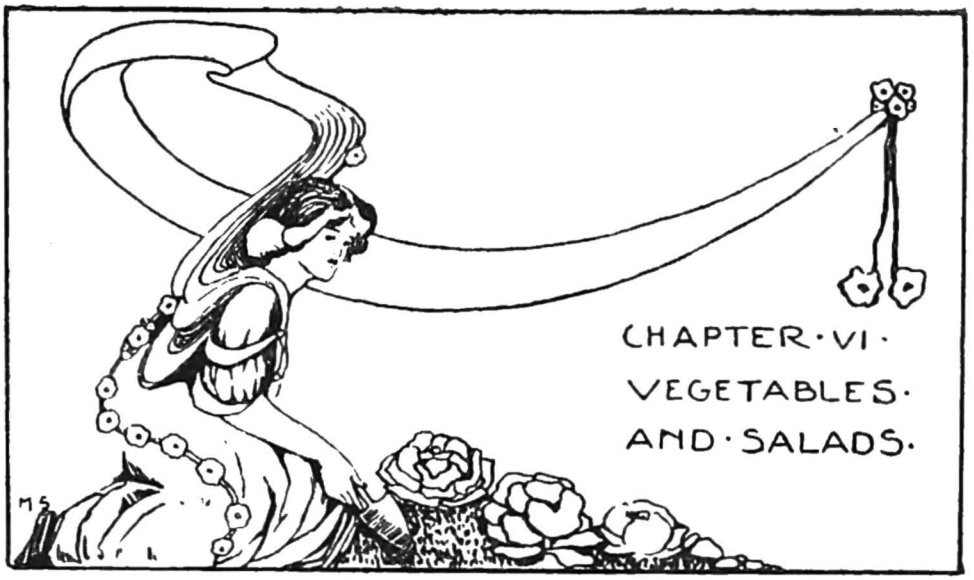

"Will a man give a penny to fill his belly with hay? Or can you persuade the turtle-dove to live upon carrion like the crow?"

JOHN BUNYAN ("Pilgrim's Progress").

THE first vegetarian was probably Nebuchadnezzar, and he has many followers. With the utmost love and respect for all vegetables, without exception, I refuse to accept them as the staff of life, or indeed as anything more than a delicious aid thereto. It is possible that the internal economy of certain very worthy folk may be more easily conducted on a vegetarian basis, and indeed every man is at liberty to feed as suits him best; but as a matter of preference, predilection and experience, I decline to follow his example. If they are content to let me go my way

unmolested, I have no desire to interfere with their tastes. But no proselytising, please!

Here in England, although we shine in our roasts, our beef, our chops, and maybe a few other trifles, we are woefully and culpably ignorant of vegetable cookery. The average British cook has but one idea with vegetables. She cooks them in water, with lumps of coarse soda, which she thinks makes them soft and keeps their colour. As a matter of fact, this process, especially the soda, practically destroys their health-giving properties. Vegetables want the kindliest care, the most delicate handling, the most knowledgeable treatment. Otherwise they become mere parodies of their better selves. What could be more terrible, more depressing, than the usual slab of wet cabbage doled out at the average London restaurant? It is an insult to the cabbage, to the guest, and to the Art of Cookery. And it is so easy to cook it decently—even in a Chafing Dish.

Again, the average British household knows and uses only a very limited range of vegetables, ignoring, wilfully or otherwise, scores

of edible delights, easily grown and easily cooked, but with the inbred laziness of crass conservatism, totally overlooked, because, forsooth, "the greengrocer does not keep it!" The greengrocer, on the other hand, scorns the inquirer after such strange green meats, because "they are never asked for"; and so, between the two, we are relegated to the same dull round of vegetable monotony.

Household cookery knows nothing of the Aubergine, or Egg-plant, of which there are fourteen edible varieties, most of which can easily be grown in this country, although the rich purple kinds are best suited to our climate. Then there is Salsify, which is amenable to a dozen different treatments; as the vegetable oyster it is duly honoured in America, but we know it not. The Good King Harry is only known in Lincolnshire. The leaves served as cabbage are excellent, and the tender young shoots are as delicate as asparagus. The Cardoon, Scornzonera, Celeriac, Chicory, Buck's Horn, Chervil, Jew's Mallow, Lovage, Purslane, Rampion, Scurvy-Grass and Valerian, are only a selection from a list thrice as long.

It is useless, however, to lift up one thin quavering voice of protest in a wilderness of deaf greengrocers. I must e'en deal with the common vegetables of commerce, others being unprocurable, and their cultivation a counsel of perfection.

