

T H E F O O D O F E N G L A N D

AS SHOWN IN

L I T E R A T U R E

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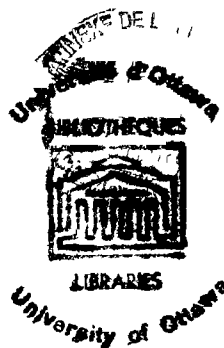
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## C H A P T E R      O N E

"Thou shalt eat crudded cream and bramble  
berries,  
Pie lid and pastry crust,  
Pears, plums and cherries."

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

This stanza from Phillada Flouſ Me may serve to introduce this study of foods and beverages as shown in the inspirational literature of England.

Literature is the written record of a nation's aspirations and hopes. It portrays the political life that is the details of the reigns of kings; the quarrels of the nobles; the rising importance of the middle classes; the limiting of

the authority of hereditary classes; the growing importance of democracy and the recognition of the rights of the common man. It portrays the social life that is the details as to how people lived; the ways in which they earned their living; their homes; their family relationships; their foods. It portrays the intellectual life that is the details of what people thought; their ideas about religion; their interest in peoples of other lands; their continual striving to understand the natural world; their systems of philosophy and science.

And yet to be literature, more than a framework is necessary. Throughout it all must shine the conviction that man is master of his fate, that he can remake his world and that man made in the image of God is capable of profound, tender, yet moving emotions. By the masters of our English literary heritage these things are shown, illustrated often by comparison with men and women of baser day.

It is proposed in this study to examine in some detail the food of England, particularly during the Mediaeval, Tudor and Restoration periods. Believing that literature reflects the time in which, or for which, it is written, references will be made to works of many authors to illustrate the quality and quantity of the food of all classes. It is hoped that references can be made, in most cases, to original sources. The historian has assembled facts relating to certain periods of study, yet a primary source of information relating to any

period must be the literature of that period.

In view of the increasing interest in nutrition and the provision of an adequate diet, it is hoped that such a progressive selection of references will show the changes that have taken place in food habits. Such a study would be incomplete without some information and comment upon the value of diets at different times. The scientific data will not be extensive, since the primary purpose is to find out in the literature details of food habits of our ancestors.

## C H A P T E R      T W O

Evelyn writing of his travels in Huntingdonshire says:  
The country about it so abounds in wheat that when any  
King of England passes through it they have a custom  
to meet him with a hundred ploughs.

## C E R E A L S

Bread has been referred to as "the staff of life"  
and in a literary sense by a gigantic synecdoche has been used  
for food in general. Thus in the holy scriptures, St. Matthew  
(Chap.4,v.3) we read:

"Command that these stones be made bread."

The struggle for "bread" or food has been the cause of many  
uprisings in kingdoms and wars between nations.

Cereals or products made from them have been familiar  
for thousands of years. References to them have entered our  
literature, in a literal sense, in descriptions of what people  
ate, and perhaps to a greater extent in metaphors or similies  
to illustrate salient points.

City dwellers are quite accustomed to receiving their  
bread, wrapped and even sliced for use. To a large extent, home

baked bread is unknown to city children and many would turn to the Book of Knowledge to find out about it. Many families in the country, however, still watch the crusty loaves coming from the oven, just as families have done through the long years of history.

The cereals grown in Britain have been wheat, oats, rye and barley. Many references to corn throughout the literature must not be taken to mean the American corn (*Zea mays*) but refer to cereals in general, often to a mixed stand of barley and oats. Such general classification is seen in the line from Henry 6:<sup>1</sup>

"Want ye corn for bread".

Meal might be ground single grains or a mixture. Bread was not the chalk coloured "white bread" of today and dark bread was really dark, not like our modern "brown bread". During the Middle Ages and into modern times in England, much rye was grown and ground into meal. This was especially true of the eastern midland because of the heathy soil and wet climate.

When children run in from school to demand a lunch, nutrition wise mothers give them bread and milk. Such practice was recommended by Chaucer in The Treatise on the Astrolabe:

"Bred and milke for children".

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1. First Part King Henry 6, 3,2,49.

References to barley bread are numerous through the literature of the Middle Ages:

"But barley bred and water pure",  
from The Roman de la Rose.

Such fare is rather scorned in the Faerie Queen:<sup>1</sup>

"Bread and water and like feeble thing".

Two lines from Chaucer's Book of the Duchess illustrate the hospitable spirit of the poor and also that "white bread" was even then regarded as more proper for gentle folks.

"Let him eat brede of pured white seed  
And let us wyves eat barley bread".

The beautiful Nun Priest's story from Canterbury Tales in describing the plight of the poor widow says:

"Milk and brown bread in which she found  
no lak".

Bread or buns was usually taken with other foods; to again quote from Chaucer's stories of England in the late Middle Ages, The Squire's Tale:<sup>2</sup>

"An yevre hein sugre, honey, bred and milk".

The Miller's Tale:<sup>3</sup>

"With bred or cheese or good ayle in  
a jubble".

The Reeve's Tale:<sup>4</sup>

"For ale an bred and roasted ham  
an goos".

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1. The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser, 5,4, 31,8.
  2. The Squire's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1.614
  3. The Miller's Tale, " " 1.3628
  4. The Reeve's Tale, " " 1.4137

The mention of a sandwich is given in Measure for Measure<sup>1</sup>:

"Small, brown bread and garlic".

Cheese and bread have often been eaten together as shown in

The Holy Friar<sup>2</sup>:

"An cheese and bread frae women's laps  
Was dealt about in lunches".

Samuel Pepys wrote in his Diary<sup>3</sup>:

"Had bread and cheese for my dinner".

Shakespeare in Henry IV, refers to<sup>4</sup>:

"Toast and butter".

A striking figure of speech using bread is found  
in As You Like It<sup>5</sup>:

"His kissing is as full of sanctity  
as the touch of holy bread".

But cereals were ground and made into porridge. It  
may be supposed that Robt. Burns refers to oatmeal, when he  
sings<sup>6</sup>:

"Blessed with content and milk and meal".

Beans and pease were favorite crops in England in  
the Middle Ages, especially among the peasants. The Vision of  
Piers Ploughman states<sup>7</sup>:

"Piers had only cheese, curds, an oat cake,

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1. Measure for Measure, Wm. Shakespeare, 3,2,198.

2. The Holy Friar, Robt. Burns.

3. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Jan.2,1659.

4. First Part, King Henry IV, 4,2,22.

5. As You Like It, Wm. Shakespeare, 3,4,10.

6. The Contented Cottager, Robt. Burns.

7. The Vision of Piers Ploughman, Wm. Langland, Passus 7.

"a loaf of beans and bran, and a few vegetables, so the poor people brought peasecods, beans and cherries, pease and leeks".

In describing the evil state into which the country had fallen, Piers states:

"Nor would beggars eat bread with beans  
in it,  
But stamped bread, fine bread, clean  
wheaten bread".

Pease and beans were often ground together, as in Burns:<sup>1</sup>

"The farina of beans and pease he ha'st  
in plenty".

Many poets have described the life of the peasant with his rude fare as in Chaucer's Parson's Tale:<sup>2</sup>

"Bettre is a morsel of bread with joye",  
or, Tale of Sir Thopas:<sup>3</sup>

"An gyngerbread that was ful fyn".

Many details of people's lives are shown in the Centerbury Tales as in The Reeve's Tale:<sup>4</sup>

"An bad his wife go knede it in a cake".

The so-called domestic comedies of Shakespeare contain many references to food. Not all were successful cooks, as is

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1. Dr. Hornbook, Robt. Burns
  2. The Parson's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer, l.630.
  3. Tale of Sir Thopas, Geoffrey Chaucer, l.2044.
  4. The Reeve's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer, l.4094.

shown in The Taming of the Shrew:<sup>1</sup>

"Our cakes' dough on both sides".

References are numerous to cakes and ale, as in Twelfth Night<sup>2</sup>  
and Henry 8:<sup>3</sup>

"No more cakes and ale".

or, in Henry 4:<sup>4</sup>

"Mouldy prunes and dried cakes".

Mention should be made of brose. This was prepared by mixing ground oatmeal, pease or beans, with water, milk or "beef stock". Robt. Burns has a poem: "Oh gie my love brose". Brose provided a nourishing, quickly made soup which would provide a lunch for a working man. It is interesting to note that brose is still prepared in the Ottawa Valley. A few years ago, a sample of brose was submitted to the Laboratory of the Plant Products Division, Department of Agriculture. It was made from field peas and was of good quality.

From the dawn of history, grain has been ground between flat stones to prepare flour. This, of course, crushes the whole berry and it was not long before someone discovered that the coarser particles could be removed by sifting the ground meal through cloth. This process of bolting was done

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1. The Taming of the Shrew, Wm.Shakespeare, 1,1,140.
  2. Twelfth Night, Wm.Shakespeare, 2,3,124.
  3. King Henry 8, Wm.Shakespeare, 5,4,11.
  4. King Henry 4, Wm.Shakespeare, 2,4,159.

through woolen or linen fabric until about the middle of the 18th century when silk gauze was introduced for this purpose.

In Holingshed's Chronicles, written in 1577, this significant statement appears:

"The bread throughout the land is made of such grain as the soil yieldeth, the gentility commonly provide themselves with wheat for their own tables, while their households and poorer neighbors are forced to content themselves with rye or barley, yea and in times of dearth, many with bread made either of beans, peas or oats, or of all together and some acorns among".

Holingshed goes on to describe the different kinds of flour (1) the best quality white bread or manchet (2) the cheat or wheaten bread, somewhat grey in color (3) the ravelled containing more hull (4) the brown bread (5) Panen cibarium, the poorest and weakest which is appointed for servants, slaves and the inferior kind of persons.

The quality and conditions of sale of bread were regulated by statute even as early as the reign of King John. More important legislation was passed in 1266, during the reign of Henry 2. This Assize of Bread regulated the size of loaf and provided punishment in the pillory for offenders.

Even millers were known to take more than their share

as the observant Chaucer says of the Miller:<sup>1</sup>

"Wel coude he stele corn and profit thrice".

At first each village had its own mill, but it became common for landlords to compel their tenants to grind their corn at the lord's mill--of course levying a suitable charge. It is recorded that the Abbott of St.Albans compelled his tenants to grind corn at his own mill and paved his courtyard with stones taken from the little mills. At the peasant rising in 1381, one of the first things attended to was the destruction of the good Abbott's mill.<sup>2</sup>

On large estates, a common bakehouse was established to which wives brought their loaves for baking.

In Tudor times, people in the towns demanded bread of finer quality than that used in the country. John Evelyn in his Diary tells of interviewing some captured Dutch seamen in Chelsea College in 1665, who complained that the bread served was too fine for their taste and wanted coarser loaves.

This insistence of townspeople--especially in London--upon white bread was in large measure responsible for the adulteration of bread so much practised in the latter part of

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1.Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, 1.642.

2.English Life in the Middle Ages, L.F.Salzman,The Clarendon Press.

of the 17th century and in the 18th century. Alum was added in increasing quantities to bread to increase the whiteness, size and texture of the loaves.

In 1757 a pamphlet was published entitled Poison Detected or Frightful Truths and Alarming to the British Metropolis. The points raised in this were indeed startling, e.g.:

"Nor are alum, chalk and lime the only pernicious mixtures employed by the artifices of the bakers to abuse the people with; there is another ingredient which is most shocking to the heart, and if possible more hurtful to the health of mankind; it must stagger human belief; I shall only mention it, to make it abhorred. It is averred by very credible authority that sacks of unground bones are not infrequently used by some bakers amongst their other impurities, to increase the quantity and injure the quality of flour and bread. The charnel houses of the dead are raked to add filthiness to the food of the living".

