

# Where San Francisco's "Bohemia" Dines



SPAGHETTI, Tagliarini, Ravioli, Salame, "Vino?" says the Italian waiter in a breath.

If you are a stranger in Bohemia, this jumble of words is confusing.

But to a habitué of the fast-food restaurants it hath a goodly sound, unknown to the aristocrat, whose excursions into Bohemia are always fraught with disgust.

He will tell you that in these Dago restaurants they fling bread across the room; that they talk out of their turn; that they are ebullient with the waiter and call him familiarly by his front name; that they drink Dago red and wind huge globes of spaghetti round their forks; they laugh at the constitutional kicker and throw bread at the gastronomic connoisseur.

My aristocratic friend, here you are out of your element. The restaurants of the Barbary Coast belong to the Bohemian folk. Go back to your soft carpeted, elegantly furnished, uptown restaurant of luxury. The Spaghetti Joint is a sealed book to you.

"But of all the restaurants in San Francisco from the Cliff House down to the wharf, the ones that tickle my palate the most are those of the Latin Quarter."

So sings the Bohemian.

And why are those haunts dear to his heart?

Because in the first place they are not dear to his pocketbook, and in the second place, the art students of our commercial city, the writers, the sculptors, the actors go to these restaurants for refreshment and inspiration. Here they claim they can study human nature in the rough, without the varnish of convention. Here it is accessible.

There is a restaurant on old Clay street where Mark Twain used to wander in and draw off his order to the waiter; and another that was a favorite haunt of Bret Harte's, and still another where Robert Louis Stevenson used to practice economy.

A 20-cent dinner was his first idea of economy, but he found that his funds would not last at that rate till his book was finished, so he ate two 10-cent meals and splurged on a 25-cent dinner.

But times have improved in San Francisco since the days of Robert Louis Stevenson. His economic schedule is a back number.

The modern hungry author can get a full course French dinner for 15 cents—an everyday dinner for 10, breakfast 5.

The favorite haunt of the Bohemians now is a certain

"Hotel de France, 15c."

On Sunday nights, when the sketchbook has been laid aside and the pen and the clay of the sculptor, the seekers after inspiration, recreation and economy hie themselves to the

"Hotel de France, 15c."

They draw up their chairs to the long table and good fellowship prevails. Every one talks to everybody else.

They ladle out soup from a great soup tureen. French loaves of bread are scattered promiscuously around the table, and their meal of fish, salad, chicken, roast beef, fruit and cheese is washed down by a fagon of the red. "A boot of wine," they call it, served by a husky barmaid, the wife of the proprietor.

The Hotel de France from the outside looks like an old ark that in early days might have been washed up on the Barbary Coast to the shores of Kearny street. But on entering large corridors open up, till you reach the main dining-room, off which are private rooms, where the garbage man can take his sweetheart for the nominal price of 15 cents.

An enthusiastic regular boarder says that here you can get "the biggest glut in the city for the money. That is," he goes on to add, "if you consider money. Now, to me money is a despicable thing." And it soon develops that he is a socialist. He and his anarchist friend talk in loud tones and settle there and then at "the Hotel de France, 15c," every question in the political issue.

They entertain the whole restaurant with their ideas. These sons of toil, whose whole aim in life has been to get the "mighty dollar," lean over the table, now approving and now coming in with some argument against. Then the regular boarder switches off and quotes Shakespeare by the yard, and the dumb faces before him light up, fascinated, and at the end come in with a burst of genuine applause.

In the back of the "Hotel de France" there is a little French garden, with trailing nasturtiums and a vegetable patch of onions and garlic.

Louis, the proprietor, says that he used to serve nuts and raisins, all for 15 cents, but buying nut-crackers was a continual expense, and at the end of every week there was one dozen nut-crackers missing. "But," says Louis, "Frenchman he got great head." Louis held a consultation with the blacksmith, and the next Saturday night they had nut-crackers at the "Hotel de France" that somewhat resembled house-moving jacks.