One naturally begins with potatoes, though the reason of their position in the hierarchy of the garden is occult. Sir Walter Raleigh, good man and true, has much to answer for. Tobacco *and* potatoes! I believe it to be a fact that throughout the length and breadth of Ireland there is no memorial to Raleigh. This seems a distinct omission. But then, neither is there a statue to Lord Verulam!

Between the primitive tuber, baked in the ashes, and *Pommes à la Réjane*, there lies the whole gamut of culinary ingenuity. They are the extremes of sophistication and the opposite. But it must suffice here to give a few only of the simplest recipes, well within Chaffinda's modest capability, and in their very ingenuousness fit alike for the delectation of Prince or Pauper.

Mary's Potatoes.

The first method is called Mary's Potatoes for want of a better name. Slice up half a dozen cold cooked potatoes. Put them in the Chafing Dish with a walnut of butter and a cupful of milk; let them simmer for five minutes, then add the juice of half a lemon, a teaspoon of chopped parsley, pepper and salt. Simmer for five minutes more.

Potato Uglies.

Cut up half a dozen cold cooked potatoes into quarter-inch slices. Put four slices of fat bacon into the Chafing Dish, and hot up until the fat begins to smoke; then drop in the potatoes, add pepper and salt, and cook for five minutes. Drain before serving.

Sala's Potatoes.

Cut four potatoes in slices as large as a halfpenny, but twice as thick. Put two tablespoonsful of butter in the Chafing Dish, and a dozen delicate little onions cut into

dice. Hot up the onions and butter till the former turn a golden brown, then add the potatoes and a teaspoon of chopped parsley, salt, pepper, and a squeeze of lemon. Keep stirring, and when the onions are deep yellow, which should be in about eight minutes, the dish is ready.

Fried Potatoes

Boil half a dozen potatoes in their skins. Peel them when hot, cut them in quarters, roll them in bread-crumbs, and then fry them for seven minutes in two tablespoons of sizzling butter. Sprinkle chopped parsley on them before serving.

The tomato or love-apple is a perennial joy to the eye, whether cooked or uncooked, ripe or unripe. Its form and colour are alike exquisite, and its flavour altogether a thing apart. Our grandfathers knew little or nothing about it, apart from sauce, and it has been left to our generation fully to appreciate its possibilities. It is the more strange because it has been a staple article of food in mid and southern Europe since

time immemorial. It has even been suggested that Eve's apple, Paris' apple, Nausicaa's apple, and the apples of Hesperides were all really tomatoes! As *pommes d'amour*, *pomi di mori*, *Liebesäpfel*, *Paradiesäpfel*, or tomatoes, they are nowadays honoured and appreciated by all right lovers of the good things of the earth. They are both fruit and vegetable, and it is very difficult to spoil them in cooking. They are best of all when grilled as an accompaniment to chops (Mr. Pickwick, it will be remembered, enjoyed them in the form of sauce), but the following is a very simple and honest way of preparing them.

Fried Tomatoes.

Cut three tomatoes in halves. Pepper and salt them and coat the cut surfaces with bread-crumbs. Put two tablespoons of butter in the Chafing Dish, and when sizzling add the tomatoes and cook them thoroughly for eight minutes.

The Jerusalem artichoke should not be devoted solely to soup. It is an excellent

adjunct to meats, and fully repays a little careful attention.

Fried Artichoke Chips.

Wash and peel the outer skin of a pound of artichokes, then with a very sharp knife peel them into ribbons (as one would peel an apple); then put them lightly in a cloth to dry. Hot up two tablespoons of olive oil in the Chafer to smoking-point. Put in the artichokes, letting them fry until they rustle when stirred with a fork. Pour off the oil and strain them. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Braised Artichokes.

Wash and peel a pound of artichokes and put them aside in a basin of cold water. Melt a walnut of butter in the Chafing Dish; add the artichokes after drying them well. Let them brown well in the butter; add pepper and salt and stir them frequently, letting them simmer for twelve minutes.

Spinach Purée.

Have your spinach thoroughly well washed in several waters till it is perfectly clean. Boil a pint of water in the Chafing Dish, salt it and put in the spinach. Boil it for ten minutes. Take out the spinach and strain it. Pour cold water over it to take away the bitter taste; strain again. Put a walnut of butter in the dish, add the spinach and half a cupful of milk. Mix up well with a wooden spoon. Heat for five minutes.

