

Most Interesting Array of Menus in the World

"Buttolph Collection" at the Astor Library Includes 14,500 Bills of Fare from All Parts of the World—Unique and Painsstaking Work.

WHAT unique thing known as the "Buttolph Collection" at the Astor Library could never have been there except for the industry and peculiar interest Miss Frank E. Buttolph suddenly developed in the year 1909 in menus. The Astor Library is scarcely a place where feasting and merriment are even suggested, so the more solemn and erudite attachés of that celebrated "seat of learning" in Lafayette Place look with strange eyes upon Miss Buttolph's amazing collection of 14,500 menus.

It cannot make its impression as a part of literature, nor can it be described as an appendix to history, nor has it any place amid "old manuscripts." It must forever stand for what it is, the "Buttolph Collection," or, to describe it more elaborately, in the manner of old-time sub-titles, it is "the feminine instinct for accumulation verified by a lady, with neatness, elegance, and artistic verisimilitude."

Miss Buttolph is making history for the year 2,000 which, should our present carnivorous natures by that time merge into a diet mild and milky, will hold this generation up as an example of brute force that should annihilate all our virtues and leave us in the eyes of our descendants a race of horror and greed, a pack of flesh-eating outcasts remarkable only for our gastronomic endurance. Whether we should be thankful to Miss Buttolph for this distinction, whether we should indorse the idea, (excepting that Dr. Billings, the librarian, has enrolled it amid the archives of learning,) is a question that seriously imperils the present writing.

The poets who wrote odes in response to the vulgar cravings of their inner-poets could not be trusted to emblazon the "Buttolph Collection" with heroic meter. Most full and arrogant, most pitiless in character, most desperate of sly resource, are these 14,500 records of what men and women absorb with diligent neglect of health and spiritual welfare.

To read every single card of this gastronomic library would mean nothing less than thin kumyss for the rest of one's life. Wonderful indeed are the endeavors that man has made to cover up his culinary shame.

Taking his cue from the dissembling character of the Frenchman's gift for menu literature, he has sought to conceal the grossness of his appetite in the subterfuge of wit, in the gullibility of human nature by a fair exterior, and in the disgraceful wash of wines. Should one come upon the "Buttolph Collection" without the presence of the energetic collector herself, (an impossible feat so far, because of Miss Buttolph's ceaseless personal supervision,) one would begin to wonder what sort of person is this lady who has contrived and connived against the higher nature to gather this array of man's baser self.

Is she one of those subtleties the French call a gourmet? Or is her purpose a serious one, namely, to horrify and destroy man's habitual misconduct at the evening mess? These are answered as soon as one sees Miss Buttolph herself, a tiny, unostentatious, literary-looking lady, whose bugaboo is a possible spot upon one of her precious menus. On one of them that had been used by the late King Christian in his palace at Denmark was a coffee stain, and it was only after insisting that it had its value because it was a stain of royal coffee that Miss Buttolph could be appeased. This, of course, is all to the credit of Miss Buttolph, who has made the collection of her own expense and has devoted her attention to it with the unselfishness and care of an enthusiast.

It became difficult to select a few menus illustrative of the entire collection, because each single one seemed to the collector equally important. The most beautiful menus were made in this country, the pick of them having been used by the Lotos Club.

French seems to be the international menu language, excepting where we find ourselves lurching with the Maharajah of Baroda, mightily puzzled by the Sanskrit. Confining ourselves to the rulers of the world—big and little, revolutionary and by Divine right—we find a somewhat interesting survey of the literal power behind the throne.

The menu of Aguinaldo's last official feast commemorates the occasion when he was captured by Gen. Funston. It was sent to Miss Buttolph with the following letter from Lieut. Harry W. Newton of the Artillery Corps, who was with Gen. Funston's command at the time of Aguinaldo's capture:

Camp McKinley, Honolulu, July 5, 1903.
To Miss Frank E. Buttolph:

My Dear Miss Buttolph: We arrived in the little town of Palanen, Province of Isabella, between 3 and 4 o'clock on the afternoon of March 23, 1901. The town was in gala attire, the houses being trimmed and arches over the street. It was a rude native town, I should say, about 1,200 inhabitants. At the time our troops entered the town the plaza was thronged with people watching us come in and listening to the music of the bands. Aguinaldo's house was on the left of the plaza as we entered, overlooking the river from a high bluff. The fiesta was in honor of Aguinaldo's birthday. The dinner which the menu represents, as near as I could learn, was given by Aguinaldo to his officers, staff, and the heads or Presidents of neighboring towns. The appointments were rude, as he had been so closely chased during the month past that they had practically nothing with which to serve the dinner.

The cigar box cover (on which the menu was pasted) acted as a back, and the cards were set up on the table as an easel stands, leaning against a stick.

HARRY W. NEWTON,
First Lieutenant, Artillery Corps.



1. Menu of banquet given by the Emperor of Japan to the Taft party in Tokio. 2. Invitation to the ball given in New York in 1860 to the Prince of Wales, now King of England. 3. Menu of the Czar's private luncheon served in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. 4. Menu—in the Korean language—of dinner given by the Emperor of Korea to Secretary Taft and his party. 5. Kaiser Wilhelm's breakfast menu, used in his palace in Berlin. "The Royal Breakfast." 6. Menu of royal luncheon served in Guildhall, London, in honor of the coronation of their Majesties King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra. 7. Menu of dinner given by President Palma in Havana to Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Longworth. 8. Menu of a breakfast served to Queen Wilhelmina of Holland in her palace. 9. Menu of the regular dinner served in his palace in Vienna to Emperor Franz Josef. 10. Menu of an informal dinner served at Windsor Castle. 11. Menu of a meal served during the siege of Paris on Christmas Day. 12. Regular menu of the late King Christian of Denmark served in his palace. 13. Menu of informal dinner served at Sandringham Palace, England.