The millers and bakers defended their interests and one pamphlet made use of the old nursery rhyme to justify such practices--if they did take place.

"Fe Fi Fo Fum  
I smell the breath of an English man.  
Be he alive or be he dead  
I'll grind his bones to make my bread!"

The controversy raged for years but many believed the tales of adulteration. In Humphrey Clinker we find Matthew

Bramble writing of food in London:<sup>1</sup>

"The bread I eat in London is deleterious paste, mixed with chalk, alum and bone-ashes; insipid to the taste and destructive to the constitution. The good people are not ignorant of this adulteration, but they prefer it to wholesome bread, because it is whiter than the meal of corn".

Quite likely there was adulteration of flour, although not as great as charged by the reformers. With advance in science, particularly in analytical chemistry, it became possible to detect adulteration. Credit should be given to the Society of Public Analysts of Great Britain, who by means of microscope and chemical balance developed exact methods of food examination.

An important change in milling practice took place toward the end of the 18th century. This was the introduction of roller milling in place of stone grinding. By 1878 roller milling had superseded the age old process of stone grinding. The new process was quicker, upkeep was less and it was easier to control the degree of milling. Most important, the germ of the wheat could be separated and went with the bran. This gave a whiter flour which kept much better since the germ contained oil that deteriorated. Unfortunately, much of the

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1. The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker, Tobias Smollett.

protein, most of the mineral salts, fats and vitamins were lost in the bran stream. This was unknown at that time and it was not until World War II that millers were compelled to alter the process so as to return some of these important constituents to the flour. Flour still contained a slight yellowish tinge due to natural pigments--one being carotene--the chief precursor of Vitamin A in the body. Flour was exposed to sunlight, or to chemicals, to bleach out this color and unfortunately to lower its nutritive value.

The relative composition of white bread and whole wheat bread is shown in Table I:<sup>1</sup>

COMPOSITION OF WHITE AND BROWN BREAD

TABLE I

	<u>White Bread</u>		<u>Whole Wheat Bread</u>	
Protein	8.5	%	9.5	%
Fat	2.0		3.5	
Carbohydrates	52.0		47.0	
Ash	1.3		2.0	
Calcium	0.08		0.05	
Phosphorus	0.098		0.185	
Iron	0.0009		0.0003	
Copper	0.00034		0.0005	
Vitamin B <sub>1</sub>	90.0		300.0	
Vitamin B <sub>2</sub>	90.0		140.0	
Nicotinic acid (Niacin)	1000.0		2000.0	

1. Vitamins are expressed in micrograms per 100 g.

Two slices contain 129 and 130 calories respectively, but the whole wheat bread is higher in protein, fat and in mineral content. More important still, the whole wheat bread contains much higher amounts of the Vitamin B complex and of nicotinic acid. It is known that the B vitamins are important nutritionally. Vitamin B<sub>1</sub>, or aneurin, plays an important part in the proper functioning of nerve tissue. Early symptoms of insufficient B<sub>1</sub> are loss of appetite and muscular weakness. More serious symptoms are nervous disorders leading in some cases to neuritis and digestive troubles.

Vitamin B<sub>2</sub>--properly called lactoflavin or riboflavin--is important in the nutrition of the skin. Wheat germ is one of the richest sources. The lack of adequate amounts of nicotinic acid in the diet is a primary cause of pellagra. This disease occurs where maize is the principal cereal used, since it contains less of this vitamin than does wheat.

When large amounts of whole meal bread were eaten, adequate amounts of the Vitamin B complex would be supplied. The figures given above for wheat, indicate that it was only after white bread became widely used that a deficiency of this vitamin might occur. Valuable amounts of phosphorus, iron and

copper would also be supplied by the whole wheat bread. This bread would be harsher, rougher, more crumbly and would not keep as well because of the fat content from the germ of the wheat berry. As a source of valuable proteins, of energy, and of essential minerals and vitamins bread is very important and is indeed the "staff of life".

## C H A P T E R      T H R E E

"Dishes piled and meat of noblest sort"<sup>1</sup>

## M E A T   A N D   F I S H

Meat in various forms and in large quantities has always formed a large part of the English diet. In early times the forests abounded in game and the trophies of the chase have been celebrated in song and story. Indeed visitors to England exclaimed over the plenteous supply of meat. Meat was so common that foreigners in 1602 remarked with surprise that the English rejected the entrails and feet for the table.<sup>2</sup>

The roast beef of England has long been famous, yet we find references to many other kinds of meat. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales with delightful stories of the Middle Ages contain references to what people ate<sup>3</sup>:

"Bacon or beef or swich things as ye fynde".

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1. Paradise Lost, John Milton, 2,3,41.
  2. England under the Stuarts, G.M.Trevelyan, Methuen & Co.
  3. The Summoner's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1, 1753.

1

The Reeve's Tale :

"Get us some mete and drynke and make  
us cheer".

Meat was the principal dish of the meal as indicated in

The Merchant of Venice<sup>2</sup>:

"Cover the table, serve in the meat  
and we will come in".

or in Romeo and Juliet<sup>3</sup>:

"Look to the baked meats, good Anglican".

When Katharina is undergoing mental torture by

Petruchio, his servant tauntingly asks<sup>4</sup>:

"What say you to a piece of beef and  
mustard?"

Yet pork was very popular as this line from

The Merchant of Venice shows<sup>5</sup>:

"If we all grow to be pork eaters, we  
shall not shortly have a rasher on  
the coals, for money".

In the same play, Shylock declines to dine<sup>6</sup>:

"Yes to smell pork, to eat of the  
habitation which your prophet the  
Nazarite conjured the devil into".

Bacon and ham have ever been popular because of  
flavor and more especially because of keeping quality.

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1. The Reeve's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1.4132.
  2. The Merchant of Venice, Wm. Shakespeare, 3,5,64.
  3. Romeo and Juliet, Wm. Shakespeare, 3,4,5.
  4. The Taming of the Shrew, Wm. Shakespeare, 4,3,26.
  5. The Merchant of Venice, Wm. Shakespeare, 3,5,27.
  6. Ibid 1,3,34.

The Nun Priest's Tale might be describing a favorite modern breakfast<sup>1</sup>:

"Sound bacon and sometyme an .ey or tweye".

Yet in the Wife of Bath's Tale we read<sup>2</sup>:

"An yet in bacoun hadde I never delit".

The peculiarity of another taste is shown in Henry IV<sup>3</sup>:

"A gammon of bacon and two razes  
of ginger".

It is apparent that shoppers had to be careful in olden times as now. Alexander Pope says<sup>4</sup>:

"She brought him bacon nothing lean".

and the author speaks of a hearty dish in the same poem<sup>5</sup>:

"The beans and bacon set before 'em".

Robt. Burns knew poverty but speaks of plenty in

Impromptu:

"And plenty of bacon each day in the year".

Pepys, in his Diary, complains<sup>6</sup>:

"A poor Lenten dinner of colworts and bacon".

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1. The Nun Priest's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1,4035.
  2. Tale of Wife of Bath, " " 1,418.
  3. First Part King Henry IV, 2,1,26., Wm.Shakespeare.
  4. Imitations of Horace, Alex. Pope, 2,165.
  5. Ibid 2,137.
  6. Diary of Samuel Pepys, March 10, 1660.

When on a trip in September of the same year, his entry shows:

"Eat a mouthful of pork, which they made us pay 14d. for, which vexed me much".

References to venison served in many ways may be found in Pepys' Diary. When he was at Chatham on business for the Navy, he and the other commissioners had a meal on board a vessel<sup>1</sup>:

"The Boatswain of the ship did serve us out of the kettle a piece of salt, hot beef and some brown bread and brandy and we did make a little meal; but so good I never would desire to eat better meat while I live; only I would have cleaner dishes".

The Merchant's Tale from Canterbury Tales says<sup>2</sup>:

"An better than olde beef is the tendre veal".

This food is often mentioned in Shakespeare's plays<sup>3</sup>:

"Veal, quoth the Dutchman, is not veal a calf".

References to mutton occur in many works, but lamb as food occurs seldom. Pepys wrote<sup>4</sup>:

"A fine dinner, viz a dish of marrow bones, a leg of mutton..."

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1. Diary of Samuel Pepys, March 10, 1660.
  2. The Merchant's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1,1420.
  3. Love's Labour Lost, Wm. Shakespeare, 5,2,247.
  4. Diary of Samuel Pepys, January 26, 1659.

England abounded in wild fowl and game birds. These furnished a large part of the meat dishes of the people. Domestic poultry formed a part of the holding of nearly every peasant, and references to eggs and poultry are numerous. Chaucer in the Roman de la Rose bids them to feed the stranger<sup>1</sup>:

"With tender gees and with capons".

But the narrator in the Summoner's Tale complains<sup>2</sup>:

"Have I nat of a capoun but the lyvers".

Shakespeare in the famous passage in As You Like It notes that<sup>3</sup>:

"The justice in full round belly  
In good capon lined".

Pepys says<sup>4</sup>:

"Dined at my wife's bedside having a mess of brave plumb porridge and a roasted pullet".

Evidently he was not satisfied for he adds:

"And I sent out for a mince pie".

The Prologue to Canterbury Tales comments on the easy life of the Friar:

"Ful many a fat partrich had he in muve".

In Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing, the same

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1. Roman de la Rose (Translation), Geoffrey Chaucer, l. 7040.
  2. The Summoner's Tale, " " 1. 1839.
  3. As You Like It, Wm. Shakespeare, 2,7,172.
  4. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Dec.12,1662.

bird is mentioned<sup>1</sup>:

"There's a partridge wing saved for the fool will eat no supper".

Besides partridge, the beautiful swan was also a favorite as in the description of the Monk in Canterbury Tales:

"A fat swan loved he best of any roast".

It is remarkable how often Pepys writes of enjoying turkey. One interesting reference is on Feb.4,1665:

"My wife killed her turkeys which came out of Zealand".

This bird, which was native to North America, was imported to Europe by the Spaniards, largely domesticated in European Turkey and became very popular throughout Europe and England.

Pepys also mentions partridge and even roast swan (June 19, 1662). He often tells of some remarkable meals which he enjoyed, this passage serving as an example<sup>2</sup>:

"I had a pretty dinner for them viz: a brace of stewed carps, six roasted chickens and a jowle of salmon hot for the first course; a tanzy (a sweet dish made of eggs and cream flavoured with tanzy juice) and two neat's tongues and cheese the second".

Besides the tongues, other special cuts are referred to in the literature, particularly tripe. In that domestic comedy The Taming of the Shrew Grumio asks<sup>3</sup>:

"How say you to a fat tripe, finely broiled".

- 
1. Much Ado About Nothing, Wm.Shakespeare, 2,1,156.
  2. Diary of Samuel Pepys, March 26,1662.
  3. The Taming of the Shrew, Wm.Shakespeare, 4,3,19.

And Pepys relates<sup>1</sup>:

"Dined upon a most excellent dish of tripes,  
covered with mustard"

Surely a fair way of dressing tripe!

Rabbits were often used as a food, cooked in  
many ways<sup>2</sup>:

"And humbly live on rabbits and on roots".

Pepys wrote<sup>3</sup>:

"A feast, we had a fricasse of rabbits  
and chicken".