There are about twenty-five different kinds of edible mushrooms. The popular test of peeling is unreliable, because some poisonous mushrooms peel easily, and some harmless kinds do not. An authority on mushrooms (Mr. E. Kay Robinson) says: "If a mushroom of any kind which has been gathered from an open space is brittle and compact in texture, and not brighly coloured, nor peculiar in taste or unpleasant in smell, and neither exudes a milky juice when bruised, nor changes colour when exposed to the air, you may eat it without fear."

Consequently, when you go mushroom-gathering you must bear in mind nearly as many things as when you address your ball on the tee. I always buy my mushrooms, and go to a good shop; then, I think, you are fairly safe.

The onion is a sure poison detector. Put an onion in a dish of mushrooms. If it does not change colour the mushrooms are all right. If it blushes black with shame at its contiguity, they are all wrong. A silver spoon acts in the same way and gets black in contact with toadstools or the like. Verily, evil communications corrupt good manners—even in onions.

Stewed Mushrooms.

Flood the Chafing Dish with really good olive oil. Put in a teaspoonful of Paprika and a pinch of salt. Drop in the mushrooms, after having stalked and peeled them, black part uppermost. Cover up, and listen to the appetising sizzling for seven minutes. They should then be done to a turn.

Mushrooms used to be dried, powdered,

and used as a flavouring in the eighteenth century. Cook-books of that period speak of the condiment as "Cook's Snuff." The great and justly esteemed Grimod de la Reynière said that it ought always to be on the dining-table together with pepper and salt. Here is a hint for the modern purveyors of table delicacies.

In Sir Henry Layard's Essay on "Renaissance Cookery," he says: "Amongst vegetables, the thistle (Cardo) was esteemed a delicacy, and was generally served with fruit at the end of the dinner. The thorny thistles with well-grown white stalks are the best." The Cardo includes the artichoke, but that the name was usually applied to the common thistle is shown by the quaint remark of Romoli in his "Singolare Dottrina," that "it should not be eaten with milk, which it has the property of curdling, and consequently the process would take place in your stomach, but it should be eaten with pepper, which does not generate wind, and clears the liver; and such is the reason why donkeys, who eat largely of this, have better stomachs than men."

Dr. Thudichum, an eminent authority on dietetics, does not agree with these conclusions, which are nevertheless illuminating, and do not detract from the merits of the nettle as a food-stuff.

Welsh Leeks.

Boil half a dozen leeks in a pint of water. Drain them well, and cut each leek into two-inch lengths; squeeze a lemon over them, pepper and salt them well. Set them aside. Make half a dozen croûtons of toast and put the leeks on them. Replace them in the Chafing Dish, pouring over each croûton a liberal dose of Sauce Robert. Heat up and serve on a very hot plate. Sauce Robert (Escoffier brand) can be bought ready made at the Stores.

French Beans.

Boil a pound of shredded beans till tender, and then drain them well. Melt two table-spoons of butter in the Chafing Dish and stir into it a small dessert-spoon of flour.

Keep these simmering, and shake them about till they are lightly browned; add salt and pepper and a cup of milk. Just before serving, add the yolks of two eggs, slightly beaten, and a squeeze of lemon. Stir all up thoroughly and beat up to just below boiling-point.

Broad Beans.

Shell and wash in cold water one pint of broad beans. Put them in the Chafing Dish and boil them with a sprinkling of salt; when nearly soft strain them, and then replace them in the dish with a tumbler of bouillon, a little chopped parsley, and a lump of sugar. Cook them slowly until they are quite tender. Beat up the yolk of an egg and a wine-glass of milk; add both to the beans with pepper and salt, and beat up thoroughly to just below boiling-point.

Italian Broad Beans.

Shell a pint of fresh young broad beans and put them aside in a dish of cold water.

Fill the Chafing Dish with nearly two pints of water, add a thick slice of cooked ham, a stick of celery, a bunch of parsley, three cloves, twenty peppercorns, and a bay leaf. Boil all this for seven minutes, then remove the ham, vegetables, and spices, and put in the beans. When they are quite tender, take them out, strain them, put them back in the dish ; add a tablespoon of butter, and hot them up again for three or four minutes before serving.

Brussels Sprouts.

