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The upper Rhine

the scenery of its banks and the manners of its people

Mayence to the lake of Constance

Mayhew, Henry

London, 1858

§ 2. The Renish "Vin Ordinaire"-Cooking-Dinners-and Manners at Table

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§ 2.

The Rhenish "Vin Ordinaire"—Cooking—Dinners—and Manners at Table.

Of the first-class German wines there is no occasion to speak here, the subject having been exhausted by Cyrus Redding and others.

Of the ordinary "*Tisch-wein*," or table-wine, however—the German *vin ordinaire*, and the national equivalent of our porter—we feel bound to add a few words of honest abuse.

The Rhenish wines (unless of the very first class) are no great favourites of ours; for though we have certainly drunk at the vineyards of Rüdesheim, and Johannisberg, and Steinberg, and Hochheim, some marvellously fine "tipple"—rich with all the perfume of the choicest grapes, and glowing and exhilarating as the very sunbeams that ripened the fruit—we never yet tasted a glass of the second-class "Rhein-wein" that was worthy of being ranked above our white-wine vinegar.* Indeed we are satisfied that if your "*Zeltingers*" and "*Piesporters*," "*Stiegers*," *Niersteiners*, &c., were only sent to table in cruets instead of wine-bottles, English people would no more think of indulging in them than they would dream of drinking off the contents of a pickle-jar. For if we be desirous of testing chemically whether the liquid in the bottles at a German *table d'hôte* belong really to the *vinous* or *acetous* class, we have merely to provide ourselves with a small packet

* The price of ordinary "*Tisch-wein*" is about 5 gros (6*d.*) the bottle. It may certainly be had as low as 4 gros, on the one hand, but at that price it is sad dysenteric stuff; and on the other hand, as high as 10 or 12 gros the bottle—though the latter can hardly be classed as "*vin ordinaire*." The red wine, as a rule, is rather dearer than the white. *Tisch-wine*, if bought by the "*fass*" (barrel) of 180 bottles, costs from 5 to 6 thalers (15*s.* to 18*s.* English). *Apfel-wein* (cider) may be had from 2 to 2½ gros (2½*d.* to 3*d.*) the bottle.

of carbonate of soda, and note the violent effervescence that ensues, immediately the alkali is added to the "sour stuff," as well as the quantity of the alkaline carbonate that it is necessary to use before the effervescence ceases — or, in other words, before the integrant acid is entirely neutralised in the so-called wine. This, to those who know anything on the subject, will indubitably prove that they are tippling under the name of "*Tisch-wein*" a mild verjuice, rather than hock — a kind of vinous lemonade — a liquid that, like tea, certainly cannot be said to "inebriate," but which, unlike it, cannot be said to "cheer" either — a pickle that may be excellent for young ladies who wish to thin themselves, but which is sad stomach-achey wash to gentlemen who like anything more generous than a gargle with their dinner.

The fact is, the vineyards of Germany lie at the very verge of the wine-making countries. It is well known to geographers, that there are not only "snow-lines" and "heat-lines" belting the earth, but distinct zones of land for the growth of a certain kind of fruit, or a particular sort of vegetable, grain, or flower; and as on ascending a tropical mountain the traveller passes thermally through the several climates of the globe, from the equator to the pole, even so he traverses, at the same time, horticulturally and floriculturally, through distinct belts of fruits and flowers, the same as if he were journeying *along* the world rather than *above* it.

"In order to obtain a potable wine," says Humboldt in his *Kosmos* (and the epithet, *potable,* should be well impressed on the reader's mind), "it is requisite that the mean annual temperature should exceed 49° Fahrenheit, and that the winter temperature should not be lower than 33°, whilst that of the summer months should exceed 64°:" for "in the plains of the Baltic," he tells us, "where a wine is produced that can scarcely be called *potable,* the mean annual heat is 47° 5′, that of the

winter 31°, and summer 63°;" whilst in the rich wine district of Bordeaux, he says, "the mean annual heat is 57°, that of the winter not lower than 43°, and of the summer as high as 71·0°."