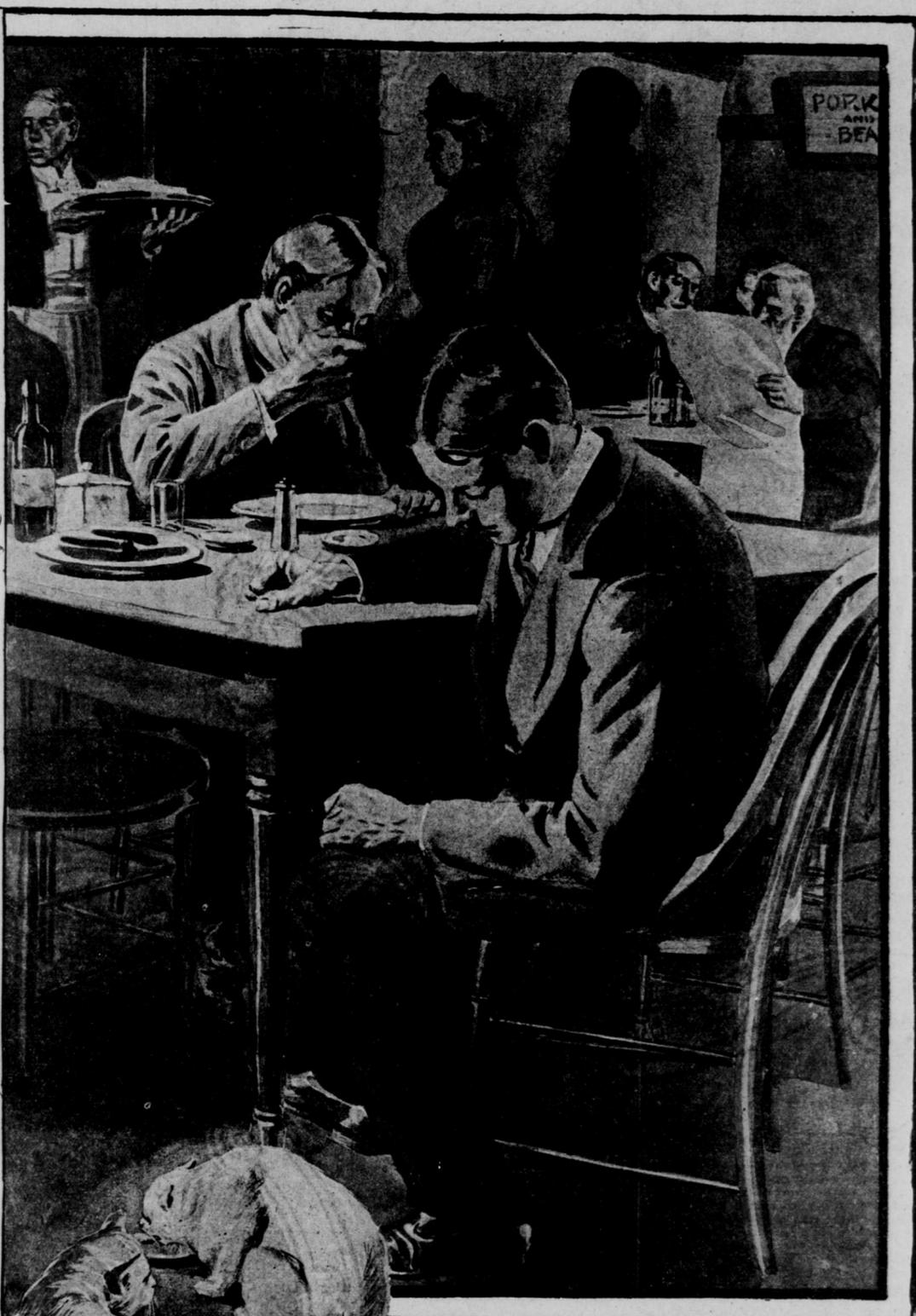
But trouble was on deck for the well-meaning Louis. His patrons got to scrapping one night and used the blacksmith's nut-crackers as weapons. So nuts were abandoned at the "Hotel de France."

"Besides ze English walnut he go up in ze price," added Louis, with a shrug.

The barroom, off the main dining-room,



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with its little round tables, is where Louis takes in the shekels.

Coffee John's, on Clay street, used to be a rendezvous for the happy eaters. Here they could get for 10 cents

Soup, Baked Spuds, Beans, Chops, Coffee and Rolls, And Apple Sauce.

And for 5 cents coffee and rolls. At Coffee John's you proclaim from the door whether you are going to leave 5 or 10 cents in the restaurant.

"Bow!" said in a loud tone, means soup and prosperity and a regular dinner.