Dishes were prepared from parts of the animal not often  
eaten today. Robt. Burns in O gin ye were dead speaks of  
"a sheep's head in the pot", or, from the Summoner's Tale<sup>4</sup>:

"And after that a rosted pigges head".

On New Year's Day 1660, Pepys entertained guests  
at breakfast with:

"A barrel of oysters, a dish of neats' tongues  
and a dish of anchovies, wine and ale".

To the same author we are indebted for a description of two  
strange dishes<sup>5</sup>:

"Drinking great drinks of claret, and eating  
botargo (a sausage made of eggs and the  
blood of a sea mullet)".

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1. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Oct.26,1662.
  2. Satires of Horace, Alex.Pope, 2,52.
  3. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Apr.6,1662.
  4. The Summoner's Tale, 1.184., Geoffrey Chaucer.
  5. Diary of Samuel Pepys, June 5,1660.

Entry of March 10, 1664, states:

"Home to dinner to a good hog's harslet (heart, liver and other edible offal, especially of the hog) a piece of meat I loved".

Some attention should be given to how meat dishes were prepared. The Prologue to Canterbury Tales in describing the Cook says<sup>1</sup>:

"He coulde rooste and sethe and boil and fry".

Shakespeare's plays contain many references to cooking, as<sup>2</sup>:

"The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit".

In describing the well to do in The Prologue, Chaucer remarks<sup>3</sup>:

"Without bake mete was never his hous".

Sometimes the cooking was not too successful for Pepys wrote<sup>4</sup>:

"My wife and I alone to a leg of mutton,  
the sauce of which being made sweet, I  
was angry at it and eat none".

Pies made of meat, often of several sorts, were very popular in the Middle Ages. Piers Ploughman in the Vision of the Field full of Folks describes a fair:

"Cooks and their men crying,  
Pies hot, all hot,  
Good pork, good goose, come and dine,  
White wine, red wine to wash the roast meat down".

The plight of the poor peasant is described  
by Piers<sup>5</sup>:

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1. The Prologue to Canterbury Tales, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1.383.
  2. The Comedy of Errors, Wm. Shakespeare, 1,2,44.
  3. The Prologue to Canterbury Tales, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1.343
  4. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Dec.2,1665.
  5. The Vision of Piers Counsel, Wm. Langland.

"I have no penny, pullets for to buy  
 No neither goose or pig, but only two  
     green cheeses  
 And two loaves of beans and bran baked  
     for my little ones,  
 But I have parsley, cabbage and leeks".

So other poor peasants brought what they had:

"The poor people fetched their peasoods,  
 Their beans and balsam apples, they  
     brought them in their laps,  
 Onions, salads and many ripe cherries".

From the Vision of Do-Well, the plight of the poor is described<sup>1</sup>:

"Bread and thin ale for them are a banquet,  
 Cold fish and cold flesh are like roast  
     venison,  
 A farthing's worth of mussels, a farthing's  
     worth of cockles,  
 Were a feast for them on Fridays or fast  
     days".

While the rich are described:

"For the doctor on the dias, drank wine so fast  
 He ate sundry meats, minces and puddings,  
 Wild boar and tripe and eggs in grease fried".

In this chapter, some attention should be directed to the use of fish as food. Both fresh and salt water fish formed a large part of the diet.

Edmund Spenser in the beautiful Epithalamion rhymes<sup>2</sup>:

"The silver sealy trouts doe tend full well  
 These trouts and pikes all others do excell".

The same author, in the Faerie Queene mentions<sup>3</sup>:

"Thirty sorts of fish".

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1. The Vision of Do-Well, Wm. Langland.
  2. Epithalamion, Edmund Spenser, 4,11,135.
  3. The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser, 4,11,135.

Pope, in Horace Satires describes<sup>1</sup>:

"A tomb of boiled and roast and flesh  
and fish".

Robt. Burns in The Twa Dogs gives the location of a place as

"Where sailors gang to fish for cod".

Many references to fish and fishing are made in the Canterbury Tales. It is in Pepys' Diary however that mention is made of many kinds of fish.

"Had red herrings for our breakfast"<sup>2</sup>

"Did eat a dish of mackarel newly  
hatched for my breakfast"<sup>3</sup>

When he visited Southampton<sup>4</sup>:

"Had dinner with the Mayor of sturgeon of  
their own catching, which did not  
happen in twenty years".

"A feast--a lamprey pie, a most rare pie,  
a dish of anchovies"<sup>5</sup>

"Had dinner of ling and herring pie, very  
good meat"<sup>6</sup>

"Did give them a jowle of salmon"<sup>7</sup>

"A brace of stewed carps"<sup>8</sup>

He has many references to oysters, usually bought by the barrel,  
and to lobsters<sup>9</sup>:

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1. Satires of Horace, Alex Pope, 2,70.
  2. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Feb.28,1663.
  3. Ibid Apr.26,1661.
  4. Ibid Apr. 6,1663.
  5. Ibid Mch.19,1667.
  6. Ibid Aug. 6, 1665.
  7. Ibid Mar.26,1660.
  8. Ibid Oct. 8,1660.
  9. Ibid Feb. 4,1661.

"To eat some Colchester oysters with  
Sir William Batten".

"Had a fine supper, among others excellent  
lobsters which I never eat at this  
time in the year before".<sup>1</sup>

His experience with anchovies was often unpleasant, as this  
entry shows<sup>2</sup>:

"Wine and a dish of anchovies which did  
make me ill at night".

Shakespeare speaks of another kind of sea food in  
Henry 4<sup>3</sup>:

"She had a good dish of prawns"

Methods of cooking in the Middle Ages were quite  
elaborate. Large quantities of salt were used to preserve meat  
and fish since refrigeration was unknown. It is recorded that  
Sir Francis Bacon became ill and died as a result of testing a  
theory. On a journey he wished to find out whether a chicken  
could be preserved by being stuffed with ice rather than salt.  
He felt compelled to descend from his carriage and to try it  
forthwith and in so doing contracted a cold which caused his  
death. Meat must have often been very salt, or, on the other  
hand very high flavored. This partly accounts for the generous  
use of herbs and spices.

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1. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Feb.4,1661.
  2. Ibid Sept.25,1659.
  3. Second part of King Henry 4, 1,3,99.

Salzman in English Life in the Middle Ages gives a popular recipe for preparing "leche lumbard"--something like a German sausage:

"Take pork and pound it in a mortar with eggs; add salt, sugar, raisins, currants, minced dates, powdered pepper and cloves; put in a bladder and boil it, then cut in slices. This was served with a sauce made of raisins, red wine, almond, milk, coloured with saffron, pepper, cloves, cinnamon and ginger".

Roasting of meat, even whole carcasses, was done on spits over a wood fire. These were turned by servants, small boys, or by dogs in a small tread mill. Finnemore in Social Life of England describes a smoke jack. This was a wheel in the chimney which was turned by convection currents of heat and was in turn connected by chains to turn the spit. The same author gives the origin of the term blackguard. The black guard was the company of scullions, under cooks, master cooks and inferior attendants, hangers on in a great house. These were often a turbulent, thievish lot and hence this name came to be used for rascals.

Many writers have given details of how dishes should be prepared for special occasions. It would seem that a gem among essays on foods is Charles Lamb's Dissertation upon Roast Pig. In purity of language, delicacy of phrase and above all in humour it remains a classic. Consider the final paragraph:

"His sauce should be considered. Decidedly a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains and a dash of mild sage. But banish dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them or make them stronger than they are--but consider, he is a weakling--a flower".

We might here consider the preparation of veal and other pies as outlined by that shrewd philosopher Mr. Samuel Weller in the Pickwick Papers. Sam enlightens Mr. Pickwick on that subject<sup>1</sup>:

"Weal pie, wery good thing is a weal pie when you know the lady as made it, and is quite sure it ain't kittens". As he went on to describe what he had learned from his friend the pie-man he made Mr. Pickwick shudder.

"They're all made o' them noble animals", says he, a-pointin' to a wery nice little tabby kitten, "an I seasons 'em for beef-steak, weal, or kidney 'cording to the demand--just as the market changes and appetites wery".

This was just one of the ways in which this illiterate servant with his knowledge of the world instructed the gullible yet lovable leader of the Pickwick Club. It is to be hoped that when Mr. Pickwick was in prison because of his "principles" that the "enormous meat pie" which Sam provided was not secured from his friend the pie-man.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The Pickwick Papers, Charles Dickens, Chapt.19  
2. Ibid Vol.2, Chapt.16

One is tempted to discuss other incidents and occasions in the Pickwick Papers where food is a principal object. Sam Weller's remark regarding oysters might have been true of London of the 18th century but hardly today:<sup>1</sup>

"It's a very remarkable circumstance, sir, that poverty and oysters always seem to go together."

and Mr. Weller senior added:

"And it's just the same with pickled salmon".

Of course, Mr. Pickwick intended to make a note of that but something else came up. This expression "came up" brings to mind another character particularly well drawn by Mr. Dickens, viz: Mr. Micawber, who was always expecting something "to turn up". Mr. Micawber gave a "beautiful little dinner"<sup>2</sup>

"Quite an elegant dish of fish; the kidney-end of a loin of veal roasted; fried sausage meat; a partridge and a pudding. There was wine, and there was strong ale; and after dinner Mrs. Micawber made us a bowl of punch with her own hands".

They all waxed quite merry, but alas at 7.30 the next morning Mr. Micawber addressed a note to David, beginning:

"The die is cast--all is over".

Thus Micawber is cast down from the heights as shown by this master of characterization.

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1. The Pickwick Papers, Chas. Dickens, Vol.1, Chapt.22.
  2. David Copperfield, " " Vol.1, Chapt.17.

Some idea of the amount of meat eaten in the 17th century is given in the Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England by M. Misson. He was impressed by the amount of meat eaten even by the poor people and stated that he had met people who rarely tasted bread, so much meat did they habitually consume<sup>1</sup>. He gives a good description of cookshops:

"Generally four spits, one over another carry round each five or six pieces of Butcher's meat, Beef, Mutton, Veal, Pork and Lamb; you have what quantity you please cut off, fat, lean, much or little done; with this a little salt and mustard upon the side of a plate".

It was at this time that poultry came to be more highly regarded by the well to do; formerly they had been rather despised as poor men's food. In 1658, Philip Messinger wrote The City-Modern, a Comedie and in it Holdfast says:

"When my master got his wealth, his family fed;  
On roots, and liver, and necks of beef on Sundays.  
But now I fear it will be spent on pultry,  
Butchers meat will not go down".

The quality of meat varied, of course, from locality to locality. Reference has already been made to extensive practice of salting and to plentiful use of herbs and flavors. In the 18th century, with an increase in the size of cities and towns, thousands of animals were walked to the

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1. The Englishman's Food, Drummond and Wilbraham.

markets, passing along from fair to fair. Matthew Bramble complains of the quality of the meat as he did of the bread<sup>1</sup>:

"Mutton is in fact, neither lamb or mutton, but something betwixt the two, gorged in the rank fens of Lincoln and Essex, pale, coarse and frouzy".

With this historical background from the literature, we may now consider the significance of meats in nutrition.

The art of the preparation of meats has been handed down as an English tradition and was recognized by foreigners as attested to by this excerpt:<sup>2</sup>

"The English cookes, in comparison with other nations, are commended for roasted meates".

Sir Thomas Elyot wrote:<sup>3</sup>

"Befe of Englande to Englyshemen whiche are in helthe, bryngeth stronge nouryshynge".

