

World's Pearls from the Mississippi Valley



The bodies of four pearl hunters were found swinging to a tree limb recently in a west Kentucky county. They had been robbed by the riffraff that follows in the trail of the pearl fisher who strikes into a new country of rich finds. Pearls have recently been found in large numbers in the rivers that wander through the flat lands of the west Kentucky counties. The pearl fleets are moving into the river bottoms in both Kentucky and Tennessee.

The Mississippi valley is now supplying the bulk of these pale gems that encircle the white throats of the world's famous beauties. American belles, princesses of the old reigning houses of Europe, Indian rajahs and the jewel fanciers of all the world buy and wear the mussel-born pearls that are scooped from the boiled flesh of the fresh-water bivalve.

Thousands of men and women are engaged in the work of pearl fishing among the rivers of the great central valley. It has become one of the accepted ways of making an easy living, and in some cases the fortunate fisherman becomes wealthy through a few lucky finds. Many fishermen have thrown away their nets and tackle and rigged their flat-bottomed boats for the work of gathering up the denseness of the mussel beds.

Their fleets of dingy boats move lazily up and down the streams that are tributary to the Mississippi. They lift tons of shells from the mussel beds in the oozy bottoms of muddy rivers. The working up of the shells into pearl buttons has become an industry of great importance to many of the valley communities. Millions of these grimy shells are taken from the rivers each month. Great heaps of them lie along the rivers, memorials of the first years of the pearling craze in the west.

There are big fleets of the pearl fishermen's boats on the Illinois. Hundreds of them patrol the waters of the Wabash and the Little Wabash. The Arkansas, the Red, the Des

Moines, the Rock and scores of other streams have numerous camps of pearl fishermen. Many of the rivers have been practically scraped clean of the mussels and the fishermen have moved on to other and less worked areas. Beardstown, Ill.; Muscatine, Iowa; Vincennes, Ind., and numerous villages in Arkansas have long been the haunt of the foreign and the American pearl buyer.

World's Finest Pearls.

The big finds of late in Kentucky and Tennessee have stirred the interest of the professional and amateur hunter. For years many of the world's finest pearls have been coming out of the lower valley. Buy a pearl in the United States and there are nine chances in ten that the lustrous gem came originally from the grimy hand of some pearl hunter along the Wabash or the Illinois.

Visit the jewel shops of Paris, Vienna or London, select a pearl of the first quality, and five times out of ten it is a jewel that was picked out of a mussel shell somewhere in the new world.

Half the pearls sold in the markets of the old world as sea pearls are known by experts to be the products of the big and little streams that are the haunt of the American pearl fisherman. It is now the source of supply from which the markets of the world draw their pale and lustrous gems.

For some mysterious reason the pearl fisheries of the far east are declining in importance. The sun-browned expert divers of the Persian gulf are still dipping into the hot seas and gulfs of Asia, but their finds become less valuable every year. The pearl buyers of Europe long since turned to America for the gems that are loved of women.

Pearl fishing is enough of a gamble to appeal to the reckless tastes of the man who likes to make it all on a single throw of the dice. A pearl fisherman may find a prize in the first shell that he opens, or he may spend a year opening shells without any

particular results. It can be made hard work, this business of dragging the river bottoms with myriad hooks that grapple with the slimy shells of the pearl-bearing mussel. Up and down the streams the little flat-bottomed craft drift and pull, and if the owner is lucky and careful there may be a pearl worth anywhere from \$5 to \$1,500 somewhere in the day's catch. It is all chance, but the harder you work the more chance you have.

Every Shell Examined.

With a large load of shells the hunter comes ashore and boils the mussels in deep vats that he half buries in the ground. This is usually done at a half-permanent camp. The women and the children of the pearling camps aid in this part of the work, as every separate shell must be looked over carefully, that no lustrous pearl may be thrown away as useless.

Buyers from the great jewelry firms of London, Vienna, St. Petersburg and Paris spend the year in the middle of the pearling districts of the valley. Frenchmen, Belgians, Russians, representatives of the jewel-loving races of the earth, keep an eye on all the big finds that are made in various parts of the valley. They must compete with the special buyers sent out by New York and other Eastern cities.

