundant principle of all these plants is the *fécule*, or flour, and the vegeto-animal matter of which bread is made, and other preparations for food, and fermented liquors; these cereals are given green or dry to cattle as forage; their straw covers houses, and serves as litter and manure.

Cereals was also the name given to a feast in honour of Ceres, instituted at Rome by the edile Mumonius, and celebrated every year on the 7th of April. The ladies of Rome appeared clothed in white, and holding torches in remembrance of the travels of that divinity. Cakes sprinkled with salt and grains of incense, honey, milk, and wine, were offered to that goddess. Pigs were sacrificed to her. The *cereals* of the Romans were the *thesmophories* with the Greeks.



### III.

## GRINDING OF CORN.

AT a very distant period, when gods, not over edifying in their conduct, descended at times from the heights of Olympus to enliven their immortality amongst mortals, we are told that a divine aliment charmed the palate of Jupiter and that of his quarrelsome wife; nay, of all those who inhabited the celestial abode. We are ignorant of the hour at which the table of the god of thunder was laid; but we know well that he breakfasted, dined, and supped on a delicious ambrosia—a liquid substance, it may be presumed, since it flowed for the first time from one of the horns of the goat Amalthea, and of rather an insipid taste, if we are to believe Ibcus,<sup>1</sup> who describes it as nine times sweeter than honey. The gods have disappeared; we would forgive them for leaving us, had they left behind them the recipe of this marvellous substance; but its composition and essence remain unknown, and man, not skilful enough to appropriate to his use the inexhaustible treasures of culinary science, began his hard gastrophagic apprenticeship by devouring acorns which grew in the forests.<sup>2</sup> This is assuredly very mortifying to our feelings; but you may believe it on the authority of a poet, for we well know that a poet never tells an untruth.<sup>3</sup> Besides, fabulous antiquity adds new weight to the fact, by informing us that the Arcadian Pelasgus<sup>4</sup> deserved that altars should be erected to his memory, for having taught the Greeks to choose in preference the beech-nut, as the most delicate of this class of comestibles, according to the tender Virgil, who, however, only judged of it by hearsay.<sup>5</sup>

There is a great degree of probability in the supposition that the different races of the north, each inhabiting a country covered with

immense forests, lived for a long time on the fruit of these different kinds of oak which they possessed in such abundance. The great respect they had for the tree, the pompous ceremony with which the high priest of the Druids came every year to cut away the parasitical plant which clings to it, the very name of the Druids—derived from a celtic word signifying *oak*—all seem to point out the first food of our ancestors. The oak furnished the primitive aliment of almost every nation, in their original state of barbarism. Some of them had even preserved a taste for the acorn after they became civilized. Among the Arcadians and the Spaniards, the acorn was regarded as a delicious article of food. We read in Pliny that, in his time, these latter had them served on their tables at dessert, after they had been roasted in the wood-ashes to soften them. According to Champier, this custom still subsisted in Spain in the 16th century.

The regulation made by Chrodegand, Bishop of Metz, about the end of the 8th century, for the canons, says expressly<sup>6</sup> that if, in an unfavorable year, the acorn or flour should fail, it will be the duty of the bishop to provide it.

When, animated by the most praiseworthy zeal and courage, Du Bellay, Bishop of Mans, came, in 1546, to represent to Francis I. the frightful misery of the provinces, and that of his diocese in particular, he assured the king that in many localities the people had nothing to eat but bread made of acorns.

But mankind, who soon get tired of every thing, even of acorns and beech-nuts, began to dislike this wholesome and abundant food, when Ceres, the ancient Queen of Sicily, came just *à propos* to give a few lessons in the art of sowing the earth.<sup>7</sup> Corn once brought into fashion acquired a surprising repute, and the ancient food was given up to the animal which it fattens; and if this last were eaten, it was no doubt in gratitude for the fruit mankind had formerly so much loved.

The good Ceres did not stop there; it was very well to have corn, but to know how to grind it was also requisite; and the human race was then so lamentably backward, that one might have gone round the world without meeting a miller, or even the shadow of the meanest little mill.

The Queen of Sicily then invented grinding-stones,<sup>8</sup> but, as the most useful discoveries require time to be known and improved upon, the way of grinding corn with stones did not become uniform everywhere. The inhabitants of Etruria (now called Tuscany) pounded the grain in





ALCINOUS'S HAND MILL

1852

mostim." The early Romans adopted the same process, and gave the name of *Pistores*, grinders, to those persons who followed this occupation.<sup>10</sup> They relate that one of the ancient families of Rome took the surname *Piso*, having descended, as they believed, from the inventor of the art of bruising wheat with pestles.<sup>11</sup>

Down to the latest days of the Roman Republic the corn was bruised *manu* being rotated. The pestle used for this purpose was somewhat pointed, and suspended by the aid of a ring to the extremity of a flexible beam supported by an axle.<sup>12</sup>

From the time of Moses the Hebrews used grinding-stones: several passages of the Holy Scripture clearly indicate this. Among others: "No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge; for he taketh a man's life to pledge."<sup>13</sup> Another text shows that the Egyptians used grinding-stones with handles, at about the same period.<sup>14</sup> The Israelites, when in the Desert, employed the same means to pound manna,<sup>15</sup> and after their settlement in the Promised Land, these utensils served to grind corn.

The Greeks, following faithfully the system from which they had but slightly deviated, have honoured King Miletus as the inventor of grinding-stones;<sup>16</sup> the upper part was of wood, and armed with heads of iron nails. A passage of Herodotus would seem to lead us to believe that the grain was first crushed with rollers on stone slabs, which operation would naturally lead to the bruising of it between grinding-stones.<sup>17</sup> However this may be, these *manu* were no doubt still scarce in the heroic times, since the same poet does not fail to inform us that one was to be seen in the gardens of Alcibiades, chief of the Phœacians.<sup>18</sup> This kind of decoration would but very little please the taste of our modern horticulturists.

Nearly two centuries before our era, in the year of Rome 582, the Romans, victorious in Asia, brought with them handmills.<sup>19</sup> This conquest of industry soon made an immense stride, and to the labour of man succeeded by degrees the obedient aid of horses and ass. Hence the two kind of mills so often mentioned—by hand, *manuales*; by animal, *bestiaris*.<sup>20</sup>

Delighted with a discovery which supplied an important necessity of life, the Romans invented a divinity to whom they might show their gratitude, and Olympus was honoured with a new inmate: the goddess *Mola*, protectress and patroness of mills and millstones.<sup>21</sup>



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Down to the latest days of the Roman republic the corn was bruised after being roasted. The pestle used for this purpose was somewhat pointed, and suspended by the aid of a ring to the extremity of a flexible lever, supported by an axle.<sup>12</sup>

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Now Mola was one of a large family; she had several charming sisters, like herself, who could not endure living among the commoners, while Ganymede served ambrosia to their elder sister, or poured out for her the nectar of the gods. Besides, it cost so little to be made a goddess! A few grains of incense, more or less, who would grudge such a trifle? The Flamine of Jupiter, whom they consulted, was at first rather refractory. He feared the crowding of Olympus; he doubted whether polite intercourse could ever be established between gods of high birth and little divinities covered with flour; but when at last the high priest had ceased speaking, the deputation removed all scruples by a reasonable bribe, and the sisters of Mola were forthwith enrolled in the list of immortals, under the designation of well-beloved daughters of the god of war.<sup>22</sup> Mars was rather ungentlemanly on the occasion, but the high priest undertook to bring him to reason.

This took place about the end of May, and the Romans resolved to celebrate, from the 9th of the following June, the festival of the patroness of Roman millers, and of her sisters, the newly elected divinities; the ceremony was worthy of those for whose apotheosis it was instituted, and every year, on the same day, new rejoicings consecrated this great event.<sup>23</sup>

The mills ceased to turn and to grind, a profound silence reigned in the mills; the asses, patient and indefatigable movers of an incessant rotation, took a lively part, whether or no, in the festivals of which they became the principal actors. These honest creatures' heads<sup>24</sup> were crowned with roses, and necklaces of little leaves encircled their necks and fell gracefully on their chests;<sup>25</sup> we need not add that, on this day, the thick bandages which generally covered the eyes of these useful labourers were removed.<sup>26</sup>

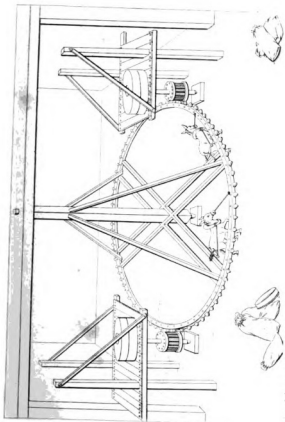
Independently of this annual solemnity, the asses, turners of the mills, had sometimes their windfalls,—that is to say, hours of holiday, during which they could freely graze on the neighbouring thistles. This happened when an awkward slave performed badly the duties of fanning his master, or spilt carelessly a few drops of Falernian wine when filling his cup. The unfortunate creature was immediately condemned to work at the mill;<sup>27</sup> he was deprived of his name, and received in lieu that of the quadruped he replaced—*Asinus*;<sup>28</sup> and the instrument of his sufferings, by a refinement of strange irony, was called his manger.<sup>29</sup>

It sometimes happened that a free man, reduced to extreme indi-



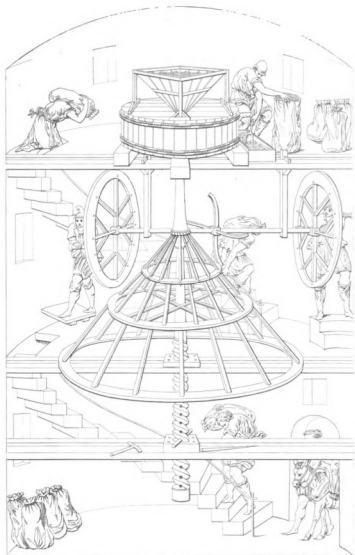












F. T. J. Volant. del.

Jodder & West. scul.

PLAUTJSS MILL.







gence, had recourse to this hard occupation, in order to earn a living. Plautus was obliged to work at it, and we know that he wrote some of his comedies during the short moments of leisure allowed him by his master the miller.<sup>20</sup>

An important modification was subsequently made in the mechanism of mills: we mean hydraulic mills, whose introduction into Italy is of uncertain date, although Pomponius Sabinus asserts (but without proof), that this discovery took place in the reign of Julius Cæsar. They were known in Rome at the time of the Emperor Augustus, and Vitruvius mentions them.<sup>21</sup> More than sixty years afterwards, Pliny speaks of them as rare and extraordinary machines.<sup>22</sup>

Some writers have thought that *hydraule*, or *hydromile*, watermills, were invented by Vitruvius, and that this celebrated architect made experiments with them, which were forgotten or neglected after his death.<sup>23</sup> Curious readers, who are not afraid of the venerable dust with which time has covered many useful though despised books, will consult with benefit the learned treatise of Goetzius on the mills of the ancients, printed in the year 1730.<sup>24</sup>

Strabo, who flourished under the Emperor Augustus, tells us a watermill was to be seen near the town of Cabire and the palace of Mithridates.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, this useful invention, which we could not now dispense with, made so little progress during four centuries that princes thought it a duty to protect, by several laws, those establishments, still rare, but which people began to appreciate. Honorius and Arcadius decreed, in 398, that any person who turned the water from mills for his own profit, should be punished by a fine of five pounds weight in gold; and that any magistrate encouraging such an act should pay a like sum.<sup>26</sup> The Emperor Zeno<sup>27</sup> maintained this law, and rendered it still more stringent by adding, that the edifices or land into which the water had been turned should be confiscated.<sup>28</sup>

It is to be regretted that the precise origin of the miller's profession cannot be traced; but, alas! in almost all the arts which tend to preserve life, we discover the same uncertainty: we are ignorant of the period of their discovery, and it frequently happens that but few traces of their development remain. On the contrary, the dates of battles, or scourges which have decimated the human race, are certain enough: the stain of blood leaves an impression which can never be effaced.

In the midst of the conflicting opinions of the writers of antiquity, what appears most probable is, that watermills were invented in Asia Minor, and that they were not really used in Rome till the reign of Honorius and Arcadius.

Under the rule of the Emperor Justinian, when the Goths besieged the Roman city,<sup>39</sup> the celebrated Belisarius thought of constructing some on the Tiber. The means which he employed were simple and ingenious. Two boats firmly fixed, at two feet distance from each other, caused the stream to give a rapid motion to the hydraulic wheel, suspended by its axle between these lateral points of support; and this wheel turned the mills.<sup>40</sup> This system differed but little from that of Vitruvius, which he described more than five centuries before, and is explained in a few words. A little wheel, fixed to the axle of the hydraulic wheel, turned a third wheel, adhering to the axle of the upper grindstone, and the corn fell between the two stones in passing from the hopper placed above.<sup>41</sup>

These grindstones were made of a kind of porous lava, which retained its roughness, or rather, its roughness was renewed, by the continual friction.<sup>42</sup>

The introduction of watermills, however, did not prevent the use of those worked by hand, which habit, cheapness, and facility of removal recommended: these antique mills of the Hebrews, the Egyptians, and the Greeks of the heroic times, were only five feet high. Each family was supplied with as many as they might require. In the residence of Ulysses, that great king of little Ithaca, there were as many as twelve. Women turned the mills, and were obliged to deliver a certain quantity of flour before leaving the task imposed on them.<sup>43</sup>

Corn was at first ground in a portative hand mill; by the Britons, women and young girls were employed in this kind of labour.<sup>44</sup>

It is, however, probable that watermills were known at a very early period in England. Strutt cites a passage from a charter by Ulfere, in 664, which warrants the supposition.<sup>45</sup>

It would be difficult to point out the precise date of the first employment of mills; nevertheless, Somner informs us, in his "Antiquities of Canterbury,"<sup>46</sup> that the Anglo-Normans of that place ground their corn. "There was," says he, "sometime a windmill standing neare the nonnery without Ridigate, which the hospitall held by the grant of the nonnes there: the conditions mutually agreed upon, at the time of

the grant, were that the nonnes, bearing the fourth part of the charge of the mill, should reap the fourth part of the profit of it, &c. \* \* \* and this about the reign of King John."

The bran was separated from the flour by means of a sieve; the dough was made, and sent to the bakers to be baked. The poor contented themselves with cakes baked under the ashes."

Something remains to be said of windmills. We will say but little on the subject: this aerial mechanism—which the knight-errant, Don Quixote, of imperishable memory, thought it necessary to fight with sword and lance—was unknown before the Christian era in any nation whose writers have transmitted to us the least traces of their civilisation; but nothing proves that windmills were unknown to others. This opinion seems to be well-founded, from a passage of the chronicler Wincellaus, who relates, in his "History of Bohemia," that the first water-mill raised in that country was in the year of Christ 718, and that no other was in use before (*antea*) but mills built on the summit of mountains, which were put in motion by the wind." It appears, then, that there is some untruth in the assertion, that this sort of mill was introduced into Europe, about the year 1040, by the first Crusaders, on their return from the East." At all events this question is no doubt very deserving the laborious search of the learned; it has but a secondary interest for the gastronomist. It matters little to him whether he owes the grinding of his corn to the breath of a zephyr or to the slimy source of a river; all he requires is good flour, because it enters into a great number of culinary preparations—and, first of all, bread is made from it.

## MANIPULATION OF FLOUR.

MAN has not always eaten fine wheaten bread, biscuits, or sponge cakes ; and, for many centuries, the inexperience of his palate prevented his imagining or understanding those magic combinations, that science of good living,<sup>1</sup> which requires time and serious study. Nature makes us hungry ; art creates, modifies, and directs the appetite—these are incontestable truths, which this work will serve to unfold, and, if necessary, to prove, should any of our readers unfortunately not be already convinced of the depth of these wise axioms.

Let us go no further back than the year 2000 before the Christian era, and enter together the tent of the father of nations—*Abraham*. We might lead you to the fire-side of each of the nineteen patriarchs who preceded him, but that would take us too far.

In the interior of this nomad dwelling, Sarah, the venerable companion of the Pastor-King, has just prepared, with flour and water, round pieces of flattened paste, which she places on the hearth, and covers afterwards with hot ashes.<sup>2</sup> It was thus that princes and servants made bread in the East. The Jewish people who inhabited the Desert ate no other kind ;<sup>3</sup> and the Prophet Elijah, reposing under the shade of a juniper tree, appeased his hunger with this simple and primitive food.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes, however, at certain periods of solemnity, the Hebrews used a gridiron, placed on the coals, or a frying-pan, into which they put the paste ;<sup>5</sup> but these various modes of cooking produced a kind of cake, dry, thin, and brittle,<sup>6</sup> somewhat like the Jewish Passover cake, which was broken by the hand without the aid of a knife ;<sup>7</sup> they were called *lechem*, choice and chief food,<sup>8</sup> and the mother of

the family generally renewed them each day.\* The inhabitants of the East thought so much of bread, that it was considered a special mark of regard and hospitality to the person to whom it was offered.<sup>10</sup> Boaz says to Ruth: "At meal time come thou hither and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar."<sup>11</sup>

Although the use of bread without leaven and baked under the ashes was common among the Jews,<sup>12</sup> it is nevertheless evident that they knew and employed, at an early period, some substance to raise the dough, which they designated by the name of *seor*. It was, perhaps, flour diluted with water left to get sour. Pliny assures us that of all means employed by the ancients to render bread savoury and light, this is the most simple and easy.<sup>13</sup>

It appears not unlikely that the Hebrews learned from the Egyptians how to prepare the leaven they made use of. The period at which an allusion is made to it for the first time, in the Bible, renders this supposition likely. It is when the people of God were about to escape from the slavery of the Egyptians, and are preparing to celebrate the Passover, on the eve of their setting out for the Desert.<sup>14</sup> The Israelites, therefore, knew how to make bread more digestive and of better taste than is generally believed—not so good, perhaps, as our delicate fancy bread, but better than the clumsy lumps of paste baked under the ashes, in the frying-pan, or on the gridiron.<sup>15</sup> They had also ovens at a very distant period of their history—some four thousand years ago.<sup>16</sup> These ovens were made with bricks or clay; afterwards they used iron and brass;<sup>17</sup> but nothing in the Holy Writings shows us that any one exercised among them the trade of a baker, at least at this early period, nor, indeed, very much later.