The quality of the diet varied from home to home and as today the well to do had a more adequate diet than did the poorer people. But in general the excessive amounts of meat eaten would supply large amounts of protein and fat.

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1. The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker, Tobias Smollet.
  2. Fyne Morysons Itinerary 1617, Holinshed's Chronicles.
  3. The Castle of Helthe, Sir Thos.Elyot.

TABLE II

	<u>Protein %</u>	<u>Fat %</u>
Bacon	12.2	53.0
Chuck Beef	17.6	22.0
Beef Tongue	17.4	11.0
Chicken	21.1	4.5
Duck	21.4	8.2
Goose	21.4	7.1
Ham (lean)	19.5	25.0
Mutton	19.8	12.4
Oysters	9.8	2.0
Pork Chops	17.9	18.0
Rabbit	20.8	10.2
Turkey	24.0	6.7
Veal cutlets	19.1	12.0

Meat contains very little carbohydrates, but the fat content would supply energy since one part of fat has two and one quarter the energy value of carbohydrate. More important than the total protein content is the biological value of the proteins. Protein of animal origin is much more valuable in nutrition than protein from cereals. The chemist says that meat protein contains more of the amino acids which are essential to growth.

Meat contains small amounts of Vitamin C but supplies considerable amounts of Vitamin A and B.

We find a reference to the strengthening effect of meat in Oliver Twist when Mr. Bumble blames Oliver's new strength

on meat<sup>1</sup>:

"Meat, ma'am, meat, you've over-fed him, ma'am. You've raised an artificial soul and spirit in him, unbecoming a person of his condition. If you had kept the boy on gruel ma'am this would never have happened".

Mrs. Sowerbarry's liberality had consisted in a profuse bestowal upon him of all the dirty odds and ends which nobody else would eat. The same poor boy, when he found a refuge in the home of Mr. Brownlow, was given a basin of broth<sup>2</sup>. Oliver calculated that "this basin of broth was strong enough to furnish an ample dinner when reduced to the regulation strength, for three hundred and fifty paupers, at the lowest computation". And he--poor Oliver--knew since he had been an inmate of such an institution.

Some information as to the vitamin content of several kinds of meat is given in Table III. All figures are for 4 oz. servings, Vitamin A is given in International Units and the Vitamin B fractions in milligrams per 100 g.

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1. Oliver Twist, Chas. Dickens, Chapt.7.  
2. Ibid Chapt.12.

TABLE III

	<u>Vitamin A</u>	<u>Thiamine</u>	<u>Vitamin B</u> <u>Riboflavin</u>	<u>Niacin</u>
Liver	23100	.4	3.2	18.4
Heart	low	.5	1.1	7.3
Kidney	1133	.4	2.3	9.9
Beef	60	.2	.2	7.2
Pork	low	1.1	.3	6.0
Lamb	low	.2	.3	7.0
Oysters	225	.3	.5	.7

In addition to the above, liver contains small amounts of Vitamin C and D. This latter vitamin is so important in proper development of the bones and teeth that special consideration should be given at this point. Calcium and phosphorus are required in the ration of .5 - .7 in maturity, but in infancy and during growth the ration is about 1.5 - 2.0. Research has shown that Vitamin D increases the amount of calcium and phosphorus which are absorbed from the digestive tract to nourish the body. Quite the same effect as is given by Vitamin D is brought about by the ultra-violet rays of the spectrum obtained either from sunlight or some artificial source. Evidently Vitamin D is produced in the article exposed to these rays, whether it is skin, which is tanned or in food-stuffs. Indeed it is quite common practice now to enrich foods in Vitamin D by such a process of exposure.

A deficiency of Vitamin D in winter would easily occur even on a good diet. If the calcium and phosphorus happened to be

in the right ration, normal calcification would take place. Natural food stuffs contain little or no Vitamin D. Apparently nature has seen fit to have a large concentration only in fish livers. Cod livers were first found to possess a high concentration. Dr. Alexis Carrell tells of the fisherman from the Scottish Islands rowing out to fish. Their lunch consisted of two large oat cakes. When the first cod was hauled in, pieces of the liver were placed between the cakes and the fisherman sat on his lunch. This expressed the oil from the liver, which was removed before the oatcake, saturated with fresh cod liver oil, was eaten.

Other varieties of fish have livers containing much higher concentrations of Vitamin D than does the cod. The amount is remarkable and Table IV is inserted to illustrate this.

TABLE IV<sup>1</sup>

<u>Liver Oil</u>	<u>Vitamin D in International Units per Gram</u>
Cod	50 - 200
Halibut	1000 - 4000
Sea bass	4000 - 5000
Sword fish	4000 - 10,000
Yellow fin tunny	13,000 - 45,000
Striped tunny	220,000 - 250,000

1. The Englishman's Food, J.C.Drummond and Anne Wilbraham.

Halibut liver oil is the most important, since it contains large amounts of Vitamin A as well as D. Insufficient Vitamin D in the diet in winter causes a disease known as rickets, where there is malformation of the bones. One of the first descriptions of this in our literature is by Rev. Thomas Fuller in Good Thoughts in Bad Times, Together with Good Thoughts in Worse Times; in Section 29 he says:

"There is a disease of Infants (and an infant disease, having as scarcely yet gotten a proper name in Latin) called the Rickets, wherein the Head waxeth too great, whi'st the legs and lower parts wain too Little".

And in the Memoirs of the Verney Family, Vol.2 we find Lady Verney writing to her husband in this way:

"I must give thee some account of our own baby's heare. For Jack his leggs are most miserable, crooked as ever I saw any child, and yett thank God he goes very strongly".

Doubtless little Jack was suffering from rickets induced by his diet of bread, soup and gruel.

Cod liver oil first came into medicinal use in England in the 18th century. It was first used for rubbing swollen joints and bones and in 1782 was used clinically. Such cod liver oil must have been difficult to swallow since it was made by allowing the liver to putrefy and skimming off the oil. It was over 100 years later that the steam distillation process was introduced.

The English have always been great meat eaters, although the amount and kind have varied according to economic conditions. The bit of bacon in the cottage and the roast beef in the manor have been typical. A meat dish enshrined in English traditional holiday fare was a boar's head on a silver dish with a peacock pie at the other end of the table.

C H A P T E R      F O U R

"Ripe apples drop about my head,  
The luscious cluster of the vine  
Upon my mouth do crush their wine  
The nectarine and curious peach,  
Into my hands themselves do reach,  
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,  
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass".

F R U I T S   A N D   N U T S

This charming stanza from The Garden, by Andrew  
Mervel--the Puritan poet--may well serve as an introduction  
to our study relating to fruits.

A fruit is the matured ovary, with its seeds, and  
any parts of the flower that are closely associated with it.  
The edible part of most fruits consists of the fleshy part  
of the pericarp. In some cases, the edible substance is  
highly specialized tissue other than the pericarp. In still  
other cases, the pericarp is combined with other tissues to  
form the edible material. In the case of nuts, the seed is  
the edible part rather than the pericarp.

Fruit, at least apples, plums and cherries, seems to have been plentiful in mediaeval England. In Polycronycon we read:

"Also Englonde is beauteuous of londe, floure of londes all about that londe is full payed with fruyte".

Very likely the cultivation of the fruit trees was very haphazard and the quality was poor. In monastery gardens, more care and attention would be given and advances made both in variety selection and in yield and quality.

In Piers Ploughman we find references to balsam apples, i.e. ones with a fragrant odor. And as Piers told of his hardships the poor people brought him "beken apples" and "chiries".

It is to that chronicler of the late Middle Ages--Chaucer, "the first warbler"--that we turn to learn of the kinds of fruit. He describes the season of the year when:<sup>1</sup>

"Autumpne comith ayeris hevvy of apples".

He was familiar, too, with other fruit for he speaks of the trees:<sup>2</sup>

"That peches, coynes (quinces) and apples bere".

and in the same poem he tells of the fruit of Mediterranean lands:<sup>3</sup>

"Fyges and many a date tree".

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1. Boethius Book, Geoffrey Chaucer
  2. Romance of the Rose, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1.1374 (Translation)
  3. Ibid 1.1364

It is recorded in the custom entries for the port of Southampton, in 1309, that the vessel St. Anne of Portugal discharged as part of her cargo 255 'couples' of figs and raisins. These were valued at 3 shillings apiece.

In that pictorial cavalcade of England in the Middle Ages--The Canterbury Tales--we find the merchant speaking of an English fruit<sup>1</sup>:

"To eten of the smale peeres grene".

At that time, considerable wine was still made in England. The Domesday Book states that the Norman lords planted grapes. William of Malmesbury spoke of the Vale of Gloucester as planted thicker with vineyard than any other part of England, producing good wine. Wine making came to an end about the middle of the 16th century<sup>2</sup>.

References occur to pears, especially to one variety Wardens--which were highly esteemed for making pies.

The limitation of climate upon fruit production in England in comparison to southern climes seems obvious. In one Tudor manuscript this is overlooked by a patriotic writer, who gives this enthusiastic description of English horticulture<sup>3</sup>:

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1. The Merchant's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1.2333.
  2. English Life in the Middle Ages, L.F. Salzman, The Clarendon Press.
  3. A Debate between the Heralds of England and France, John Coke, 1549.

"We have almaner of graynes and fruit, and more plenty than you, for, thanked be God! England is a fruitful and plenteous region, so that we have sum frutes whereof you have fewe, as wardeins, quynces, peches, medlers, chestnottes and other delicious frutes serving for all seasons of the yere, and so plenty of peres and spleas that in the weste partes of England and Sussex they make pirry and sydre and in such habundaunce that they conveye parte over the sea, where by the Monseurs of France it is coveted for theyr beverages and drynkes".

English horticultural and agricultural life was enriched about 1568 when numbers of refugees found shelter there from the persecutions in the Low Countries under the rule of Alva. Some of the refugees were skilled farmers and gardeners who brought with them knowledge of grafting and budding so that the quality of the gardens and orchards was improved. It was not the last time that England was to open her doors to refugees, and, as usually happened, they enriched their haven with new knowledge and skills.

Commerce and trading brought fruits to English tables. Andrew Borde writing in 1542 in Introduction of Knowledge speaks contemptuously of Spain in general "except it be by the see syde and great towmes, is poer and evyl fore, and worse lodgyng; yet ther is plenty of fruit, as fygges, poundganades, orenge and such lyke". Some of this fruit was imported into England, especially

oranges.

In the Paston Letters Mch.1,1470, this entry appears:

"An myn orangys shall come to me, I trust.  
 Dame Elyzabet Calthrop is a fair lady and  
 longyth for orangis thou she be not with child".

Dame Margaret Paston seems to have had a sweet tooth for in  
 November 1452 she wrote to her son John:

"Ye wol send me a booke wyth chardequeyns  
 (preserve made of quinces) that I may have  
 it in morning".

Again, Feb.5,1472, she writes:

"Pray you to buy me a sugar loyfe and dates  
 and almunds, and if ye bewar (lay out) any  
 mor money, when ye come home, I shall payt  
 you ageyn".

These delicacies could be obtained by her son in London to  
 which they were imported. Almonds were in great demand in  
 the Middle Ages and figure prominently in cookery recipes.  
 Oranges and pomegranates were imported in large amounts. One  
 shipment for Queen Eleanor consisted of a frail of figs of  
 Seville, a frail of raisins, a bale of dates, 230 pomegranates,  
 but only 15 lemons and 7 oranges. Oranges were regularly used  
 by the well to do. It is said that a favorite dish of Lord  
 Protector of the Commonwealth was veal with an orange sauce.