Many experts profess to believe that the pearl supply of the central states is rapidly becoming exhausted.

There are others who claim that the supply is practically inexhaustible, as long as the number of fishermen and boats in the business is not greatly increased. They believe that there are many streams that would repay working that have thus far never been dredged or dragged by the pearl fleets. It is these rivers that they look to for the supply of the future, when the present beds are more nearly exhausted. Miles and miles of the Illinois river have been scraped clean of the mussels. The Des Moines river, home of the pearl-button industry in America, is giving up less of pearls and shells than it did in the earlier days, when pearling was new in the middle west.

Near Mt. Carmel, Ill., a little more than a year ago, a lucky fisherman picked up a pearl that was afterward sold for \$1,800. Farmers' sons and town lads out for a day's fishing on the river have stumbled upon finds worth anywhere from \$100 to \$500. As soon as news of this sort becomes known in the neighborhood there is usually a rush of the amateur and the professional pearler to that section of the stream. It is something like a stampede to a new gold diggings, but on a miniature scale.

Found a \$1,200 Pearl.

One summer afternoon a party of fishermen on the Wabash river were fishing in an unfrequented part of the river. Their luck was anything but good, and one or two of the party began to playfully open a few mussels that the low stage of the river had bared. One of the party was tearing open the shells in a listless sort of way. He felt something round and hard in the tissues of the half-dead mussel. He squeezed it through the clammy flesh and a beautiful pear-shaped pearl dropped through his fingers. Two more pearls—smaller, but still valuable enough to bring \$100 each—were found in the same stranded group of mussels. The pear-shaped pearl sold for \$1,200 by the time half a dozen frenzied buyers were through bidding upon it.

Queer Cure for Consumption.

Some of the English papers announce the accidental discovery of what appeared to be a cure for consumption by means of the ammoniated gases generated in the production of maggots for fish bait in an establishment near Bradford. The United States consul at Bradford, in a report to Washington, says: "While engaged in this work, it is said certain persons known to be suffering from tuberculosis have regained their health."

you had?" the old fellow was asked. "I was cook, sah, fo' a Confederate regiment in sixty-fo'," he answered. "That is, sah, I had the job of cook, but, to tell the truth, I didn't work at it." "Why not?" "There wasn't nothing to cook, sah."

Protected Against Bored.

To save himself from loss of time caused by callers who are a long while in coming to the point, a Paris functionary has put on his office table a card bearing the words: "Be so good as to abstain from speaking of my health or the weather or of the Bourne quotations, three subjects with which I am perfectly well acquainted. Start at once on the matter that brings you here."

Forehanded and Intelligent.

Storekeeper—Well, my little man, what can I do for you?
The Kid—Say, when I comes in here this afternoon with a lady and asks you for a dollar's worth of your best chocolates, just pass me out a penny's worth of them little things in the corner, will you?—Puck.

RABBIT STEW, FRENCH STYLE

New Recipe Recommended to Housewife Who Would Make a Hit With the Folks.

Cut up rabbit, wash and put in jar; now put on the following spices: Salt and pepper, a pinch of cayenne, two whole chill peppers, eight or ten whole peppers, the same amount of cloves and allspice, three or four laurel leaves; then a finely cut onion; three or four cloves of garlic cut fine and about two or three slices of lemon. Then cover with good claret wine. Set away in cool place for two days. Half an hour before cooking take out all the pieces; put in a strainer and let drain. Now put on a frying pan in which you have placed a good sized piece of butter or half butter and half lard; let get smoking hot, then put in your rabbit and let fry on both sides. Then throw all in a stew pan and keep on frying until all is fried. Take your frying pan and put in more butter and lard, then take a heaping wooden ladle of flour and brown it nicely; put in a fine cut onion; when pretty nearly brown, cook a few minutes longer. Then take the wine and spices, with the onions and garlic the rabbit was soaked in, and make the gravy; use all that has drained from the strainer; if not enough add a little water; then pour over the rabbit in the stew pan, and let stand an hour and a half, or until tender. When done, pour on a hot platter. Be liberal with grease, as it is required to make stew good.