At Frankfort and Heidelberg, however, the mean temperature for the entire year is, according to the table published by the same eminent authority, 49° 5′ respectively; and that for the winter months as low as between 33° and 34°, whilst for the summer it seems to be, after a long series of observations, only a fraction above 64°.* Hence it will be perceived, that

* "The following table," says the author of "Kosmos," (vol. i. p. 30, Bohn's Edition,) "illustrates the cultivation of the vine in Europe, and also the depreciation of its produce according to climatic relations. Cherbourg and Ireland show in the most remarkable manner how, with thermal relations very nearly similar to those prevailing in the interior of the Continent, the results are nevertheless extremely different as regards the ripeness or unripeness of the fruit."

TABLE SHOWING THE LATITUDES AND CLIMATIC RELATIONS OF THE UNDER-MENTIONED WINE-GROWING AND NON-WINE-GROWING COUNTRIES.

Places.	Latitudes.	Elevation in feet.	Mean Annual Temperature Fahrenheit.	Mean Winter Temperature.	Mean Spring Temperature.	Mean Summer Temperature.	Mean Autumn Temperature.	Number of Years' Observation.
Bordeaux	44° 50′	25·6	57·0	43·0	56·0	71·0	58·0	10
Strasbourg	48 35	479·0	49·6	34·5	50·0	64·6	50·0	35
Heidelberg	49 24	333·5	49·5	34·0	50·0	64·3	49·7	20
Mannheim	49 29	300·5	50·6	34·6	50·8	67·1	49·5	12
Cherbourg	49 39	0·0	52·1	41·5	50·8	61·7	54·3	3
Wurzberg	49 48	562·5	50·2	35·5	50·5	65·7	49·4	27
Frankfort-on-Maine	50 7	388·5	49·5	33·3	50·0	64·4	49·4	19
Berlin	52 31	102·3	47·5	31·0	46·6	63·6	47·5	23
Dublin	53 23	0·0	49·1	40·2	47·1	59·6	49·7	13

The above table proves that the production of "potable wine" does not depend on *latitude*; since Cherbourg, whose latitude is only 49° 39′, does *not* produce wine, whilst Frankfort *does*, though its latitude is but 50° 7′. Coblenz, again, is about the latitude of Plymouth, 50° 22′, whilst Mayence is nearly upon the parallel of the Lizard in Cornwall, 49° 57′; and all the best wines of Germany are grown between these places—that is to say, either on the Rhine or its tributary rivers. None of the better wines of France, however, are grown so far north.

Nor does the production of a *potable* wine depend on the mean *annual* tem-

the wine-growing districts of the Rhine are, thermally, *but one degree superior to those of the Baltic*, where the juice obtained from the grapes is said to lie at the very extreme of potability, or, more graphically speaking—on the verge of verjuice.

The consequence is, that though the vineyards in the sunniest situations on the banks of the Rhine *may* produce good wine in warm seasons, nevertheless, in milder years, it is obvious, that the grapes, in those *Weingartens* which have a less directly southern aspect, and upon which the noonday rays fall obliquely rather than "full butt," cannot be ripened sufficiently for the juice to be "potable" by really educated palates; or, indeed, for the liquor yielded by them to have the faintest vinous quality.*

perature of different localities, since the average yearly heat of Cherbourg is 52° 1′, and Frankfort only 49° 5′. Neither is it regulated by the mean *autumnal* temperature, that of Cherbourg being 54° 3′, and that of Frankfort 49° 4′. The heat of *summer*, indeed, appears to be the main circumstance; for the above table shows, that when the summer heat is below 70° the wine has a "hock" character, and when below 64° it is barely "potable," whilst below 63° no wine at all is produced.

"A hot year, with occasional showers, gives better grapes than a hot dry year. The best wine of the present century was produced under great summer-heat, as well as in connexion with frequent thunder-showers, which moistened the earth almost every night. A moderate and a bad year for the Rhenish vintage is the result not only of a low degree of summer temperature, but of the untimely advent of the hot and rainy days. Thus the year 1848 was not particularly hot, but the weather was warm at the time of the blooming; this afterwards changed to fine light showery rains, whilst at the time of the ripening the season became warm again; so that the result was a good year. The weather for a good vintage should be hot in June, in July hot with thunder-showers, in August the same, and in September warm and dry."—*Observations on the Growth of the Vine, kindly furnished by Dr. Wirtgen, the celebrated botanist of Coblenz.*