The chief baker or butler, whose punishment and death Joseph foretold, when he interpreted that officer's dream, was an Egyptian, and belonged to King Pharaoh.<sup>18</sup>

Hitherto an infallible book has been our guide; let us now dive into the dark and almost boundless regions of fabulous antiquity.

The most frightful god of which the fevered imagination of man could possibly form an idea—a god with the face and legs of a goat, the horrible Pan!—according to some credulous writers, taught mortals the art of making and baking bread. The name even of this food, they say, furnishes an incontestable proof of this assertion.<sup>19</sup> You are mistaken, reply more sensible writers; it is in the Greek word *pan*,

signifying *all*, that we must seek the etymology of this nutritious substance, which accompanies all other aliments, takes their place if needful, and agrees equally with all mankind.<sup>20</sup>

This, one would think, is conclusive; but the learned, the philologist, and every Procrustes of literature, protests against a halt with so fair a field before him. It is from the word *pascere*,<sup>21</sup> proudly exclaims another interpreter, that the substantive, bread, is derived.<sup>22</sup> This word has been rather disfigured on its way: think of the length of time it has been travelling down to us.

Ceres taught the Greeks how to cultivate corn; they learned from Megalarte and Megalomaze how to knead flour and bake it in ovens.<sup>23</sup> The gratitude of the Bœotians erected statues and altars to their memories, and shortly after, Greece could boast of having obtained the most skilful bakers in the world. The bread of Athens and Megara had a well deserved reputation: its whiteness dazzled the eye, and its taste was exquisite.<sup>24</sup> This voluptuous and fickle nation very soon began to tire of so intelligent and simple a manipulation, and must needs mix with the paste a host of ingredients which greatly altered its flavour: and seventy-two different sorts of bread<sup>25</sup> took birth from the scientific association of milk, oil, honey, cheese, and wine with the best flour.<sup>26</sup> All these varieties were called by the generic name of *artos*, bread; to which was added an epithet which prevented the mistaking of one kind for another.

The bread-market at Athens was very amusing; women (for the fair sex busied themselves with this trade) waited, seated, by the side of their baskets until Mercury should send them customers, and woe to those who came late, or whose evil genius led them to find fault with either the quality, quantity, or price of the goods. Have you ever heard the ladies of Billingsgate playing off their pleasant jokes on a timid countryman, or a foreigner, whose accent had betrayed him? It is a running fire of puns and crude picturesque expressions which nothing can resist; our Greek market-women would have been more than a match for them—can we bestow upon them greater praise?<sup>27</sup>

Some of them sold *azumos*, a delicate sort of biscuit, but rather tasteless, prepared without leaven;<sup>28</sup> others—irresistible syrens—invited children to taste of the relishing *artolaganos*, in which a renowned baker had the talent of introducing wine, pepper, oil, and milk.<sup>29</sup>

Here the sparkling eyes of a rich epicurean were on the look out for some *escarites*, a very light paste, seasoned with new sweet wine and honey,<sup>30</sup> and which was relished even by fatigued appetites at the close of a repast.<sup>31</sup> The poorer people made their choice among heaps of *dolyres*, or *typhes*: they were coarse compounds of rye and barley;<sup>32</sup> the ladies of fashion (*petites maitresses*) preferred the puff cakes called *placites*,<sup>33</sup> or the sweet *melitutes*, whose exquisite and perfumed flour was delicately kneaded with the precious honey of Mount Hymettus.<sup>34</sup> Lastly, the robust workman of the Pyreus bought the *tyrontes*, bread mixed with cheese,<sup>35</sup> which the higher classes of society in Athens abhorred, and which even the middling classes excluded from their tables.

Let us add to this imperfect enumeration, that the Greeks baked their bread in several different manners: some in ovens, others under ashes, over charcoal, or between two pieces of iron, similar to our *gauffre* moulds, and under a bell, or cover of some metal with a rim round the top, and fire over it.<sup>36</sup> For making a batch of bread, they employed nine pounds six ounces of leaven to twelve bushels of flour.<sup>37</sup> With regard to their ovens, in the construction of which they excelled, they always took particular care to place them near a hand-mill,<sup>38</sup> in order that the various processes that the wheat had to undergo should take place with ease and promptitude.

The Romans were for a long time *Pultiphagists*, or eaters of gruel, &c.;<sup>39</sup> and it would be difficult to ascertain with accuracy the precise period at which they gave a preference to bread; they no doubt knew of it before the year 365 of Rome, for, at the siege of the Capitol by the Gauls, Jupiter, who protected the besieged, thought of nothing better to get them out of their difficulties than to appear at night to their general, Manlius, and to give him the following advice: "Make," said he, "bread with all the flour you have left in store, and throw it to the enemy to show them that Rome has no apprehension of being reduced by famine." This stratagem, worthy of a Merry-Andrew, pleased Manlius so much, that he immediately put it into execution. The Gauls fled, Master Jupiter was highly delighted with the trick he had played, and thereby the Romans got rid of this swarm of barbarians.<sup>40</sup>

Whether this little story be true or not, the people of Romulus had a decided taste for gruel; it was a national dish, and was only discontinued to be given to the soldiers, defenders of the republic, when it was

perceived that their laborious duties required more substantial food.<sup>41</sup> The Romans made their gruel of all kinds of flour.

King Numa (1715 B.C.), guided by the advice of the nymph, Egeria, taught his subjects the art of parching corn, of converting it into flour by means of mortars, and of making that gruel with which he liked to regale himself.

This good prince was rather fond of interfering in what did not concern him, and the royal compound was afterwards cooked in the public bakehouses, which the piety of the sovereign placed under the protection of the powerful Fornax, a goddess unknown till then, and who soon became the object of general and fervent worship.<sup>42</sup>

There is but one step from gruel to bread: the Romans perceived it. Thus this favourite dish lost its reputation, and the worship of Fornax somewhat cooled. But, on the other hand, there was still the smell of cakes on all sides; cooking on the hearth, on the coals, in small bell-stoves, and in large baking pans, until ultimately they became acquainted with the use of ovens.<sup>43</sup>

At last, Rome began to have them built, under the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, about 630 years before the Christian era. They were solid constructions, immoveable, and very like those of the present day.<sup>44</sup> Men were employed to keep up the necessary degree of heat; and their useful profession (thanks to the strange caprices which so tyrannically rule the social hierarchy) became one of the vilest and most sordid occupations in the capital of the world.<sup>45</sup> These ovens were ordered to be built far away from all edifices, in order to prevent accidents by fire;<sup>46</sup> an excellent precaution, where so many incautious and merry old gossips came daily to bake their bread.

Once there, those worthy plebeians amused themselves by giving full scope to their noisy fun, slandering their neighbours freely and charitably, telling each other all the little scandal they had picked up here and there, among the good souls in their neighbourhood. Hence these public places of labour and incessant babbling were called the "gossip bakehouses."<sup>47</sup>

These joyous meetings continued until the arrival of Greek bakers, 170 years B.C., who followed the victorious armies of the republic on their return from Macedonia.<sup>48</sup> These new operatives effected a complete revolution in the art of making bread: they reformed the taste of their masters, and, by degrees, the proverbial frugality of the



conquerors of the universe gave way to the exquisite researches and wonderful delicacies of those whom they had subdued.

The Romans perceived the importance of perpetuating the talent of these strangers, and converting it eventually into a national industry. With these views, they gave them Roman colleagues, and subsequently they were formed into a college, or sort of association, which no member could quit on any pretext whatever. The son followed his father's profession, and he who married the daughter of a baker became one himself.<sup>49</sup> Sometimes one of these privileged artisans was raised to the dignity of senator, as an honour to his colleagues; but in that case he was required to abandon his fortune to the person who took his place; he might, however, decline the dignity, and remain at his kneading-trough.<sup>50</sup> All alliances with gladiators and comedians were interdicted them; and the law decreed that the delinquent guilty of such dishonour should be first scourged, then banished, and that his property should be confiscated for the benefit of the community.<sup>51</sup> Finally, the prodigal baker was assimilated with the dishonest bankrupt, and expelled the college.<sup>52</sup>

The above details on some of the dispositions of the law regarding this interesting corporation, sufficiently prove the importance that the Roman government attached to it, and wished it should always maintain.

The bakers of Rome received from the public granaries whatever they required, at a price fixed by the magistrate. If the officer charged with the distribution of it gave a bad quality, or exacted a bribe to supply good corn, that officer was disgraced, and he became forever a journeyman baker.<sup>53</sup>

Independently of public bakeries, the number of which reached 329 under the reign of Augustus, there were also, in the houses of the wealthy, slaves whose sole occupation was the making of bread, and these slaves brought an exorbitant price when they excelled in their art.<sup>54</sup> They used portable ovens, made of iron or earthenware, under which they placed red-hot coals. Sometimes they employed a round brass vessel with a cover, which was put under the flames. In the houses where the greatest luxury reigned, they had a kind of silver mould, from which the bread was taken, and served to the guests.<sup>55</sup>

It is absolutely necessary to dive into the private life of the Roman people, and not to neglect any of their domestic customs (accounts of which are scattered here and there, in the writings of the more serious

historians, and among the dangerous frivolities of certain poets), if we wish to have a correct idea of the excessive refinement which the opulent classes evinced, even in the most ordinary things.

Modern nations are satisfied with the bread more or less white, and even bear, without much complaint, certain illicit mixtures, in which various heterogeneous substances are sometimes strangely amalgamated; but this was not the case in Rome. The prefect of provisions (*præfectus annonæ*) was scrupulously careful to see that the supply of bread was abundant; that it was of exact weight; that the manipulation of it was excellent; and that it was made of the best flour the public granaries contained.

As we have already observed, that was one of the most serious cares of the government on behalf of a people who only required two things—bread and the circus,<sup>46</sup> and whose ferocity, when pressed by hunger, knew no bounds.<sup>47</sup>

They studied carefully every modification that the art of baking might seem to require: they examined the leaven in use, and experimented with new kinds. The following are the compositions Pliny has transmitted to us:—

The Romans thought much of millet for their leaven; they mixed it with sweet wine, in which they let it ferment a year.

They employed, also, wheat bran, soaked for three days in sweet white wine, and dried in the sun. Of this they diluted a certain quantity at the time of making bread, which was left to ferment in the best wheat flour, and afterwards mixed with the entire mass.

The leavens just mentioned were made during the vintage; the rest of the year they were replaced by the following:—A dish containing two pounds of barley paste was placed on red-hot coals, and heated until ebullition commenced. It was put into vessels till it became sour.

Very often leaven was procured from dough just made. A piece was taken from the mass previous to salt being added; it was then left to turn sour, and might be used the next day.

The celebrated naturalist who supplies these details, tells us that, in his time, the Gauls and Spaniards, after having made a drink from wheat, saved the scum to raise the dough, and that their bread was the lightest of all.<sup>48</sup>

It would be difficult to form an idea of the prodigious luxury which Rome introduced into an aliment so common, and of such universal

use as bread. Its name, its form, and flavour indicated the various ranks of society to which it belonged.<sup>53</sup> There was the senator's bread, that of the knights, of the citizens, of the people, and that of the peasants.<sup>54</sup>

Let us go together under the vast galleries supported by those magnificent arcades.<sup>51</sup> The *ediles* have preceded us; they are visiting the shops;<sup>52</sup> it is the *Forum Pistrinum*, or bread-market. The year is good: a *septier* (five bushels) of wheat is only twenty-five shillings,<sup>55</sup> and provisions of all kinds abound in Rome. Foreigners, also, are here, attracted by curiosity; for Vespasian is preparing to deposit with solemnity the spoils of Jerusalem in the temple of Peace.<sup>56</sup>

In the middle of the inclosure you see the statue of Vesta, the goddess worshipped by bakers.<sup>57</sup> In the front, and round the gallery, those open stalls are loaded with a number of round loaves of the same form and weight: they are all five inches in thickness; the top is divided by eight notches—that is to say, they are first divided across, and the four parts are again subdivided.<sup>58</sup> These lines are made in the dough, so that they may be more easily broken.

The Roman gentry and shopkeepers give the preference to this sort of household bread, simply composed of flour, water, and salt.<sup>57</sup>

You perceive, here and there, several baskets, full of heavy biscuits; they are called *autopyron*; it is a coarse, black food, composed of bran mixed with a little flour, and made expressly for the dogs and slaves.<sup>59</sup>

Do you see that colossal-looking man, with enormous limbs, who is walking about with an air of stupidity, and whose small head is covered with scars? The dealers know his profession, and one of them offers him the *athlete's* bread; it is kneaded, without leaven, with soft, white curd cheese, and is a coarse, heavy food, which that class of people seem to partake of with great delight.<sup>60</sup> That stout baker before us occupies two of the most spacious shops in the market, on the left of the statue: he is one of the richest members of the corporation, and is the principal purveyor for the camp and army. Those large sacks, placed before him with so much symmetry, contain the *buccellatum* biscuit, or dried bread for the troops.<sup>79</sup>

His neighbour (called the Greek), was born at Athens; he is the fashionable purveyor to the princes, senators, and sybarites of Rome. No one understands so well as himself the art of mixing salt, oil, and

milk with the best wheaten flour; an exquisite combination, which produces the celebrated bread of Cappadocia, served only on the tables of the wealthy.<sup>71</sup> With the *artoplites*, a light bread, made with the best wheaten flour, and baked in a mould, it is the only kind of which refined persons can partake.<sup>72</sup> If we were not afraid of tiring you, we could point out many other sorts of bread which abound in the *Forum Pistrinum*, for there is some for all tastes and classes, from the *artopticii*, baked in moulds,<sup>73</sup> a most nutritious and digestive bread, down to the *furfuraceus*, a mass of indigestible bran that the wildest savages among the Scythians could not have swallowed with impunity.

We should have spoken to you of the *astrologicus* bread, the paste of which is similar to that we use in our days to make fritters, commonly called batter.

Also of the *cacabaceus*, which is indebted for its agreeable and spicy flavour to the water, which is previously boiled in a kind of bronzed stewpan; and the *siligineus* bread, made of the best flour. Its manipulation is difficult and tedious; no matter—the epicurean prefers it, when, by chance, he happens to be hungry.<sup>74</sup>

Neither ought we to forget the *panis madidus*, a species of paste made of milk and flour, with which the fashionable ladies and effeminate dandies covered their faces before going to bed, to preserve the freshness and beauty of their complexion.<sup>75</sup>

But this enumeration may appear to you idle and endless; let us, therefore, leave the market and assist at the distribution of bread *civilis* among the people, of which thirteen ounces is given to each person;<sup>76</sup> we will then give a rapid glance at the various other *cereals* besides wheat, which, in some shape or other, are converted into food.

The customs of the middle ages cannot be better illustrated than by adding the following curious notes:

The Norman kings subjected the bakers to very severe laws with

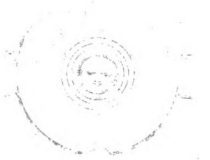
#### DESCRIPTION OF PLATE No. VII.

BREAD.—No. 1. In Herculaneum there were found two entire loaves of the same dimension, being 13½ inches in diameter, and 3½ inches thick. Each had eight divisions cut on the top, that is to say,—a cross was first marked, and between each, another division was made; some had stamps on the top.

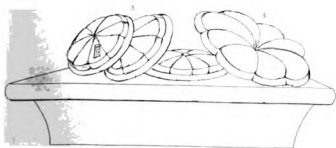
No. 2. At Pompeii, in a shop near the Pantheon, were discovered bronze moulds for pastry and bread.

No. 3. The Cappadocia bread, made in a mould, found at Pompeii.