HOW TO COOK MUSHROOMS

Variety of Combinations Can Be Served With This Edible Fungus as Chief Ingredient.

A Philadelphia hostess noted for her delicious dinners, and especially for various combinations that have mushrooms as the chief ingredient, says that the reason none of her guests is ever ill after a mushroom supper is that she always has fresh mushrooms, never the canned or bottled sort, and always has them cooked for ten minutes or so before adding the various tid-bits that go to make up the delectable whole. Mushrooms require more cooking than most persons think, and should be thoroughly done before they are served, no matter how much the impatient ones may say, "Oh, they are cooked enough; they will not harm me," as every chafing dish cook has heard them say at times. An Italian dish which this hostess has discovered consists of oysters scalloped with macaroni and served with a mushroom sauce. Cheese is omitted and paprika takes the place of cayenne to make the flavor more delicate, otherwise the oysters and macaroni alternate and are flecked with butter, as in other ways of scalloping, and the dish is one for the gods.

Chocolate Creams.

Beat the whites of two eggs to a stiff froth. Gradually beat into this two cups of confectioners' sugar. Flavor with one-half teaspoon of vanilla and work well. Roll into little balls and drop on slightly buttered platter. Let the balls stand for an hour. Shave five ounces of chocolate, put in small bowl, which you place on the fire in sauceman of boiling water. When the chocolate is melted, remove from fire and drop creams into it, one at a time. Take out with fork and drop gently on buttered dish. It will take one-half hour to harden chocolate.

To Mend a Leaking Ice Pan.

Melt paraffin and while it is hot pour a coating over the bottom of the leaking pan, having first set it on a newspaper; some of the paraffin will run through the holes in the pan, but it can be scraped off and is just as good to use again. Of course, this pan can never be used on the stove, but serves very effectually for the ice water pan beneath the refrigerator.

Ham Scallop.

Two cupfuls of cold boiled ham ground fine, six hard boiled eggs. When cold separate whites from yolks and chop fine. Make thick cream sauce of two tablespoonfuls butter and two of flour. Cook until smooth, then add one pint milk. When thick, season with salt and pepper. Butter baking dish. Put in layer of sauce first, then add in succession ham, yolks and whites of eggs, and top layer of sauce dusted with fine cracker crumbs and small pieces of butter. Bake till brown. Delicious for lunch.

Maple Sugar Spring Biscuit.

These dainties are served with the sweet course at dinner or luncheons, and are equally acceptable at 5 o'clock tea. Make a rich baking powder biscuit dough, roll it to one-quarter inch in thickness and spread half of it with melted butter, then sprinkle butter with maple sugar forced through the food chopper; put on the other half of the dough, cut into cakes with a small biscuit cutter, and brush over the top with beaten egg. Bake in a moderate oven and

IDEAL CHINA DISPLAY

CORNER CUPBOARD IS MOST SATISFACTORY REPOSITORY.

Combines Perfect Safety With Effective Background and Dignified Frame or Sitting for Delicate Treasures.

By far the most beautiful and satisfactory repository for china is the old corner cupboard or buffet, which is found in all well built houses belonging to the latter half of the Eighteenth century. These cupboards were sometimes open, but more often had glass doors, frequently of great beauty. Here was every requisite for the ideal display of china. They combined perfect safety with an effective background and a dignified frame or setting for these delicate treasures. The arrangement massed their colors in a decorative panel, at the same time that it placed them low enough for leisurely enjoyment and accurate observation. Happily for us, this good old fashion is being revived in our modern houses and will soon become deservedly popular.

Cupboards built into the wall space upon each side of the chimney afford occasion for a display of china which is architecturally delightful. Sometimes a built-in sideboard is used, or a less formal arrangement of shelves in a chimney recess, or inglenook. Again we find a carved wall cabinet, or a combination of plate shelves with a corner seat—all of which are modifications of what we may well call the panel arrangement.

