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Epicures of World Pay Homage to S. F. Restaurants

Fame of City's Cafes Has Circled the Earth; Cookery Is Unique, While Quality of Food and Modesty of Prices Is Unequaled Anywhere

(Continued From Preceding Page.)

to do the best he can, for yourself and your friends.

Hearkening back for the moment to the hotels, it must not be forgotten that one cause of their ability to cater to the general public comes by reason of the large hotel supply houses that are located in San Francisco with a radiating business in every direction.

If there is a rush of guests and supplies are required they can be secured on the instant.

Accommodations Ample For the Big Convention

Hotel statistics estimate there are accommodations for San Francisco in the neighborhood of 25,000 people. This includes, of course, not alone the hotels, but apartment houses with their temporary guests.

At the time of the exposition, a census showed 1200 hotels and as many more apartment houses with accommodations for 50,000. Unquestionably these accommodations have increased in the five years intervening.

It is a matter of importance, with the coming of the Democratic convention in June, and there is no little pride among the hotel men that they assure the various committees of their ability to house those who will be visitors.

Many Books Written Of Famous Restaurants

Books have been written of the famous restaurants of San Francisco—the show places and the out-of-the-way spots that have been made famous by just such publicity. Here is a man—an author perhaps—who will designate the sand dab as the most delicious of all ocean fish. Comes another who calls to mind the Toke point oyster or the pompano, while still a third will go into raptures over the artichoke, prepared and cooked as only some of our Californians can cook it.

Never has an article been written or book published on this all-important gastronomic subject but San Francisco has been foremost with the author. New Orleans, Baltimore—other cities as well—have been given their share of praise, but it has generally remained for the writer to sing the joys of this city by the Western sea above all others.

Marchand's Well Known In the Days of Old

Going back some thirty-five years—not a long stretch for San Franciscans—there was that famous restaurant known as Marchand's. It was established first of all away up on Dupont street, and when "Old Man Marchand" died, Pierre, then a waiter in the place, married the widow and conducted the restaurant—of course, under the same name.

Later Marchand's moved to Pine street and Grant avenue, and still later to Grant avenue at the corner of Morton street, later to be renamed Union Square avenue.

It was an institution with an individuality, a characteristic, seemingly, of all successful organizations. To enter Marchand's one was compelled to pass through the kitchen. Spotlessly clean was this workshop of Pierre and his assistants, and he was not unduly proud of the fact that his guests could see for themselves just what was going on.

There were no table-d'hote dinners—nothing warmed over or prepared in advance. Everything was cooked to order for the diner.

Vegetables Cooked As They Are Ordered

In front of the service table could be found small baskets of whatever vegetables happened to be in season. If Mr. Guest wanted green peas, they were taken raw from the bucket, carried to the kitchen and there cooked.

Marchand's made a specialty of cooking vegetables without the covers on the pots. It was at that time, and still is, the theory of some epicures that vegetables give off a gas that does not improve their flavor. Marchand's, of course, had covers for the pots, but there was always a vent, or the lid was lifted in order to give room for the steam to escape.

The cooking was done with a spit and charcoal fire, augmented by a coal range. There was no such thing in those days as the warming-pan, that contrivance of the Yankee by which food not used can be held for latecomers.

Quail and Cabbage Dish Fit for Kings

While there was no regular bill of fare, Pierre adopted the practice of one special dish for each day in the week.

You might, for example, go into Marchand's of a Thursday night. If you happened to know Pierre intimately, he would escort you to your table and, in response to your query, would say:

"Monsieur, we have some very fine quail and cabbage this evening."

Quail and cabbage, by the way, is not entirely extinct as a dish, and if you ever have the opportunity, don't forget to order it.

The cabbage is first cooked, then the quail is dropped in, together with sausage and a bit of salt pork. Quail, cooked by itself, is apt to be a trifle dry. In this fashion there is no finer dish.

And—here's the odd part of it all—the cabbage, taking over the flavor of the quail, is better than the bird itself.

Maison Riche Had Nevadans as Guests

Right across from Marchand's, and operated at about the same time, was the famous house of Maison Riche. It was originally on Sutter street, near Bush, but later, as the tide of fashion changed, was on Geary street.

The Maison Riche was conducted by a pompous Frenchman and was famed far and wide—on the Atlantic coast as well as here for its fine cooking.

Its leading guests numbered such men as John Mackay, Dick Dye, United States Senator J. P. Jones and other celebrated Nevadans. They made it a point in those days of old, the days of gold and silver, to dine at the Maison Riche whenever they happened in San Francisco.

A table-d'hote dinner was one of the features, but it was rarely accepted by the guests, who preferred special dishes prepared as the owner and chef only could cook them.