* The Rhenish vineyards are mostly situate on the southern slope of the mountains, or in such a position that they may be exposed to the beams of the sun during the greater part of the day; but only in the best situations, and under the screening of the neighbouring mountains, even with a *full* southern exposure, can any wine be produced at more than 500 feet above the Rhine. Generally speaking, it is unusual in Rhineland to plant vineyards in plains, because in such

To make wine from grapes, it is necessary that a *certain amount of saccharine matter* should be developed in the fruit by the action of the sun's rays; and this saccharine matter (which, when duly fermented, serves alone to form the wine) certainly does *not* possess the property of effervescing upon the addition of alkaline carbonates: indeed the best Rhenish wines, of the best vintages, are known to contain an unusually small amount of acetic acid.

But because in *warm* years the sunniest vineyards of the Rheingau are able to produce a wine that is *not* vinegar, it assuredly does not follow that every petty vine-garden which is exposed to the south-east or south-west, rather than looking directly southward, and on which the noontide rays therefore can fall only slantingly at best, is able to yield, year after year,—even though the climate has thermally been barely equal to that of the Baltic plains—a juice more vinous, or more generous, than that which could be expressed from unripe cranberries.

This, indeed, constitutes the great fallacy concerning the Rhenish wines: because the climate is *occasionally* hot enough for the vineyards of Johannisberg, and Steinberg, and Rüdesheim, to produce *good* wine, about once in *three* years;*

a position the influence of the sunbeams is found to be too weak, and the soil too cold. The celebrated vineyard at Worms, however, which produces the renowned wine called "Liebfrauenmilch," is a notable exception to the rule; for there the vines grow almost in a meadow. Gradually-sloping hills are preferable; and it is found that the best wine comes from the plants in the middle of the slope—those at the upper and lower part of the hill yielding a wine of more or less inferior quality.

* It is estimated, that in the course of ten years' vintages there is generally
1 very good year.
2 good, or "pretty good" years.
3 moderate years.
3 bad years, and
1 failure;

therefore people are gulled into the belief that the bleak mountain patches on the banks of the Mosel and the Rhine, as far down as Bonn, are capable of doing the like *every year*, even though the grapes be as hard and rough as bullaces to the palate, and contain no more saccharine than sorrel.*

so that only *one* year's yield in *ten* can really be said to produce *excellent* wine, whilst very nearly *half* the years are acknowledged to produce *bad* wine.

In the present century,

The *very good* years were, 1811, 1822, 1834, 1846; or only 4 in upwards of half a century.

The *good* years were, 1819, 1825, 1826, 1828, 1831, 1839, 1842, and 1848; or 8 in 56 years.

The "*pretty good*" years were, 1815, 1818, 1836, 1853; or 4 in 56 years.

The *bad* years, 1816, 1817, 1821, 1823, 1829, 1843, 1844, 1849, 1850, 1851, 1854; or 11 in 56 years.

The years not particularized were merely "moderate" ones.

* The proportion of acid in the different Rhenish wines depends upon, 1, The kind of grapes; and 2, The higher or lower degree of ripeness.

All grapes become sweet in very good years. The better the sort, the more favourable the situation, and the hotter the summer—the sweeter and richer of alcohol the wine becomes.

The Reesling grape is considered to yield the best wine with the finest aroma. But many vintners cultivate also a large quantity of the Kleinberger, Sylvaner, or some other kind of second-rate grapes, to mix with the better kind. In the Rheinpfalz, the Traminer grape is largely cultivated, and yields a pretty good wine called "Forster Traminer;" but though the Traminer ripens early, and possesses great sweetness, it has little perfume or "bouquet" connected with it: besides, this plant is more tender, being incapable of bearing the same low temperature as the Reesling and Kleinberger. The Sylvaner grape produces a fine sweet wine, with considerable aroma, being indeed the kind of fruit from which the celebrated Johannisberger is obtained; but as this species contains a large quantity of mucilage, it is not so easily pressed.

Good white-grape vines, however, are sometimes grown successfully (as at Johannisberg) in a "heavy and fat" lime soil; but, as a rule, the white grape requires a lighter soil than the red, which thrives best in clayey ground.

