

A WOODEN SHOE.

It was announced to all Paris that Pagan had fallen seriously ill at the conclusion of his grand concert, had been attacked by a fever which refused to yield to the remedies employed by his physicians.

Some days later, Pagan, whose form was almost spectral, seemed to have his frail existence suspended by a thread, which the slightest shock might sever. The physicians ordered solitude and absolute repose, therefore he removed to the Villa Lutetana in the Faubourg Poissonniere. It was an excellent establishment and stood in a large park-like garden, where the patient could enjoy either solitude or society at choice. A great charm of the place was that every one lived as he pleased; in the evening, retiring to the solitude of his apartment, or joining in the games, music and conversation held in the drawing-room. Pagan preferred passing the evening in quietness and retirement. There was plenty of gossip about him in the drawing-room and three or four censorious old women tell on him tooth and nail.

'Ladies,' began one, 'have you seen this great musician?' He salutes no one, and never speaks a word. He takes his bowl of soup in an arbor in the garden, and then hastens away to anyone approaches. What an oddity he must be!

'That's part of his malady,' said another. 'People say that there is some terrible mystery about his life; some love story I imagine.'

'Not at all!' added a third. 'Pagan is a miser; there's no mystery about that. Do you remember the concert which was organized in favor of families who suffered from the inundation at St. Etienne? The great violinist refused to take part in it because he would have to play gratuitously. Depend upon it, he fears that were he to mingle in our society, he might be asked for similar favors.'

In the entire household Pagan never exchanged a word with anyone except Vicette the housemaid who attended him. She was a cheerful, innocent country girl, whose prattle, when she served his meals, amused him.

One morning Vicette presented herself with a sad, drooping countenance, and served breakfast without uttering a word. The musician noticed the change in the young girl, and questioned her about it.

'What's the matter, my child? You look sad. Your eyes are red, some misfortune has befallen you, Vicette?'

'O, yes sir.'

'Would it be indiscreet to ask you what it was?'

'No, sir; but—'

Pagan fixed his great black eyes on the girl's troubled countenance.

'Come,' he said, 'I see how it is. After having made you a thousand promises he has quitted you, and you no longer have any tidings of him.'

'Ah! poor fellow! He has quitted me certainly, but it was not his fault.'

'How is that?'

'Because in the conscription he drew a bad number, and he has been sent away with a long gun on his shoulder and I shall never see him again.' sobbed poor Vicette as she buried her face in her white apron.

'But, Vicette, could you not purchase a substitute for him?'

The girl, withdrawing her apron, smiled sadly through her tears.

'Monsieur is jesting,' she said. 'How could I ever buy a substitute? This year men are tremendously expensive on account of the report that there is going to be a war. Fifteen hundred francs is the lowest price.'

The musician pressed Vicette's little plump hand between his long, sorrowful fingers as he said:

'If that's all, my girl, don't cry; we'll see what can be done.'

Then taking out his pocket book he wrote on a blank leaf:

'Mem: To see about giving a concert for the benefit of Vicette.'

A month passed on, the snow came and Pagan's physician said to him: 'My dear sir, you must not venture out of doors again until after the winter.'

'To hear is to obey,' replied the musician.

At Christmas eve, on the anniversary of the birth of the Lord, a custom exists in France very dear to the children. A wooden shoe is placed at the corner of the hearth and a beneficent fairy is supposed to come down the chimney laden with various presents and dainties, with which he fills it.

On the morning of December 24, four of Pagan's feminine critics were in consultation together.

'It will be for the evening,' said one. 'Yes, for this evening; that is settled,' replied the others.

After dinner Pagan was, according to his custom, seated on the drawing-room sofa, sipping his eau sucrée, when an unusual noise was heard in the corridor. Presently Vicette entered and announced that a porter had arrived with a case, directed to Signor Pagan.

'I do not expect any case,' said he, 'but I suppose he had better bring it up.'

Accordingly a stout porter entered, bearing a good-sized wooden box, on which, besides the address, were the words, 'Fragile, with care.' Pagan examined it with some curiosity, and, having paid the messenger, proceeded to open the lid. His long, thin, but extremely muscular fingers, accomplished the task without difficulty and the company whose curiosity caused them some what to transgress the bounds of good manners, crowded around in order to see the contents of the box.

The musician drew out a large packet secured with several seals. Having opened this, a second, and then a third wrapping appeared, and at length the curious eyes of twenty persons were regaled with a gigantic wooden shoe, almost large enough to serve for a cradle. Peals of laughter hailed this discovery.