How They Cooked Chateau Briand Steak

The establishment was particularly noted for its rare imported white wines, and a most delightful dinner so say the old-timers, a four-course meal, together with a pint of imported wine, could be had for $1.50.

One of the dishes of those times, though not originating in San Francisco, was the Chateau Briand steak. There is still this steak, though wisecracks of the days gone by say it is not prepared after the same fashion.

The Chateau Briand was originated by a famous French chef who lived some 120 years ago and was brought to San Francisco by his compatriots. The genuine Chateau Briand steak never touched the fire. Flavored with garlic and other condiments as required, it was placed between two dinner steaks and in that fashion received its baptism of fire.

Story of Origin Of Oyster Cocktail

Today, so they say who should know, the same steak is prepared for your ordering, but without the smaller steaks that will keep the taste of the fire away. Once again has the high cost of living scored a victory over the fine art of cooking.

One report has it that the oyster cocktail is a native of California; that it was "invented" by accident and brought to its successful eminence through the shrewdness of John Moraghan, who conducted an oyster house in the California Market.

As that particular story goes, a sailor man, some three sheets to the wind, dooked at the Moraghan stall and asked for a bowl of oysters.

It was an unusual order, as oysters were served chiefly in those days on the half shell. But the lure of gold, flashed by the tar, persuaded Moraghan to give his customer what he wanted, and a quart of the California oysters were prepared.

As the stranger was about to eat, his eye met the array of condiment bottles for which the market stalls were famous. He asked the price to mix the same in his mulligan.

John Farley Says He Knows Inventor

"Nothing," was the answer, according to the yarn.

The sailor seized the catsup, tabasco, worcestershire, and, in setting that was handy, dumping them in his bowl of oysters.

Moraghan is said to have noted the satisfaction with which the sailor ate his food. He experimented at his leisure and later appeared the oyster cocktail.

It's a shame to spoil a good story like that perhaps, but John Farley, he of the Cliff House in the kindlier days of that famous part of men and women, says it's not so.

John insists he knows who did the cafe business than he. So it will not tell.

"The oyster cocktail, as it came about originally," explains Farley, "was composed of California oysters, tabasco, catsup and angostori bitters. As the cocktail became more popular with the general public, the bitters were eliminated.

Warning Paid Is Put on the Ban

"There have been many to claim they originated this dish. Yet, I know who did, but if I were to give the name someone would be sure to step forward and say that John Farley was wrong, that so and so was the inventor. Let it go, there are a dozen claimants for the honor."

Farley, who declares that San Francisco is second to no city in the world for its food, the quality and quantity, as well as price and method of preparing, raves at the Yankee who invented the warming pan.

"It has served to kill the art of cooking wherever it is in vogue," he said, "since food that is once prepared and then kept warm is never as good as the article fresh from the oven. Frenchmen who opened restaurants and usually did their own cooking finally came to see in the warming pan a money-saver, and they adopted this invention of the land of their birth."

These restaurants that have been named were, of course, the higher class, the more expensive. It was the coming of the Italian restaurants that opened the eyes of San Francisco people and visitors as well to the possibilities, a few years back, of cheaper food.

Joe Gusti Known For Steaks He Cooked

It was all good food they served and it was largely a question of the price you wished to pay. There was Joe Gusti, an Italian who served his patrons with American cooking. Forty odd years back Joe had a stall in the California market, opposite Mike Moraghan's, his specialty being steaks, chops and oysters.

Joe didn't cook. He was the glad hand artist, approaching your table "once you were seated to assist you in selecting your dinner. His was the meeting ground for the after dinner crowds, and no matter what the lateness of the hour, there was always Joe at the door to inquire how you had enjoyed the meal. There was hospitality mixed with the dinner itself.

Shrimps or Crabs as A Freewill Offerings

Moraghan's was famous for the sauces and condiments, piled on the tables and free to whoever wanted the same. No sauce of the Indies was too difficult for Moraghan to secure and the gastronomic expert could flavor his food as highly as he cared or dared to do so.

A platter of shrimps, a goodly helping, or a leg of crab was served as an appetizer. It was a free will offering from the Moraghan stall, without money and without price.

At that time the "long bit" or the twelve-and-a-half-cent piece was in usage in San Francisco. So it was a common occurrance for the diner to pay 37½ cents, or 37½ cents as the case might be.

Dollar Dish Meal For Quarter of Dollar

Tickets were given the diner, as, instead of paying the waiter, it was customary for the patron to take his check to the cashier.

Numerous were the so-called "cheap" restaurants, and liberally patronized, you may rest assured. There was the New York Bakery on Kearny street, between Clay and Sacramento. J. M. Pike was one of the proprietors, and he specialized in a three-course meal for a quarter of a dollar. It usually consisted of beefsteak, coffee, vegetables and pie. Actors of the Bella Union and other variety theaters, as well as police from the City Hall, were among the frequenters.

