

CORN IS THE KING.

The Great American Cereal at the Exposition.

TICKLES PARIS PALATES.

Mr. J. H. McKeever Writes an Interesting Letter Concerning the Efforts to Popularize Corn.

PARIS, May 25, 1900.

Every farmer in Crawford county who raises corn is vitally interested in what is the most unique part the United States is taking in the Paris Exposition of 1900. Farmers throughout the corn belt of the west share with those around Denison this feeling of anticipation and they should be thoroughly alive to the good which may come from this feature. It carries with it the possibility of an increased price for corn so as to place it where never again will the Crawford farmer burn his corn crop for fuel rather than sell it because it is cheaper to do so than to buy coal. In an effort to bring about this condition of affairs the corn kitchen has been established at the fair. In a room on the third floor of the agricultural annex, a building devoted exclusively to the exhibits of American farm implements, corn served in half a dozen different ways, is being dispersed free to all who will come up to the high counter and make their desires known no matter whether they speak English, French or Chinese. The more that come, the better they like it and ere the fair is over they hope to feed thousands every day. The place is not for the American abroad, he already knows what good things can be made from corn, but it is the visitor from the countries of Europe who is the special object of its hospitality. Once giving him a taste of corn prepared as a food for man it is hoped that when he goes home he will want more, and buying it for himself increase the export trade in this commodity until America shall feed the world.

The kitchen is not large, for this room is set off from the larger area of the top floor of the building by a partial partition through which a wide, flag-draped doorway is cut and out of which the most savory odors come to greet the visitor as he mounts the stairway. Inside a high counter forms three sides of a square in whose hollow all the process of preparation is to be seen. Busy at a gas range is a typical southern "auntie" whose smiling face beams from beneath a red bandana turban and whose robust form is encircled by a huge apron. All that she does is to bake gold and brown corn cakes and she is kept busy all of the time for this is probably the most popular dish of all those they serve. Next to hers stands another range upon which a white-capped chef and his assistant prepare soup, hominy, fritters and bake the various breads, for they make three out of the corn. To serve these the individual portions are placed in dainty dishes and given forth by a man and a woman, both colored. One who has never enumerated the different ways of preparing corn would be amazed at the variety of the dishes which they serve here. Of course the corn cakes and syrup are the staple but following close after are corn bread and corn soup, a very excellent one too. In addition to the ordinary corn bread cut in yellow cubes, there is corn pone. Boston brown bread made from corn and white bread from corn flour. Fritters and fried and boiled hominy may complete the second course and then comes Indian pudding with sauce and a blanc mange or custard trembling in pink and white molds under its accompanying dressing. Crisp popcorn always fills great glass bowls on the counter. These jars too have delightfully wide mouths so that no matter how big a handful of the corn one takes the list is not going to stick in taking it out. Butter, syrup and sugar with a glass of water are served with the dishes so that every facility is offered to make agreeable the foreigners introduction to a food which he considers too base for man's use.

It is a funny sight to see some of the French men try the corn for the first time. The other day a trio of them came up and with every show of diffidence they finally approached the counter at one side. The colored waiter inside asked them what they would have—think of a negro talking French. They, of course, didn't know, so corn cakes were suggested. At this stage one of them balked and said that none need be brought for him, but the others stood for it. When the little plates, with their three crisp and tender discs of meal upon them, were put down, became at once the objects of intense scrutiny and of animated gesticulation and debate. Finally one man picked up a cake in his fingers and nibbling the fragment which had not broken off of its own weight pronounced it all right. A patriotic lover of those same corn cakes was dismayed at the unprepared state in which they were being devoured and suggested that some butter and syrup, which the waiter had set down, be added to them. This was too much for the second man and he gave up to the bolder