Clay slate, of which the Rhine rocks are composed, has an excellent influence on the growth of the vines; not only because it absorbs and retains the heat of the noonday sun, as well as the moisture of the atmosphere, but on account of its containing a large amount of potassium, which, as it decomposes and enters into the soil, is found to be most beneficial to the plant.

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK
Baden-Württemberg

Such is assuredly the character of the berries from which the ordinary *Tisch-wein* of Germany is produced; and those who are simple enough to believe that they are bibbing a kind of mild hock, rather than dilute acetic acid, at the Rhenish

The expenses of a German vineyard are as follows per Morgen, or Prussian acre (= 1⅛ English acre):—

I. Original Outlay upon a Vineyard—*per Morgen.*

	£	s.	d.
Cost of an acre of "vineland," calculated to grow from 3000 to 3300 plants	105	0	0
Rent for five years till the plants are fit for bearing	5	5	0
N.B. If the soil be not prepared for vine culture, the cost of the land would be less than the above; but then the expenses of the first planting would be proportionately greater.			
Planting of the vines ("*das Setzen*") costs on an average per Morgen	3	18	0
50 cart-loads of manure for the young plants, with cost of carting and carrying	7	19	6
Tending and rearing of the young plants (pruning, digging, and binding) for 4 years, at 22*s.* per year	4	8	0
Cost of 3000 poles, at 1½*d.* each	15	0	0
Land-tax for 5 years, at 4*s.* 0⅔*d.* per Morgen, per annum ..	1	0	3
Gross outlay	142	10	9

II. Annual Expense of a Vineyard—*per Morgen.*

	£	s.	d.
Planting of single plants to keep the rows full	0	3	9
Manuring, with stable-manure and bone-dust alternately every 4 years, in addition to the regular manure for the vines ..	1	1	9
Cost of pruning the vines	0	9	0
Repair and renewal of poles	0	15	3
Sticking the poles	0	3	1½
Willow-twigs and tying	0	8	3⅔
Digging the ground twice	0	10	0
Binding up and trimming	0	10	0
Gathering and pressing	0	15	0
Casks and tubs	0	15	0
Rent of cellars, &c.	0	15	0
Land-tax	0	4	0⅔
Gross annual expense	6	10	3

tables d'hôte, should resort to the unerring test we have before laid down, when they will assuredly be appalled at the amount of grape-pickle they are swallowing under the name of "a nice light German wine;" for thus analysed, even

Such a vineyard will continue bearing for 20 years, on an average, before the plants require renewing.

The wages of the labourers vary from 9*d.* to 1*s.* per diem *without* food, and are 6*d.* a-day *with* food; women and girls get a groschen or two less. In the autumn, the "carriers" are paid about 9*d.* a-day, and the "gleaners" 5*d.*, with board and lodging.

The common press for the wine costs from 11*l.* to 12*l.*

Five *Beschöffen* (porters' loads of about 20 gallons each) of good, ripe, and juicy grapes, and seven Beschöffen of poorer ones, will yield an *Ohm* (30 galls.) of wine.

	Gallons Eng.
The average yearly yield of one morgen of vineland (on the Lower Mosel, Winnigen district) in the course of fifteen years, was	196
The yield increased in the good years, viz.:—	
In 1846, to	265½
1839, to	338⅔
1834, to	446⅔
In the bad years, however, the yield decreased, so that the vintages of 1829, 1830, 1837, yielded scarcely anything.	
In the Ahr the average annual yield for forty-eight years was not quite	162
In the poor upperlands of the same district the average yield per Morgen for white wine was	351
And for red wine	234

	£	s.	d.
The mean price of the wine in the Lower Mosel, taking an average for 40 years (1816–1855) was per 18 galls.	0	13	1½
Hence the average money-yield for a Morgen of vineland was ..	7	3	4½
And deducting from this the average annual expense of cultivating the same extent of vineland (see above)	6	10	3
Leaves as profit to the cultivator of each Morgen a surplus of ..	0	13	1½

The Trester, or "husks," that remain after the pressing, amount to about one quarter of the entire quantity of the grapes, and these are sold to make brandy, and generally produce sufficient to pay the cost of using the presses.

But there is still to be added to the annual expenses the cost of the "must tax" (*Most-steuer*), as well as the rent of the Morgen of land, and interest on the capital invested.