Spenser mentions a few kinds of fruit in the

Faerie Queene, speaking of trees<sup>1</sup>:

"Loaden with fruit and apples rosy red".

Another variety, probably some kind of pippin, is noted<sup>2</sup>:

"Their fruit were golden apples  
glistening bright".

An early summer ramble is described<sup>3</sup>:

"Went to the green wood to gather strawberries".

The Shepherds Calendar for March recalls to mind  
how the black crows delight to congregate:

"Carrion crows that in our peere-tree haunted".

When we turn to the work of "divinest" Shakespeare,  
there appear many references to fruits, sometimes factual and  
sometimes associated with tuneful and striking similes. These  
lines from Midsummer Night's Dream when the love stricken  
Titania charges her fairies to take good care of the holidaying  
weaver, Bottom, may introduce some selections from Shakespeare's  
work<sup>4</sup>:

"Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;  
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;  
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries;  
With purple grapes, green figs and mulberries;  
The honey bags steal from the humble-bees".

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1. The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser, 1,11,46,2.
  2. Ibid 2,7,54,1.
  3. Ibid 6,10,34,2.
  4. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Wm. Shakespeare, 3,1,188.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely are discussing the new King Henry V, they mention the wildness of his youth in mad escapades at the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap. Ely sums up their discussion in these words <sup>1</sup>:

"The strawberry grows underneath the nettle  
And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best  
Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality,  
And so the prince obscured his contemplation  
Under the veil of wildness".

The wildness of Prince Hal's youth is shown in Shakespeare's Henry IV, with his roistering companions Falstaff, Poins, Peto and Bard. It is recorded, however, that when he became King he settled down and gave courageous, inspired leadership.

Strawberries grow wild on acid runout soil and easily lend themselves to domestication. Shakespeare mentions other berries. The portly Falstaff in discussing the evils of the time says:<sup>2</sup>

"All the other gifts appertinent to man, as the malice of this age shapes them, are not worth a goosberry".

The boaster Thersites exclaims:<sup>3</sup>

"O' the t'other side, the policy of those crafty swearing rascals--that stale of mouse-eaten dry cheese, Nestor, and that same dog--fox Ulysses--is not proved worth a blackberry".

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1. King Henry V, Wm.Shakespeare, 1,1,60.

2. Second Part, King Henry IV, Wm.Shakespeare, 4,1,196.

3. Troilus and Cressida, King Henry IV, Wm.Shakespeare, 5,4,13.



In regard to the fruits which are known to the botanists as pomes, we find many references to apples and some to pears and quinces. In All's Well That Ends Well we find Perolles talking with Helena in a rough and jocular style<sup>1</sup>:

"Your virginity is like one of our French  
withered pears; it look ill, it eats drily;  
marry, 'tis a withered pear".

Lady Capulet and the kindly if vulgar Nurse are discussing the menu<sup>2</sup>:

"Hold take these keys and fetch more  
spices, nurse."

Nurse: "They call for dates and quinces in  
the pastry".

The southern part of England, notably Kent, has become famous for apple production. There is at East Maling, Kent, a horticultural research station which has become world famous, both for apple production and for work in fruit processing. Some of the first research work on the production of apple juice was done there.

In Twelfth Night, Malvolio is telling of the messenger sent by Count Orsino and describes him thus<sup>3</sup>:

"Not yet old enough for a man, nor young  
enough for a boy; as a squash is before  
it is peascod, or a codling when 'tis  
almost an apple".

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1. All's Well That Ends Well, Wm. Shakespeare, 1,1,175.
  2. Romeo and Juliet, Wm. Shakespeare, 4,4,1.
  3. Twelfth Night, Wm. Shakespeare, 1,1,167.

Now a codling is considered as an early apple--a stewing apple--one proper for the making of fall apple sauce yet lacking keeping qualities. In the same scene, line 260, Viola exclaims:

"The nonpareil of beauty".

It is interesting to note that a modern variety of apple is known as Nonpareil.

The oft quoted speech of Antonio is interesting to our study:<sup>1</sup>

"Mark you this, Bassanio,  
The devil can cite scripture for his purpose,  
An evil soul producing holy witness  
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek  
A goodly apple rotten at the heart".

The country wise, observant Shakespeare, uses the fact that some apples drop earlier than others. He could not know that usually this is caused by infestation of the codling moth but he has Antonio say:<sup>2</sup>

"The weakest kind of fruit  
Drops earliest to the ground".

In the drama Cymbeline, the banished lord Belarius describes how he fell from favour:<sup>3</sup>

"Then was I as a tree  
Whose boughs did bend with fruit, but in one night  
A storm or robbery, call it what you will,  
Shook down my mellow hangings, nay my leaves,  
And left me bare to weather".

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1. The Merchant of Venice, Wm. Shakespeare, 1,3,102.
  2. Ibid 4,1,110.
  3. Cymbeline, Wm. Shakespeare, 3,3,230.

This gives a striking picture of one formerly loaded with favours --the phrase mellow hangings is superb--who finds himself alone and without the things to gain favor when the cross currents of criticism have stripped him.

We might think that the unhappy Wolsey had in mind the orchards of Kent in all their spring-time promise when he says<sup>1</sup>:

"Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness!  
This is the state of man; today he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him,  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,  
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a-ripening,--nips his root,  
And then he falls, as I do".

If Shakespeare wrote only parts of this drama, it seems sure that his genius must have written these lines. After suggesting the glory of the orchard in blossom time and harvest, the fall and fate of the individual are summed up in seven words. This is an example of classic restraint in one who illustrates all the exuberance of the Renaissance.

In the same play, on the occasion of the birth of Elizabeth, we find the dutiful Cranmer extolling the future of England when she shall be queen<sup>2</sup>:

"In her days every man shall eat in safety,  
Under his own vine and fig tree, what he plants;  
and sing  
The many songs of peace to all his neighbours".

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1. King Henry VIII, Wm. Shakespeare, 3,2,265  
2. King Henry VIII, " " 5,4,40

To return from these flights to the mundane matter of food, we find that Petruichio says the sleeve of the gown is<sup>1</sup>:

"Carv'd like an apple-tart".

In addition to the domestic fruits, Shakespeare indicates that several imported fruits were in common use.

From the Iberian peninsula and other Mediterranean countries, dried fruits were imported. In All's Well that Ends Well, Parolles baits Helena with the remark<sup>2</sup>:

"Your date is better in your pie and porridge  
than in your cheek".

This was not very gallant of Parolles to indicate that the first blush of youth on the lady's cheek had been succeeded by a measure of wrinkling.

Reference has already been made to figs<sup>3</sup> and it is interesting to find a few instances when prunes are spoken of. In the comedy Measure for Measure, there is a great deal of nonsense<sup>4</sup>:

"Sir she came in great with child--and longing--saving your honour's reverence--for stewed prunes, sir; we had but two in the house".... "Master Ford here, this very man, having eaten the rest".

At the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap, Falstaff

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|--|----------|
| 1. The Taming of the Shrew, Wm. Shakespeare, | 4,3,98.  |
| 2. All's Well that Ends Well, " "            | 1,1,173. |
| 3. King John " "                             | 2,1,162. |
| 4. Measure for Measure " "                   | 2,1,103. |

complained that his pocket had been picked and was abusing the Hostess in a more or less merry style. Prince Henry entered and the Hostess claims his protection thus indicating that jolly Prince Hal often frequented her tavern. In the verbal exchange, Falstaff exclaims<sup>1</sup>:

"There's no more faith in thee than in a stewed prune".

Even then, before the days of boarding houses with prunes and fruit cake (Mrs. Gaskell's Granford) the lowly prune was somewhat despised but its dietary value was known.

When our survey moves on to Restoration times, we note that all the domestic fruits spoken of above were still known. For information our attention is directed to Pepys Diary. Even when busy at the Yard, he found time to put down in his precise shorthand the details of how he spent his day. He dearly loved a little gossip and faithfully recorded it. Even his weaknesses and lapses from duty either national or domestic found expression in his Diary. It must be admitted that he neglected Mrs. Pepys oftener than he neglected his work. He comments on a friend's garden<sup>2</sup>:

"Nor so great gooseberries--as big as nutmegs".

He gave a dinner to some friends. The dessert was<sup>3</sup>:

"A tart and then fruit and cheese".

Everything must have been well prepared and served for his entry

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1. First Part, King Henry IV, Wm. Shakespeare, 3,3,128.  
 2. Diary of Samuel Pepys, July 22, 1660.  
 3. Ibid Jan. 13, 1662.

closes with these words:

"My dinner was noble and enough".

Strawberries are noted on June 15, 1664. His references to oranges are interesting; he records the purchase of oranges for the satisfactory dinner mentioned above. When visiting one of the south coast ports, he observes <sup>1</sup>:

"I drank a glass, a pint I believe at one draught of the juice of oranges--here they drink the juice as wine--with sugar and it is very fine drink".

Oranges and lemons were still luxuries for the prices given in The Memoirs of the Verney Family are "lemons unwashed three shillings a dozen and oranges one shilling each".

Rev.G.Scott Thompson remarks<sup>2</sup>:

"Fruit is brought only to the Tables of the Great, and of a small number even among them".

When fruit was eaten, it was usually with the idea that it was useful to 'keep down the vapours'.

Pepys indicates that fruit was reaching the market<sup>3</sup>:

"Eat a muskmelon, the first I have tasted this year".

He received a shipment from Spain<sup>4</sup>:

"Had some grapes and millions from my Lord at Lisbone, the first that ever I saw, but the grapes are rare things".

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1. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Apr.13,1669.
  2. Life in a Noble Household (1641-1700).
  3. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Aug.24,1659.
  4. Ibid Sept.27,1666.

The careful Pepys recorded the price of fruit<sup>1</sup>:

"Buy other things---lemons six pence  
and oranges three pence".

Evelyn, who was a contemporary and friend of Pepys has a few references to fruit in his Diary<sup>2</sup>:

"Saw at Beddington, the ancient seat of the Carews, famous for the first orange garden in England, also pomegranates bearing well".

He also records his impressions of pine-apple<sup>3</sup>:

"Ate that rare fruit called the King's pine, growing in Barbadoes and the West Indies. His Majesty having cut it up was pleased to give me a piece off his own plate to taste of; it has a grateful acidity but tastes more like the quince and melon than of any other fruit".

Evelyn's Diary was written for all to read while that of his friend Pepys was written in shorthand which he likely never expected to be deciphered. If this favor had happened to Pepys his entry would likely have been: "Did today taste of that fruit called the King's pine which the King did lately receive from the West Indies, but Lord! the piece given me being of that small size that was hard to decide on the flavor, but very good withal".

The excellence of English apples has been celebrated by many. It is recorded in that song so beloved by male

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1. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Dec.8,1665.  
2. Diary, John Evelyn, Sept.27,1666.  
3. Ibid Aug.12,1677.

quartettes a few years ago: "We've come up from Somerset, where the cider apples grow".

And John Webster asks<sup>1</sup>:

"Is not old wine wholsomest, old pippins toothsomest?"

Evelyn recorded in his Diary some of his impressions regarding a journey about England. Advances in horticulture were being made, especially on the estates of the wealthy. He describes a garden on an estate which Sir Robt. Clayton bought from a relative of his--Sir John Evelyn at Godstone, Surrey<sup>2</sup>:

"It is such a solitude among hills, as being not above sixteen miles from London, seems almost incredible, the ways up to it are so winding and intricate. The gardens are large and well walled, and the husbandry part made very convenient and perfectly understood. The barns, the stacks of corn, the stalls for cattle, pigeon house, etc. of most laudable example. Innumerable are the plantings of trees, especially walnuts. The orangery and gardens are very curious".