'Ah!' said Pagan, 'a wooden shoe. I can guess who sent it. Some of those excellent ladies wish to compare me to a child who always expects presents and never gives any. Well, be it so. We will see if we cannot find some method of making this shoe worth its weight in gold.'

So saying, and scarcely saluting the company, Pagan withdrew to his own apartments, carrying with him the case and its contents.

During three days he did not appear in the drawing-room. Vicette informed the company that he worked from morning till night with the tools of the carpenter. In

fact, the musician, whose hands were wonderfully flexible and dextrous in other things besides violin playing, had fashioned a perfect and sonorous instrument out of the clumsy wooden shoe. Having enriched it with one silver string, his work was complete. Next day a public notice appeared that on New Year's eve Pagan would give a concert in the large hall of the Villa Lutetana. The great master announced that he would play ten pieces, five on a violin, and five on a wooden shoe. The price of the tickets was placed at twenty francs each. Of these only 100 were issued and they were immediately purchased.

The evening arrived and Pagan appeared, smiling, with every appearance of renewed health, and on his favorite violin played some of those marvellous strains which never played to transport his auditors to the seventh heaven of delight. Then he seized the shoe, which in its new guise of violin still preserved somewhat of its pristine form, and his whole being lighted up with enthusiasm he began a wonderful improvisation which captivated the souls of his hearers. It represented first the departure of a conscript, the tears, the wailing of his betrothed, then his stormy life in the camp and on the field of battle, and finally his return, accompanied by triumph and rejoicing. A merry peal of wedding bells completed the musical drama.

Long and loud were the thunders of applause; even the old ladies who disliked Pagan could not refrain from clapping their palms, and bouquets thrown by fair and jeweled hands fell at the feet of the musician. In a corner of the hall next the door, Vicette was weeping bitterly. The sympathy of the conscript had gone straight to her heart.

At the conclusion of the concert the receipts were counted and they amounted to two thousand francs.

'Here, Vicette,' said Pagan. 'You have five hundred francs over the sum required to purchase a substitute. They will pay your bridegroom's traveling expenses.'

Then after a pause he continued: 'But you will want something wherewith to begin housekeeping. Take this shoe violin, and sell it for your dowry.'

Vicette received from a rich amateur six thousand francs for Pagan's wooden shoe.

This violin is today in the possession of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava.—Will M. Clemens.

ONIONS ARE WHOLESOME.

Savory, Healing, and Mighty Good to Eat Stewed or Raw.

Few realize that perhaps the most useful of all vegetables, to the cook as well as the housewife, is the savory and healing onion. Soups, sauces, chowders, made-over dishes in fact almost every meat or fish dish that is served, is seasoned with a few drops of onion juice, and one would wonder what was wrong if this juice was omitted. History classes the onion among the oldest vegetables known, and it is spoken of with deference. The onion was among the things the Israelites longed for while in bondage, and a tourist travelling through the Eastern countries writes that it is not to be wondered at, as the onion grows in Egypt are most delicious. A celebrated medical authority says:

Onions make a nerve tonic not to be despised. No other vegetable will so quickly relieve and tone up a worn-out system, and they should be eaten freely, particularly by brain workers and those suffering with blood or nervous diseases. He further says: 'Nothing will clear and beautify a poor complexion sooner than the eating of onions in some form.'

It onions are prepared properly there is little or no odor from them left in the breath, and for lovers of uncooked sliced onions it is well to know that if a sprig of parsley is dipped in vinegar and eaten no unpleasant odor in the breath can be detected. With so much to recommend it, the onion in some form should be found frequently upon the daily menu.

Onions should be cooked always in agate or porcelain lined vessels, for ironware is liable to make them dark colored. If the onions are held under water while peeling there will be no shedding of tears. To extract the juice from an onion, cut a thick slice from one end of the vegetable and press the cut surface against a coarse grater, moving the onion a little and letting the juice run from the corner of the grater. Cut off another slice of the onion and repeat until you have the desired quantity.

For onion soup: Peel and slice half a dozen onions, put them in a saucepan with three tablespoonfuls of butter, and place over the fire and stir until the onions commence to cook; then cover the pan closely and put it at the back of the fire, where the onions will steam and simmer until the milk is ready. Put one quart of milk in a double boiler, and when it is at the boiling point, which should be in about fifteen minutes, draw the pan containing the onions to the front part of the fire again, stir in one tablespoonful of flour and cook a moment before adding the boiling milk to the onion mixture; cook fifteen minutes, placing the pan where the milk cannot burn; then strain through a sieve. Return the strained soup to the fire and season with salt and white pepper. Beat the yolks of three eggs light and stir into them one cup of cream. Add this mixture to the hot soup, and as soon as the whole is thoroughly heated pour into a tureen. Sprinkle a little chopped parsley over the top and serve.