The vine culture, therefore, can be profitable only to the vintner who keeps a

the "Blessed Virgin's Milk" itself will be found to be *turned*, and the "Dragon's Blood" to be sour enough to curdle every drop of one's own: so that after a time the simple opening of a bottle of the far-famed Zeltinger will be sufficient, to the knowing, to fill the mouth with water, like the cutting of a lemon; and a mere thimble-full of Braune-berger enough to set the teeth on edge like the sharpening of a saw.

Now Germans delight in "*Essig*"—their very children loving sours as much as ours do sweets. Indeed we knew a little Rhenish girl of two years old who made wry faces at sugar-stuff, and smacked her tiny lips over pickles; and, moreover, a servant-girl whom we brought with us to England began to fall ill, after a short time, for want of the national sharp sauces and the congenial dash of sour stuff with her food. To such palates, therefore, the products of the acetous fermentation are naturally more agreeable than

stock of cattle sufficient to supply him with manure, as well as uses the young plantations to cultivate beet-root and beans, or some kind of fodder for his cattle, or food for himself and family.

The wealthier vintners, however, generally obtain a better price than that above given for their produce, owing, not only to the more careful cultivation of the vines, but to the fact of their having better land, as well as being able to avail themselves of every circumstance that may add to the value of their produce.

In the Rheingau and in the Ahr, the vineyards are mostly in the possession of large and rich proprietors. On the Mittelrhein and Mosel, however, they generally belong to, or are worked by, small peasants. The latter are mostly in a very distressed condition, being too poor to speculate on the results of the harvest, as the rich proprietors do; so that the returns of the vintage often do not cover the cost of production, and an indescribable amount of misery frequently prevails among the class. When the vineyard is let to a peasant, the proprietor generally bears the expense of all large buildings, and contributes 1*s.* 9*d.* per hundred plants towards the expense of manuring. For this he mostly takes a certain share of the grapes, and has the right of choosing the vessels in which they are kept.

The above information has been kindly furnished by Dr. Wirtgen of Coblenz, and Dr. Arnoldi of Winnigen.

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK Baden-Württemberg

those of the vinous, so that what is positive vinegar to us becomes to their tastes absolute wine.

There are, however, some peculiar "bowls" or "cups" popular in Rhineland, which, for the sake of completeness, deserve some mention. The *vin ordinaire* or "*Tisch-wein*" of Germany, being, as we have said, as sour and as mild in its exhilarating qualities as our stalest table-beer, the Prussians, love to neutralise, or rather disguise its acid by sugar, and to give flavour to it, as they do to their tasteless viands, by the addition of all kinds of fruit.

Of the drink called "*maiwein*" we have already spoken in another place, and no sooner is the month passed after which the potion is christened, and strawberries have made their appearance, than the beverage termed "cardinal" becomes popular at the casino and wine-houses. This is made up of wine and sugar and the little "*fraises des quatres saisons*" that are styled "earth-berries" by the Germans, and wild strawberries by us —the fruit being steeped in the "*Zeltinger*" or "*Piesporter*" for a considerable time before the potion is quaffed and the infusion served, like the *maiwein* at the wine-gardens, in handleless glass mugs imitative of small barrels. Indeed it is the custom to soak all kinds of fruit in the sweetened Rhenish wines. Sliced oranges, preserved apricots, grape blossoms, young filberts, &c. &c. are severally used according to the season; and many of these, it must be confessed, serve to make the sour stuffs (that in England would be added only to gherkins and walnuts) about as palatable drinks in hot weather as our raspberry vinegar.

The beer of Germany, to throats that have been accustomed to English Burton and London porter, is but wretched physicky wash, costing about threepence halfpenny a quart, and tasting so strongly of dandelion instead of hops, that a true-born Briton enjoys it about as much as he would a

course of taraxacum tea; and on the banks of the Rhine may be seen whole fields full of the bitter weed growing as thick as our clover.

The Rhenish cooking is the worthy counterpart of the Rhenish meat. We know not whether the custom arises from a sense of the antiquity of the oxen used as food, or from a vulgar belief in the nutritive qualites of soup, and a desire to obtain two dishes out of one piece of "flesh;" but not a joint—even though it be but a few pounds weight—ever comes to a Prussian table that has not been boiled for some five hours, and then baked for one—the pot liquor being served up at dinner and supper as *potage*, and the remaining mass of baked, stringy fibres, dignified by the name of roast meat (*Braten*).