The gardens and orchards of these great houses were primarily laid out for beauty, but advances in fruit growing were made.

Evelyn pays tribute to the estate of Lady Clarendon at Swallowfield<sup>3</sup>:

"There is an orchard of one thousand golden and other cider pippins; walks and groves of elms, limes, oaks and other trees. The garden is so beset with all manners of sweet shrubs, that it perfumes the air".

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1. Westward Hoe, John Webster, 2,2,54.
  2. Diary, John Evelyn, Oct.12,1677.
  3. Ibid Oct.22,1685.

Glass houses were being built for growing nectarines, peaches, vines and even lemon and orange trees. Heat was supplied at first with stoves. Evelyn indicates that conducted heat was installed in some glass houses <sup>1</sup>:

"I went to see Mr. Watt, keeper of the apothecaries garden of simples, at Chelsea. What was very ingenious was the subterranean heat, conveyed by a stove under the conservatory, all vaulted with brick, so as he had the doors and windows open in the hardest frost, secluding only the snow".

Many of these estates were those of the newly rich, some who made fortunes in the expansion of trade with the South Seas and the Orient. It is to be hoped that some shrubs and fruit bushes found their way from these estates to the small holding of the peasants.

Even in the early eighteenth century fruit was expensive and its use confined to the well to do except during local harvest time. The French traveller and writer M. Misson comments on English life <sup>2</sup>:

"The Desert the English never dream of unless it be a piece of cheese. Fruit is brought only to the Tables of the Great and of a great deficiency even at that".

Prices were high even during the fruit season. Records of purchases for the household of Earl of Bedford show eight pounds of cherries costing 5s 4d, two quarts of gooseberries 6d, three and a quarter bushels of peas 9s 4d.

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1. Diary, John Evelyn, Aug.7,1685

2. Memoirs of English Travel, M.Misson, 1719.

From earliest time, the peasants and countrymen made some use of nuts for food. In Vergil's Gnat we find<sup>1</sup>:

"The oke whose acorns were our food".

The sweet chestnut which grows so well in England also provided nuts; chestnuts roasting on the hob; chestnuts to flavor dressing for fowl.

In the hard wood forests in the fall, there was a plentiful supply of nuts, On this supply of nuts or mast, swine were fattened during the golden days of autumn. Such a scene is described in Scott's Ivanhoe. Our modern word bacon is derived from the Anglo Saxon word "bucon" which was the name for this crop of acorns, beechnuts, and other varieties.

Nuts contain fairly large amounts of protein and very large amount of fat. The biological value of proteins from nuts is low, being inferior to those from cereals. Nuts supply a large amount of phosphorus. They contain no Vitamin C but appreciable, although variable, amounts of Vitamins A and B.

For most of the population in Mediaeval and Tudor England fruit was available during the season only when berries, either wild or cultivated, and tree fruits were in season. There must have been a decided deficiency of Vitamin C in the diet. A regular supply of this vitamin is necessary since it is rapidly excreted from the body.

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1. Vergil's Gnat, Edmund Spenser, 1.200

Fruit seems to have been regarded as not good food, arising perhaps from the influence of Galen, who considered that they gave rise to fevers. Sir Thomas Elyot states<sup>1</sup>:

"That nowe all fruites are generally noyfulle to man, and do ingender ylle humours and be oftetyms the cause of putrifid fevers, yf they be moche and contynually eaten".

Peaches were regarded as among the least harmful, yet opinion was held that fruit caused a "grevious flux". This fear was due, doubtless, to the spread of dysentery during the summer months when fruit was in season.

This prejudice against fruit persisted into succeeding centuries for Pepys says<sup>2</sup>:

"In the afternoon had word that my Lord Hinchingbroke is fallen ill, which I fear is with the fruit that I did give them on Saturday last at my house; so in the evening I went thither and there found him very ill and in great fear of the small pox".

During the 18th century orchards in Kent expanded rapidly and much fruit was sent to London. In 1794 apples sold for 7s - 8s a sack and filberts 16s - 42s a hundred (104 lb.)<sup>3</sup>

The vitamin content of some of the more common fruits in raw state (the edible part) is given in the following table. Vitamin A is expressed in International units, Vitamin B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> and C in micrograms per 100 g. of fruit.

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1. The Castel of Helthe, Sir Thos. Elyot, 1539.
  2. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Aug. 12, 1661.
  3. General View of the Agriculture of Kent, John Boys.

TABLE V

	Vitamin Content			
	A	<u>B<sub>1</sub></u>	C	<u>B<sub>2</sub></u>
Apples	50	45	6000	75
Apricots	4000	30	11,000	73
Blackberries	83	45	3000	Low
Cherries	200	50	12,000	Low
Currents	400	30	100,000	Low
Gooseberries	380	150	25,000	Low
Oranges	90	78	48,000	60
Peaches	1700	20	8,000	64
Pears	15	60	5,000	76
Plums	360	100	5,000	45
Prunes, dried	1600	180	Nil	650
Strawberries	50	33	6,000	300

Some other native berries have a high Vitamin C content. Rose hips are especially high and during the late war were made into a puree to supply this essential nutrient. It is interesting to note that rose hips were used even in Tudor times to "purify the blood".

It seems clear that a prescorbutic condition especially in winter existed among all classes. Remedies were given in 16th century herbals for "making loose teeth firm" and for "purifying the blod in spryngtyme". Most of these remedies were herbs or extracts prepared from fresh strawberry leaves, raw purslane, raw gooseberries, bramble leaves, or leaves in wine.

These symptoms of scurvy were aggravated on a restricted diet and especially severe among seamen and explorers. It is not proposed to study that aspect of diet in this paper. It is well known that the value of lemons and limes was determined empirically and that British sailors became known as "limey's" since their ships carried supplies of these juices. One unfortunate by product of this discovery was that it was thought that acids in general protected against scurvy. Some ship masters and owners supplied vinegar and oil of vitriol (sulphuric acid) since they were cheaper. The latter had no antiscorbutic power and the former only if it might have come from a cask in which some vegetable, such as cabbage, was preserved.

In general it may be said that the insufficient supply of fruit at certain seasons of the year, and the unfortunate prejudice against its use, brought about a condition where scurvy at least in a mild form was very prevalent.

## C H A P T E R      F I V E

"A gardin goodly garnished with hearbs and  
fruit"<sup>1</sup>

### V E G E T A B L E S

A dietary maxim, that at a dinner meal two vegetables other than potatoes should be served, is of quite recent origin. Our ancestors in England, in early times, did not use many vegetables. It seems strange to think of a dinner meal without potatoes and other vegetables.

In a previous chapter reference has been made to the large quantities of meat which were consumed by the well to do. It must be realized that the poor did not fare so well.

Three vegetables seem to have been grown from early times, viz, garlic, onions and leeks. In the Prologue to  
Canterbury Tales the description occurs :  
<sup>2</sup>

"Wel loved he garlick, oynons and leks".

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1. The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser, 2,7,51,4.
  2. Prologue to Canterbury Tales, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1,634.

Peas are also referred to but it is difficult to distinguish between garden peas and field peas<sup>1</sup>:

"He poureth pesen (peas) upon the hatches slide".

Water cress grew abundantly in the English countryside and was used in "salats". In recent years it has been found that water cress is quite rich in Vitamin C and its use has a firm scientific foundation.

Piers Ploughman describes what the poorer people had to eat<sup>2</sup>:

"Piers had only cheese, curds, an oat cake, a loaf of beans and bran and a few vegetables so the other poor people brought peascods, beans and cherries, also pease and leeks".

When we pass along to Tudor England, many kinds of vegetables seem to have been grown.

In Midsummer Night's Dream, when the actors are getting ready, Bottom admonishes them<sup>3</sup>:

"And most dear actors eat no onions nor garlick, for we are to utter sweet breath".

A character appearing in several of Shakespeare's plays, who has a great connection with food--all kinds and in quantity-- is Sir John Falstaff. While he does not make an appearance in King Henry V, three of his servants appear as soldiers. One of

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1. The Legend of Good Women, Geoffrey Chaucer, 1,648.
  2. Vision of Piers Ploughman, Wm.Langland, Passus 7.
  3. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Wm.Shakespeare, 4,2,43.

these, Pistol, brags to the King how he would attack Fluellen<sup>1</sup>:

"Tell him I'll knock his leek about his pate  
upon Saint Davy's day".

When Fluellen is talking with King Henry after the battle of Agincourt, he recalls that Henry's grandfather John of Gaunt also fought in that locality. He recalls the service of the Welshman on that occasion<sup>2</sup>:

"The Welshmen did goot service in a garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their monmouth caps, which, your Majesty knows, to this hour is an honourable pledge of their service; and I do believe your Majesty takes no scorn, to wear the leek upon St.Davy's day".

To which the King graciously replied:

"I wear it for a memorable honour; for I am Welsh, you know, good countryman".

In the dark tragedy Othello, we find the villain Iago comparing our bodies to gardens<sup>3</sup>:

"So that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many".

It would seem that lettuce and herbs were in general use, since these grow with little care.

In Henry IV, 2,1,9 we find two carters complaining about the quality of the inn<sup>4</sup>:

"Peas and beans are as dank here as a dog".

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1. King Henry V, Wm. Shakespeare, 4,1,54.
  2. Ibid " " 4,7,107.
  3. Othello " " 1,3,325
  4. First Part, King Henry IV, Wm. Shakespeare, 2,1,9.

Evidently beans were used for animal food as well as for humans, for in A Midsummer'Night's Dream we find the mischievous Puck relating<sup>1</sup>:

"I jest to Oberon and make him smile,  
When I a fat and bean fed horse beguile,  
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal".

This gives a pretty picture of an overfed stallion which has been standing in the stable for a long time.

Parsley is a vegetable that grows easily; a perennial, it requires little care. Evidently it has long been used for garnishing soups and salads. In Taming of the Shrew, Biondello says<sup>2</sup>:

"I knew a wench married in an afternoon as  
she went to the garden for parsley to stuff  
a rabbit".

A vegetable associated with the Germanic tribes from earliest times was turnip. Reference to their use showing them to be common is found in The Merry Wives of Windsor<sup>3</sup>:

"Alas I had rather be set quick in the earth  
and bowled to death with turnips".

Pope mentions them in the Moral Essays<sup>4</sup>:

"Had roasted turnip in the Sabine Farm"

This recalls that turnips are delicious when roasted in the ashes of a fire, preferably outdoors, as every farm boy knows.

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1. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Wm. Shakespeare, 2,1,45.
  2. The Taming of the Shrew, " " 4,4,115.
  3. The Merry Wives of Windsor, " " 3,4,91.
  4. Moral Essays, Alex Pope, 1,219.

The common potato, which is used in such quantities, was introduced from America. This plant, *Solanum tuberosum*, was a native of the lower Andes and was taken to Europe by the Spaniards. Its introduction to England has been attributed to Sir Francis Drake. Rev. Barton Lodge attributes its introduction to Sir Walter Raleigh in these unflattering words<sup>1</sup>:

"It was one of the greatest villians upon earth (Sir Walter Raleigh) who (they say) first brought this root into England".