"Cup!" means coffee and rolls.

"Bow!" or "cup" is re-echoed by the waiter to the cook. For the rest you wait on yourself. You take your knife, spoon and fork from the counter and a plate of butter from the pyramid of plates. A big blue sign with white letters over the "bread and rolls" counter reads: "Three snakes with coffee; two with a square meal." And Coffee John himself stands there to see that you take no more; but sometimes a deft-fingered wight presses down on the next butter plate in

the pile and sticks an extra piece on the bottom of his own plate.

Certain restaurants are noted for certain dishes. There is a restaurant down on the water front known as the Fisherman's Restaurant. It is AI for its fish. Here the fishermen bring the choicest of their stock. After dinner they sit back in their chairs and sing. One among them has a beautiful tenor voice, and his en-

trance always brings applause. He is as familiar with selections from grand operas as we are with "Goo-goo Eyes." His favorite selection is the last tenor solo in "Luca di Lammermoor," and Van Dyke could not put more passion into the song. His eyes have a far-away look that proclaim the dingy restaurant and his companions forgotten. The fog banks of the bay are converted into soft Italian

skies as his voice mounts up, "Oh, Bell alma lunamorta."

The old Buon Gusto restaurant, at the head of Kearny street, was the favorite restaurant with the Italians of the Grau company. For them cobwebbed wines were dug up from the cellar. The best in the larder was theirs, and Signor Salvatore Giovannoni, the proprietor, himself waited on them.

There is a Swiss restaurant on Montgomery avenue whose front window reads:

"Swiss Restaurant. French and Italian Cooking 50 cents. Meals 25 cents."

Among others that deserve honorable mention are "The Dirty Spoon Restaurant," "The Flytrap," "The Silver Moon" and "Mary's Little Lamb."

Lucchetti's and Sanginetti's, down near the water front, are perhaps the best known of all the Italian restaurants. On Sunday nights they are crowded, but the crowd lacks the unconsciousness which is uppermost in the nature of a true Bohemian.

There is a Greek restaurant near the Greek church, in the Greek colony, and a Jewish restaurant further down town called "The Kosher." Here unleavened

bread and Jewish cooking are to order.

There are numerous Mexican restaurants in the Latin quarter. Luna's is known as the "hot joint." Everything here is much and redly peppered. Here for 50 cents they serve salad, soup, fish, chile con carne, chicken, beefsteak, dessert and coffee and a bottle of claret.

There is a little Mexican restaurant near the County Jail where a good Mexican dinner can be had for a quarter. The proprietor waits on the table, while the pretty senora cooks the Mexican dishes before your eyes.

The true Bohemian, when broke, takes himself to the Helping Hand restaurant, on Commercial street. Food is here 1 cent a dish. For 5 cents you can get a full meal. The Helping Hand restaurant bill of fare is:

Bowl of Soup ..... 1 cent  
Bowl of Mush ..... 1 cent  
Bowl of Rice ..... 1 cent  
Plate of Potatoes ..... 1 cent  
Plate of Beans ..... 1 cent  
Plate of Bread ..... 1 cent  
Dish of Vegetable Stew ..... 1 cent  
Dish of Vegetables ..... 1 cent  
Dish of Sauce ..... 1 cent  
Dish of Macaroni ..... 1 cent  
Dish of Nut Butter ..... 1 cent  
Dish of Sugar ..... 1 cent

Members of the royal household, men, women and children, may be seen accompanying them on their wheels.

A few months ago the fashionable wheeling club gave a grand bicycle tournament, which was attended by the King and Queen and nearly all the Princes of Siam.

Hamilton King, our Consul General at Bangkok, has sent home these remarks made by one of the local newspapers:

"Taken simply as a parade of cyclists in fancy dress with decorated machines—a kind of fete that is common enough both in Europe and America—it may be doubted if any of those present had ever seen anything better, or indeed, anything that equaled it. There were between two

and three hundred bicyclists in the procession, all in elaborate fancy dress, on which a wealth of ingenuity had been spent. First in the programme came the races, with all the records of Siam to make; and they were as successful as they could have been expected to be where there is no racetrack. After the races came the procession round the Freeman ground, when the spectators had a chance of trying to make out who was who. Their Majesties, it should have been said, were early on the ground and took the greatest interest in the whole proceedings.