Of course it is idle to tell the reader, whose palate can distinguish a decoction of burnt acorns from that of roasted coffee, that by the Prussian culinary process the entire juices and flavour of the food have been extracted as perfectly as if the joint had been submitted to a chemical operation—for such the cooking really is; while the juices themselves, by being diluted with water, have not only lost all their savoury character, but have actually been deprived of their nutritive property: for the experiments of Magendie long ago proved to the thinking world, that soup is incapable of sustaining the life of a dog—a hound fed upon it sickening in a week and dying in ten days.

There is an old story which says, that if a person be blindfolded it is impossible to distinguish port from sherry, when sipped one after another. Nevertheless, with the eyes wide open, and the palate scrutinising every morsel that is put into the mouth, we will defy the keenest English taste to tell whether they are eating Prussian beef, or veal, or chicken,

or duck, or partridge—for all, whether flesh or fowl, are put into the earthen pot alike, to wabble the entire juices and flavour out of them on the stove, and then placed in a tin pan to be dried up and soddened in the steam of a close oven—open fires being known only at the palace in Coblenz.

Now the consequence of this barbarous mode of cooking is, that in order to give something like flavour to the tasteless mass of string to which the meat is reduced, it has to be eaten with fruit instead of vegetables; so that it is not at all unusual, in Rhenish Prussia, to be served with boiled beef and cherries, —pigeons and hot boiled strawberries—pork and oranges—tongue and currants—veal and stewed prunes—and, indeed, an infinity of such messes as positively nauseate an English stomach to think of, much more to see and taste.

The vegetables, again, are as badly treated as the viands themselves. Green peas are often boiled and eaten in the shells, though *we* in England consider the pods fit only for pigs; and even when the peas alone are cooked in Deutschland, they are stewed in butter and sugar. Then, new potatoes are boiled and dished up with caraway seeds—the wiseacre professors declaring they do this to keep away the cholera; and to bring the matter to a fitting climax, the rotten acid cabbage, known by the name of "*Sauer-kraut*," is eaten with wine, and when mixed with "champagne," it is "*sehr delicat*," say the Prussian polypes—creatures of mere stomach without either palate or brain to direct it.*

* The price of potatoes is about 3*s.* for 110 lbs., which is at the rate of 3 lbs. for a penny. Cabbages average from 10 to 15 gros (1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.*) the hundred plants. Carrots (which are sold by weight) are about the same price as potatoes, whilst turnips cost 4 gros (5*d.*) for a large basketful, holding about 3 English bunches, and peas fetch about 3 gros (3½*d.*) the half-peck. The Rhenish vegetables, however, are poor dwarfed things in comparison with our own.

Fruit is even cheaper than the "green stuff." Peaches may be had at the

The mention of "*Sauer-kraut*" reminds us that almost every eatable in Prussia is acid, for even the hares are stuffed with onions and baked in vinegar; and in a true Rhenish house you get sour soup (made out of sorrel)—sour bread, (a black compound that would create a riot in an English workhouse)—sour cabbage—sour jams (for the fruits are pickled before the sugar is added)—sour wines—and even sour treacle.

Now the experiments of Dr. Stevens during the cholera have proven that acids have the effect of blackening the blood, and you can positively see in every Prussian's face that the fluid which trickles through his capillaries has been rendered muddy by the quantity of sour things he is accustomed to swallow.

The mode of serving the dinner, even in the most refined establishments, consists in cutting up every one of the viands on a chopping-board at a side-table. Here each joint or bird is removed from the dish on which it is brought into the "*Speise-saal*," and having been placed on the bare block is carved, one after another, without the least cleansing of the wood—boiled beef, wild duck, roast veal, chickens, pork, hare, &c.—no matter how dissimilar the character of the food. Nor have even the most fashionable people yet learnt to look for a change of knives with every change of dish—the same being kept for fish, flesh, fowl, and (even though the stews reek of garlic) the one "*Messer*" retained and used for the pudding.

rate of 1*d*. for 2 dozen. Cherries cost ½*d*. to 1*d*. per lb. Apples are 20 gros (2*s*.) for 50 lbs. Gooseberries, 1 penny the pound. Grapes, 1*d*. to 2½*d*. the lb. Wild strawberries, 2*d*. the plateful. Plums, ½*d*. to 2*d*. the hundred. Walnuts, 1½*d*. to 3*d*. the hundred. Pears are the same price as apples; currants as strawberries, and chestnuts as walnuts. Almost all the fruit, however, is deficient in flavour.