Shakespeare mentions this vegetable as if it were in common use. When the portly Falstaff is disguised as a buck (he frankly says "the fattest, I think, in the forest") waiting for the two matrons, who have bedevilled him all through The Merry Wives of Windsor, he says<sup>2</sup>:

"Let the sky rain potatoes".

This vegetable is coupled with kale in Robert Burns' Holy Willie's Prayer:

"Curse thou his basket and his store of kale  
and potatoes".

Potatoes were at first grown only in a few kitchen gardens and there was much opposition to their general use. They were thought to be unwholesome and were more popular in Ireland than in England. It is interesting to note that their common nickname is derived from an attempt to discredit their use: Society for

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1. Palladius on Husbandrie, Rev. Barton Lodge.

2. The Merry Wives of Windsor, Wm. Shakespeare, 5,5,21.

Prevention of Unwholesome Diet ( S P U D ). In 1664, an attempt was made to popularize them because of the scarcity of wheat and the unpopularity of rye. The newly formed Royal Society gave encouragement to this movement. John Forster in "England's Happiness Increased.....by a plantation of the roots called potatoes", tried to induce people to grow them and gave a good description of four kinds. He closes on this lyrical note in his prose:

"But when these Roots shall once come into use, People will live more happily and plentifully, Trading will flourish, and much Glory will redound to Almighty God, for discovering so profitable a Secret".

The sweet potato, *Ipomea batata*, seems to have been brought to England by Mr. John Hawkins in 1564. Richard Hakluyt in The Principal Navigations of the English Nation enthused about this vegetable in these words:

"These Potatoes be the most delicate roots that may be eaten, and doe faire exceed our passneps and carets. Their pines be of the bigness of two fists....and the inside eatheth like an apple, but is more delicious than any sweet apple sugred".

This quotation serves not only to extoll sweet potatoes, but also to record that parsnips and carrots were grown by 1564 and that sugar was plentiful enough to be used to sugar apples.

Since peas were a crop grown in the Middle Ages, we find reference to them in Shakespeare and in Pepys Diary.

A manuscript on gardening, written about 1440, lists seventy-eight plants suitable for cultivation. Most of these were savoury herbs used in the kitchen in preparation of meats, sauce, or salads, and only a few vegetables in our modern sense. Salads were liked and much used. In the Paston Letters, Dame Margaret writes <sup>1</sup>:

"Send you several potts of oyle for saladys".

Catherine of Parr used to send messengers to Holland to procure material for salads<sup>2</sup>: John Dryden in the Hind and the Panther states<sup>3</sup>:

"And with a Lenten salad cooled her blood".

Certainly in Lent and on fast days more vegetables would be used in place of meat. These herb salads would help in supplying Vitamin C and balance the large intake of meat. Edward Smith in Foods gives this recipe for a fourteenth century salad:

"Take Psel, Sawge, garlee, chibol'i, oynons, leek, borage, myn't, poneet, fenel, and ton tressis (cresses), rew, rosemarye, purslarye, laue, and weische hem clene, picke hem, pluk he small wip phu (thine) hand and myng hem wel with rawe oile, lay on viynegr and salt and sue it forth".

1. The Paston Letters, Apr.30,1472.

2. History of English Gardens, G.W.Johnson.

3. The Hind and the Panther, John Dryden, Part 3,1.30.

In the delightful portrayal of the Fairies in Midsummer Night's Dream, Bottom is talking to the sprite Peasblossom and greets him in these words<sup>1</sup>:

"I pray you commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother and to Master Peascod your father".

And a few lines further he consoles Mustardseed in these words:

"That same cowardly giant like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentlemen of your house--your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now".

Advances were made in gardens and in vegetable culture about 1560. At that time the Duke of Alva was imposing harsh conditions upon the people of Flanders. Many emigrated and took refuge in England and among these refugees were many farmers and gardeners.

By the time of the Restoration new kinds of vegetables were in use in addition to those formerly used. Pepys wrote in his Diary<sup>2</sup>:

"Mr. Newburne is dead of eating cowcubbers, of which the other day I heard of another, I think".

And on April 23, 1661, he speaks of:

"Passed our time in the garden cutting up speragus for dinner".

It is certain that the growth and culture of gardens was fostered by the monasteries. Not only did the monks have time to

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1. A Midsummer Night's Dream, Wm. Shakespeare, 3,1,182.  
2. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Sept. 2, 1663.

devote to horticulture, but the interchange of personnel with religious houses on the continent served to bring to England knowledge about new fruits and vegetables. Emphasis was placed on theseasoning herbs--rape, onions, garlic and leeks. Quite likely the strong seasoning was needed to overcome the strong taste of tainted meat in summer and to increase the palatability of salted meat.

It was not until the middle of the 19th century that the tomato was introduced from North Carolina. Some authorities considered it to be violently aphrodisiac, hence the name "love-apple". At first it was used as a decoration, but soon became popular as food. Vegetable marrow and pumpkin were introduced about the beginning of the 19th century.

From records of food purchased for special events, it seems that during Mediaeval times and later, vegetables were not used to any great extent. Cabbages were purchased and used mainly for making soups and potages. In the amount of purchases for a dinner for fifty people, given by the Salter's Company, recorded in A History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London, by William Herbert, there is a long list of materials but no mention of vegetables. Large amounts of meat and generous supplies of spices such as pepper, mace, saffron are given but vegetables were held in poor esteem.

Even in the 17th century, vegetables were scarcely more popular. In The Anatomy of Melancholy, by R. Burton, we find this statement:

"Some approve of potatoes, parsnips, but all corrected for wind".

Correction was achieved by the use of herbs and simples. Burton himself lists no less than sixty-four such corrections. Perhaps this little use of vegetables in the towns and cities was because of their greater use among countrymen and accordingly they were despised as poor man's food.

The value of vegetables in diet is largely for their content of mineral salts and of vitamins. Important too is the fact that vegetables and most fruits have an alkaline reaction upon the blood. In Table VI, a partial analysis of some vegetables is given to illustrate what may be expected from different varieties and the wide range in essential nutrients. In this table, Vitamin A is expressed in International units, Vitamins B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> in micrograms and Vitamin C in milligrams per 100 g. of food. Analysis is given on the raw state and on wet basis. Thus the figures are comparable for food as eaten.

TABLE VI

	Calcium %	Phosphorus %	Iron Milligrams per Kg	Copper Milligrams per Kg	A	B <sub>1</sub>	Vitamins C	B <sub>2</sub>
Asparagus	.025	.039	9.6	1.4	1,400	180	40	130
Green beans	.046	.136	9.8	1.0	1,200	95	23	150
Cabbages	.045	.029	4.3	.5	38	80	100	66
Carrots	.056	.046	6.4	.8	10,000	70	4	65
Celery	.078	.037	6.2	.1	10	36	9	35
Dandelion greens...	.084	.035	30.3	1.5	12,000	200	150	220
Garlic	.010	.143	23.0	3.6	Nil	Low	14	Low
Lambsquarter	-	-	-	-	19,000	Low	25	Low
Onions	.034	.045	4.8	.8	Nil	33	20	120
Parsley	.045	.029	31.6	2.1	5,000	80	140	Low
Dried Peas	.084	.400	57.0	14.0	5,100	540	Nil	300
White Potatoes	.014	.058	9.1	1.7	40	150	28	50
Spinach	.067	.068	25.5	1.2	8,400	100	75	400
Winter Squash	.019	.015	5.5	.4	7,000	48	3	80
Tomatoes	.011	.026	4.4	.7	2,000	80	27	90
Turnip greens	.216	.075	34.8	.9	16,000	140	120	370
Watercress	.157	.046	29.7	.4	4,000	120	60	250

The members of the onion family stand as poor suppliers of Vitamin A. Large amounts of this important vitamin could be obtained from carrots, spinach and also from dandelion, turnip greens and lambsquarters. These would be available to poor people in country districts and would in spring and summer supplement the diet in this respect. Large amounts of iron would also be supplied by these spring herbs. While the figures for Vitamin C show a large variation, the leafy vegetables again stand high. Potatoes contain a fair amount and when consideration is given to the large amount eaten, per person per meal, a substantial amount of Vitamin C may be derived from this source.

A mild deficiency of Vitamin A causes night blindness, so that when passing from a bright light to a dim light one is unable to see properly. More serious deficiency leads to serious eye disorders and in chronic cases to ulceration of the cornea and the development of opaque areas. This eye disorder known as xerophthalmia is prevalent in those countries where a cereal diet is not adequately reinforced with green vegetables and animal products.

In 17th century England it would likely have been children of well to do parents, who suffered from Vitamin A deficiency. Green vegetables and butter were seldom eaten by these classes since they were looked upon as "poor man's food".

Vitamin A deficiency leads to diseases of the bladder and kidneys. The development of stones or calculi in the bladder or urinary tract was quite common in the 17th and 18th century England, even among children and young people. We remember how Pepys had been "cut for the stone" and how he annually celebrated the event and returned thanks to God for his continued good health. A diet rich in calcium and deficient in Vitamin A would tend to cause this trouble.

More vegetables were eaten in the 18th and 19th centuries. In The Old Curiosity Shop, by Charles Dickens, we find Mr. Swiveller sending out for "beef and greens". A rich green colour was even then associated with nutritional value and in The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker, we find Matthew Bramble asserting that cooks:

"Boil their greens with a brass farthing  
to improve the colour".

Although we need copper in the diet to assist the iron to form hemoglobin, the metallic copper obtained in this way would be rather poisonous. In modern times, cooks use vegetable colorings to improve the tints of food. Thus we have spinach served with a dark green colour due to the use of prepared food colouring materials.

In general, we may say that in the Middle Ages few vegetables were eaten, except those of the onion family and green stuff such as parsley and water cress. Both of these latter would supply large amounts of Vitamin A. The development of gardening and vegetable raising was fostered by the monks in monastery gardens. From the Continent and from the New World came new varieties of vegetables which gradually, and often after some reluctance, came into more general use. Even the tomato-- or love apple--overcame its first evil reputation and became popular. No attempt has been made in this study to consider methods of keeping vegetables for winter use as this would lead to the fields of storage and refrigeration.

## C H A P T E R      S I X

"Why, sir, alasse my Cow is a commonwealth to mee,  
for first sir, she allowes me, my wife and sonne,  
for to banket our selves withall, butter, cheese,  
whay, curds, creame, sod (boiled) milk, raw milke,  
sower-milke, sweet milke and butter milke".

## W H I T E      M E A T S

The above quotation from A Looking Glass for London and Englande, by Lodge and Greene, seems to cover the entire field of dairy products or white meats as they were called in mediaeval England. For the purpose of this study, eggs are included in this chapter.

In mediaeval England, considerable numbers of livestock were kept. The lord of the manor had oxen, cows, sheep, pigs and poultry. Even the "poure widewe dwelling in a narwe cottage" whom Chaucer describes<sup>1</sup>:

"owned three large sows, three kine and  
eke a sheep as well as a cok and seven  
hennes".

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1. The Nun Priest's Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer.

Animals thrived during the growing season but in winter feed was short and consisted mostly of hay, straw, dried beans and a very little grain. It was customary to slaughter most of the old and weakly animals, since only the young and healthy were likely to survive the winter season.

Piers Plowman, in describing his state of poverty, says<sup>1</sup>:

"Have only cheese, curds, an oat cake, loaf of beans and bran and a few vegetables".

The Nun Priest's Tale, by Chaucer, says the poor widow had:

"Milke and broun breed in which she found no lak".

The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales uses this simile<sup>2</sup>:

"Whit as morne milk".