member. He acted and the result was much to his liking for he ate his plateful, all the time telling his friends what they were missing. Hardly any of the foreigners understand what the popcorn is. The kitchen is kept stocked with the raw material by American manufacturers of corn products. The importance of the kitchen was not realized until so late that it had to be given this comparatively out-of-the-way place where but few of the thousands of people who come to the fair ever find it. The propaganda which has charge of the demonstration is headed by Col. Clark E. Carr of Galesburg, Ill., who has been working to popularize corn among European nations ever since he was minister to Denmark some years ago. When the fair was announced he took up the idea anew and the kitchen was evolved. Now an average of 300 foreigners are fed every day and the Colonel expects more as the news spreads. The United States raises every year two billion bushels of corn and exports only ten per cent or two million bushels, while of the wheat crop 30 per cent is sent abroad. Thus if the foreign demand can be increased so that the price of corn will be raised but one cent a bushel, it would mean \$20,000,000 a year more to the farmers of Iowa, Illinois, and other corn states. On the day of the formal opening, May 17, Commissioner General Peck brought this point out strongly in his address saying that it was easy to see how an agency which would tend to teach the world the food value of the greatest product of the United States might prove the most important part the nation took in this exhibition. As he concluded, he said: "The United States corn kitchen at Paris is now formally opened where all the peoples of the earth can come and partake of the greatest American food, cooked in an American fashion, served in an American way and on a liberal American basis where without let or hindrance the world can feast in a foreign land protected by the American flag." Col. Carr is his presentation remarks said that in placing corn before the representatives of all lands they were doing to these people a greater service than to themselves. He believed that Indian corn or maize had contributed toward giving Americans that vigor of mind and body for which they were celebrated. Gen. Horace Porter, ambassador to France, spoke from his own experience in the Civil War when the army of the Cumberland, besieged in Chattanooga, had found corn a food for man and horse which not only gave strength but prevented scurvy as well. He said he felt like doing as the Indians and organizing a dance in gratitude for corn. The missionary work done this summer will return benefits in years to come in many fold.

CAUGHT BY BANDITS.

THE INCONVENIENCE OF BEING MISTAKEN FOR A LORD.

With Two Pairs of Ears and Possibly Two Lives at Stake and No Ransom in Sight, the Captives Decided It Was Time For Business.

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If an American wants to go abroad on a cash capital of \$500, there is no law to prevent, even if he is a newspaper man who has saved and economized for six or seven years to get that much wealth together. When I started out with my friend Gillam, who was an artist instead of a journalist, and had \$50 less capital as well, we took steamer passage on a steamer and planned to do Europe on foot and avoid all extravagances. As to how we got along until we struck Greece and a certain event happened is of no great consequence. We tramped here and there, ate, slept and had a fairly good time.

From Athens we went on a tramp up the country, viewing tombs and ruins by the way, and after putting in two days at Marathon we started out one morning for a hamlet called Histrophus. We were first met by about a dozen dogs of all sizes, ages and colors, and each one a worse looking dog than the one who came after. After we had clubbed the pack off we were charged down upon by nine children of various sizes and ages, all of whom needed soap and water. They rallied around us for small coin, and not getting any they fell back and gave four women a chance. We got rid of the latter to encounter three men, one of whom could speak a little English. They were dirty, ragged villains, who did not hesitate to threaten us, and not a word could we get out of them about the ruins until we had come down with a backsheesh. Gillam started out after a bit to do some sketching, while I found a place to take a nap, and the inhabitants of Histrophus finally got out of breath begging for coins and trying to get us to buy a skeleton old goat for \$2 and went back to their flea infested huts.

At the end of two hours I was awakened by some one giving me a smart kick on the hip, and I roused up to see that we had been taken prisoners by four brigands. The fellows had come down off the mountains, about four miles away, having probably been notified by a messenger from the village. I have many times read of the picturesque Greek brigands, but the four who gobbled us up that day must have gone out of the picturesque business some weeks previous. They were a ragged, ugly lot, no better than the men of the village, and we were far more distrustful with their breaths than

afraid of their knives. The leader spoke English fairly well, and I have always felt grateful to him on that account. All leaders of Greek brigands should learn three or four languages before proceeding to business, as it is a great help toward an understanding about identity, money matters and so forth. It was the leader who had kicked me, which I have always taken as a compliment, and as I sat up he saluted me and said:

"My lord, you will please consider yourself a prisoner and come along without resistance."

"But don't make any mistake on me," I replied. "As near as I can make out from this short range you are brigands."

"I am Bobetto," he said as he laid his hand on his heart and bowed low.

"Excuse me that I never heard of you before. You are a brigand and in it for money, and this is your band?"

"My lord is correct."

"Now, about this lord business. Let us have an understanding. Who do you take me for?"

