

**ARISTOLOGY: OR, THE
ART OF DINING. WITH
PREFACE AND NOTES**

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Aristology: Or, the Art of Dining. With Preface and Notes by Thomas Walker & Felix Summerly

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THOMAS WALKER & FELIX SUMMERLY

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OR
THE ART OF DINING
BY
THOMAS WALKER, M.A.

WITH PREFACE AND NOTES

BY
FELIX SUMMERLY

... "with despatchful looks in haste
Eye turns, on hospitable thoughts intent,
What choice to choose, for Delicacy best,
What order so contrived as not to mix
Tastes, not well joined, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindest change."

Book V. *Paradise Lost*.

mc LONDON: GEORGE BELL AND SONS

YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1881

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PREFACE.

1.

THE doctrines, in which the author of *ANATOMY* expounded the first principles which should govern all dinners seem well worthy of reproduction at this time. They may rank even with Solomon's proverbs. The millionaire and the man whose dinner costs from one to five shillings should always hold them in remembrance in providing his dinner, which Walker called "one of our most important temporal concerns."

2. Thomas Walker, when he wrote these words in 1835, was a police magistrate at the Lambeth Court. He was a bachelor, and his doctrines appear to have been influenced somewhat by that imperfect state of existence. He preached especially the virtue of a simple style of dining. He was the son of a Manchester manufacturer, and born in 1784, and certainly a century ago Manchester banquets were very simple affairs compared with the state dinners given at Eccles, Didsbury, Higher Broughton, and the principal suburbs of Cottonopolis at the present day. The chief banker in Manchester before 1800 was a grocer and cheesemonger almost living in kitchen, parlour, and all; and the simplicity of those early times must have laid the foundations of Thomas Walker's faith in simplicity. He

took his degree of B.A. in 1808, and M.A. in 1811, at Trinity College, Cambridge: he ate the dinners which gave him his legal qualification in the Inner Temple before 1812, when he was called to the Bar. Many of the specimens of dinners related in this work were given in his chambers in the Temple.

3. In 1829 he was appointed a Metropolitan Magistrate. In May, 1835, he started a weekly periodical called the ORIGINAL, being the sole contributor, "published every Wednesday at 12 o'clock:" doubtless with that punctuality which he insisted upon as an inflexible canon for dining. He published twenty-nine numbers of this work, the last on the 2nd of December, 1835. In this number he says: "London living and authorship do not go on well together. My writings have latterly drawn upon me more numerous and cordial invitations than usual, which is a gratifying sign of approbation, but of somewhat ruinous consequences. Conviviality, though without what is ordinarily called excess, during the greater part of the week, and hard fagging during the remainder, with a sacrifice of exercise and sleep, must tell; and if I were to go on without interruption I must make myself a slave, with at the same time great danger of falling off. I have therefore determined to suspend my labours till the first Wednesday in March, and feeling the expediency of such a step, I think it best to take it at once." "It will be my aim, during the interval between this time and March, to put myself into the best state for renewing my labours with effect. Diet, sleep, and exercise are the chief points to be attended to, and difficult it is to attend to them in this metropolis. If one could but succeed in uniting the advantages of solitude with those of society, it would be glorious." Alas! it

was not given him to fulfil his engagement with his readers. He went to Brussels, and died there in a few weeks afterwards, on the 20th of January, 1836. I take the dates of his life from the "Biographical Dictionary," by Thompson Cooper, F.S.A., in preference to other similar dictionaries, one of which kills him in 1862! so difficult is it to be accurate even in a trifle. "ARISTOLOGY, or the Art of Dining" was not the only one of the subjects on which Walker wrote in the Original; "The Art of attaining High Health;" "Parochial Government;" "Pauperism"—were others, all well worth reading.

4. Whether or not Walker had ever read the *Physiologie du Goût* of *Anthelme Brillat Savarin*, published in 1825, his "Art of Dining" affords no positive evidence. It is likely he did, for there are strong analogies between the two works. Brillat Savarin was a judge of the Court of Cassation, and a member of many literary and scientific societies in France. His gastronomic philosophy, which was much more comprehensive and detailed than Walker's "Art of Dining," has been recently translated by R. E. Anderson, M.A., and the "fundamental truths of the science" given by Brillat Savarin may be found in the Appendix (B); other cautions worth consulting also in Appendix (C), taken from Murray's "Art of Dining,"¹ which is more or less a compilation from the "Quarterly Review" of articles entitled *Gastronomy and Gastronomers*—written by one who enjoyed favourable opportunities of criticizing dinners of the highest quality.

5. There are forcible reasons why the doctrines of Walker for dining well should be well considered at this

¹ "The Art of Dining, or Gastronomy and Gastronomers." J. Murray, 1852.

period. The Education Department of the Privy Council makes under easy conditions, a public grant of two shillings a head on behalf of every girl who is reported by an inspector as having a knowledge of the "culinary treatment of food," which in English language means cookery. There is a National Training-School for Cookery at South Kensington, which trains teachers of cookery for Public Elementary Schools. It uses a cookery book so simple that almost an idiot may teach cookery by it. There are local centres for teaching cookery at Edinburgh and many northern towns. Two things, Walker says, stamp any dinner with glory—namely, excellent potatoes, with melted butter of the first quality. In the progress of the Art we may hope, by degrees, to see these two delicacies quite common. Since Walker's day the Corn Laws have been repealed, and millions of bushels of nourishing food made cheap for the toiling men and women. All the world is supplying us with food of every kind. Turtle and pine-apples do not cost a tenth of what they did a century ago. And the Society of Arts has lately organised a Food Committee of Landlords and Men of Science, to give the public increased knowledge of what science and the world are doing to supply food to them.

6. I have appended a letter I wrote some years ago, for reforming public dinners, which is based upon Walker's principles, and the work of reformation still remains to be done.

7. A golden rule for dining well, is, that you should feel after dinner lightsome, refreshed, with plenty of fire in you—not heavy, bloated, sodden, and beaten in spirit.

FELIX SUMNERLY.

The Feast of St. Valentine,
1881.