As to the border arrangement, the best instance of this is the plate rail at the top of a rather high wainscoting. It is an ideal location for patterns highly decorated in beautiful and delicate designs. Their position is low enough to be within range of close observation and of leisurely enjoyment, yet high enough to make them quite safe from danger of accident. A similar arrangement higher up in the room, even over doors and windows, is allowable for plates whose border is a simple band of some solid color, or for larger pieces which are slightly imperfect.

Besides these permanent arrangements for china, there are infinite possibilities in the line of temporary provisions. The china cabinet which originated in the days of Sheraton, is familiar to us all. Many good ones are to be bought, and they make possible the artistic massing of china.

Another well-known piece of furniture is the dresser, whose vogue waned almost to the vanishing point, but is now being revived by craftsmen of the present day. It is now being developed in forms so simple and so charming that they bid fair to become most desirable aids in the artistic arrangement of well selected china in any dining room.

Another revival of an old-time adjunct is shown by the interest taken in the wall plate racks which have been so long in use among the Tyrolean peasantry. From these crude and simple suggestions have been evolved designs of infinite variety, and many of them rich in decorative carving.

All such wall fixtures as racks, shelves, or cabinet form delightfully decorative spots of color above the sideboard or the serving table. There is infinite scope for originality along these lines; and when they are well constructed, much beauty of arrangement can be obtained at a comparatively slight expense. The craftsman needs only a proper sense of proportion, a logical sense of fitness, and a practical knowledge of his craft. To these he can add an unlimited variety in decorative finish. Certainly nothing adds more to the charm and attractiveness of a dining room than quaint and pretty china, arranged in artistic fashion.

Cherry Batter Pudding.

To make it beat to a cream, a half cupful butter and three tablespoonfuls of sugar. Then add little by little, stirring constantly, four beaten eggs, a quart of flour that has been sifted with three teaspoonfuls baking powder and a half teaspoonful of salt. Add a pint of milk, and lastly a quart of pitted cherries. "Boil two hours in a buttered mold not allowing the water to stop a moment from its boiling. Serve with hard sauce or cherry sauce.

Ham Rabbit.

Mix well together one-half cup of deviled ham, one cup of grated cheese, four beaten eggs, one cup of cream and salt and paprika to taste. Cook over boiling water until thick, stirring constantly and serve at once on crackers or toasted bread.

Onion Toast.

Toast bread and butter it, cook onions until tender and crush them, add milk, salt and pepper to taste; heat and pour over the buttered toast.

Future of Moving Pictures

Edison Tells of the Possibilities in This Field That Soon May Be Developed.

An interview with Thomas A. Edison in the New York Dramatic Mirror quotes the great inventor as saying that the future of the motion picture is almost unlimited. He calls attention to the obvious educational value of pictures in connection with work in the elementary schools such as the teaching of history, geography and literature. He is sure that the future of the motion pictures in the amusement world is a great one and he concludes the subject with the following comment upon the development of moving pictures in regard to the work of the great actors:

"That will be only another development of the art. At the present time the works of the greatest singers are indelibly recorded in phonograph, and talking machine records and will be capable of reproduction for centuries to come. These records make it pos-

sible for all music lovers to enjoy good music. They will undoubtedly cultivate a higher musical taste in this country. The same thing is true of the motion picture, and especially when it is effectively combined with the phonograph. The great actors and actresses are able in their short lives to reach only a fraction of the public. If their gestures and words are recorded by moving pictures and the phonograph, they can be seen, heard and appreciated by every man, woman and child in the country, not only now, but for 100 years to come."

Nothing to Work On.

Gen. Horatio C. King, secretary of the Society of the Army of the Potomac, was narrating his memories of the Civil war. "We suffered many hardships on both sides," said General King, "but the Confederates suffered more. I remember a grizzled old negro who at the outbreak of the Spanish war applied for a place as an army cook. 'What experience have