No. 4. The mould for the above.











respect to the weight and price of bread. The first offence was punished by the confiscation of their bread; the second by a fine; and the third by the pillory."<sup>77</sup>

Saint Louis made statutes for the bakers of Paris. He forbade them to bake on Sunday or any festival day, under pain of a fine of eighteen sous (about eight pence), and a certain quantity of bread. But he gave them permission to open their shops and *sell* every day of the year without exception."<sup>78</sup>

In the 17th century, a new regulation was made concerning bakers; they were to bake "daily, and have always on sale three kinds of bread, viz., that known as *pain de chalis*, of twelve ounces; *pain de chapitre*, of ten ounces; and brownish household bread, of sixteen ounces. The price of each to be *douze deniers* (a halfpenny), marked by the baker with his own particular mark." They were also permitted to make "rolls and other sorts," but not to expose them for sale "under pain of being fined four hundred Paris livres (a little more than twelve pounds sterling)." "<sup>79</sup>

Master-bakers were admitted at Paris, in the 14th century, in the following manner:—

When a young man had been successively winnowed, sifter, kneader, and foreman, he could, by paying a certain amount to the king as legiance money, become an aspirant-baker, and commence business on his own account. Four years after, he was received as master by going through certain formalities. On a given day, he set out from his house, followed by all the bakers of the town, and repaired to the residence of the master of the bakers, to whom he presented a new pot filled with nuts, saying: "Master, I have accomplished my four years; here is my pot of nuts." Then the master of the bakers asked the secretary of the trade whether that were true, and having received a reply in the affirmative, the master of the bakers returned the pot to the aspirant, who broke it against the wall, and was at once reckoned amongst the masters.

Let us reckon up the different kinds of bread that were in use at that epoch:

The bread made simply with flour, water, salt, and yeast—the common bread; the best was made at Chailly or Gonesse.

The bread cooked in hot water—*pain échaudé* (in England, we should call it baked dumpling).

The bread made of the finest flour, beaten a long time with two sticks—pounded bread.

The bread made of the very finest and purest flour (biscuit flour) slightly baked—roll bread.

The bread made of fine flour, kneaded with butter, and sprinkled with whole wheat—sheep bread.

The bread made of fine flour, eggs and milk—Christmas bread.

And lastly, rye bread, kneaded with spice, honey, or sugar—ginger-bread."

## V.

# FRUMENTA.

Do not be alarmed, fair readers, at the Latin noun which heads this chapter: tolerate it in consideration of our promise seldom to solicit a like favour. It meant, among the Latins, all the plants which produce ears of corn,<sup>1</sup> the seeds of which can be converted into flour.<sup>2</sup> Clearly there never was a more innocent expression.

*Barley* seems to claim the first place among cereals of the second order; the Greeks looked upon it as the happy symbol of fertility,<sup>3</sup> and the ancient inhabitants of Italy gave it a name (*hordeum*) which, perhaps, recalled to their mind the use mankind made of it before wheat was known (*exordium*).<sup>4</sup>

The Jews had a great esteem for barley, and sacred history generally assimilates it to wheat, when the fruits of the earth are mentioned. Thus a beloved spot produces both these plants:<sup>5</sup> Shobi offered to David wheat and barley;<sup>6</sup> and Solomon promises twenty thousand sacks of wheat and as much barley to the workmen charged with cutting down the cedars of Lebanon.<sup>7</sup>

The Greeks and Romans did not carry their love for this grain so far as the Hebrews. In Rome it was the food of the flocks and cowards.<sup>8</sup> In Lacedæmon and at Athens the gladiators and common people had no other aliment;<sup>9</sup> they made it into barley-gruel (*alphiton*), the composition of which was very simple, and would not probably tempt a modern Lucullus. Here is the recipe of this ancient and national dish:—

Dry, near the fire or in the oven, twenty pounds of barley flour, then parch it. Add three pounds of linseed meal, half a pound of coriander

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seed, two ounces of salt, and the quantity of water necessary.<sup>10</sup> To this mixture of ingredients the Italian epicureans added a little millet, so as to give the paste more cohesion and delicacy.<sup>11</sup>

This culinary preparation must appear rather unworthy of those nations who so completely eclipsed all the gastronomic glories of the universe; wherefore let us hasten to reinstate them as men of taste and exquisite intelligence, by citing a more learned combination, which obtained the judicious patronage of the Arcestrates and Apicii:—

Take pearl barley, pound it in a mortar, make use of the flour only, and put it in a saucepan; pour on it by degrees some of the best oil; with that certainty which science alone gives to the hand, and stir it carefully, whilst a slow, equal fire performs the great work of cookery. Be, above all, attentive to enrich it, at proper intervals, with a delicate gravy extracted from a young fat chicken or from a succulent lamb. Unceasingly watch, lest the ebullition, by going on too rapidly, force this delightful mixture to overflow the side of the vessel; and when your practised palate informs you that it is worthy of your guests, present it to their impatient sensuality.<sup>12</sup>

So it appears the ancients were acquainted with pearl barley, and barley water; the latter took the name of diet drink (*ptisana*), which we only associate with melancholy reminiscences.<sup>13</sup> Hippocrates was not only in raptures with the virtues and properties of this aliment,<sup>14</sup> but he also conferred the highest praise on that sweet and insipid drink, which our doctors order their patients, as did the oracle of Cos, and which at that time was called "barley broth."<sup>15</sup>

*Oats* occupied an honourable place after barley. Pliny fancied these two plants so analogous, that the owner of a field who had sown barley might find oats at the time of harvest, whilst precisely the reverse might happen to his neighbour.<sup>16</sup> Nature, in our days, is not subject to such frolics; and our farmers are tolerably certain that, by care, labour, and God's assistance, they will gather from the soil what they have sown.

"In order to develop a strong flavour of vanilla in black oats, wash this seed, boil it a moment in water, and employ the decoction as you would potato flour, and it will form excellent creams.

"In Normandy and Lower Britany they make with flour of oats a delicious soup. The following is the manner they obtain it. They take white oats and put them in the oven; when sufficiently dried, they are fanned, cleaned, and carried to a mill, the grinders of which are freshly

sharpened. The miller takes care to hold them a little way off, in order that they may not crush the grain, and that this last may preserve the shape of rice; by this means they remove the whole of the pellicle."—**PARMENTIER.**

The Greeks and Romans knew how to appreciate oatmeal: they used it to make a kind of gruel, such as we have already described, and also a substantial thick milk, which they prepared as we do.<sup>18</sup>

*Rice* was also held in great esteem by them: they considered it as a food very beneficial to the chest; therefore it was recommended in cases of consumption, and to persons subject to spitting of blood.<sup>19</sup>

*Millet*, so called from the multiplicity of its seeds,<sup>20</sup> abounded more particularly in Gaul, in the time of Strabo.<sup>21</sup> Pliny pretends that no grain swells so much in cooking, and he assures us that sixty pounds of bread was obtained from a single bushel of millet, weighing only twenty pounds.<sup>22</sup> This naturalist also speaks of another kind of millet, coming originally from India, and which had only been in cultivation ten years in Italy. The stalk resembled that of the reed, and often attained the height of ten feet; its fecundity was such that a single grain produced innumerable ears of corn;<sup>23</sup> therefore, if so prolific, and capable of making good and economical food, why should it not be, in 1853, cultivated largely wherever the climate may allow it?

Some writers place *Panic Grass* among the wheats, because certain nations made bread of it.<sup>24</sup> The higher classes of Rome and Athens always resisted this bad taste. They preferred spelt, or red wheat, a super-excellent grain,<sup>25</sup> which was much honoured by the Latins, if we can credit the charming letter, written by Pliny the younger, to Septilius Clarus, on the occasion of a dinner, where the latter failed to join the guests. Among other delicate dishes with which he desired to treat his friend, he had ordered a spelt cake to be made.<sup>26</sup> This same flour was the base of the Carthaginian pudding; which the reader may taste if he will, here is the recipe:—

**CARTHAGINIAN PUDDING.**—Put a pound of red wheat flour into water; when it has soaked some time, place it in a wooden bowl, add three pounds of cream cheese, half a pound of honey, and one egg; beat this mixture well together, and cook it on a slow fire in a stew-pan.<sup>27</sup> Should this dish not be sufficiently delicate, try the following:—

When you have sifted some spelt flour, put it in a wooden vessel, with some water, which you must renew twice a day for ten days. At

the end of that time squeeze out all the water, and place the paste in another vessel; reduce it to the consistence of thick lees, pass it through a piece of new linen, and repeat this last operation; dry it in the sun, and then boil it in milk.<sup>28</sup>

As regards the exact seasoning of this exquisite Roman dish, it is your own genius which must inspire you with the proportions.

Let us not omit to notice the *Erupmon* of the Greeks, the *Irion* of the Latins, the *Indian Wheat* of the moderns. This plant produces a wholesome and easily digestible food; it was well known in Italy in the time of Pliny,<sup>29</sup> at which period the peasants used to make a crisp sort of heavy bread, probably somewhat similar to that which is still used in the south of France.

Since the famine of 1847 great attention has been paid to this flour; much was imported into England from America, where it is used in domestic economy; when green, its milky pulp is an excellent food: the various advantages of this flour, however, are not sufficiently developed to give all the benefit of its goodness to the world; habit and prejudice assist materially to prevent its being generally employed.

The Romans also ate it as hasty-pudding, parched or roasted, with a little salt. A writer equally remarkable for his elegant and easy style, as well as for the justness of his observations, informs us that, in our days, the Indian inhabitants of the unfruitful plains of Marwar never dress Indian corn in any other way.<sup>30</sup>

Such are the principal *graminea* which the ancients thought worthy of their attention, or allowed to appear on their tables, with more or less honour according to the degree of esteem in which they were held. It is probable that the cooks in the great gastronomic period of Rome and Athens, who knew so well the capricious nature of their masters' palates,<sup>31</sup> had to borrow from magic chemistry, then so flourishing, some wonderful means of giving to various kinds of cereals a culinary value they now no longer possess—what might we not expect from a Thimbron,<sup>32</sup> a Mithoeceus,<sup>33</sup> a Soterides?<sup>34</sup> This latter performed a feat which does him too much honour to be unnoticed here.

The King of Bithynia, Nicomedes, was taken with a strange, invincible, and imperious longing which admitted of no delay; he ordered his cook, Soterides, to be sent for, and commanded him to prepare instantly a dish of loaches. "Loaches, Sire!" cried the skilful, yet terrified cook; "by all the gods, protectors of the kingdom, where can I procure these fish

at this late hour of the night?" Kings ill brook resistance to their will.<sup>33</sup> Nicomedes was not celebrated for patience when pressed by hunger. "Give me loaches, I say," replied he, with a hollow and terrible voice; "or else——" and his clear, fearful, pantomimic expression made the unfortunate cook understand too well that he must either obey or immediately deliver up his head to the provost of the palace. The alternative was embarrassing; nevertheless, Soterides thought how to get out of the scrape. He shut himself up in his laboratory, peeled some long radishes, and with extraordinary address gave them the form of the fatal fish, seasoning them with oil, salt, black pepper, and doubtless several other ingredients, the secret of which the illustrious *chef* has not handed down to posterity. Then, holding in his hand a dish of irreproachable-looking fried fish, he boldly presented himself before the prince, who was walking up and down with hasty strides awaiting his arrival. The King of the Bithynians ate up the whole, and the next day he condescended to inform his court that he never had loaches served he so much liked.<sup>34</sup> This digression, which the reader will kindly pardon, sufficiently shows to what height the art of ancient cookery was carried, and of which this work will furnish new and abundant proofs.

The cereals having had so much of our attention, we have now to consider those grains or seeds which serve as the bases or necessary adjuncts to different dishes.

## VI.

### GRAINS: SEEDS.

ONE of the most important was *Mustard* seed. Pythagoras maintains (and no one has contradicted his assertion) that this seed occupied the first rank amongst alimentary substances which exercise a prompt influence on the brain.<sup>1</sup> Indeed the ancients attributed to it the same qualities that we do at the present day.

Mustard, according to their opinion, excites the appetite, gives piquancy to meat, strengthens the stomach, and facilitates digestion. It is better suited, say they, to bilious constitutions than to lymphatic persons; and they recommended its use in summer, rather than in winter.<sup>2</sup>

The good Pliny, always disposed to adopt, without much examination, any stories, provided they were but slightly exaggerated, was convinced, and affirms, with his accustomed good humour, that this plant is a sovereign remedy against the bite of the most venomous serpents: it is only necessary to apply it to the wound. And, again, if taken inwardly, there is nothing to fear from the poisonous effects of certain mushrooms.<sup>3</sup> The doctors of the 19th century are, apparently, little inclined to adopt the method recommended by the worthy naturalist.

Mustard seed is only mentioned in the Bible as a term of comparison; its alimentary qualities are nowhere indicated.<sup>4</sup>

The Romans, and other nations after them, fermented this seed in new sweet wine. It is from this, perhaps, we must seek for the origin of the word mustard, "*mustum ardens*" (burning wine)<sup>5</sup>; some gastronomic writers give it another derivation, not generally adopted. This



condiment, say they, was formerly called *sauve* or *senevé*. It was only towards the close of the 14th century that this name was changed. Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, marching against the inhabitants of Ghent, who had revolted from him, and the city of Dijon having supplied him for this expedition with a thousand men-at-arms, the prince, in gratitude, granted to that city, amongst other privileges, that of bearing his arms, with his motto, "*Moult me tarde*." The whole of this was carved on the principal gate of Dijon, but an accident having destroyed the middle word, the two others *moult tarde* caused many a smile at the expense of the Dijonnais; and as they traded in *senevé* (mustard), this grain was called in derision *moutarde*, when it came from Dijon, a name it has preserved ever since.<sup>6</sup> If this etymology is not true, at least it is ingenious.

*Coriander*, amongst the Romans, appears to have possessed the same property as mustard, that is to say, they considered it was strengthening and digestive.<sup>7</sup> They employed it also in a very useful manner during the great heat of summer: they mixed it with vinegar, after it had been well bruised or pounded, and laid it over any kind of meat, which this coating preserved in a perfect state of freshness.<sup>8</sup>

Pliny classifies the bitter seed of the *Lupin* as a grain pertaining to that of wheat;<sup>9</sup> and if you soak it, he says, in boiling water, it becomes so mild that it can be eaten.<sup>10</sup> Zeno, of Citium, was of the same opinion. This philosopher, with all his wisdom, could not help showing his bad temper, even towards his best friends at times, but was very affable after he had quaffed several cups of delicious wine. One day he was asked for an explanation of this contrast in his temper. "That is very simple," he replied; "I am of the same nature as the lupins: their bitterness is insupportable before they are soaked, but they are of an exquisite mildness when they have been well steeped."<sup>11</sup>

We strongly doubt, nevertheless, whether this plant has ever been honoured by the patronage of connoisseurs and people of delicate taste; a very high authority in cookery—Lycophon, of Chalcis—used to say, with a kind of disdain, that this despicable plant was hardly good enough for the common fare of the mob, or to feast the guests at a beggar's table.<sup>12</sup>

It was principally used as food for cattle, and not without reason, if it be true that twenty pounds of lupins are sufficient to fatten an ox.<sup>13</sup>

The lovers of etymology, who may be classified in the family of

readers of logogriffs, were in raptures at finding the following: "The Latin name of *Lupinus* has been given to this grain because the lupin wears out and destroys the land nearly as the wolf destroys and devours the flocks; whereupon they exclaimed, with pride, '*Lupinus à lupo!*'"<sup>14</sup>

At the period when the gods did not exact much, but were contented with humble offerings, men placed on the altars loaves made of *Linseed* meal; a treat the immortals gratefully accepted, though certainly it would not much tempt us<sup>15</sup> of the present day.

The Asiatics afterwards thought of pounding the linseed, frying it, and mixing it with honey; these cakes seemed to them too good for their divinities, so they ate them themselves.<sup>16</sup>

In the time of Pliny, the Lombards and Piedmontese ate this miserable bread of the gods, and even found in it a most agreeable flavour:<sup>17</sup> these nations have since improved their taste.

Shall we mention *Hempseed*, the *Cannabis* of the ancients, which was served fried for dessert?<sup>18</sup> That hemp should be spun and made into ropes, well and good; but to regale one's-self with it after dinner, —when the stomach is overloaded with food, and hardly moved from its lethargic quietude by the appearance of the most provoking viands that art can invent—what depravity! What strange perversion of the most simple elements of gastronomy!

The Arabs, that wandering nation, who are not yet acquainted with the roasting-spit, nor the voluptuousness of a delicious repast, formerly intoxicated themselves with a beverage extracted from linseed;<sup>19</sup> we, who are in possession of generous wine, let us deplore such excesses, and not imitate them.

## VII.

# VEGETABLES.

ALL nations have sown vegetables, and judged them worthy of their particular attention; sometimes they have even confounded many of these plants with the cereals, because they were converted into flour and bread,<sup>1</sup> especially in time of famine.<sup>2</sup>

After the Deluge, when God made a covenant with Noah he said, with respect to the food of man:—"Even as the green herb have I given you all things;"<sup>3</sup> and, subsequently to that epoch, the holy writers frequently demonstrate, in their simple and interesting style, the various uses which the Hebrews made of vegetables. Esau, pressed by hunger, sold his birth-right to Jacob for a dish of lentils.<sup>4</sup>

Among the presents which David received from Shobi, were beans, lentils, and parched pulse.<sup>5</sup>

The four Hebrew children were fed with vegetables, at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon.<sup>6</sup> It is sufficient, we think, to indicate these passages, without uselessly increasing the number.