Place a pint of small Brussels sprouts in the Chafing Dish with two pints of boiling water, slightly salted. Boil for ten minutes; take out the sprouts, drain them and put them aside to keep hot. Then make the following sauce in the Chafing Dish. Two tablespoons of butter melted, one tablespoon flour, pepper and salt, and sufficient bouillon to make the mixture of the consistency of thick cream. Heat this to boiling, stirring it well. Just before serving, add the juice of a whole lemon. Pour the

sauce over the hot sprouts, and serve very quickly.

Both this and the previous receipe are adapted from a most excellent book on the cooking of vegetables: "Leaves from our Tuscan Garden," by Janet Ross.

Haricot Beans.

Put a pint of young green shelled haricot beans into the Chafing Dish with two pints of boiling water. When half cooked add salt and pepper and a tablespoon of butter. Take out the beans, drain them, and replace them in the dish with another tablespoon of butter, a little chopped parsley, more salt and pepper and a squeeze of lemon. Toss them about well in the Chafing Dish and hot up for eight minutes.

Fried Parsley.

Indispensable for flavourings. Wash the parsley thoroughly, pick off the stalks, leaving the large heads. Dry it very carefully as, if it is left at all damp, it will

never become crisp. Put the parsley in the Chafing Dish with a tablespoon of olive oil or butter. As soon as the oil or butter ceases bubbling, take out the parsley and let it dry on a piece of paper. The parsley should remain quite green; if it is brownish it is a sign that it has been fried too long.

Green Peas.

A pint of shelled peas, a tablespoon of butter, pepper and salt, and a good squeeze of lemon; put all these in the Chafing Dish. Add a cupful of milk and hot up for ten minutes, then strain and serve. Avoid mint, green or otherwise.

Chestnuts.

Shell a score of chestnuts, cover them in the Chafing Dish with boiling water, and in four minutes take them out and remove the skins. Return them to the boiling water, add a cup of milk, pepper and salt, and simmer until quite tender but not soft.

"Behold, the earth hath roots;
The bounteous housewife Nature, on each bush
Lays her full mess before you."—*Timon of Athens.*

It has been made plain, I trust, that it is not necessary to rely solely on the damp-sodden vegetables of the pre-historic cuisine. It is just as easy to cook them nicely as otherwise, and a deal more satisfactory. The bounteous housewife Nature overwhelms us with her treasures of root and sap, and it seems almost an outrage to neglect the opportunities so lavishly offered to us.

I have just described a score or so of the plainer methods of cooking vegetables, simply as an indication of their possibilities, but the enterprising Chafer will find as he progresses in the art (and Chafing grows upon one like any other hobby) that there are dozens of others which lend themselves readily to his, or her, deft manipulation.

The grandfather of Charles Darwin was a poet of parts, and in his "Phytologica" he says:

"Oft in each month, poetic Tighe! be thine
To dish green broccoli with savoury chine;
Oft down thy tuneful throat be thine to cram
The snow-white cauliflower with fowl and ham!"

This is wise advice, because the green broccoli is far better than the white.

There are many American vegetables which may be cooked without a twang. They are all in tins or bottles, bearing plain directions. Among others I can speak from personal experience of Sugar Corn, Green Corn, Oyster Corn, Boston Beans, Lima Beans, and Succotash. This last is a meal in itself, and of most excellent flavour and convenience. Green corn, too, reminds those who know the South African mealie in all its toothsomeness, of many a hearty supper of Kaffir mealies roasted in the embers of a camp fire, or even in that most primitive of ovens, an ant-heap, which, believe it or not as you will, turns out better cooked meats than some of your very patent, very modern, very "gadgetty" kitchen ranges, although not better, I ween, than my chaste Chaffinda.

From vegetables to salads is but one step. I do not see any valid reason for apologising for the inclusion of salads in a Chafing-Dish book. They are not cooked in a Chafing Dish, it is true, but it is part of my religion that no meal is complete without a salad,

green for choice, but anyhow a salad I do not insist on salad for breakfast, although on a blazing hot July day, after a swim or a tramp, or both, I can imagine worse things than an omelette, some kidneys and bacon, and a slice of real ham, and a green salad to top up with. But no dinner is really a dinner without a salad, and by that I do not mean three scraggy lettuce leaves, soused in vinegar, which as *Salade de saison* is the usual accompaniment to that disastrous hen, *Poulet au cresson*, which is a centipede as to legs and has no breast or liver wing.

As this screed is, after all, a plain record of personal likes and dislikes, I see no reason for concealing the fact that I have no use whatever, no manner of use in the wide wide world, for mayonnaise with salad. The Americans swear by it ; I swear at it. My salad mixture, which goes with everything—absolutely everything—is simplicity itself. *Eccolo !*

Salad Mixture.