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK Baden-Württemberg

The Prussians, like most savage tribes, are continually eating; not that their gastric capacities amount to those of the Samoiedes, who are said to consume ten pounds of food besides a dozen tallow-candles in a day; but their meals recur at such short intervals that they seem to find their chief delight in feeding every two or three hours. As our cook-maids, when they go to the theatre, usually take a basket of provisions with them and munch now a piece of cold pudding, and now an apple, while they whimper over the sorrows of "the heroine of the domestic drama;" so a Prussian lady never attends a "*Grosses Concert*" in a public wine-garden, or a village "*Schützenfest*," (shooting-feast,) but what she must have her raw sausages or her hard-boiled eggs as refreshment there, even though it be but a couple of hours after dinner.

Early in the morning there is the "*Frühstück*," (literally, the early bit, or, in plain English, breakfast,) and this consists of a cup of so-called coffee and a slice or two of black bread. Then at ten o'clock comes another coffee-drinking — "*Zehn-ure essen*" — at which more black (or among richer folks, whitey-brown) bread is eaten. At twelve or one follows the dinner, which at the *tables d'hôte* consists of the same eternal dishes:

1st course, soup.
2nd, boiled beef.
3rd, cutlets, sausages, and *sauer-kraut*.
4th, fish and pudding.
5th, roast meat, birds, preserves, and salad.
6th, dessert, coffee, cards, and cigars.

Go where you will, you are sure to get the same invariable messes — the same *bouilli* with the same sauce — the same everlasting sponge-cake pudding — the same breaded cutlets — the

same roast veal and fruit, until you cannot bear the look of the disgusting medley.*

Family dinners are not, of course, so lavish as those at the hotels; but generally, in the houses of well-to-do people, these consist of (1), soup; (2), bouilli; (3), sausages and vegetables; (4), kalbfleische and compôte; whilst the professors' families put up with soup and boiled beef only, and those of the very poor people have horse-meat instead of rindfleische for their animal food.

Four o'clock is the hour for the "coffee-drinking;" and of this meal sausages or hard-boiled eggs are often the accompaniments. At the Kermes at Gülz, on the Mosel, we saw the wife of an officer and (we suppose we *must* add) a gentleman, eat no less than four eggs as hard as we give to our canaries, besides a large hunk of *Göttinger-wurst*, and a big wedge of cake—in addition to a "*portzi-ohn*" (portion, so pronounced) of coffee, and a glass mugful of "*Maiwein*," at a little after three one Sunday afternoon.

Lastly, at eight o'clock, occurs the "*Abend-essen*," or supper, for which some of the lucky few who are blest with a sufficiency of groschens have a second edition of dinner,

* It is but just to except here the "*Hôtel de Trèves*," at Coblenz, the "*Hof von Holland*," in Cologne, and the "*Goldenen Stern*" at Bonn, where the best cooking throughout Rhenish Prussia is to be found. The price charged for dinner at the best *tables d'hôte* is 25 gros (2*s* 6*d*.) per head, including a pint of tolerable *Tisch-wein*. At the taverns, equivalent to our commercial inns, the charge for dining at the *table d'hôte* is 15 gros (1*s*. 6*d*. English). At the "*Restaurations*" the viands are sold by the plate, or "portion,"—mutton costing 2*d*. the portion and beef the same, whilst a small supply of ham may be had for 1*d*. Soup, again, is 1*d*. the plate, and coffee 1*d*. the cup. At one of the suburban gardens our children and their maid had tea for 3*d*. (or 1*d*. per head), which included coffee, sugar, milk, butter, &c. We remember an English gentleman giving a dinner to two others at one of the principal restaurations, the whole expense of which did not amount to 1*s*., even though three courses were partaken of by the host and his guests.

even down to hot pudding—on which they sleep. Others, of more limited means, content themselves with soup and bouilli only; and others, of still humbler resources, with merely a bowlful of baked potatoes and black bread.