The heroes of Homer, those men covered with iron and brass, whose terrible blows dealt death and desolation, reposed after their exploits, partaking of a dish of beans or a plate of peas.<sup>7</sup> Happy simplicity of the Homeric ages! Patrocles peeled onions! Achilles washed cabbages! and the wise Ulysses roasted, with his own hands, a sirloin of beef!

One day the son of Thetis received under his tent a deputation sent by the Greeks, to entreat him to be friends with Agamemnon. The young hero, who could only be accused of a little pride and passion,

invited these worthy personages to dinner, and, with the assistance of his friend, gave them a magnificent banquet, in which vegetables occupied a most conspicuous place.\*

Sixteen Greek authors have devoted their vigils to profound researches concerning the qualities of these useful plants; their works have not been transmitted to us, but their names are to be found inscribed in the gastronomic treasure which Athenæus—that grammarian, philosopher, and epicurean—has bequeathed to the meditations of posterity.<sup>9</sup>

But it is principally with the Romans that this interesting branch of the magic art flourished. They have told us that this great family of herbs took the name of vegetables (*legumina*), because they were chosen and picked by the hand;<sup>10</sup> and their most celebrated horticulturists have prided themselves on the preparation of the ground to which they were confided, on the attention which they claimed, and on the Hygeian virtues which experience attributed to them. Heathen theology, too, consecrated several of them to the solemnities of their religion, and some nations even considered them worthy of their homage and the fumes of incense.<sup>11</sup>

Virgil himself seems to regret his inability to sing of gardens and vegetables. Perhaps a rapid sketch of what the great poet says on this subject, may not be misplaced here.

“ Si mon vaisseau long-temps égaré loin du bord,  
 Ne se hâtait enfin de regagner le port,  
 Peut-être je peindrais les Ciens chéris de Flore ;  
 Le Narcisse en mes vers s’empresserait d’éclorc,  
 Les roses m’ouvriraient leurs calices brillants,  
 Le tortueux concombre arrondirait ses flancs ;  
 Du persil toujours vert, des pâles chicorées  
 Ma muse abreuverait les tiges altérées,  
 Je courberais le lierre et l’acanthé en berceau,  
 Et du myrthe amoureux j’ombragerais les eaux.”<sup>12</sup>

One more fact will serve to show to what extent the Romans carried their enthusiastic affection for leguminous plants: we know that illustrious families did not disdain to borrow their names from them. The appellations, Fabius, Cicero, and Lentulus, thus enhanced the humble

renown of beans (*faba*), peas (*cicer arietinum*), and lentils (*lenticula*).<sup>12</sup> The eminent orator we have just named gave the preference one day to a dish of beet-root, instead of oysters and lampreys, of which he was passionately fond.<sup>13</sup> It is true that, since the promulgation of the Licinian law,<sup>14</sup> which allowed but little meat and plenty of vegetables, the voluptuaries of Rome invented most astonishing ragouts of mushrooms and pot-herbs. So true is it that the genius of man develops itself more particularly under difficult circumstances, and that the art of cookery owes, perhaps, the perfection and glory which it has attained to the impediments with which its formidable enemy, frugality, seems always ready to surround it.

Apicius, that profound culinary chemist, who nobly expended immense treasures in inventing new dishes, and who killed himself<sup>15</sup> because the remainder of his fortune was not sufficient for him (though to another it would have seemed magnificent)—Apicius shows us what he believed to be the most suitable manner of preserving vegetables. "Choose them," he says, "before they are perfectly ripe, put them in a vessel coated with pitch, and cover it hermetically."<sup>16</sup>

The reader will decide for himself between this process and those which science has since discovered.

The capitulars (or statutes) of Charlemagne enter, on the subject of vegetables, into some instructive details. They inform us that lettuces, cresses, endive, parsley, chervil, carrots, leeks, turnips, onions, garlic, scallions, and eschalots, were nowhere to be found, except in the emperor's kitchen-gardens. Charlemagne had all those vegetables sold, and derived from them a very considerable revenue.<sup>17</sup>

Anderson makes an observation (under the date 1548), which deserves to be noticed here, were it only on account of its singularity. "The English," says he, "cultivated scarcely any vegetable before the last two centuries. At the commencement of the reign of Henry VIII., neither salad, nor carrots, nor cabbages, nor radishes, nor any other comestibles of a like nature, were grown in any part of the kingdom; they came from Holland and Flanders."

According to the author of a project, printed in London in 1723, in 8vo., "for the relief of the poor, and the payment of old debts, without the creation of new taxes," Queen Catherine herself could not procure a salad for her dinner. The king was obliged to send over

to Holland for a gardener to cultivate those pot-herbs, with which England is, perhaps, better furnished now than any other country in Europe.

Anderson asserts (1660) that cauliflowers were not known in England until about the time of the Restoration. And, lastly, the author of the "State of England," printed in 1768, remarks that asparagus and artichokes were only introduced a few years antecedent to that date.

## VIII.

# DRIED VEGETABLES.

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## BEANS.

THIS innocent vegetable, which with us certainly awakens no lugubrious thoughts, was formerly consecrated to the dead. It was offered in sacrifices to the infernal gods, and its mysterious virtues evoked by night, spirits, and shadows.<sup>1</sup> The Flamen of Jupiter could not eat it, and he was forbidden to touch a bean, or even to pronounce its name ;<sup>2</sup> for the fatal plant contains a little black spot, which is no other than a noxious character—a type of death.<sup>3</sup>

Pythagoras and his followers carefully avoided this dismal food, in the fear of submitting a father, sister, or beloved wife to the danger of a cruel mastication ;<sup>4</sup> for who knew where wandering souls might rest during the course of their numerous transigrations.

Grave writers say the cause of this abstinence is, that beans are difficult of digestion ; that they stupify those who make use of them as food ; and that hens who eat them cease to lay eggs.<sup>5</sup> What more shall we say ? Hippocrates, wise as he certainly was, had some of these strange fears, and he trembled for his patients when beans were in blossom.<sup>6</sup>

In spite of such ridiculous prejudices, this plant had numerous and enlightened defenders. When green, it was served on tables renowned for delicacies ; and, when fully ripe, it frequently replaced both wheat and other corn.<sup>7</sup> One of the festivals of Apollo—the *Pyanepsia*—owed its origin and pomp to the bean. This vegetable then obtained pre-

eminence over all that were boiled in the saucepan, and offered to the God of Day and the Fine Arts.<sup>8</sup> Is it possible to imagine a more brilliant rehabilitation?

If we are to believe Isidorus, this plant was the first culinary vegetable of which man made use;<sup>9</sup> he was, therefore, bound to preserve a grateful remembrance of it.

King David did not deem it unworthy of him,<sup>10</sup> and the Prophet Ezekiel was commanded to mix it with the different grains of which he made his bread.<sup>11</sup>

We possess few certain indications proving the different culinary combinations to which beans gave rise among the ancients. All we know is, that they ate them boiled,<sup>12</sup> perhaps with bacon; raw,<sup>13</sup> with salt, we should imagine; or fried<sup>14</sup> with fat, butter, or oil.

Two kinds especially attracted the attention of true connoisseurs of that class of *gourmets* elect, whose palate is ever testing, and whose sure taste detects and appreciates shades, of almost imperceptible tenuity—first, the bean of Egypt, recommended for its rich, nutritious, and wholesome pulp; this bean was also cultivated in Syria and Cilicia;<sup>15</sup> and secondly, the Greek bean, which passed at Rome for a most delicious dish.<sup>16</sup> Certain gastronomists, however, preferred another vegetable of which we are going to speak.

Ever since the middle ages the bean has played a very important part in the famous "Twelfth-night cake," almost all over Europe. The ephemeral royalty it bestowed was often sung by the poets, and consecrated in chronicles. Thomas Randolph informs us that Lady Flemyng was queen of the bean in 1563.<sup>17</sup> Some days after the Duke of Guise was assassinated by Poltrot. History has its puerilities as well as its great tragedies.

The Spaniards had also their Twelfth-night cake. When John, Duke of Braganza, had obtained the crown of Portugal (1640), Philip IV. of Spain informed Count Olivares of the event, and added, as if it were a consolation for the loss of a kingdom, that this new sovereign was nothing more than a "king of the bean."<sup>18</sup> Philip was mistaken.

These cakes were made in former days nearly in the same manner that we make them now. Sometimes they contained honey, flour, ginger, and pepper. One portion was for God, another for the Holy Virgin, and three others for the Magi; that is to say, they gave all these portions to the poor.<sup>19</sup>



In England the cake was often full of raisins, among which one bean and one pea were introduced.

"Cut the cake," says Melibœus to Nisa; "who hath the beane shal be kinge; and where the peaze is, shal be queene."<sup>21</sup>

"At the present day the bean is one of the vegetables most cultivated in Egypt and Italy. At Naples, as in Egypt, they are eaten raw when young, and the large ones cooked and grilled in the oven. They are publicly sold already cooked."—LEMAN.

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## HARICOTS.

It is well known that Alexander the Great was fond of travelling, and that he was generally accompanied in his peregrinations by a certain number of soldiers, who occasionally took for him, on his route, cities, provinces, and sometimes kingdoms. It happened, one day, that as the Macedonian prince—worthy pupil of Aristotle—was herbalizing in India, his eyes fell upon a field of haricots, which appeared to him very inviting. It was the first time that he had seen this plant, and he immediately ordered his cook to prepare a dish of them—we do not know with what sauce; but he thought them good, and, thanks to this great conqueror, Europe was enriched with a new vegetable.<sup>22</sup>

Virgil was doubtless ignorant of this noble origin, when he decried haricots severely, by qualifying them so disgracefully.<sup>23</sup> It is true that the lower classes of people, who were very fond of them, did great injury to their reputation; for things the most exquisite soon lose their value when they fall within the reach of the vulgar. It is thus with a pleasing melody—when given up to the barbarous and melancholy street organs it ceases to charm the ears of drawing-room fashionables. The same again with a plaintive ballad—it loses its attraction the moment a street Orpheus begins to murder it with his Stentorian bawl.

Let it not be thought, however, that the plant of which we speak was exclusively reserved for the vulgar appetite. Oh, no! the Greeks and Latins had too much good taste for that. The former allowed it a distinguished place on their tables, together with figs, and other side

dishes. They only required that haricots should be young, tender, and green.<sup>23</sup>

In Rome they were preserved with vinegar and garum; and, prepared in this manner, they excited the appetites of the guests at the beginning of the repast.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, it was admitted that this vegetable was much more wholesome than beans, that the stomach was less fatigued by it, and that persons of delicate constitutions might partake of it without fear. Certain amateurs even pretended that no vegetable was to be compared to haricots;<sup>25</sup> but others differed from them on this point; and the latter, right or wrong, pronounced in favour of peas.

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## PEAS.

Green peas, we are sorry to say, were not appreciated as they deserved to be by the Romans.<sup>26</sup> It was reserved principally for our century to discover their value, to cultivate them with care, and to force nature to give them to us before the appointed time. This plant was hardly known in 1550. Since that period, the gardener, Michaux, undertook to bring it into repute. For some time in France it was called only by the name of this worthy man.<sup>27</sup>

Before that it was an unappreciated vegetable; it came forth, blossomed, and disappeared, without utility and without renown.

It was not thus with grey peas (*pois chiche*), which flourished at a very remote period, and are mentioned in the sacred writings.<sup>28</sup> The common people of Rome and Greece made them their ordinary food. They ate them boiled or fried; a rather disagreeable dish, according to the caustic Martial,<sup>29</sup> who, however, speaks with disdain of every kind of peas, in whatsoever manner they may be prepared.

Nevertheless, the satirical humour of this celebrated poet did not prevent this vegetable from being universally sold; and men, women, and children regaled, and even gorged, themselves, with fried grey peas,<sup>30</sup> or ram peas (*cicer arietinum*), a singular name, for which they were indebted to the slight asperity remarkable in each of the grains.<sup>31</sup>

At the Circus, and in the theatres, they were sold at a low price to the spectators, whom it seemed impossible to satiate with this delicacy,

although it has so little attraction for us.<sup>32</sup> In short, the nation of kings had so decided a taste for grey peas, that those who coveted public employment did not fail to distribute them gratuitously to the people, in order to obtain their suffrages.<sup>33</sup> We must acknowledge that in those days votes were obtained at a very cheap rate.

## LENTILS.

The Egyptians, whose ideas were sometimes most eccentric, imagined it was sufficient to feed children with lentils to enlighten their minds, open their hearts, and render them cheerful. That people, therefore, consumed an immense quantity of this vegetable, which from infancy had been their principal food.<sup>34</sup>

The Greeks also highly esteemed this aliment, and their ancient philosophers regaled themselves with lentils. Zeno would not trust to any one the cooking of them; it is true that the stoics had for their maxim: "A wise man acts always with reason, and prepares his lentils himself."<sup>35</sup> We must confess that the great wit of these words escapes us, although we are willing to believe there is some in them.

However it may be, lentils were abundant in Greece and in the East; and many persons, otherwise very sensible, maintained, with the most serious countenance in the world, that they softened the temper and disposed the mind to study.<sup>36</sup>

It is hardly necessary to observe that this plant was well known to the Hebrews. The red pottage of lentils for which Esau sold his birth-right,<sup>37</sup> the present of Shobi to David,<sup>38</sup> the victory of Shammah in the field of lentils,<sup>39</sup> and, lastly, the bread of Ezekiel,<sup>40</sup> sufficiently prove that the Jews numbered this vegetable as one of those in ordinary use among them.

The Romans had not the same esteem for it as the nations we have mentioned. According to them, the moisture in lentils could only cause heaviness to the mind, and render men reserved, indolent, and lazy. The name of this vegetable pretty well shows, they said, the bad effect it produces. Lentil derives its origin from the word *lentus* (slow),<sup>41</sup> "*Lens a lente.*"

And, as if enough had not been alleged to disgrace this unfortunate

plant, and to give the finish to the ill-fame it had acquired, it was placed amongst funereal and ill-omened foods. Thus Marcus Crassus, waging war against the Parthians, was convinced that his army would be defeated, because his corn was exhausted, and his men were obliged to have recourse to lentils.<sup>13</sup>

How was it possible to resist such attacks! The humble plant gave way in spite of the few flattering words of the poetic Virgil,<sup>14</sup> and the assurance of Pliny that this food produced two uncommon virtues—mildness and moderation.<sup>15</sup>

## IX.

### KITCHEN GARDEN.

THE art of gardening, which may be called the luxury of agriculture,<sup>1</sup> was known at the most remote periods.<sup>2</sup> In the same inclosure was to be found the kitchen garden, orchard, and flower garden,<sup>3</sup> at a short distance from the habitation of the rich.<sup>4</sup> Royal hands did not disdain to embellish those spots which afforded a pleasing retreat, solitude, and repose.

Thus Attalus resigned the cares of his crown to cultivate his little garden, and sow in it the seeds of his favourite plant.<sup>5</sup>

Babylon, the renowned city of antiquity, was celebrated amongst other wonders for her gardens suspended in the air; they were partly in existence sixteen centuries after their erection, and astonished Alexander the Great<sup>6</sup> by the sublime grandeur of their prodigious boldness and the rare beauty of their workmanship.

Homer has left us the description of Alcinous's garden,<sup>7</sup> from which can be traced the birth of the art of gardening; its luxury consisted in the order and symmetry of its form, in the richness of its soil, the fertility of the trees, and in the two fountains which ornamented it. It was not so with the Romans. Those conquerors of the world displayed every where pomp and ostentation: Lucullus, Crassus, Pompey, and Cæsar, filled their gardens with the riches of Asia and the spoils of the universe.<sup>8</sup>

The serious horticulturist, who wanted a garden for enjoyment, and not for show, carefully laboured, to see it bring forth fine fruits and excellent vegetables.<sup>9</sup> Water was properly distributed for irrigation by means of aqueducts<sup>10</sup> of tiles, wood, or lead pipes,<sup>11</sup> and everywhere the

plants received the necessary moisture; and clever experienced gardeners were constantly occupied in improvements suggested by an attentive and skilful master.<sup>12</sup>

The kitchen garden of the ancients contained mostly the vegetables, herbs, and roots, of which we still make use; but they also cultivated certain other kinds, which modern cookery has either put aside or rarely employs. We shall describe all those which appear most worthy of notice.

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## CABBAGE.

This plant has experienced the fate of a host of human things that have not been able to bear the weight of a too brilliant reputation. Time has done justice to the extraordinary qualities attributed to it, and the cabbage now remains, what it ought always to have been, an estimable vegetable and nothing more.

The Egyptians adored it, and raised altars to it. They afterwards made of this strange god the first dish of their repasts, and were imitated in this particular by the Greeks and Romans, who ascribed to it the happy quality of preserving from drunkenness.<sup>13</sup> It was more particularly the red cabbage that obtained these honours and prerogatives. From Italy the victorious legions introduced it among the Gauls, as well as the green cabbage; the white species appears to belong originally to southern countries.

