

FROGS AND AXALS.

Paris is, perhaps, the only city in the world where a man can dine from a few sous to almost any sum of money. During a long residence in the capital of civilization, my gastronomic experience has ranged from a supper in the Grand Saxe to a dinner at eleven sous in the Rue Ste. Anne. I had eaten snails at a restaurant in the Rue de Valenciennes, and horse flesh in a low wine shop at the Barrière Fontainebleau; but the renowned frog, one of the greatest delicacies of French cookery, was for a long time a stranger to my palate.

In the days of Plet and Castlereagh, when three-bottle men flourished in English society, and when duels were more frequent than they are now-a-days, Englishmen firmly believed that frogs and snails were eaten by their neighbors across the channel as roast beef in England. But now, when a man can breakfast in London, and dine and sip his cup of coffee on the boulevards on the evening of the same day, our fellow-countrymen perceive that the French do not live exclusively on frogs and snails; and the ordinary visitor to Paris, although he may read in *Godeys* that several tons of horse flesh are sold there for human food every year, is so occupied in sight-seeing that he seldom comes across a *boucherie de viande de cheval*, and rarely or never meets with frogs exposed for sale. Still if he would take a stroll in the Halles Centrales early in the morning, while the Alsations are sweeping the streets with their long black brooms, and the market carts are going their rounds, he will find hundreds of frogs' hind legs upon skewers, in the same manner as larks, and boxes upon boxes of snails, all ready for the hands of the chef.

One summer afternoon while strolling through the delightful glades of the forest of Fontainebleau, I came upon a colony of frogs in a rocky pond, and stood for some time in silence by the edge of the water, contemplating the beauties of the surrounding scene. The varied shades of the forest; the deep blue sky and snowy clouds; the luxuriant display of moss-covered stones; the lovely sunlight colors formed together an exquisite picture of sylvan repose that had well earned for the little marsh the surname of the *Mare aux Fees*.

Ten feet of rod, any sort of line, with a couple of small fish-hooks baited with red fannel, is all that is required to catch the cunningest of frogs, and the angles are only a few casts. His habit is to behave like a bold and active insect to ensure success. The country girls in their snow-white caps and colored handkerchiefs, were busy at work with fishing rods, and the continued whipping of the water tempting the denizens of the pool to the surface, every moment saw a fresh head protruded above the weeds. A hungry legion dashed attendance upon each line, and needless to say, a rapid succession of the penalty of having been endowed with so little sense. But the book did not always strike, and the frog, relinquishing the treacherous fannel, was landed high and dry, but still uncaptured, upon the grassy bank. A sharp and terrible hunt ensued, and a little Frenchman scampered off in pursuit, with all the activity his short legs would permit, coming to grief most grotesquely, over a hillock, to the great diversion of the country girls. Caught at last, the frog gives one despairing crack on being consigned to the basket where a large number of friends in misfortune are ready to hail his advent with a vigorous jump.

The peasantry catch them in large quantities at night, by means of a lantern placed upon a plank which is pushed into the water. The frogs, attracted by the light, jump upon the plank and are immediately captured. Green frogs, which are only ones fit for food, are eaten in large numbers in the south of Europe, and are found in both running and stagnant waters. The Paris Halles are principally supplied from Quevrin in Belgium, where the frogs are caught at night with nets and hooks baited with worms. They are sold by auction in the fish market, and generally fetch about 25 francs the thousand. The hind-legs are usually stewed in white sauce, and bear a resemblance in taste to the wing of a chicken. The fore-legs and liver are used for soups.

Snails are gathered off the vines by the peasantry in the wine districts, and are sent up in cases and wicker baskets to the Paris Halles, where they are sold by auction like frogs in the fish market. They generally fetch about 7 francs 50 centimes the thousand, and are purchased by people who make it their business to prepare them for the *restaurants* and *chauffeurs*. There are numerous establishments in the neighborhood of the Halles where as many as seven or eight thousand snails are prepared daily, during the winter months. They are killed by being placed in scalding water, and after being removed from their shells by the aid of a stout piece of wire, are thrown into an immense copper and boiled for three-quarters of an hour in a mixture composed of water, vinegar, salt and herbs. They are then replaced in their shells, the mouths of which are closed with butter and parsley, and are ready for sale. To prepare them for the table, it suffices to place them in the frying-pan for a few minutes, with a small piece of butter, and without removing them from their shells. They are retailed at the wine-shops and *charcutiers* at 30 and 40 centimes the dozen. Once a Week.

How to PLANT POTATOES.—The *Standard* reviewer gives us some particulars of a method of cultivating the potato, discovered by Gühlich, of Pinnberg, in Holstein, which it is said has given surprising results where employed. The leading feature of this culture is in turning up the soil to a considerable depth. 2. Choosing a good large round and many-eyed potatoes. 3. Leaving between each seed-potato a space of twelve square feet. 4. Laying the tubercle with the budding side down. By a report laid before the last meeting of the Frankfurt Agricultural Society we learn the result of experiments made last year. In one morgen (two-thirds of an acre), where each potato was left twelve square feet, the produce was 108 scheffels (German Bushels); another morgen of land, where each had a space of nine square feet, yielded 88 scheffels; in a third morgen, where each potato was left six square feet, the produce was 78

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