The menu is written in Spanish, with two items scratched out, presumably at the last moment, by the head waiter. The design is crude, the border being painted in water color, and the cigar box lid, on which it is pasted, being antique with dirt.

The smallest menu in the world is printed on a piece of court plaster, for a dinner given at Bergen, Norway, to visiting members of a medical convention held there on Aug. 30, 1885. The bit of plaster was in an envelope, just as it is sold by druggists. It was rather an elaborate menu, too, for so modest a space:

MENU ON COURT PLASTER.
Diner.

Faté.
Potage de Tomate.
Langues de bœuf grillé avec sauce d'olives.
Jambon avec chouffleurs aux haricots.
Poules avec champignons.
Homard à la mayonnaise.
Perdreix naïve.
Poulets avec salades aux cornichons.
Dessert.

Madeira.
Sauterne.
Glace.
Gateaux.
Fruits.
Diner donner aux membres étrangers du Congrès des Médecins à Bergen.

An august luncheon served to Emperor Nicholas II., Czar of All the Russias, in his bomb-proof palace at St. Petersburg is a fairly substantial French meal, even for a ruler. Probably no one of the Czar's enemies in his own country has any idea of the sort of food his imperial monarch eats. As this is a

sample of the regular midday breakfast in the palace at St. Petersburg it is interesting as a possible scientific explanation of the Emperor's embarrassments.

President Palma's dinner to Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Longworth while they were in Cuba on their wedding tour is quite a simple menu, the dishes being written out instead of printed on the card.

The most modest and abstemious of monarchs was the late King Christian of Denmark, whose royal menu had only three or four dishes, and was written out, probably by the chef.

The menu of the state dinner given to their royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales at the Government House, Malabar Point, Bombay, during their recent visit to India, is only a little more elaborate. The menus of British royalty are all quite simple, however, as the menus at Windsor Castle and Sandringham clearly demonstrate. They are printed on white card, with the royal arms in gold above.

Of course, on the occasion of the coronation feast at Guildhall a specially beautiful menu commemorates the event.

The menu of a dinner given by ex-President Loubet "aux officiers du Corps Expéditionnaire de Chine," though elaborate, has the stamp of French taste and delicacy. The only emblem of rank about it is the initials of the ex-President in one corner.

In India, where one Maharajah honors another at a state feast, it is customary to print three or four menus for the different castes represented at the dinner. Each caste is condemned to a certain style of food, so that there are denials at one table and extravagances at another. The menu used by the Maharajah of Baroda (now visiting this country) on the occasion of a feast given to the Maharajah Scindiya of Gwalior, is in Sanskrit, and when translated into phonetic sounds would disturb even Mr. Carnegie's most expert Scotch dialect. There is always a French translation of the menu accompanying the Sanskrit version.

A dinner given by King Humbert of Italy to the diplomats and officers of state at the Quirinal, and the menu of a supper served at a ball given there later by King Victor Emmanuel reveal no domestic reduction of expense in the Court life in Rome. They are neither of them elaborate, and neither have as much culinary originality as one might find at any high-class restaurant in New York.

The only item on the menu of a dinner given by the Danish Consul at Amoy, China, that is at all suggestive of locality is "pigeon pie," though it is not spelled in pigeon English.

His Imperial Majesty Kaiser Wilhelm II. of Germany enjoyed a breakfast at the New Palace in Potsdam one bright May morning in 1898 which must have been exceedingly tasty. It is printed in script type of the German character on a white card bound with a frame in gold. With the invariable modesty of this great ruler the menu bears the significant announcement at the top, "The Royal Breakfast." No other ruler has had the assurance to accomplish this in menu literature, but the Kaiser desires no forgetfulness of his imposing character—even at his own private breakfast table.

When Secretary Taft was in Seoul the Emperor of Korea dined in person with the American party, it being his first meal in public with foreign ladies. The menu of this dinner is in the Korean language, and his Majesty has since gone into retirement. The food, which was Korean, resembled that which is served on Chinese tables. Only rats from the imperial household, it is said, were served on this occasion.

A luncheon given by the Emperor of Japan at Tokio to Secretary Taft was printed in the Japanese character, but at the banquet the menu was in French.

Perhaps the most interesting menu of the "Buttolph Collection" is a Christmas meal served in 1870 at the Café Voisin during the siege of Paris. The Hon. Capt. Bingham, in his "Journal of the Siege of Paris" describes the quality of the menu in this way:

"There has been a feeble attempt on the part of the English colony to be merry and indulge in the festivities of the season. It cheered the heart, however, even to pass by the great butchers' shops at the top of the Faubourg St. Honoré, and see the exhibition of fancy meat, the product of every country from Indus to the Pole. The supply, of course, came from the Zoological Gardens, and purchasers hovered between a prime piece of white bear or a bit of the patient dromedary."

Francisque Sarcey, writing of the same conditions, says:

"The better classes had not the same physical sufferings to endure. It was easy for them to procure provisions, dear as they were, or to dine at a restaurant. It was there that most men dined; those who had maintained an 'at home' invited their friends and made an essay of the most singular dishes. I do not refer to mule or donkey, which was sold regularly. But the most fantastic animals from the Zoological Gardens took their turn—first bear, then antelope, kangaroo, ostrich, yak, and so on."

The items on the menu of the Christmas dinner given at the Café Voisin in 1870 bear these gentleman out. It was not printed, but written, and interlined.

One could spend days going over the interesting phases revealed in this "Buttolph Collection," but it is under lock and key, and only Miss Buttolph herself will show them.