Into a large bowl put half a teaspoon of salt, same of Paprika, a dash of black pepper, freshly ground by a hand-mill, and a teaspoon of made English mustard. Mix them up well. Now add very gradually the very best quality of olive oil, almost drop by drop, to the quantity of three tablespoons, mixing all the time until the ingredients assume the consistency of cream; now thin this with one tablespoon of good wine vinegar, and amalgamate thoroughly. That is all I use.

Now and again, by way of extra titillation of the jaded palate, you may add half a tablespoon of Tarragon vinegar, herbs to taste, Spring onions, chives, French mustard, olives (French only), hard-boiled eggs, dandelion leaves, nasturtium leaves, and celery salt.

But there are half a dozen rules which I would seriously enjoin the salad mixer to bear in mind.

Only use a wooden spoon and fork for mixing.

Never cut a lettuce ; always break it with the fingers.

Dry the lettuce thoroughly in a serviette or in a salad-basket before breaking.

Make the salad ten minutes before eating it. Neither more nor less.

Do not bother about garnishing the top of a salad ; see the ingredients are well mixed. The decoration will look after itself and be much more artistic if left natural than if fussed into geometrical designs.

Make your mixture proportionate to your salad. This is a matter of intuition and experience combined. The test of right mixing is that no fluid should remain at the bottom of the bowl when finally mixed.

The "fatiguing" or turning over and over, that is, the actual mixing of the salad, should be very thoroughly done for just as long as is bearable to the verge of impatience. Rub a crust of bread with garlic or onion, put it in the bottom of the bowl and take it out just before serving. This is a *chapon.*

The true salad artist will never add any second dose of any ingredient during the process of mixing the sauce. I was once

present at a salad duel between an eminent Belgian violoncellist and a British banker. The former was an artist, the latter a well-meaning amateur. They used the same cruet-stand, and during the mixing process the banker politely pushed the oil and vinegar across to the Belgian, who bowed and said: "Thanks. I never add!" The banker appreciated the rebuke and retired from the contest. Both salads were excellent.

The old salad-proverb about the oil-spendthrift, the vinegar-miser, and all the rest of it, is too old to quote, but it expresses a truism aptly enough. Three to one is, according to my view, a fair proportion of oil to vinegar, but this, as indeed most things in this so-called twentieth century of ours, is only a matter of individual taste, and I have no desire to suggest that my opinion should be given the force of law. I have known a salad enthusiast who coated each leaf of lettuce with oil on a camel's-hair brush, but this I think is an exaggeration of artistry. On the other hand, the wild stirring of dollops of the four condi-

ments in the salad spoon, which, is then emptied vaguely into the salad, is childish and inefficient. The Italians have a proverb that runs:

"L'insalata non è buon' ne bella
Ove non è la pimpinella."

The pimpernel is our burnet.

It is quite unnecessary to give full recipes for all the following salads. I have already indicated the mixture, and the choice of ingredients need only be hinted at.

Lettuce should be young, fresh, and crisp. There are many varieties, the most delicate of which perhaps is the Romaine

Endive is good when quite young. It should be very light in colour. Do not mix it with lettuce. A few dandelion leaves are quite permissible.

Chicory makes an excellent salad, and radishes mix well with it.

Celery and Parmesan cheese go well together. The celery must be cut into half-inch pieces.

Cauliflower, cooked and cold, mixed with celery, or a very few slices of cold cooked carrot, is cool and pleasant.

Tomatoes and lettuce go well together, and onions are a good addition.

Potato salad requires firm round little potatoes cooked, cold, and cut into slices. The best kind is known as Hamburg Potatoes, and they may be had at the German Delikatessen shops. Avoid anchovies and olives with potato salad, but encourage chives and a sprinkling of cheese.

Celeriac.

This is a variety of celery, sometimes known as Dutch celery, a tuber which has a quite peculiar and characteristic flavour. It needs no addition whatever, and is an excellent accompaniment to all meats. Cut it in slices, after boiling it for twelve minutes, and mix carefully with plenty of liquid.

Mashed Potato Salad.

Beat up ordinary mashed potatoes with a little lukewarm weak stock or warm water instead of milk, and no butter. Then dress

them with a little chopped chive, oil and vinegar, pepper and salt. This can be endlessly varied with chopped hard-boiled eggs, beetroot, cucumbers, anchovies, &c. This salad comes from that most excellent compendium of quaint conceits, "More Pot-pourri from a Surrey Garden," by Mrs. C. W. Earle.