Hippocrates had a peculiar affection for this vegetable. Should one of his patients be seized with a violent cholic, he at once prescribed a dish of boiled cabbage with salt.<sup>14</sup> Erasistratus looked upon it as a sovereign remedy against paralysis. Pythagoras, and several other learned philosophers, composed books in which they celebrated the marvellous virtues of the cabbage.<sup>15</sup>

A writer, not less serious than those we have just quoted, the wise Cato, affirms that this plant infallibly cures all diseases; and pretends to have used this panacea to preserve his family from the plague, which, otherwise, would not have failed to reach them. It is to the use the Romans made of it, he adds, that they were able during six hundred

years to do without the assistance of physicians, whom they had expelled from their territories.<sup>16</sup> This bold assertion deserved a little retaliation on the part of the faculty; so they deposed the cabbage from the rank occupied by it in medicine, and banished it to the kitchen.

The Athenian ladies formerly partook of the general enthusiasm in favour of this wholesome vegetable, which was always served to them when a new-born infant required their maternal love and care.<sup>17</sup>

The ancients were acquainted with three principal kinds of cabbage: the silken-leaved, the curled, and the hard, round, white cabbage.<sup>18</sup>

Apicius does not busy himself with any one of these varieties in particular in the various preparations he points out, and which we submit to the appreciation of connoisseurs:

1st. Take only the most delicate and tender part of the cabbage, which boil, and then pour off the water; season it with cummin seed,<sup>19</sup> salt, old wine, oil, pepper, alisander, mint, rue, coriander seed, gravy, and oil.

2nd. Prepare the cabbage in the manner just mentioned, and make a seasoning of coriander seed, onion, cummin seed, pepper, a small quantity of oil, and wine made of sun raisins.<sup>20</sup>

3rd. When you have boiled the cabbages in water, put them into a saucepan and stew them with gravy, oil, wine, cummin seed, pepper, leeks, and green coriander.<sup>21</sup>

4th. Add to the preceding ingredients flour of almonds, and raisins dried in the sun.<sup>22</sup>

5th. Prepare them again in the above manner, and cook them with green olives.<sup>23</sup>

Who will question the service rendered to the culinary art by resuscitating these antique dishes, in which the cabbage admits of such a variety of combinations, and which we owe to the learning and experience of a man of taste? Whatever may be the opinion of our modern Trimalcions, we must not forget that this vegetable, prepared according to the recipe of Apicius, was the delight of the *gourmets* of Rome more than eighteen centuries ago.

The Romans brought the red cabbage into Gaul, and the green cabbage also. White cabbages came from the north, and the art of making them headed was unknown in the time of Charlemagne.<sup>24</sup>

"In some countries cauliflowers are dried, and the white headed cabbages are preserved. The first, stripped of their leaves, are cut in slices,

and boiled two minutes in water slightly salted. They are shortly after withdrawn, and put to drain on hurdles, which are afterwards exposed to the sun during two or three days. At the expiration of that time the cauliflowers are placed in an oven half-warm, and are kept there till the stalks are dry; they are then wrapped in paper to preserve them from damp. To keep the headed cabbages, divide them in six or eight pieces, according to size, throw them for an instant in boiling water, then withdraw and plunge them in vinegar, which from time to time must be changed, especially at the beginning, taking care to add always a little salt."—DUTOUR.

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## BEET.

Columella pretends that this plant owes its name (*beta*) to its resemblance to the letter B.<sup>24</sup> We shall leave to the professional etymologist the trouble of examining whether Columella made a mistake or not.

The Greeks had two distinct sorts of beet—the black and the pale; they preferred the latter,<sup>25</sup> especially when it came from Ascrea in Bœotia.<sup>27</sup> They called this species Sicilian beet; and the physician Diphilus—who joined to his knowledge of botany that sort of gastrophagic intuition, that culinary *mens divinior*, whose inspiration never leads astray—placed it far above the cabbage, notwithstanding the estimable qualities of this latter vegetable.<sup>28</sup> He recommended it to be eaten boiled, with mustard, and considers this food as a very excellent vermifuge.<sup>29</sup>

The beet has not found favour with Martial, who, always caustic and severe, calls it an insipid dish.<sup>30</sup> This injurious, and perhaps unjust, epithet would doubtless have exercised a fatal influence upon the destiny of this most inoffensive of vegetables, if an opponent of greater weight had not entered the lists against the atrabilarious poet.

We read in Apicius: "Boil, over a slow fire, some very tender white beet; add leeks, which have been taken from their native soil some days previous; when all this is cooked put it into a saucepan with pepper, gravy, and raisin wine; take care that the ebullition be régular, and serve."<sup>31</sup>



" Or, if you prefer: tie in bundles the beet you have carefully chosen, wash it, throw in some nitre, and boil it with water; then put it into a saucepan with sun-raisin wine, pepper, cummin, and a little oil; at the moment of ebullition add a mixture of gravy and coarsely chopped walnuts; cover the saucepan for an instant, uncover, and serve."<sup>22</sup>

The skilful artist is pleased for the third time to mention this culinary herb; and this is the new preparation which he gives:—

" When you have boiled beet in water until it is tender, add a pulp of leeks, some coriander, and cummin seed, carefully combined with flour and sun-made wine; place these different ingredients in a saucepan, and add gravy, oil, and vinegar."<sup>23</sup>

By tasting one of these dishes you will be convinced that Martial did not understand them; or, perhaps, he composed his epigram after dinner.

One species of beet is well known in its two principal varieties, under the name of beet-root and white-beet. The southern parts of Europe appear to be the native countries of the beet. It serves as food for both man and cattle. Sugar is extracted from the root, and potash from the stalks and leaves.

Beet-root is preserved, after stripping it completely of its leaves, and the earth which remains on them, in greenhouses, in dry cellars, and even in trenches covered with earth, in layers, lengthwise, with sand. They are thus preserved until the following May.

" Beet-root is eaten cooked in ashes or in water, and seasoned in various ways; they are excellent in salad, either by themselves, or mixed with endives or dandelion, &c."—Bosc.

## SPINACH.

It does not appear that spinach was known to the Greeks and Romans. Some authors think that it might be the *chrysolacanon* of the Greeks,<sup>24</sup> but it is probable that this was no other than the *orach*;<sup>25</sup> Beckmann<sup>26</sup> thinks, with several botanists, that this plant came from Spain; and, indeed, it has been often called the *Spanish vegetable*.<sup>27</sup>

We only speak of this plant by way of memento, and regret that our

first masters in cookery have not been able to transmit to us the results of their studies and experience in the preparation of spinach, whose precocity must always render it valuable to amateurs of vegetable food.

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### MALLOWS.

The ancients ate mallows, and recognised in them soothing and softening qualities.<sup>38</sup> Diphilus of Siphne says that their juice lubricates the windpipe, nourishes, and is easily digested.<sup>39</sup> Horace praises this aliment;<sup>40</sup> and Martial, for once just, recommends its use.<sup>41</sup>

It is true that a passage of Cicero would seem to indicate we know not what deception, which appeared all at once when eating or after partaking of mallows;<sup>42</sup> but the Roman orator, perhaps, knew little of the properties of the plant, which were only described much later by Pliny the naturalist. The curious may consult on this subject the twenty-first chapter of the twentieth book of his great work.

At all events mallows were in high renown; they occupied one of the first ranks among pickles, those famous *acetaria* which had so powerful an effect in quickening the appetites of the Greeks, and preparing their stomachs for great gastronomic struggles.<sup>43</sup> They were served as a salad. The large-leaved mallow was mixed with *œnogarum*, pepper, gravy, and sun-made wine.<sup>44</sup>

The small-leaved mallows were also prepared with *œnogarum* and gravy; but instead of pepper and wine, oil and vinegar were added.<sup>45</sup>

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### ASPARAGUS.

*"Quiconque ne voit guère n'a guère à dire aussi."*<sup>46</sup> But travellers, those daring pioneers of science, have sometimes, in their travels, the strange good fortune to behold wonders invisible to other eyes. Thus some skilful explorators of Africa saw, about the middle of the second century of the Christian era, in Getulia, asparagus of excellent quality

and of very beautiful growth, being no less than twelve feet high ! It is needless to add that the Libyan vendors rarely sold them in bundles. But these veridical travellers, on quitting the plain to ascend the mountains, found something still more wonderful ; the land there seemed to suit these plants still better, for they acquired the height of twenty cubits.<sup>47</sup> After this, what shall we say of our European asparagus, so shrivelled and diminutive in comparison with that of Getulia ?

The Greeks, not having any better, contented themselves with the ordinary sort, such as we have at the present day. They considered it very useful in the treatment of internal diseases.<sup>48</sup> Diphilus, who was very fond of it, regrets that this vegetable should be so hurtful to the sight:<sup>49</sup> is it because we eat asparagus that spectacles have become necessary at nearly all periods of life ?

The Romans cultivated this plant with extreme care,<sup>50</sup> and obtained the most extraordinary results. At Ravenna, they raised asparagus each stem of which weighed three pounds.<sup>51</sup>

Then, as in our days, they were allowed but a short time to boil ; hence the favourite expression of Augustus, who, to intimate his wish that any affair might be concluded without delay, was accustomed to say : " Let that be done quicker than you would cook asparagus."<sup>52</sup>

The cooks of Rome had a method which appears to have been subsequently too much neglected ; they chose the finest heads of asparagus, and dried them. When wanted for the table, they put them into hot water, and then boiled them a few minutes.<sup>53</sup> Thanks to this simple process the plant swelled considerably, and passed as being very tender and fine flavoured.

The Apicii, Luculli, and other connoisseurs of renown, had this vegetable brought from the environs of Nesis, a city of Campania.<sup>54</sup>

It is asserted that Asia is its native soil, and that it was originally brought to us from that part of the world. Nevertheless, wild asparagus grows naturally in certain sandy soils, as, for instance, in the islands of the Rhône and the Loire.<sup>55</sup>

" When it is found impossible to eat all the asparagus you have cut, and which has arrived at a convenient maturity, place them by the thick ends in a vessel containing about two inches of water ; or else, bury them half-way up in fresh sand. By means of these precautions asparagus may be preserved several days."—PARMENTIER.

## GOURD.

This vegetable, which the wise *gourmet* is too discreet to despise, and to which the whimsical fancy of Roman gardeners gave the most grotesque forms,<sup>55</sup> appears to be the very image of those soft and easy dispositions who yield to and obey every one, and whose unintelligent mildness is only repaid with sarcasm or disdain. Observe this creeping vegetable, left free to grow to its full size, which would sometimes attain the length of nine feet,<sup>57</sup> and which the will of man was able to reduce to the slender and tortuous shape of a hideous dragon.<sup>58</sup> When hardly ripe, it was cut and served on the tables of the most dainty, where it was eaten with vinegar and mustard, or seasoned with fine herbs:<sup>59</sup> and whilst the ungrateful guests savoured the stomachic and nourishing flesh of the gourd,<sup>60</sup> they did not cease to amuse themselves at the expense of its round and almost empty body<sup>61</sup>—the proverbial image of a head not over well-provided with brains.<sup>62</sup>

To the present day even, more than one popular joke continues to pursue this plant, although its culinary qualities are appreciated as formerly.

We are indebted to India for the seed of the gourd,<sup>63</sup> which the Greeks designated, according to the species, by the names of Indian and common gourd. The latter kind was either boiled or roasted; the former was generally boiled in water.<sup>64</sup> Antioch furnished the finest specimens to the markets of Athens.<sup>65</sup>

The ancients were acquainted with the manner of preserving this vegetable in such a state of freshness as to enable them to eat it with pleasure in the month of January:<sup>66</sup> the method is as follows,—the gourds were cut in pieces of a moderate size; these pieces, strung like beads, were first dried in the open air, and then smoked; when winter arrived, each piece was well washed before putting it into the stewpan, with the various culinary herbs which the season produced; to this was added endive, curled cabbage, and dried mushrooms.<sup>67</sup> The rest of the operation is easily understood. The Romans prepared this vegetable in different ways: a few of the principal ones will suffice.

1st. Boil the gourd in water, squeeze it out carefully, place

it in a saucepan, and mix some pepper, a little cummin seed, rue, gravy, vinegar, and a small quantity of wine, reduced to one-half by boiling. Let the whole stew, and then sprinkle it lightly with pepper, and serve.<sup>68</sup>

2nd. Boil and carefully squeeze them to extract the water, then put the gourds into a saucepan with vinegar and gravy; when it begins to simmer, thicken with fine flour, sprinkle lightly with pepper, and serve.<sup>69</sup>

3rd. Throw some salt on the gourd after it has been boiled, and the water pressed out of it; put it into a saucepan, with a mixture of pepper, cummin seed, coriander, green mint, and the root of benzoin; add some vinegar; then chop some dates and almonds; a little later, more vinegar, honey, gravy, sun-made wine, and oil; sprinkle lightly with pepper, and serve.<sup>70</sup>

4th. Put into a stewpan a fowl, with a gourd; add some apricots, truffles, pepper, cummin, sylphium, mint, parsley, coriander, pennyroyal, and calamint; moisten with wine, gravy, oil, vinegar, and honey.<sup>71</sup>

These four recipes are sufficient to prove that this vegetable stood very high in the estimation of the Romans.

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## TURNIPS.

The epicureans of Athens preferred turnips brought from Thebes;<sup>72</sup> Roman gastronomists placed those of Amitermes in the first rank, and those of Nursia in the second. The kitchen-gardeners of Rome furnished them with a third variety, to which they had recourse when they could not procure any other.<sup>73</sup> They were eaten boiled, thus:—after the water had been extracted from them, they were seasoned with cummin, rue, and benzoin, pounded in a mortar, adding to it afterwards honey, vinegar, gravy, boiled grapes, and a little oil. The whole was left to simmer, and then served.<sup>74</sup>

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## CARROTS.

The Greeks and Romans planted or sowed them in the beginning of the spring, or autumn.<sup>75</sup> They distinguished two kinds, the wild and the cultivated.<sup>76</sup>

This much esteemed root received the honour of being prepared in many ways. Sometimes it was eaten as a salad, with salt, oil, and vinegar.<sup>77</sup>

It was also stewed, and mixed afterwards with ænogarum.<sup>78</sup> Again, they boiled it in a stewpan, over a slow fire, with some cummin and a little oil, and just before serving it was sprinkled with ground cummin seeds.<sup>79</sup>

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## BLIT

(A SORT OF BEET).

Blit is one of the family of *atriplices*, which grows in Europe, and in the temperate regions of Asia; it owes its ancient reputation entirely to the insipidity of its flavour, from which it derives its Greek name, synonymous with stupidity and insignificance.<sup>80</sup> Blit was eaten boiled, when nothing better was to be had. In fact, it was a last resource—and nothing more.

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## PURSLAINE.

This vegetable, the aspect of which would lead us to suppose it possessed savoury qualities (though experience proves the contrary), was formerly mixed in different salads, and still enjoys some esteem when associated with a leg of mutton.<sup>81</sup>

In default of esculent qualities (which it certainly does not possess),

the ancients recognised in purslaine many admirable virtues,<sup>22</sup> which are not acknowledged in the present day. The internal use of this plant, also its external application, cured the bite of serpents, wounds inflicted by poisoned arrows, and infallibly neutralized the effects of poisonous drinks.<sup>23</sup> But, alas! purslaine is not now what it was formerly; for it is hardly permitted to appear by the side of one of our fresh white lettuces.

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### SORREL.

Sorrel is a polygenous plant, and grows throughout Europe amidst the grass fields. The Romans cultivated it in order to give it more vigour,<sup>24</sup> and ate it sometimes stewed with mustard, and seasoned with a little oil and vinegar.<sup>25</sup>

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### BROCOLI.

Drusus, son of Tiberius, was so passionately fond of the brocoli, which Apicius induced him to eat, that he was more than once severely reprimanded by his father on the subject.<sup>26</sup> It is true that the celebrated Roman epicurean displayed so much art, and gave such delicious flavour to it, that this dish alone would have been enough to establish his reputation. In fact, brocoli has always been appreciated by connoisseurs; and Glancias, who passed his life in meditating seriously on the perfectibility of culinary ingredients, said: "That nothing could be better than this vegetable, boiled and suitably seasoned."<sup>27</sup>

This was the method of preparing it at Rome: they used only the most tender and delicate parts of the brocoli, which were boiled with that extreme care the artist always devotes to this first operation; and, afterwards, when the water had been well drained off, they added some cummin seed, pepper, chopped onions, and coriander seed—all bruised together, not forgetting, before serving up, to add a little oil and sun-made wine.<sup>28</sup>

## ARTICHOKE.

A young and unfortunate beauty had the ill-luck to displease a vindictive and irascible god, who instantly metamorphosed her into an artichoke.<sup>95</sup> This poor girl's name was Cinara. Although she had become a bitter plant she preserved this sweet name, which the moderns have strangely modified. Our readers, who eat artichokes with so much indifference, will, perhaps, sometimes lament this poor victim of a blind resentment.