Pass grated cheese with this soup, and each person can add it to suit the taste.

A good onion soup is made thus: Peel three large onions and slice them thin. Put the pan over the fire and as the butter melts stir the onions so they will cook evenly. When the onions are light colored and tender stir in two spoonfuls of flour and cook a moment before adding one and

ore-half cups of hot stock, or water will answer if the stock is not at hand. This should be added slowly, stirring all the while. Mash fine two large boiled potatoes and gradually mix with them one and one-half pints of boiling milk, add the onion mixture to this and strain through a sieve. Heat the strained soup and season highly with salt and pepper. Add a teaspoonful of chopped parsley and serve.

Toasted crackers, or squares of brown bread lightly toasted and buttered, are nice to serve with this soup.

Onions for boiling should be peeled and each end well trimmed. Drop the onions in boiling water and cover them with fresh boiling water; salt it and let the onions boil until they are tender; take them out with a skimmer and place in a heated dish; pour melted butter over them and sprinkle with salt and pepper; or this sauce may be poured over them:

Heat one pint of milk to boiling point. Rub together two tablespoonfuls of butter and one of flour and the same of cold milk stirring until the mixture is like a thick cream; add to the hot milk and keep stirring until the mixture is smooth and thick; season with salt and pepper, and when the sauce has boiled up once, pour over the boiled onions and serve. A little chopped parsley sprinkled over the top is always a nice flavoring with onions.

Boiled onions browned in the oven are decidedly good. When the onions are nicely boiled but retain their shape, arrange them in a shallow buttered baking dish, put a bit of butter upon each one, and dust with salt and pepper. Sprinkle a thin layer of fine bread crumbs and scatter tiny bits of butter over the crumbs. Put the dish in a hot oven long enough to brown them thoroughly; serve in the same dish.

For scalloped onions: Peel the onions and boil them until tender; drain them and cut into halves or quarters, according to the size of onion. Place a layer of the prepared onions in a baking dish, dust them with salt and pepper, cover with a layer of bread crumbs and tiny bits of butter and put in another layer of onions and crumbs alternating them until the dish is full, having the crumbs for the top layer. Pour over the whole half a cup of cream or rich milk and grate over the crumbs a covering of cheese. Place in a hot oven and bake about half an hour. Onions are also very nice made with layers of tomatoes and crumbs, omitting the cheese and using the liquid from the tomatoes in place of the cream.

To prepare stuffed onions: The Spanish or large-sized Bermuda onions are best for this dish. Peel the onions and from the stalk end take out the centre of the onion. Cover with boiling salted water and cook ten minutes. Then lay the onions, opening

down, upon a clean cloth to absorb the water. Make a stuffing in proportion of two tablespoonfuls of chopped chicken or ham to one spoonful of bread crumbs. Chop fine the onion hearts that have been removed and add to the other ingredients with one tablespoonful of melted butter, salt and pepper. Moisten with a little chicken stock. Fill the onions with this mixture and place them in a baking pan containing water to the depth of one inch. Sprinkle the onions with crumbs, cover the pan, and bake in a hot oven about an hour or until the onions are tender though still retaining their form. Remove the cover long enough to brown the onions lightly before they are taken from the oven.

Another mode of preparing and serving stuffed onions is as follows: Secure large onions and after peeling them boil them slowly for one hour in plenty of water. Let them drain and then remove the inside of the onion, leaving a thick wall. Fill the space with a stuffing made of one cup of cold meat chopped fine, or sausage meat may be used. Add a few crumbs, half a cup of cream, and one beaten egg. Season with salt and cayenne pepper. Fill the space in the onion with this mixture; place the onions in a baking pan in which there is a little stock, half a carrot chopped, and a bay leaf. Sprinkle the onions with crumbs and cover them with a sheet of buttered paper and bake until the onions are tender, basting them frequently with the liquid in the pan. Place the onions on a platter and strain the liquid in the pan over them. They may be served with a cream sauce if preferred.

Perhaps the easiest way to fry onions is in a wire basket. Peel the onions and slice them, pour boiling water over them, and cook fifteen minutes; then turn them on a clean cloth to drain. Put a few of the onions in a frying basket and dip them in smoking hot fat, and brown. Drain on brown paper and dust with salt and pepper. Onions cooked in this manner are served with liver and bacon.