"An English lord, my lord. I have been expecting you for several days. The name I cannot pronounce, but I know you to be the gentleman. Have no fears for your safety, as it will be a case of ransom."

"This is kind of you. If you take me for an English lord, who do you make this other chap to be?"

"Your companion, sir. His name I heard, but cannot give it. He will also be held for ransom."

"Then we started off to the west. The particular retreat of this band was half way up a mountain, and consisted of two brush huts and a fire in front of them. We were in no manner ill used. They could have robbed us of our few dollars and personal property, but they did not even search us for weapons. As soon as we had arrived at the huts, however, Bobetto brought out stationery and commanded me to write to the English minister at Athens and obtain the sum of \$30,000. Both Gillam and I burst out laughing at this demand, and after a little I said to the leader:

"Of what use to play the fool in this matter? As I told you before, we are Americans, and poor men at that. We can raise about \$200 apiece, but not another cent, and if you take that we shall have to turn brigands and compete with you in business."

"You may be Americans, but you are my lord just the same," replied Bobetto.

"But there are no titles in America. If I should write to the American minister, he would take it as a joke. You haven't got a soft snap in this thing, old fellow. Had you got hold of Rockefeller, Gould or Vanderbilt you might have made a raise and bought a garlic factory, but we are almost down to hardpan. Sorry for you, but you can't always hit it, even in the brigand business."

"But you must write," persisted the wooden headed rascal. "You must write to the American minister that if he does not send us \$10,000 by our messenger your ears will be sent him in a package!"

I read the letter to Bobetto after it was written, and he was perfectly satisfied that it would fetch the cash in reply. It was sent off by a messenger, who would be gone at least ten days, and then we went into "retirement." It is the rule with all brigands who have a prisoner on hand to lie low and take no chances. I thought it well to prepare this gang for a disappointment, and when the messenger had departed I told them that he would only have the journey for nothing.

"It cannot be for nothing," grimly replied Bobetto as he brought out a knife and felt of its edges. "If no money comes, then your ears go to Athens! If they fail to bring it, then we will send on your heads!"

Sentinels were posted on the hills around to prevent a surprise, and we had nothing to do but loaf about. Bobetto thought he knew the game of poker, and it was for us to undeceive him. In three days Gillam and I had won every cent he had. We offered to put up \$200 against our ears, but the brigand assured us with great dignity that it wasn't regular. About once a day I thought it my duty to inform Bobetto that there were moneyless Americans and that there was nothing in it for him, and he always replied to me with a lift of the eyebrows and a shrug of the shoulders and the words:

"Time will tell, my lord; time will tell. It has happened that I have had to send ears and head to Athens before."

For the first five days of our captivity we were closely guarded, and there could be no thought of escape. Then, as we appeared to make ourselves at home, the vigilance of the brigands was relaxed. While only four had been concerned in our capture, there were really six in the band. One of them had a broken leg, and the other was acting as a nurse. Two sentinels were always stationed at points half a mile away, and occasionally a brigand fell asleep during the day. I think it was on the eighth day and at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon when the brigand nurse was sent for provisions. As two were acting as sentinels and a third was lying helpless, this left only two men to deal with. One of these was Bobetto, and he sat with his back to a rock dozing with the heat of the day. Gillam was lying on his back, while I was looking carelessly at a Greek newspaper. All of a sudden the artist sat up and whispered to me:

"Let's end this right here and now! You tackle the leader, and I'll go for the other fellow!"

The "other fellow" was at the fire heaping the brands together. We rose up in unison and made the attack. I gave old Bobetto a kick on the jaw which knocked him over and caused doleful howls, and Gillam hit his man such a blow on the neck as to render him unconscious for half an hour. There were two guns in camp, and we seized them and made for the high-

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J. P. JONES,

ASSIGNEE OF HAUGH & KEMMING.

way, only a mile distant. Before departing I gave the leader a tap on the head to quiet his yells, and so far as I know we were not followed a rod. We reached the highway just in time to get a lift in a passing cart and in a couple of hours were in Marathon. As to the letter, it was delivered at the consulate, but was looked upon as a joke and the messenger sent off empty handed. We might have lost our ears on his return, but were not there to have them sliced off. Bobetto died two years later, as I read in the papers, and it is said that he was badly disfigured by a broken jaw—the one "my lord" gave him with an American calfskin shoe. M. QUAD.

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