This plant was well known to the ancients; the hilly regions of Greece, Asia, and Egypt were covered with it;<sup>96</sup> but the inhabitants made no use of it as an aliment, and it remained uncultivated.<sup>97</sup>

It would be rather difficult to trace the precise period when it was first introduced into Italy. All we know is, that it grew there more than half a century before the Christian era, in the time of Dioscorides, who mentioned it.<sup>98</sup> It appears, nevertheless, that hardly any one troubled himself about artichokes, or their esculent qualities, up to that time; but the wealthy, about a century after, began to appreciate them, and Pliny, in one of his jesting whims, reproaches the rich with having deprived the lower classes and *asses* of a food which nature seemed to have destined for them.<sup>99</sup>

This vegetable was then very dear,<sup>100</sup> for it did not succeed, and was subsequently given up. It was so far forgotten that in the year 1473 it appeared as a novelty at Venice;<sup>101</sup> and towards the year 1465 it was brought from Naples to Florence, whence it passed into France in the sixteenth century.<sup>102</sup>

Galen<sup>103</sup> looked upon the artichoke as a bad food.<sup>104</sup> Columella sung its praise in his verses; he recommended it to the disciples of Bacchus, and forbid the use of it to those who were anxious to preserve a sweet and pure voice.<sup>105</sup>

This plant, whatever may be in other respects its estimable qualities, does not please every one equally well; its bitterness and unpleasant odour keep it at a distance from numerous palates—perhaps because too many allow themselves to be prejudiced by deceitful appearances. Here are two very ingenious methods by means of which a trial might



be made to overcome, or lessen, the defects it undoubtedly has, and which we can but deplore :—

Artichokes will become mild by taking care to steep the seed in a mixture of honey and milk.<sup>100</sup> They will then exhale the most agreeable perfume, particularly when this seed has passed three days in the juice of bay leaves, lilies, or roses.<sup>101</sup>

Having quoted the authority, we give the recipe for what it is worth.

Until the result of this experiment is known, artichokes may be eaten raw, with a seasoning of hard eggs chopped in very small pieces, garum, and oil.<sup>102</sup>

If you prefer a sharper sauce, mix well some green mint with rue, Greek fennel,<sup>103</sup> and coriander; add, afterwards, some pepper, alisander, honey, garum, and oil.<sup>104</sup> They are also eaten boiled, with cummin, pepper, gravy, and oil.<sup>105</sup>

“It is well known under what form artichokes, either raw or cooked, appear on our tables. The best way to preserve them is to half cook them, separate the leaves from the fur, and preserve the fleshy part, called *the bottom*, and throw them, still warm, in cold water, to make them firm. That operation is called *blanchir*. They are laid afterwards on hurdles, and put four different times in the oven, as soon as the bread is taken out. They become then very thin, hard, and transparent, like horn, and return to their original form in hot water. They must be kept free from damp.”—PARMENTIER.

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## POMPION.

Like the gourd, the good and creeping pompion has served more than once as a term of comparison, and that in a style most humiliating. Should any one happen to be thick-headed, or not very intelligent,<sup>106</sup> he was immediately compared to a pompion (popularly, pumpkin—whence bumpkin). The insult went still further: it was said of a pusillanimous man, “That he had a pompion where his heart ought to have been.”<sup>107</sup>

The obesity of this vegetable, and its inelegant shape, have doubtless given rise to these injurious remarks.

It was, however, acknowledged that it possessed many estimable

qualities, which ought to have compensated for its outward defects. It was thought to be very refreshing, and was employed with success in the treatment of diseases of the eyes.<sup>108</sup>

We might undertake (if permitted) a long dissertation, in order to prove that the Hebrews, weary of being in the Desert, murmured because they were deprived of the pompion of Egypt,<sup>109</sup> and not the melon, as translators have rendered it; but we should be accused of egregious presumption; the learned would frown, critics would not spare us, and our pompions would, nevertheless, pass as melons.

This plant occupies a prominent place in the precious catalogue of Roman dainties which we offer for the meditation of judges. Here are some of the ancient modes of preparing this vegetable:

1st. Boil some pompions, put them in a stewpan with cummin and a little oil; place them for a short time over a slow fire, and serve.<sup>110</sup>

2nd. When you have well boiled, reduce them to a pulp, then put them on a dish with pepper, alisander, cummin, wild marjoram, onion, wine, garum, and oil; thicken with flour, and serve.<sup>111</sup>

3rd. When the pompion has boiled in water, it is then seasoned with wild fennel, sylphium,<sup>112</sup> dried mint, vinegar, and garum.<sup>113</sup>

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## CUCUMBER.

When the Israelites were in the Desert they regretted much the cucumbers of Egypt, which were sold to them at a very trifling price when under the yoke of Pharaoh.<sup>114</sup> We may thence infer that this vegetable was very plentiful, and chiefly in great demand by the lower order of people; for as the Jews were in a state of servitude, they were necessarily assimilated with the most abject of the Egyptians.

We see that this *cucurbitacea* has been long known, and that, after the lapse of many centuries, it is held in the same degree of estimation it enjoyed among the Eastern nations.

The Greeks thought much of the cucumber, particularly of that kind which came from the environs of Antioch.<sup>115</sup> They attributed to this plant marvellous properties, which modern scepticism has completely

thrown aside. We think it good in salad, with vinegar, oil, pepper, and salt, and that is all

It is, we imagine, the only good quality our farmers ascribe to it at the present day. Formerly, in Greece, the same class of persons, being clearer-sighted, or more credulous, were convinced that this vegetable protected all kinds of seeds against the voracity of insects. To obtain this result it was only necessary to steep the seed in the juice obtained from the root of the cucumber, before it was sown.<sup>118</sup>

We freely offer this preservative to those who may wish to give it a trial, and sincerely hope they may profit by this revival of the Greek process.

The Romans conceived that this cold and somewhat insipid vegetable (we beg pardon of its admirers) required a seasoning to heighten its flavour. No sooner had they transplanted it from Asia into Rome,<sup>117</sup> than they busied themselves in rendering it worthy of their tables by various preparations, which may, perhaps, interest the curious.

1st. Scrape the cucumbers, and eat them with *œnogarum*.<sup>118</sup> \*

2nd. Scrape the cucumbers, and boil them with parsley, seed, gravy, and oil; thicken, and sprinkle pepper over the dish before serving.<sup>121</sup>

3rd. Again, they may be seasoned with pepper, pennyroyal, honey, or sun-made wine, gravy, vinegar, and a little *sylphium*.<sup>122</sup>

4th. You will obtain a most delicate dish by boiling the cucumbers with brains, already cooked; adding afterwards some cummin, and a little honey.<sup>123</sup>

The cucumber, although but little nutritious, does not agree with cold stomachs. In the north an astonishing quantity are consumed. The Poles ate them at every repast with boiled *mæat*.

"Cucumbers are preserved in a very simple manner. The essential point is to obtain good wine-vinegar. After having well washed and wiped them, put them into either white or red vinegar (the colour is better preserved by using the white); add salt; cover simply the vessel containing them with a board. The vinegar must always be an inch higher than the cucumbers, and must be entirely renewed at the end of a month."—PARMENTIER.

\* Apicius composed the *œnogarum* (or rather *eleogarum*, for wine is not mentioned in his recipe) in the following manner: bruise, in a mortar, pepper, alisander, coriander, and rue; then add some *garum*, honey, and a little oil.<sup>119</sup>

Or, prepare the condiment with thyme, wild mint, pepper, and alisander; to which add, as before, *garum*, oil, and honey.<sup>120</sup>

## LETTUCE.

From time immemorial the lettuce has occupied a most distinguished place in the kitchen garden. The Hebrews ate it, without preparation, with the Paschal lamb.<sup>124</sup> The opulent Greeks were very fond of the lettuces of Smyrna,<sup>125</sup> which appeared on their tables at the end of a repast;<sup>126</sup> the Romans, who at first imitated them, decided, under Domitian, that this favourite dish should be served in the first course with eggs,<sup>127</sup> purposely to excite their indomitable appetites, which three courses (and such courses, ye gods! when compared with ours of the present day) would hardly satisfy.

The bitter lettuce was sufficient for the frugal Hebrews,<sup>128</sup> but the delicate epicureans of Athens and Rome were much more particular; they valued them only when a mild and sweet savour invited the most rebellious palate, and awakened the slumbering desires of a fatigued stomach. And what care, what attention, did they not bestow on the growth and maturity of this cherished plant!

Aristoxenus, a philosopher by profession, an epicurean by taste, had in his garden a species of lettuce which was the envy of his surrounding neighbours. The worthy man, rendered happy by their jealous admiration, went every evening, without fail, to contemplate the small square of ground which contained his treasure, and sprinkled it carefully with water, doubtless from a limpid stream. Tush! Water, to moisten the lettuces of Aristoxenus! No: the philosopher kept in reserve a sweet and excellent wine to quench the thirst of his plants, and to communicate to them that delicate perfume and exquisite taste, the mysterious cause of which baffled the neighbouring gastronomists.

The day after, the arch old man would say, with a roguish smile, that he was going to gather some relishing green cakes, which the earth prepared expressly for him,<sup>129</sup> and the simple countrymen were wonder-struck without understanding the cause.

The lettuce—favourite plant of the beautiful Adonis<sup>130</sup>—possesses a narcotic virtue, of which ancient physicians have taken notice. Galen mentions that, in his old age, he had not found a better remedy against the wakefulness he was troubled with.<sup>131</sup> The biographer of

Augustus informs us that this Emperor, being attacked with hypochondria, recovered only by the use of lettuces, recommended by Musa, his first physician; <sup>132</sup> nothing, therefore, is wanting in praise of this useful plant—literally nothing, since the king of cooks, Cœlius Apicius, judged it worthy of an honourable place in the immortal book he has bequeathed to the amateurs of the Archeologico-culinary science of all ages and all countries.

“Take,” says he, “the leaves of lettuces, let them be boiled with onions, in water wherein you have put some nitre; take them out, squeeze out the water, and cut them in small pieces; mix well some pepper, alisander, <sup>133</sup> parsley seed, dried mint, and onions; put this mixture to the lettuce, and add to the whole some gravy, oil, and wine.” <sup>134</sup>

Lettuces may also be eaten with a dressing of gravy and pickles. <sup>135</sup>

Our ancestors served salads with roasted meat, roasted poultry, &c. They had a great many which are now no longer in vogue. They ate leeks, cooked in the wood-ashes, and seasoned with salt and honey; borage, mint, and parsley, with salt and oil; lettuce, fennel, mint, chervil, parsley, and elder-flowers mixed together. They also classed among their salads an agglomeration of feet, heads, cocks' combs, and fowls' livers, cooked, and seasoned with parsley, mint, vinegar, pepper, and cinnamon. Nettles, and the twigs of rosemary, formed delicious salads for our forefathers; and to these they sometimes added pickled gherkins. <sup>136</sup>

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## ENDIVE.

Pliny assures us that the juice of this plant, mixed with vinegar and oil of roses, is an excellent remedy for the head-ache: <sup>137</sup> we leave to the proper judges a pharmaceutical mixture which does not belong to our province, and which we only quote *en passant*.

Virgil thought endive bitter, <sup>138</sup> but he did not speak ill of it. Columella recommended this salad to fastidious and satiated palates; <sup>139</sup> this is praising it. The Egyptians appreciated its merits, <sup>140</sup> which the Greeks had too much sense and good taste to disdain; and the Romans ate it prepared in the following manner:—

Choose some fine endive; wash it well; drain off all the water; add a little gravy and oil; then chop some onions very small; strew them over the endive, and add honey and vinegar.<sup>141</sup>

It is understood that the sweet savour of the honey corrects the bitterness of the plant; but a judicious attention must preside over the quantity of that substance, for too much or too little might easily spoil this salad of Apicius.

## ONIONS.

Whoever wishes to preserve his health must eat every morning, before breakfast, young onions, with honey.<sup>142</sup> Such a treat is assuredly not very tempting: besides, this rather strong vegetable leaves after it a most unpleasant perfume, which long reminds us of its presence; wherefore this recipe has not met with favour, and, indeed, it is much to be doubted whether it will ever become fashionable.

Alexander the Great found the onion in Egypt, where the Hebrews had learned to like it.<sup>143</sup> He brought it into Greece, where it was given as food to the troops, whose martial ardour<sup>144</sup> it was thought to excite.

Pliny assures us that Gaul produced a small kind, which the Romans called Gallic onions, and which they thought more delicate than those of Italy.<sup>145</sup> At any rate, it was a dish given up to plebeians and the poor. Horace opposed to it fish—the luxurious nourishment of rich and dainty Romans.<sup>146</sup> In spite of this reprobation on the part of the elegant poet, Apicius does not fear to introduce the plant in his *Olus Molle*, a kind of *Julienne*, not devoid of merit.

Take onions, rather dry, and mix pepper, alisander, and winter-savory, to season a variety of vegetables previously boiled in water and nitre, the which, when very fine, thicken with cullis, oil, and wine.<sup>147</sup>

## LEEKs.

This vegetable—a powerful divinity, dreaded among the Egyptians,<sup>148</sup> and a food bewailed by the Israelites in their journey through the Desert<sup>149</sup>—cured the Greeks of numerous diseases, which in our days it is to be feared would resist its medicinal properties.<sup>150</sup> Everything changes in this sublunary world, and the leek no doubt follows the common law.

The authors of a compilation rather indigestible at times, but often very curious, assert that this vegetable attains an extraordinary size, by putting as many of the seeds as one can take up with three fingers into a piece of linen, which is then to be tied-up, covered with manure, and watered with care. All these seeds—so they say—will at last form themselves into one single seed, which will produce a monstrous leek.<sup>151</sup>

This process, which is revealed to us by the geonics, would have had an enthusiastic reception from those fervent pagans who vied in zeal with each other, to see who could offer Latona, on the day of the Theoxenias, the most magnificent leek.<sup>152</sup>

The mother of Apollo received this plant with pleasure, although presented to her quite raw ; but she would probably have preferred it dressed in the following manner :—

Take leeks, the mildest it is possible to procure ; boil them in water and oil, with a handful of salt, and put them into a dish, with gravy, oil, and wine.<sup>153</sup>

Or, cover the leeks with young cabbage leaves ; cook them under the hot embers, and season afterwards as above.<sup>154</sup>

## MELON.

This *cucurbitacea*, the most delicate vegetable belonging to this numerous family, has always been the delight of the inhabitants of the

East and of Europe. It came originally from the most temperate regions of Asia; the chivalric Baber made it known to his Hindoo subjects;<sup>155</sup> and the Romans introduced it into the west, at the time of their first expedition against the Persians. Melons had a prodigious success at Rome, and soon became a necessity with which the wealthy could not dispense. The Emperor Tiberius, that cruel and covetous prince,<sup>156</sup> liked them so much that they were served to him every day throughout the year.

The Greeks, whose ingenious and lively imagination mingled with everything the sweet perfume of flowers, contrived to place the seeds of melons in vessels full of rose leaves, with which they were afterwards sown. They maintained that, when at maturity, this cool and refreshing vegetable was impregnated with sweet emanations, and that its flavour called to mind its sweet and delicious abode with the queen of flowers.<sup>157</sup>

Sometimes also they macerated the seeds in milk and honey. Not only melons, but all the *cucurbitaceæ* were treated in this manner, when it was wished to communicate to them a milder flavour.<sup>158</sup>

In pointing out these processes in use among the ancient horticulturists, we do not at all pledge ourselves for their efficacy. However, it must be acknowledged that they exhibit a singularly praiseworthy emulation, which has perhaps prepared the way for the wonders with which our modern gardeners have made us familiar.

Independently of its exquisite flavour, the melon passed, among the Greeks and Romans, as being very beneficial to the stomach and head.<sup>159</sup> It is possible that they may have gone a little too far; but then man is so ready to give imaginary qualities to what he loves, that we cannot wonder at their praises of this delicious plant, which we generally eat in the most simple manner, without any other seasoning than a little sugar, sometimes with salt and pepper. Not so with the Romans; their practised palates required a more exquisite combination; they, therefore, added to it a sharp savoury sauce—a compound of pepper, pennyroyal, honey, or sun-made wine, garum, vinegar, and sylphium.<sup>160</sup>

Melons were not known in central or northern Europe until the reign of Charles VIII., King of France, who brought them from Italy.<sup>161</sup>



## RADISH.

Amongst other singularities which abound in the Talmud, the curious can but have remarked the following :

Judea formerly produced kitchen garden plants so large, that a fox bethought himself to hollow a radish, and make it his residence. After he had removed, this new kind of lair was discovered ; it was put into a scale, and found to weigh nearly one hundred pounds.<sup>162</sup>

It is a pity that no one preserved the seed of so remarkable a vegetable, which no doubt was only to be found in Judea.

The Greeks had very fine radishes, but they were not of such a surprising size. They procured them from the territory of Mantinea.<sup>163</sup> Mount Algidea also furnished the Romans with an excellent kind,<sup>164</sup> but which they esteemed less highly than those of Nursia,<sup>165</sup> in the country of the Sabines. These latter cost about threepence a pound in the time of Pliny ; they were sold for double that sum when the crop was not abundant.<sup>166</sup>

Writers of antiquity notice three distinct kinds of radishes : the large, short, and thick ; the round ; and the wild.<sup>167</sup> They fancied that, at the end of three years, the seed of this plant produced very good cabbages,<sup>168</sup> which must have been rather vexatious, at times, to honest gardeners who might have preferred radishes.