Onions may be par boiled, cut into thick slices and then fried in butter, sliced apples being fried in the same pan and both being served together, laid upon slices of buttered toast. Little button onions often are parboiled in milk, then rolled in flour, fried in very hot fat, served by themselves, garnished with parsley.

For baked onions: Peel large onions and put them in a saucepan with plenty of water; when the water commences to bubble turn it off and cover the onions with fresh boiling water. Salt the onions and let them cook slowly for three-quarters of an hour. Butter a deep earthen pie plate, place the onions upon it, sprinkle them with salt and pepper and lay a piece of butter upon each onion. Put a little stock of water in the plate and scatter crumbs



over the whole. Bake in a slow oven about three-quarters of an hour. Serve these onions with a cream dressing to which has been added a teaspoonful of chopped parsley.

Onions baked in milk: Select onions of uniform size, peel them, and partly cook them in plenty of boiling salted water. Then drain the onions and place them in a buttered baking dish. Heat one pint of milk to boiling point, mix a teaspoonful of cornstarch with a little cold milk, and stir into the boiling milk. Add a tablespoonful of butter, and salt and pepper. Beat two eggs light, and turn the hot mixture over them. Pour this into the dish with the onions and place in a moderate oven, baking until the onions are tender and the custard set. Serve the onions from the same dish they are baked in and stick tiny sprigs of parsley in the custard, so a sprig can be served with each onion.

For brown onions for serving with and garnishing beefsteak: If the onions are large peel them and cut into thick slices or quarters. Little onions may be left whole.

Soak the onions in cold water half an hour, drain this water off, and pour over them a small amount of water, cover the pan, and put over a slow fire and cook until the water has boiled away. Put a little butter in the pan and lightly brown the onions; then partly cover the onions with clean beef stock and season with salt and pepper. Cover the pan and cook until the onions are tender, though retaining their shape. Place a broiled steak on a hot platter and arrange the onions around it. After the steak has been seasoned with butter, salt, and pepper pour the little gravy remaining in the pan over the meat, garnish with sprigs of parsley, and serve.

Another mode of preparing onions for garnishing roast meat and poultry is: Peel one pint of small white onions, cover them with water, cook ten minutes, drain off this water and replenish with fresh boiling water, and cook five minutes longer before turning them upon a sieve to drain. Melt some butter in a frying pan over a moderate fire, put in the onions and sprinkle them very lightly with sugar, and fry them a light brown, rolling them around with a fork so they will be evenly colored. Take the onions up with a wire spoon, and put them in a clean frying pan with two spoonfuls of clear rich soup jelly and one lump

of sugar. Place the pan over the fire and let the onions cook a few moments, turning the onions over in the liquid stock so each part will be coated with a rich, glossy covering. Place them around on the meat dish.

What is a nicer relish than these same little white onions pickled? Peel the onions and put them in a strong brine for thirty-six hours; then drain them and let them lie in cold water over night. Again drain them and put in jars scattering among the onions a few whole cloves a stick of cinnamon, and a blade of mace. Heat two quarts of vinegar to boiling, add half a cup of brown sugar and turn over the onions. If the vinegar loses its strength or shows any sign of mould, drain the onions and rinse with water and then cover the pickles with fresh hot vinegar.

A very old remedy for a cold on the chest is an onion poultice, which is made by heating the onions and then putting them in a muslin bag and bruising them. Lay the bag upon the chest over night. Care should be taken about getting in a draught when the poultice is removed in the morning.

An old recipe for onion cough syrup, that is excellent, is as follows: Peel five large onions and slice them. Put the slices in a saucepan, with one quart of good vinegar. Cover the pan and let the contents boil slowly until the onions are very tender; then strain through a cloth and extract all the juice. Add one cup of granulated sugar to the strained liquid, and again put over the fire and boil down to about one-half. Bottle and seal. If put in a cool place this syrup will keep several months. The dose is from one to two teaspoonfuls every two hours, according to the severity of the cough.

An Experienced Man.

A foreigner of German extraction who had been in this country only a few months and could speak but little English, entered one of the big State street stores the other day, inquired for the manager, said that he was dead broke and wanted a chance to go on the road as a salesman for the firm.

'Have you ever had any experience?' 'Experience?' 'Yes—what have you ever sold?' 'My overcoat.'—Chicago Times-Herald.

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