"New York Dumps" At the What Cheer

Miners invariably wended their way to the What Cheer House restaurant, located at Sacramento and Webster streets. Hunger could be satisfied for a number of fifteen cents, little more than a bit. There was stew for a thin dime, with coffee and the inevitable "spud" for a nickel more.

The chef of the What Cheer was famous for his "New York Dumps," as the apple dumpling he rolled in dough was called. An apple as big as your two fists was a meal in itself.

The Miners' Restaurant, operated by a German, J. Berges, was styled the hon ton of the cheaper establishments. Most of this type of restaurants had wooden tables with sawdust on the floor. Berges individualized himself by installing marble-topped tables with linoleum for the floor.

Swain's bakery, established back in 1868, was one of the very old ones. Swain's was on Sutter street near Kearny, and attracted the better class of people from the theaters, as well as the matinee crowds.

Two of the better class restaurants were on Market street, near The Chronicle. Across from the Palace was the Antelope. Further west was the New World. The Antelope had a regular bill of fare, while the New World had a glory all its own through a choice Burgundy wine.

Lieutenant of Police Was Old-Time Waiter

Scotty Campbell, now a lieutenant of police, was a waiter years back in the California on the east side of Montgomery street, near Merchant. Scotty had a front station, and it is the delight of his friends to tell the story of his taking on a carload of food in the kitchen, teetering his way to the front and letting the dishes slide off in front of their proper owners.

S. B. Baldwin, who later made a fortune in real estate, was proprietor of the Clay Street Restaurant, on the New York Bakery on Clay, between Sansome and Leidesdorf.

Few of the old-time restaurants achieved more fame than Campi's Italian restaurant. Like many of the others, it was on Clay street, and Campi made a specialty on French dinners.

Picnics were the vogue with San Franciscans of a Sunday and once they were over, it was the plan of Mr. Young Man and his best girl to rush to Campi's for their dinner. For 50 cents per person a meal fit for the gods was laid down before them and all in courses as well.

Campi's Popular With Picnic Parties

Pop Dickie's was popular with the horsemen in the times of the Bay District track. At Pop's you could get almost anything you desired in the short order line, but it was the alum chowder that put him into the top ranks as caterer to the appetites of men.

This city undoubtedly owes much of its success to the necessability of the produce market. A few miles outside of the peninsula, along the State highway as well as over against the Pacific ocean itself, are thousands of acres given over to market gardening. Italians who know so well how to till the soil; Portuguese who are their close competitors and other races raise the vegetables and fruits that grace the tables.

Produce Hauled in From Peninsula Section

They come in a matter of fifteen to twenty miles, sometimes further, with their wagons bulging with produce. On the return trip these same carriers are loaded with soil enrichers that help to make two blades grow where one grew before.

Before motor trucks were in common use, teams drew the loads to San Francisco markets. The drivers would start from the ranches in time to bring them to the markets at 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning. The trip was usually a cold one and as the drivers frequently worked sixteen and seventeen hours a day, they dozed as they made the trip.

Prank Played on Sleepy Drivers

By the time they reached upper Market street there was usually a procession of these vegetable wagons. A story has it that one wag, going home from a late session, noticed the drivers fast asleep. Saying not a word and as quiet as a mouse, he advanced to the center of the street and seizing the lead horses turned them around.

Playing follow their leader, other horses turned and before long the procession was headed out Market street instead of down.

Something like an hour later, those same garden men were whipping their steeds, on a mad rush for a belated market. They had finally discovered the prank that had been played on them.

Today the transportation of produce is changed. It comes to San Francisco almost entirely in motor vans and the trip is made in an hour, where it took three in the old-fashioned way.

Unexcelled Variety In Local Markets

There is a variety unexcelled to be found in the California markets. California climate will produce anything that is growable. Fish in ranges come fresh from the marshes the wild fowl, from the ocean shell fish, and from the farms and ranches all the vegetables and fruits that can be mentioned. Choice asparagus, artichokes in season, garlic with which to flavor dishes, the most tender of lettuce which goes with the salad, green peas, beets, corn; in short, virtually anything that might be named from the vegetable kingdom.

With such a host of supplies at our own door, it would be a poor cook indeed who could not assist in making San Francisco excel in this particular line.

Summing it up there is cause for cheer.

You, Mr. Stranger, can sleep where you will and be housed as luxuriously as your purse and pocketbook demand or require.

As to your food, you can eat in almost any language that is spoken. You may have your French dinner if you are of Paris. You may meet with your Italians if you please or for a change have a Spanish meal and then out of Mexico.