In times of popular tumult this root was often transformed into an ignominious projectile, with which the mob pursued persons whose political opinions rendered them obnoxious to *the majority*, as we might say in the present day.<sup>169</sup> As soon as calm was re-established, the insulting vegetable was placed in the pot to boil, and afterwards eaten with oil and a little vinegar.<sup>170</sup>

The Romans preserved radishes very well, by covering them with a paste composed of honey, vinegar, and salt.<sup>171</sup>

## HORSE-RADISH.

“By Apollo!” cried, mournfully, a philanthropic and gastronomic Greek, “one must be completely mad to buy horse-radish, when fish can be found in the market.”<sup>173</sup> So thought the philosopher Amphis. And at Rome, as in Greece, this reviled and despised root hardly found a place on the table of the poor, when anything else could be had.

There were several serious causes for this fatal proscription: this plant was found to be bitter, stringy, and of difficult digestion;<sup>173</sup> it was looked upon as a very common food;<sup>174</sup> the lowest class alone dared to feed upon it; the opulent were therefore compelled to exclude it from the number of their dishes. And again, certain strange customs, authorised by the Roman law, contributed greatly to make the horse-radish an object of horror and detestation; so true it is, that the manner in which objects are associated with our ideas determines almost invariably our love or hatred for them.

Nevertheless, all the species of this vegetable (and there were five in number, distinctly mentioned by Theophrastus<sup>175</sup>) ought not to have been condemned so severely. The Corinthian, the Leiothasian, the Cleonian, the Amorean, and the Bœotian, were so many distinct and separate species, each of which possessed its own peculiar property and quality.<sup>176</sup> The last-named, with its large and silky leaves, was tender, and had a sweet, agreeable taste.<sup>177</sup> The others, not so good, perhaps, were wholesome and nourishing, and their natural bitterness never failed to disappear, when the seeds were allowed to soak for some time in sweet or raisin wine before they were sown.<sup>178</sup>

Shall we now mention the properties the horse-radish possessed, and which ought to have been sufficient to establish its reputation, if prejudice were not both deaf and blind?

Take, fasting, some pieces of this beneficent and despised root, and the most inveterate poisons will be changed for you into inoffensive drinks.<sup>179</sup>

Would you have the power to handle and play with those dangerous reptiles whose active venom causes a speedy and sure death? Wash your hands in the juice of horse-radish.<sup>180</sup>

Do you seek an efficacious remedy for the numerous evils which besiege us unceasingly? Take horse-radish,—nothing but horse-radish.<sup>181</sup>

It is true that this incomparable root attacks the enamel of the teeth, and, indeed, soon spoils them;<sup>182</sup> but why should we be so particular when so many marvellous properties are in question?

As to its culinary preparation, Apicius recommends us to serve it mixed with pepper and garum.<sup>183</sup>

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## GARLIC.

Garlic was known in the most remote ages. It was a god in Egypt.<sup>184</sup> The Greeks held it in horror. It was part of their military food—hence came the proverb, “Eat neither garlic nor beans;” that is to say, abstain from war and law.<sup>185</sup> There was a belief that this plant excited the courage of warriors; therefore, it was given to cocks to incite them to fight. The Greek and Roman sailors made as great a use of it as the soldiers,<sup>186</sup> and an ample provision was always made when they set out on any maritime expedition.<sup>187</sup> It was a prevailing opinion that the effects of foul air were neutralized by garlic; and it was, no doubt, this idea which made reapers and peasants use it so lavishly.<sup>188</sup>

However, the taste for this vegetable was not always confined to the people, in the southern countries of Europe; it gained, at times, the high regions of the court. It is reported that, in 1368, Alphonso, King of Castile, who had an extreme repugnance to garlic, instituted an order of knighthood; and one of the statutes was, that any knight who had eaten of this plant, could not appear before the sovereign for at least one month.<sup>189</sup>

The priests of Cybele interdicted the entry of the temple of this goddess to persons who had made use of garlic. Stilphon, troubling himself very little about this interdiction, fell asleep on the steps of the altar. The mother of the gods appeared to him in his dream, and reproached him with the little respect his breath disclosed for her. “If you wish me to abstain from garlic,” replied Stilphon, “give me something else to eat.”<sup>190</sup>

The ancients, great lovers of the marvellous, believed that this despised vegetable possessed a sovereign virtue against the greater number of diseases,<sup>191</sup> and that it was easy to deprive it of its penetrating odour by sowing and gathering it when the moon was below the horizon.<sup>192</sup>

The Greek and Roman cooks used it but very seldom, and it was only employed as a second or third-rate ingredient in some preparations of Apicius which we shall hereafter mention.

"Garlic is called the physic of the peasantry, especially in warm countries, where it is eaten before going to work, in order to guarantee them from the pernicious effects of foul air. It would be too long were we to relate all that has been written in favour of this vegetable; let it suffice to say that it is employed in numerous pharmaceutical preparations, and among others in vinegar, celebrated by the name of *aromatic vinegar*."—Bosc.

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## ESCHALOTS.

Alexander the Great found the eschalot in Phœnicia, and introduced it into Greece. Its Latin name, *Ascalonica*, indicates the place of its origin, Ascalon, a city of Idumea.<sup>193</sup> Its affinity with garlic set the ancients against its culinary qualities, and this useful plant, too much neglected, only obtained credit in modern times.

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## PARSLEY.

Hercules, the conqueror of the Nemæan lion, crowned himself with parsley; a rather modest adornment for so great a hero, when others, for exploits much less worthy, were decked with laurels. A similar crown became, subsequently, the prize of the Nemæan<sup>194</sup> and Isthmian Games.<sup>195</sup>

Anacreon, that amiable and frivolous poet, who consecrated all his moments to pleasure, celebrates parsley as the emblem of joy and festivity;<sup>198</sup> and Horace, a philosophic sensualist of the same stamp, commanded his banquetting hall to be ornamented with roses and parsley.<sup>197</sup>

Perhaps it was thought that the strong, penetrating odour of parsley possessed the property of exciting the brain to agreeable imaginations; if so, it explains the fact of its being worn by guests, placed round their heads.

Fable has made it the food of Juno's coursers.<sup>198</sup> In battle, the warriors of Homer fed their chargers with it;<sup>199</sup> and Melancholy, taking it for the symbol of mourning, admitted it at the dismal repasts of obsequies.<sup>200</sup>

Let us seek to discover in this plant qualities less poetic and less brilliant, but, assuredly, more real and positive. In the first place:—

Wash some parsley with the roots adhering; dry it well in the sun; boil it in water, and leave it awhile on one side; then put into a saucepan some garlic and leeks, which must boil together a long time, and very slowly, until reduced to two-thirds—that done, pound some pepper, mix it with gravy and a little honey, strain the water in which the parsley was boiled, and pour it over the parsley and the whole of the other ingredients. Put the stewpan once more on the fire, and serve.<sup>201</sup>

The following recipe is much less complicated and more expeditious:—

Boil the parsley in water, with nitre; press out all the water; cut it very fine; then mix, with care, some pepper, alisander, marjoram and onions; add some wine, gravy, and oil; stew the whole, with the parsley, in an earthen pot or stewpan.<sup>202</sup>

If the illustrious pupil of Chiron, the warlike Achilles, had known the culinary properties of parsley as well as he knew its medicinal virtues, he no doubt would have been less prodigal with it for his horses;<sup>203</sup> and the conquerors of Troy would have comforted themselves, during the tediousness of a long siege, by cooking this aromatic plant, and enjoying a new dish.

Parsley, according to some writers, was of Egyptian origin; but it is not known who brought it into Sardinia, where it was found by the Carthaginians, who afterwards made it known to the inhabitants of Marseilles.

## CHERVIL.

This plant, which Columella has described,<sup>204</sup> furnished a relishing dish, prepared with gravy, oil, and wine; or served with fried fish.<sup>205</sup> At the present day it is highly commendable in salad.

## WATER-CRESSES.

The water-cress, the sight alone of which made the learned Scaliger shudder with terror, is supposed to be a native of Crete. It was, doubtless, the cresses of Alen (Suabia), which are cultivated in our gardens, and not those commonly found in brooks and springs.

The Persians were in the habit of eating them with bread:<sup>206</sup> they made, in this manner, so delicious a meal, that the splendour of a Syracusan table would not have tempted them.<sup>207</sup> This is one of those examples of sobriety which may be admired, but are seldom followed.

Plutarch did not share the opinion of the Persians, but scornfully ranked cresses amongst the lowest aliments of the people.<sup>208</sup> Nevertheless, the Romans, as well as the Greeks, granted to this cruciform plant a host of beneficent qualities, and among others, a singularly refreshing property. Refreshing! to say the truth, it refreshes much in the same way that mustard and pepper do.<sup>209</sup> Boiled in goat's milk, it cured thoracic affections;<sup>210</sup> introduced into the ears, it relieved the tooth-ache:<sup>211</sup> and finally, persons who made it their habitual food found their wits sharpened and their intelligence more active and ingenious.<sup>212</sup>

However, it does not appear that cresses ever enjoyed, in Rome or Athens, a culinary vogue equal to their official reputation; it was said that its acrid taste twisted the nose,<sup>213</sup> and this coarse jest naturally did it harm to a certain degree with the rich and delicate. Be that as it may, those who dared, ate it dressed in the following manner:—

With garum, or oil and vinegar;<sup>214</sup> or with pepper, cummin-seed, and lentiscus (leaves of the mastic-tree).<sup>215</sup>

The water-cress *par excellence* grows in springs, rivulets, and ditches, in Europe. Its piquant taste is rather agreeable; it is eaten as a salad or seasoning, with poultry and other roasted meat. This plant increases the appetite, fortifies the stomach, and possesses anti-scorbutic qualities.

A great consumption is made of it in certain countries. It is cultivated in running waters, either in gardens, or sown in the shade, where it is watered abundantly. The less it sees the sun, the softer it is.—Bosc.

## X.

### PLANTS USED IN SEASONING.

WE will point out, as briefly as possible, those plants mostly used in the kitchens of the ancients to heighten the flavour of their dishes, or to give them a particular taste, according as the dish or fancy might require it. In them especially lies the secret of those *irritamenta gulae*, or excitements of the palate, which Apicius brought so much into fashion.

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#### POPPY.

The seed of this plant was offered, fried, at the beginning of the second course, and eaten with honey.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it was sprinkled on the crust of a kind of household bread, covered with white of eggs.<sup>2</sup> Some of it was also put into the panada, or pap, intended for children<sup>3</sup>—perhaps to make them sleep the sooner.

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#### SESAME.

This seed was used in nearly the same manner as the poppy, and it occupied a distinguished rank among the numerous dainties served at dessert.<sup>4</sup> Certain round and light cakes were covered with this seed.<sup>5</sup> The Romans brought sesame from Egypt.<sup>6</sup>



## SOW-THISTLE. 4

This plant furnished a kind of milk, which was sometimes drunk : sometimes various kinds of meat were seasoned with it.<sup>7</sup> It was afterwards given up to rabbits, and there is every probability that they will retain undisputed possession of it.

## ORACH.

Few vegetables have been more exposed to injurious accusations. Pythagoras reproaches it with causing a livid paleness, dropsy, and the scrofula, in those persons who eat it.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, a greedy curiosity introduced it into the catalogue of culinary preparations, and the guests of Apicius tasted more than once the fatal orach without knowing its pernicious properties. History does not say that they suffered any pernicious effects from it.

This plant is also eaten like spinach, and mixed with sorrel to soften its acidity.—Bosc.

## ROCKET.

Persons about to undergo the punishment of the whip were recommended to swallow a cup of wine, in which rocket had been steeped. It was asserted that this draught rendered pain supportable.<sup>9</sup> And again, that this plant, taken with honey, removed the freckles which sometimes appear on the face.<sup>10</sup>

Whatever may be the degree of credence accorded to these two recipes, this vegetable enjoyed some reputation among the ancients, who mixed the wild and the garden rocket together, so as to temper the heat of the one by the coldness of the other.<sup>11</sup>

## FENNEL.

It was employed but seldom in the preparation of dishes or pastry ; but it was believed that the juice of its stalk had the property of restoring or strengthening the sight.<sup>12</sup>

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## DILL.

This plant, which, according to the ancients, weakened the eyes,<sup>13</sup> was much renowned for its exquisite odour,<sup>14</sup> and its stomachic qualities.<sup>15</sup> A much-admired perfume<sup>16</sup> was made from it ; it produced an agreeable sort of wine or liqueur ;<sup>17</sup> and a small number of choice dishes, for the enjoyment of connoisseurs, owed to it the reputation they had acquired.<sup>18</sup>

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## ANISE-SEED.

The production of an umbelliferous plant, which grows wild in Egypt, in Syria, and other eastern countries. Pliny recommends it to be taken in the morning, with honey and myrrh in wine :<sup>19</sup> and Pythagoras attributes to it eminent Hygeian properties, whether eaten raw or cooked.<sup>20</sup>

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## HYSSOP.

The Greeks, the Romans—and before them, the nations of the east<sup>21</sup>—believed that hyssop renews and purifies the blood. This plant, mixed with an equal quantity of salt, formed a remedy much extolled by Columella.<sup>22</sup> It was crushed with oil to make a liniment, used as a

remedy for cutaneous eruptions.<sup>23</sup> An excellent liqueur was obtained from it, known under the name of hyssop wine;<sup>24</sup> and lastly, this plant was used in a number of dishes, which it rendered more wholesome and refreshing.

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### WILD MARJORAM.

Nearly the same qualities were attributed to this herb as to hyssop;<sup>25</sup> and it was employed still more frequently in the composition of the most delicate condiments. Dioscorides<sup>26</sup> and Cato<sup>27</sup> make copious remarks on a much-esteemed liqueur, which they called wild marjoram wine.

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### SAVORY.

An odoriferous herb, which entered into the seasoning of nearly every dish.<sup>28</sup>

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### THYME.

Besides the various culinary purposes for which the ancients used this plant, they, like ourselves, extracted from thyme aromatic liqueurs,<sup>29</sup> the preparation of which will be given in another part of this work.

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### WILD THYME.

We find it rarely spoken of by magiric writers. Pliny believes it to be most efficacious against the bite of serpents.<sup>30</sup>

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### SWEET MARJORAM.<sup>31</sup>

Was much employed in the Isle of Cyprus; very little, if at all, in Rome, where they knew little more of sweet marjoram than the oil extracted from it.<sup>32</sup>

## PENNYROYAL.

The ancients entwined their wine cups with pennyroyal,<sup>23</sup> and made crowns of it, which were placed on their heads during their repasts, by the aid of which they hoped to escape the troublesome consequences of too copious libations.<sup>24</sup> On leaving the table, a small quantity of this plant was taken, to facilitate digestion.<sup>25</sup>

Pennyroyal occupied, also, an important place in high gastronomic combinations.

## RUE.

The territory of Myra, a city of Lycia, produced excellent rue.<sup>26</sup> Mithridates looked upon this vegetable as a powerful counter-poison;<sup>27</sup> and the inhabitants of Heraclea, suspicious—and with reason—of the villany of their tyrant, Clearchus, never stirred from their dwellings without having previously eaten plentifully of rue.<sup>28</sup> This plant cured also the ear-ache;<sup>29</sup> and to all these advantages, it joined that of being welcomed with honour on all festive occasions.<sup>30</sup>

## MINT.

There was formerly—no matter where or when—a beautiful young girl, who was changed into this plant through the jealous vengeance of Proserpine.<sup>31</sup> Thus transformed, she excited the appetite of the guests, and awakened their slumbering gaiety.<sup>32</sup> Mint prevented milk from curdling, even when rennet was put into it.<sup>33</sup>

## SPANISH CAMOMILE.

The Romans sometimes mixed with their drink the burning root of the Spanish camomile;<sup>34</sup> and we are astonished at meeting with the name of this formidable plant among the ingredients of some of their dishes.

### CUMMIN.

The condiments prepared with cummin had a very great reputation ; and culinary authors frequently mention this vegetable, which the Greeks and Romans invariably used.<sup>43</sup>

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### ALISANDER.

The same might be said of alisander, which, in the time of Pliny, passed as an universal remedy,<sup>44</sup> and which Apicius honours by naming in many of his dishes.

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### CAPERS.

Young buds of the caper tree, a shrub—native of Asia, where the species are in great varieties. It was but little thought of at the tables of the higher classes, and therefore was left to the people.<sup>45</sup>

The buds of the caper are gathered, and thrown into barrels filled with vinegar, to which a little salt is added ; then, by means of several large sieves made of a copper plate, rather hollow, and pierced with holes of different sizes, the different qualities are separated, and classed under different numbers. The vinegar is renewed, and the capers are replaced in the barrel, ready for exportation.

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### ASAFETIDA.

This plant, which we have excluded from our kitchens, and whose nauseous smell is far from exciting the appetite, reigned almost as the chief ingredient in the seasoning of the ancients. Perhaps they cultivated a kind which in no way resembled that of modern times. If it

were the same, how are we to explain the extreme partiality which Apicius shows for it? and which he says must be dissolved in luke-warm water, and afterwards served with vinegar and garum."

It is certain that the resin drawn by incision from the root of this plant is still much esteemed by the inhabitants of Persia and of India; they chew it constantly, finding the odour and taste exquisite.

"The neck of the root is cleared of the earth it is covered with, and replaced by a handful of herbs. At the end of forty days the summit of the root is cut transversely; then a small bundle of herbs is laid over, so as not to touch it. A whitish liquor exudes from the cut, and every other day it is gathered; the cut is renewed until the root is quite exhausted. The result of this crop is laid on leaves, and dried in the sun."—Bosc.