"The judging over and the prizes presented, a mimic 'battle of flowers' began, and was entered into with good spirit.

## Fish With Metal Tags Are Being Put in the Ocean.

It seems rather an odd idea to fasten metal tags to marine fishes and then let them loose in the ocean with the idea of identifying them as individuals in case they happen to be caught at a future time; but this is what the United States Fish Commission is doing just now with cod, 1500 of which have been duly tagged and released this year. No two tags are alike, the markings on them being stamped in a series of letters and numbers, record of which is kept in a book in such a manner that if a tagged codfish turns up, a moment's reference to the memoranda will furnish the history of that particular specimen, with date of liberation, weight and so forth. For example, a cod wearing a tag with the raised inscription "S 100" has a complete identification card, so that she cannot be mixed up with any other fish entered in the commission's ledger.

## Bicycles Are the Fad in Siam.

The King of Siam rides an American bicycle of the latest and most approved model. The wheel is a great success there, though the first safety bicycle was taken to Bangkok only five years ago by an American dentist named Carrington. He made a great sensation on his trips around the city. The natives thought it a wonderful invention, and many who had the money to invest imported wheels and learned the art of riding. There are now nearly three thousand bicycles in Bangkok alone, and all classes ride them. It is the fashionable fad, for royalty is among the devotees of the wheel. The members of the Government frequently go to and come from their duties at the public offices on their bicycles. They even go to public functions, including the King's receptions, on this distinguished conveyance.

## Table Habits in Turkish Homes.

Of late years some Turkish households have become considerably modernized, even aping the ways of Paris. But conservative Turks frown on such new-fangled ways. In a conservative Turkish household, rich or poor, no tables are used and chairs are unknown. Instead there is a huge wooden frame in the middle of the room about eighteen inches high. When the family—the men only—assemble to dine cushions are brought, placed upon the frame, and on these the members seat themselves tailor fashion, forming a circle around a large tray. The tray is a very large wooden, plated or silver affair, according to the financial condition of the family, and thereon is deposited a capacious bowl. About it are ranged saucers of sliced cheese, anchovies, caviare and sweetmeats. Interspersed with these are goblets of sherbet, pieces of hot unleavened bread and boxwood spoons. Knives, forks and plates do not figure in the service but each has a neatly spread

upon his knees, and every one, armed with a spoon, helps himself.

The host is presently borne away, and another dish takes its place. This time it is a conglomeration of substantial stewed together, such as mutton, game or poultry. The meat has been divided by the cook into portions, which are dipped up with the aid of a spoon or with the fingers.

For the host to fish out of the mess a wing or a leg of a fowl and present it to a guest is considered a great compliment, and for a Turk of high degree to roll a morsel between his fingers and put it into the mouth of a visitor is looked upon as good manners.

A recent European invention is a process for making artificial sponges. The method is based on the action of zinc chloride on cellulose, by which spongy compounds similar to starch are produced. These products, when placed in water, swell, and in an atmosphere sufficiently dry, become hard again.

There is a little bakery where you digest the Bible with your dinner. You read "Try our mince pies" on the bill of fare and "Prepare to meet your God" on the wall.

An old restaurant on Commercial street is a historic landmark. It was established by the miners in '49, and is the oldest restaurant in the city. It is called the Mint restaurant, because the United States Mint used to be across the street and the officials used to eat there.

It is a great rendezvous for the old timers—old Huntington and Fair often ate here. Some of the tables used in '49 still furnish the old-fashioned, low-ceilinged place. It is distinctly a business man's restaurant, closed on Sundays. Men from the Land Office, the Hall of Justice and the United States Sub-Treasury, eat there and drink over the same bar where in '49 the miner weighed out his gold dust and treated his friends.

San Francisco is the greatest restaurant city in the world. It has been described as a city of restaurants and bachelors. "A street called Kearny runs through the city where beautiful women laugh and chat and wear huge bunches of violets. They meet their friends and eat at restaurants, of which there are many. The main idea seems to be to keep the restaurant proprietors in pin money."

San Francisco runs the whole gamut in restaurants, from the uptown restaurants where you tip the waiter for bringing a glass of water to the restaurants where a hungry man can get a square meal for a dime, only he must be hungry, for the 10-centers are not calculated to tempt the high-bred palate, but to satisfy the vulgar pangs of real hunger.

ISABEL FRASER.