Such is, we conscientiously believe, a fair and unexaggerated statement of the food partaken of by the middle classes of Rhenish Prussia.

We now come in due course to speak of the habits of the Prussians at table.

Foreigners, generally speaking—even those belonging to "the politest nation in the world"—seem to be less refined in their conduct while feeding than the pair of Chimpanzees that daily dined in public at our Regent's Park Zoological Gardens.

It is no unusual sight to see a Parisian dandy, while waiting for his soup at a *restaurant*, clean his nails with his fork, or use the same implement as a tooth-pick.

But if Parisians exhibit little delicacy of feeling at their meals, Prussian ladies as well as gentlemen positively appal you, as well as deprive you of all appetite for your dinner, by their barbarous mode of feeding.

The knife is not only used as a spoon, wherewith to scrape up the last drop of gravy from the plate, by even the *élite* of Rhenish society, but thrust half down the throat by ladies who affect the fancied elegance of white kid gloves. So little skilled, indeed, are the people in the use of a four-pronged silver fork, that the wife of a member of the learned professions assured us she preferred the old-fashioned two-pronged instrument; and when we remonstrated, by reminding her that it was impossible to eat peas with a miniature pitchfork, she replied that she "could do *that* quite well enough with her knife."

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The story is told of Beau Brummel, that he once made his appearance in deep mourning, and on being questioned as to the reason, he informed the inquirer that he was in black for his father. "Dear me!" said his friend, "how terribly sudden! I saw Mr. Brummel only yesterday." "Yes," returned the beau, with affected grief, "and I dined with him last night myself; but when I left him to go to the play, he was busily engaged eating peas with his knife, and so I naturally conclude the poor man has cut his throat by this time."

If, however, Prussian ladies have yet to learn the use of the silver fork, they are certainly not a whit more skilful or elegant in handling their knives, for they grasp the blade rather than the handle, and cut up their meat with about the same grace as our ploughmen hack at their hunks of bread and bacon with their clasp-knives. The approved mode of proceeding at dinner—even with the Prussian exquisites—is to thrust the fork into the meat upon the plate, and pinning it there as with a stiletto, to proceed to cut it all up at once, and then to mix the fragments into a mash with the vegetables and sauce—the mess being eaten first with the fork, and the fragments at the end of the operation duly scooped up with the knife, until every portion of the sauce is lapped from the plate: after this the plate is rubbed clean with pieces of bread, and these duly swallowed; whereupon the knife is cleaned with another bit of crust, which, in its turn, is devoured—dirt, grease, and all.

Nor is the scraping process at all times resorted to; for if the dish happen to be inordinately moist, and the gravy or sauce more plentiful than usual, the more tedious operation of *eating* it with the knife is dispensed with,—the plate itself being then raised to the mouth and the greasy liquid *drunk from the edge* of it, even to the last drop.

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The story runs, that at an eating-house in the vilest part of London the announcement was made that, "to ensure a supply of clean plates, a Newfoundland dog was kept on the premises." At the first-class Rhenish hotels, however, such an animal would assuredly starve—the ladies and gentlemen there doing the duty of the fabled hound with us.

Now simple, inexperienced people, must not imagine that we are here stretching an isolated case into a type of the manners of an entire nation, or citing the habits of what are called "low people" as an illustration of the ways of gentlefolks. We are speaking of the behaviour of "officers and gentlemen"—of professors and the members of the learned professions—and indeed of those who rank everywhere as the most refined of the middle classes. Often have we seen ladies at table pour the gravy from their plates into a spoon, and thus drink off every drop of fatty moisture that remained from the meat.

Even in the families of teachers, too, who are engaged in forming the habits and manners of the Prussian youth—and in whom, therefore, one would not naturally expect to find any gross violation of decorum—the dish of baked potatoes that forms the supper of the family is placed in the middle of the table, whence all present help themselves to the vegetables with their hands; and at the *tables d'hôte* where the officers dine you will see the *soi-disant* "gentlemen" place themselves before the mirror after dinner, and, pulling a filthy hair-brush from their pockets, proceed to smooth their locks, whiskers, and moustachios with such ostentation, as plainly indicates that they believe they are performing a meritorious rather than an offensive act.