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## SUMACH.

The Romans made use of the seed to flavour several kinds of dishes."

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## GINGER.

This root was known at Rome under the Emperors, and many persons have confounded ginger with pepper, although they in no way resemble each other. Pliny refutes this error, and represents it as a native of Arabia."<sup>31</sup> It was used with other condiments."

"The Indians grate this root in their broth or *ragoût*; they make a paste which they believe is good against the scurvy. The inhabitants of Madagascar eat it green, in salad, cut in small pieces, and mixed with other herbs, which they season with salt, oil, and vinegar. In other places ginger is taken infused as a drink; it fortifies the chest, and awakens the appetite. It is preserved in sugar after it has been stripped of its bark, and soaked in vinegar. Delicious preserves are made of it with much perfume, and which keep a very long time."—DUTOUR.

## WORMWOOD.

The Egyptians had a great respect for the wormwood of Taposiris,—no doubt on account of the medicinal properties which physicians attributed to it.

Heliogabalus often regaled the populace with wormwood wine,<sup>32</sup> and the Romans gave it to the victorious charioteers. Pliny thinks this plant so salutary that nothing more precious could have been presented to them.<sup>33</sup> This explanation appears to have had but little plausibility, and it has been more rationally supposed that this liquor prevented or counteracted any giddiness they might feel. “You can cure yourself of dizziness,” says Strabo, “with the bitter leaf of wormwood.”<sup>34</sup>

The Roman wormwood wine was composed in the following manner :

They bruised one ounce of this vegetable, and mixed it with three scruples of gum, as much spikenard, six of balm, and three scruples of saffron ; to which was added eighteen *setiers*, or 180 gallons English, of old wine. This mixture was left to stand some time, but was not heated or subjected to any other process.<sup>35</sup>

In pharmacy, wine is made of wormwood ; also a syrup, a preserve, an extract, oil by infusion, an essential oil, and wormwood salt. It is supposed that several brewers on the Continent substitute the leaves and flowers of this plant for hops, in the manufacture of beer. It is, perhaps, a calumny, and we only repeat it in a whisper.

“The leaves of wormwood are used in salad to make it more digestible and heighten the flavour. They are preserved in vinegar, and to season dishes. Lastly, they are considered by some persons as a remedy, and the frequent use of them to be indispensable for the preservation of their existence.”—Bosc.

In concluding this chapter, it will be necessary to anticipate a question which naturally presents itself: did the Romans know the art of forcing fruits, and of procuring, at one season, the various vegetables or plants which belong to another period of the year?

Some verses from Martial will leave no doubt on the subject :—

“Whoever has seen the orchards of the King of Corcyrus (Aleinous),

dear Entellus, must have preferred thy rural habitation. Thou knowest how to preserve from the rigours of winter the purple grapes of thy vine bower, and prevent the cold frost from devouring the gifts of Bacchus. Thy grapes live enclosed under a transparent crystal, which covers without concealing them.

“What can avaricious nature refuse to the industry of man? Sterile winter is constrained to give up the fruits of autumn.”

This curious passage gives us to understand that the Romans had hot-houses and, no doubt, glass bells in their orchards and gardens, to bring sooner to maturity some of those productions of the earth which, by their delicate flavour and perfume, raised the insatiable desires of a people, decidedly the greatest epicureans ever known in the history of gastronomy to the present day.



## XI.

# FRUITS.

WHEN the Creator placed the first man in the Garden of Eden, he commanded him to nourish himself with the fruit it contained ;<sup>1</sup> and, from that epoch, the most ancient which the sacred work records, this kind of aliment is incessantly mentioned in the history of all nations, and at every period of their history.

The great Hebrew legislator seems to have considered fruit trees worthy of his especial care, for he forbid the Jews to cut them down, even on their enemies' lands ;<sup>2</sup> and, in order to teach his people how to preserve them in all their vigour, he declares the fruits of the first three years impure, and consecrates to the Lord those of the fourth.<sup>3</sup> He even goes further ; he exempts from military service any one who has planted a vineyard, and all fruit trees conferred the same privilege until the first vintage.<sup>4</sup>

Heathen nations also understood the importance of this branch of agriculture, and invented protective divinities—such as Pomona,<sup>5</sup> Vertumnus,<sup>6</sup> Priapus<sup>7</sup>—whose sole care consisted in protecting orchards from the inclemency of the seasons, and dispelling insects and robbers, who would damage and plunder the crops.

Each kind had, moreover, a benevolent patron, who could not honestly refuse to be useful to it : thus the olive tree grew under the auspices of Minerva ;<sup>8</sup> the Muses cherished the palm tree ;<sup>9</sup> the pine and its cone were consecrated to the great Cybele ;<sup>10</sup> Bacchus complacently ripened the perfumed pulp of the fig<sup>11</sup> and the rosy grape,<sup>12</sup> which placed him on a level with the gods.

Among the Greeks, fruits appeared on table at the second course ;<sup>13</sup> and were eaten either cooked, raw, or in the form of preserves.

The Romans sometimes breakfasted on a small quantity of dried fruits;<sup>14</sup> but the third course of their *cæna*, or principal repast, offered an incredible profusion of the productions of their own orchards, and of those of three parts of the world.<sup>15</sup>

Rich patricians, after they had exhausted all the immense resources of an incredible luxury—in their garments, habitations, and banquets—contrived to plant fruit trees on the summit of high towers, and on the house tops;<sup>16</sup> thus suspending forests over their heads,<sup>17</sup> as well as vast reservoirs, to keep alive the most exquisite fish.<sup>18</sup>

At Rome they had an expensive, but, as they thought, effective process of preparing pears, apples, plums, figs, cherries, &c., &c., and which was as follows:—

The fruit was chosen with great care, and put, with the stalks attached, into honey, leaving to each one sufficient space to prevent their touching each other.<sup>19</sup>

Our housewives of the 19th century may, perhaps, be curious to try this Roman experiment, if the quantity of honey which it requires does not frighten them.

## XII.

# STONE FRUIT.

## OLIVE TREE.

THROUGHOUT antiquity we find the olive tree acknowledged as something venerable and holy, and taking precedence of all other trees, even the most useful on account of their nourishing fruits, or the refreshing drink they furnished. The wise Minerva gave it birth;<sup>1</sup> and its foliage, which adorned the brows of the goddess,<sup>2</sup> served, thenceforth, to crown victory,<sup>3</sup> or to give rise to the sweet hopes of peace.<sup>4</sup> A green bough of olive rendered the suppliant inviolable.<sup>5</sup> The deadly arrows of Hercules were made of its wood.<sup>6</sup> From it princes borrowed their sceptre,<sup>7</sup> and the shepherd his crook.<sup>8</sup>

If, abandoning mythological fictions which surround the olive with a charming but false poetry, we interrogate history for more certain information concerning this revered tree, we shall find that Diodorus, of Sicily, informs us Minerva discovered and made known to the Athenians its useful qualities.<sup>9</sup> And a writer, in whose possession the most ancient records in the world were found—Moses—who has recounted the birth of vegetation,<sup>10</sup> tells us also of a patriarch pouring purified oil on a stone altar,<sup>11</sup> before the olive tree was known in Athens—nay, before Athens existed.

Profane historians honour Aristeus, son of Apollo, and King of Arcadia, with the invention of oil mills, and the manner of procuring the precious fluid,<sup>12</sup> the abundance of which was such, in the East, that it was used in lamps,<sup>13</sup> in anointing,<sup>14</sup> in seasoning of dishes,<sup>15</sup> and in numerous other instances too long to enumerate.<sup>16</sup>

Thus the most important culture among the Jews was that of the olive tree. There were large plantations of it in all the provinces: Galilea, Samaria, and Judea, were full of them.<sup>17</sup> It must not, however, be thought the Hebrews used olives only to make oil; they knew how to preserve them in brine, to be eaten at table, and for sale to strangers. Pliny particularly extols those of Decapolis, a province of the Holy Land: "They are very small," he says, "not larger than capers; but are much esteemed."<sup>18</sup>

Among the Greeks, the oil of Samos was considered to be the purest and finest:<sup>19</sup> next to it they gave preference to that of Caria or of Thurium.<sup>20</sup>

As regards olives, the *Colymbades*, or floating kinds were more esteemed than any other, on account of their size and taste;<sup>21</sup> they had an exquisite flavour imparted to them by being placed with different herbs in pots of oil:<sup>22</sup> the *Halmade* olives were preserved in brine.<sup>23</sup>

The cultivation of the olive tree was carried to a great extent in Greece; a host of poets sang in honour of this tree,<sup>24</sup> which produced so sweet a fruit; and Theophrastus speaks of it very frequently in his celebrated treatise on plants.<sup>25</sup>

The Romans were not acquainted with it until later; and even in the year 249 B.C., they possessed so few olive trees that a pound of oil sold for twelve *As*, or three shillings; less than two centuries after (74 B.C.), ten pounds of it only cost one *As*; but Italy had so far increased its plantations at the end of a few years (52 B.C.) that it was able to furnish olive trees to the neighbouring countries.<sup>26</sup> Its olives and oil were thought excellent; however, those of Grenada and Andalusia were preferred to them, even in the time of Pliny,<sup>27</sup> on account of their sweetness and delicate flavour. That illustrious naturalist has transmitted to us particulars of the highest interest on the cultivation of the olive tree, and the various preparations which its fruit requires, or rather, to which it is necessarily subjected for the luxury of the table.<sup>28</sup> Those who are curious on this subject may also consult Cato (the first among the Romans who has written on this tree),<sup>29</sup> Varro,<sup>30</sup> and Columella,<sup>31</sup> concerning the art of raising the plants, of gathering the olives, of extracting the oil, and of preserving the olives themselves. This latter operation was performed as follows:—

They took twenty-five pounds of olives, six pounds of quick-lime, broken very small and dissolved in water, to which twelve pounds of oak

ashes and water in proportion were added. The olives were left to soak for eight or ten hours in this lye; then taken out, washed with care, and immersed for eight days in very clear soft water, which was changed several times. They then took hot water in which some stems of fennel had been infused; this plant was taken out, and the same water saturated with salt until an egg would float. When it was quite cold, the olives were put into this pickle.<sup>23</sup>

As regards the large olives, or *colymbades*, they were sometimes crushed after the first operation, that the brine might penetrate more easily; and odoriferous herbs were added to give them a better flavour. This was the way they prepared those from the marshes of Ancona—the only ones admitted at the tables of *gourmets*.<sup>23</sup>

At Rome, olives made their appearance in the first course, at the beginning of the repast; but sometimes, after their introduction, the gluttony of the guests caused them to be served again with the dessert: so that they opened and closed the banquet.<sup>24</sup>

The distributions of oil, to which Latin authors often allude, were somewhat rare for a long period. The people looked upon this fluid more as an object of luxury than a necessary of life, and it was only on extraordinary occasions that they were gratified with it. Thus, when Scipio Africanus began his curule edileship, each citizen received a measure of oil.<sup>25</sup> After his example, Agrippa made similar distributions, in the reign of Augustus. They became more frequent under the Emperors; and Severus ordered that an immense quantity should be brought into Rome.<sup>26</sup>

Venafræ, a town of Campania, supplied excellent oil.<sup>27</sup> Pliny says that it surpassed that of all the rest of Italy.<sup>28</sup> However in those days, as at present, much was consumed of a very bad quality: for instance, that which was served by a clumsy Amphytrion to Julius Cæsar, and with which this prince seemed perfectly satisfied—a proof that the celebrated warrior was either a man of exquisite politeness or an epicure of very scanty ability.<sup>29</sup>

Independently of the culinary preparations in which oil was abundantly used, the ancients also employed much of it for anointing themselves; and, when at the bath, a slave always carried some in a vase,<sup>30</sup> with which they were rubbed. It was believed that the vital heat was thus concentrated, the strength increased, and health preserved.

Augustus inquiring one day of Pollio what ought to be done to

preserve health in extreme old age: "Very little," was his answer; "drink wine, and rub yourself with oil."<sup>41</sup>

We shall conclude this article by transcribing the recipe of an odoriferous oil for which the Liburnians were celebrated, and which Apicius considered worthy of his attention.

Pound some alder and cyperus (sedges) with green laurel leaves till they are reduced to a very fine powder—put this powder into Spanish oil, add a condiment of salt,<sup>42</sup> and stir this mixture with great care for three days or more, then let it remain for some time.<sup>43</sup>

Olive oil was little known in France under the two first races of her kings. In the reign of Charlemagne it was drawn from the east and Africa, and was so rare that the Council of Aix-la-chapelle (817) allowed the monks to make use of the oil from bacon. In 1491 the Pope allowed Queen Anne (of Bretagne), then afterwards the whole province, and successively the other French provinces, the use of butter in seasoning on fast days.

## PALM TREE.

The poet Pontanus has related, in beautiful Latin verses, the history of two palm trees cultivated in the kingdom of Naples. For a long time there had been a fine one growing in the environs of Otranto, loaded every year with flowers, and yet producing no fruit, in spite of the vigour of the tree and the heat of the climate. But one summer every one was much surprised at seeing this same tree produce a quantity of excellent and very ripe fruit. Astonishment changed into admiration when it was discovered that another palm tree, cultivated at Brindes (fifteen leagues distant), had that same year blossomed for the first time. From that period the palm tree of Otranto continued to yield fruit every year, notwithstanding the distance between it and the one at Brindes.<sup>44</sup>

The palm tree, which mythologic ages consecrated to the Muses,<sup>45</sup> was very common with the Hebrews,<sup>46</sup> to whom it supplied an exhilarating beverage called *sechar*, which is often mentioned with wine of the grape.<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, everything was useful in this tree.

The wood was employed for constructing buildings and for fuel ; the leaves were used to make ropes, mats, and baskets ; and the fruit served as food for man and cattle.<sup>48</sup> From the dates a great quantity of honey was extracted, but very little inferior to ordinary honey ;<sup>49</sup> and those which were not consumed were sent abroad with so much the more ease that they keep well.<sup>50</sup>

According to Pliny, this fruit was in reputation in Greece and Rome ; and he names several excellent species which came from Judea, and principally from Jericho and the valleys of Archelais, Livias, and Phasaelis.<sup>51</sup>

Two Greek writers<sup>52</sup> inform us that the favourite of Herod, Nicolas of Damascus, a poet, philosopher, and historian, much liked by Augustus, sent to the Roman Emperor every year a peculiar kind of date from Palestine ; and that the monarch, who became very partial to them, gave them the name of his friend. Bread and cakes were also made with them.

We shall often have occasion to remark that dates were frequently introduced in the composition of the most exquisite dishes of the Romans.

Dates not quite ripe, if exposed to the sun, become in the first place soft, then pulpy, and lastly acquire a consistency similar to that of French plums ; they can then be preserved, and sent to foreign markets.

Riper dates are squeezed to draw out a sweet juice, very pleasant, and which is put, together with the other part, in large vessels, and kept in that state, or buried in the earth. These are the ones commonly used by the rich as food ; the others are given up to the poorer class.

Dates are eaten either with or without preparation, or mixed with different kinds of viands. Their syrup is used as a sauce to various dishes.

They are also completely dried for exportation ; when reduced into flour, the caravans in the Desert employ them as food. By crushing them in soft water wine is made, which produces a strong spirit, very agreeable.

The best dates are yellowish, semi-transparent, odoriferous, and sweet.

## CHERRY TREE.

When on a very hot summer day some inviting cherries deliciously quench our burning thirst, we very little think of offering to Mithridates a souvenir of affection and gratitude. Such is man: he enjoys his wealth, and cares very little for the benefactor who has procured it for him. This ancient King of Pontus, of toxologic memory, and better known by physicians than gardeners, did not, however, pass the whole of his life in composing poisons and their antidotes; for his royal hands planted, and sometimes grafted, and it is to this useful pastime that we are indebted<sup>33</sup> for the sweet fruit, the name of which recalls to mind the city or country which was its birth-place.

Ancient authors have told us, it is true, that Europe is indebted for its cherries to Lucullus,<sup>34</sup> and that he made use of the cherry tree to ornament his triumphal car; honour is therefore due to the Roman general, but on condition that Mithridates shall lose nothing of his glory, or be eclipsed by the renown of this great conqueror.

The researches of several naturalists lead us to believe that cherry trees already existed at that period in Gaul. This tree delights in cold climates; and the wildest forests of France contain almost the whole of its varieties. Perhaps at Rome they knew no other than the wild cherry tree, which on that account was very little sought after, and Lucullus probably brought it to notice by bringing some grafts or fruits from Ceresus. In this manner the passage of Pliny<sup>35</sup> and that of Virgil<sup>36</sup> can very well be explained, which present the cherry tree as a new guest.

Moreover, the Milesian, Xenophanes, and the physician, Diphilus of Siphne, have spoken of cherries long before Lucullus was in existence. Diphilus praises them in the strongest terms; he says they are stomachic, and have a delicious flavour.<sup>37</sup> This certainly cannot apply to the sour wild fruit which is to be met with in the woods, and with which the most inexperienced palate is never twice caught.

At all events the authority of Theophrastus would be sufficient to remove all doubts, if any still remained. He informs us that, in his time, the good cherries of Mithridates passed from Lower Asia into