Old-fashioned salads, according to a seventeenth-century cook-book, were more diversified than ours. Among the ingredients of "Grand Sallets of divers compounds" were broom buds, pickled mushrooms, pickled oysters, blew figs, Virginia potato, caperons, crucifix pease, sage, mint, balm, burnet, violet leaves, red coleworts, raisins of the sun, charvel and ellicksander buds. Some of these we know under other names, but "blew figs" and "ellicksander buds" are untraceable. The list has a Rabelaisian smack, and gives one some idea of the crude admixture of flavourings which was acceptable to our forebears.

In a very charming old book, "Travels in England in 1702," by C. P. Moritz, a Prussian clergyman, the following passage

seems quotable: "An English dinner generally consists of a piece of half-boiled, or half-roasted, meat; and a few cabbage leaves boiled in plain water; on which they pour a sauce made of flour and butter. This, I assure you, is the usual method of dressing vegetables in England. The slices of bread and butter which they give you with your tea are as thin as poppy leaves. But there is another kind of bread and butter usually eaten with tea, which is toasted by the fire, and is incomparably good. You take one slice after the other, and hold it to the fire on a fork till the butter is melted, so that it penetrates a number of slices at once; this is called toast."

Another part of the same book describes the kitchen in a country inn, and gives a picture which seems to describe some old Dutch interior. "I now, for the first time, found myself in one of these kitchens which I had so often read of in Fielding's fine novels; and which certainly give one, on the whole, a very accurate idea of English manners. The chimney, in this kitchen, where they were roasting and boiling, seemed

to be taken off from the rest of the room, and enclosed by a wooden partition, the rest of the apartment was made use of as a sitting and eating room. All round on the sides were shelves with pewter dishes and plates, and the ceiling was well stored with provisions of various kinds, such as sugar-loaves, black puddings, hams, sausages, flitches of bacon, &c."

A modern Dr. Syntax in search of the picturesque would vainly nowadays look for anything approaching this homely simplicity in any English hostelry. The modern tendency seems all directed towards spurious finery, meretricious decoration, and uncomfortable New Art. The old inns are neglected, and the new hotels merely vulgarly gorgeous. The food is ambitious and basely imitative of bad French models. The advent of the ubiquitous motor car on old country roads, away from the railways, may in time improve matters, and revive, to a certain extent, the extinct glories of the old coaching inns; but as yet there is little, if any, improvement to be marked. In the meanwhile, I would suggest that every

travelling motor car be provided with a Chafing Dish, and thus mitigate or improve the dull pretentious meals which the country hotel proprietor thinks proper to provide. The Chafing Dish and the motor car seem made for one another. Will somebody try the combination?

There are just a few more salads which I should like to recommend, premising, however, that they are not altogether orthodox. By this I mean that they are not wholly composed of greenstuffs, but require the addition of extraneous appetisers.

Walnuts and Green Peas.

Boil and blanch a dozen walnuts; break them in halves, mix them with a pint of green peas, cooked and cold, and toss them about in a small quantity of dressing.

Sprouts and Chestnuts.

Boil and skin a dozen chestnuts. Break them up and mix with a pint of cold cooked Brussels sprouts. Toss them in a small amount of mixture.

Jardinière.

Almost any cold cooked vegetables. For choice, use equal portions of sliced potatoes, green peas, carrots, beans, celery, tomatoes, and onions. Add plenty of dressing.

Cucumbers and Anchovies.

Wash, scrape and dry the anchovies. Chop them up. Have the cucumber thinly sliced and thoroughly drained; plenty of salt, and little mixture. Sprinkle the anchovies over the sliced cucumber.

Cauliflower and Bacon.

Dry the cauliflower and break up into small pieces, using all the flower and very little stalk or green. Cut a couple of slices of bacon into dice, sprinkle it about in the cauliflower, and use plenty of dressing.

Bread Salad.

Cut three slices of stale bread (crumb only) into half-inch squares; same amount

of sliced cold cooked potatoes; three tomatoes in quarters, one onion; toss all well together with a good deal of dressing. This sounds very simple, but as Sam Weller's pieman said, "It's the seasoning as does it."

Lest I be thought quite unspeakably impossible in these last recipes, let me assure the worthy sceptics that they are in no wise guess-work, but one and all duly approved, and that I have merely taken the trouble to collate them and set them down here. They are excellent and original. I think that many folks will be grateful for them.