China is represented by many of its restaurants and there is always the American style, good and better as your taste inclines.

You can do ever better if your appetite is tired.

There are some restaurants noted for one dish; some for others. Why not make up your party, take along your automobile and dine in courses, picking your cafes for the dishes in which they specialize. It will be something different, though it's been done before.

PURCELL'S CAFE

WHILE stumming don't overlook Purcell's Cafe, 181 Columbus avenue. Here is one of the most famous cafes in San Francisco. It is managed by Lester Mapp, who also was manager of Purcell's when the place was located on Pacific street. Mapp is still on the job and the famous old sound of "big doings" and big business is still credited to him.

Many cities claim to have been the first to originate jazz music, but music experts say the real home address of jazz is Purcell's in this city. Jazz was born at Purcell's and, therefore, is a native son. The best colored entertainers that can be obtained anywhere in the United States are to be found at Purcell's and the class of entertainment they give is up to a high standard of excellence.

The orchestra is conceded by thousands of music lovers to be the best of its kind that can be found. Few people can entertain like colored people. They seem to sing a song louder than the average singer, and when they dance—rest assured that they entertain royally.

Lester Mapp sees to it that none but the best of colored entertainers and jazz performers entertain the many patrons of Purcell's, and his success is known throughout the country.

A spacious dance floor is always crowded in this truly unique underground cafe at Jackson street and Columbus avenue. The persons who can't dance to the merry strains given out by the various instruments used by the musicians of Purcell's are, as Mapp describes them, "just naturally Wrong."

The small army of ever-willing entertainers on duty at Purcell's always seem to get as much real pleasure out of entertaining guests as the guests themselves. There is nothing mechanical about it, and in the true style of the colored folks from way down South, the fun goes on and everybody has a regular time.

San Francisco is no exception to the rule that there is something distinctive about every city that is a city. Purcell's is a distinctive cafe and a visit to this temple of joy and music will never be forgotten.

ELKO CAFE

THERE are hundreds of places in San Francisco where people may enjoy themselves, but few of the places enjoy the reputation and furnish the music, special entertainment and food that is tendered patrons of the Elko Cafe, Kearny and Jackson streets, in the heart of the Bohemian district.

Here may be found the best to eat and drink and certainly the best that is offered in the entertainment line. The Elko is under the personal management of James La Strange, one of the best known cafemen in the United States.

"Jim" La Strange and his wonderful personality played a large part in making the Elko such a famous rendezvous for people enjoying a good evening's entertainment.

The fame of San Francisco is due largely to its cafes and the Elko is one of the principal joy spots in this city. Visitors have not enjoyed the real Bohemian life of the city until a visit to this well-appointed place is made.

The Elko is beautifully decorated throughout and several thousand dollars have been spent in perfecting a ventilating system. A huge dance floor is set in the middle of the spacious cafe. Seated on the left is one of the largest orchestras in the city. It is a real jazz band in every sense of the word. Here one may hear all the latest tunes played as they should be rendered.

Male and female entertainers sing between the dances. Just as soon as a song is published in the East, the Elko receives a professional copy, with the result that the entertainers in the Elko are singing the latest ballads and songs about the same time the people in New York and Chicago hear them.

San Francisco never did believe in half-doing anything, and that is a big reason why Jimmy La Strange has made the Elko one of the brightest spots in the city. La Strange is of the "old guard." He was born in San Francisco and is known as a prince of good fellows.

PUP CAFE

THE PUP CAFE at 14 Taylor street is one of the lively and most attractive of the many bright spots in the fast stepping semi-cloistered night life of San Francisco, and its popularity is based on three most excellent reasons.

First, because George P. Maloney is the proprietor and there is no one more open-hearted and generous in the cafe business than he. He is proud of the fact that he has yet to see the charitable benefit or subscription list that he has swung down, giving of his time, money and services of his cabaret entertainers willingly. Second, because the three best "mixologists" in the city, Thos. H. Lindsay, Dick Crowley and Charles W. Feldman Jr., work in the Pup. And third, because Maloney believes in the motto of nothing is too good for the patrons of his establishment, regardless of cost.

He has secured the best cabaret entertainers that money could procure, one of whom, Marina Diamondis, has an enviable reputation on the Pacific Coast, possessing a beautiful highly cultivated mezzo-soprano voice of wonderful range.

But the largest asset which makes the Pup such an attractive place for the pleasure seeker is Maloney himself. He was born and raised in San Francisco, is married and has four children. He started as a printer and followed the trade until six years ago, when he opened the Pup. Few men in the city have more friends than he and his business is laid down on the firm basis of giving to patrons "value received." Now—owner or additional receives the same courteous service in this cafe, a cafe which is steadily growing in popularity among the pleasure loving public of San Francisco.

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