In the Roman de la Rose, we find it directed that the traveller should be fed<sup>3</sup>:

"With tarts or with chessis fat".

Evidently the cheese was made from whole milk; there would be little difference between "fat cheese" and skim milk cheese, except that the latter would lack the butterfat--an important ingredient as we shall see.

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1. The Vision of Piers Ploughman, Wm. Langland, Passus 7.
  2. The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, Geoffrey Chaucer, l.358.
  3. The Roman de la Rose, Geoffrey Chaucer, l.7041. (Translation)

Spenser in the Faerie Queene speaks of other domestic animals<sup>1</sup>:

"She went as housewife to milk their gotes".

There is little difference in the chemical composition of cow's and goat's milk, although the latter is said to form smaller curds and to be more digestible, particularly by invalids.

Edmund Spenser speaks of the early summer--a season of plenty in the country<sup>2</sup>:

"Butter enough, honeye, milke and whay".

During the summer, quantities of butter were "salted down" to last for winter. Such salted butter would be sold in the town and if not well salted it would become rancid due to even small quantities of butyric acid.

The Shepherds Calendar for November refers to:

"Curds and clotted cream".

The Chamberlain at the inn at Rochester tells Gladshill of two travellers with money<sup>3</sup>:

"They are up already and call for eggs and butter; they will away presently".

The ambitious Hotspur found Glendower tedious company<sup>4</sup>:

"I had rather live  
With cheese and garlic in a windmill, far  
Than feed on cates and have him talk to me,  
In any summer-house in Christendom".

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1. The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser, 3,10,36,8.

2. The Shepherds Calendar, Edmund Spenser, May.

3. First Part, King Henry IV, Wm. Shakespeare, 2,2,65.

4. Ibid 3,1,162.

In the song to winter in Love's Labor Lost the difficulties of the milk-maid are expressed:

"And milk comes frozen home in pail".

At that time, cows were not stabled comfortably and milking was done either outdoors or in an open shed.

Cheese was often served as a second course, a dessert as shown in The Merry Wives of Windsor<sup>1</sup>:

"Pray you begone; I will make an end of my dinner; there's pippins and cheese to come".

In derision, a special kind of cheese is named in The Merry Wives of Windsor<sup>2</sup>:

"You Banbury Cheese!"

It is in The Winter's Tale that the lady is referred to as:

"The queen of curds and cream".

Certain localities throughout England became famous for making particular types of cheese. In Imitations of Horace, by Alexander Pope, this line occurs:

"Cheese such as men in Suffolk make".

The name of Cheddar was given to a rather firm type of cheese and this is our ordinary Canadian cheese.

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1. The Merry Wives of Windsor, Wm. Shakespeare, 1,2,13.  
2. Ibid " " 1,1,130.

The unhappy King Henry VI is portrayed by Shakespeare in the midst of bloody civil war soliloquizing in these words<sup>1</sup>:

"The shepherd's homely curds  
His cold thin drink out of his leathern bottle  
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,  
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,  
Is far beyond a prince's delicacies  
When care, mistrust and treason wait on him".

An even simpler life is sketched in Titus Andronicus<sup>2</sup>:

"I'll make you feed on berries and on roots,  
And feed on curds and whey, and suck the goat,  
And cabin in a cave".

Poultry formed part of the holdings even of the poorer peasants, and eggs formed part of their food--at least during the summer season.

In As You Like It, Touchstone is trying to impress Corin with his learning and knowledge of the court. When Corin admits that he was never at court, Touchstone jests<sup>3</sup>:

"Truly thou are damned; like an ill roasted egg,  
all on one side".

Evidently roasting eggs was a proper way to cook them for Pope in Satire of Horace, haughtily states<sup>4</sup>:

"The vulgar boil, the learned roast an egg".

Robt. Burns mentions the products of the dairy. In The Holy Friar, he speaks of:

"Sweet milk cheese"

- 
1. King Henry VI, Wm. Shakespeare, 2,5,47.
  2. Titus Andronicus, Wm. Shakespeare, 4,2,178.
  3. As You Like It " " 2,2,39.
  4. Satire of Horace, Alex. Pope, 6,85.

end in The Death of Maillie, in true Scotch hospitable style, he offers:

"Gie them gud cow milk their fill",

while in Oh gie my love Brose this line occurs:

"Gie my love brose and butter".

In Pepys Diary, cheese is mentioned very often, usually as the dessert course, often served with fruit or tarts.

Let us now proceed to determine to what extent dairy products were used as food and how they were regarded.

The nutritive value of milk is recognized<sup>1</sup>:

"A man may live with milke only and it wil serve instead of meat and drink and medicine".

The School of Salerne, translated 1608 by Sir John Herington, recognizes that it was composed of three parts--creame, whey and curds. This division does represent the three most important constituents, viz, fat, water soluble constituents and the protein--casein. This division, given in 1608, is in fact a proximate analysis.

It came to be recognized that some milk was more nutritious than other for in The Castel of Helth, by Sir Thomas Elyot, this statement is found:

"In sprynge tyme mylke is moost subtyll and milke of young beasts, is holsomer, than of olde".

---

1. Sundrie new and artificiall Remedies against Famine, Sir Hugh Platt 1596.

Milk is an ideal breeding ground for microbes and germs so that it was often felt that it was an unsafe drink, as it very likely was under the sanitary conditions prevailing.

Erasmus warns<sup>1</sup>:

"Concerning moystures it is not mete to drynke mylke usually, but moderately to use it for a meate for it engendereth dyseases".

Whey was regarded as a "temperate drinke" and very large amounts were drunk. Sir Thomas Elyot refers to it in his

Castel of Health:

"Also by reason of the affinitie whiche it hath with mylke, it is convertible into bludde and fleshe".

Most of the cheese known to the peasant would be of the soft cheese type, except in certain localities referred to above.

The School of Salerne refers to cheese in this rhyme:

"For healthie men new cheese be wholesome food  
But for the weake and sickly 'tis not good,  
Cheese is a heauiie meate, both grosse and cold  
And breedeth costivesse both new and old".

Butter was used more for cooking than eating, except as a medicine. This line indicates one of the uses to which butter was put<sup>2</sup>:

"Now butter with a leaf of sage is good to  
purge the blood".

May butter was regarded as especially beneficial and nutritious.

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1. Governance of Health, Plutarch, translated by Erasmus.
  2. Knight of the Burning Pestle, Beaumont and Fletcher.

The case for spring made butter is stated thus<sup>1</sup>:

"Yet would I wish that such as have children  
to bring up, would not bee without May  
Butter in their houses".

The same author goes on to describe how May butter  
is made:

"It is to bee made chiefly in May, or in the  
heate of the yeare, by setting Butter new made  
without salt, so much as you list in a  
platter, open to the Sunne in faire weather  
for certaine daies, untill it bee  
sufficiently clarified, and altered in colour,  
which will be in twelve or fourteene daies, if it  
be faire Sunne shining".

Such treatment would make the butter rancid and the  
development of peroxide oxygen in the fat would cause practically  
all the carotene and Vitamin A to be destroyed. It is true that  
exposure to the sun's rays would increase the Vitamin D content  
and give it enhanced anti rachitic properties. Used in the Spring  
it would help relieve pains in the joints due to rickets.

The milk of goats, sheep and asses is very nutritious  
and even in 1685 the last was highly regarded as a tonic, probably  
because it was so easily digested.

Lady Gardiner advised Sir Ralph Verney, during the  
trying Buckingham election<sup>2</sup>:

"I am sur if you due not begin to take the  
asses milk quickly you will have bot a  
short time to take it."

- 
1. The Haven of Health, Thomas Cogan, 1584.
  2. The Memoirs of the Verney Family, Vol.14.

The poet Gay notes that even in his time 1685-1732, asses were still driven about London and their milk sold fresh from producer to consumer<sup>1</sup>:

The proteins of milk, cheese, whey and eggs are of great value, biologically, since they contain the essential amino acids and can supplement the protein from cereals and vegetables. If the peasants had little meat it is fortunate that they consumed some "white meats". Animal fats would supply Vitamin <sup>A</sup> but if these were lacking, as they usually were, Vitamin A must come from green vegetables or white meats. The mediaeval peasant ate few vegetables except those of the onion family, so white meats became very important in the peasants diet to provide Vitamin A.

Even in the 17th century only the working classes ate butter in quantity as the wealthier class thought it only fit for cooking. Thomas Muffett, in 1655, in Health Improvements expresses the opinion generally held:

"Only I wonder with him (Pliny) that Africa and other Barbarous Countreys esteem it a Gentleman's dish, when here and in Holland, and in all Northern Regions, it is the chief food of the poorer sort".

Thus the wealthier classes were missing one of the best sources of Vitamin A but since their diet included large amounts of meat it probably contained enough of this Vitamin.

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1. Trivia, John Gay, Canto 2

Another important point about milk and other dairy products is the important calcium and phosphorus which they contain, in a form easily assimilated. The composition of some dairy products is given in Table VII. Vitamin A is expressed in International units, Vitamin B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> in micrograms, Vitamin C and Niacin (nicotinic acid) in milligrams and Vitamin D in International units per 100 grams.

The products of the dairy were important in English diet. Somewhat despised by the well to do and referred to as "white meats", they formed a large part of the food of the common people. Their importance today leads them to be placed high on the list of protective foods.

TABLE VII

	Protein	Fat	Calcium	Phosphorus	A	B <sub>1</sub>	C	Vitamins	Niacin	D
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>				B <sub>2</sub>		
Butter	.6	81.0	.015	.017	2400	0-120	Nil	8	Low	100
Cheese, Cheddar	22.3	30.2	.710	.682	2000	42	Nil	600	-	33
Cheese, Cottage	12.5	.8	.077	.374	110	20	Nil	-	-	-
Cream	2.9	20.0	.090	.080	1600	60	1.0	350	-	50
Milk, whole										
pasteurized..	3.5	3.9	.120	.093	170	36	.7	210	-	1
Whey	13.0	.5	.572	.524	-	1100	Nil	5900	15	-
Eggs	12.8	11.5	.067	.180	1000	150	Nil	300	7	95

## C H A P T E R      S E V E N

"I think with one draught, man's invention fades,  
Two cups had quite spoiled Homer's Iliads!  
'Tis liquor that will find out Sutcliffe's wit,<sup>1</sup>  
Lie where he will, and make him write worse yet"<sup>1</sup>

## B E V E R A G E S

From early times water has not been highly regarded as a beverage by the English. Certain exceptions must be made where writers have extolled the pleasure to be derived from a crystal spring or from a deep well. Then, too, the value of medicinal springs was recognized from the time of the Romans who built and equipped the first establishments at Bath. Many authors have had their characters "take the waters" both for the good of the individual and for the gossip and intrigue which seemed to flourish so well there, nourished, no doubt by the waters and by the wealth.

Matthew Bramble boasts of the quality of water on his home estate<sup>2</sup>:

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1. Letter to Ben Jonson, Francis Beaumont.
  2. The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker, Tobias Smollett.

"Drink the pure lymph, pure crystalline as  
it gushes from rocks".

As usual, his opinion of things in town--in London--is far from  
complimentary:

"If I would drink water, I must quaff the  
mawkish content of an open aqueduct,  
exposed to all manners of defilment or  
swallow that from the Thames, impregnated  
with all the filth of London and  
Westminster".

In the course of their tour about England, Humphrey  
Clinker and his master visited a famous spring at Harrowgate,  
said to be useful "for curing scurvy and other distempers".  
Humphrey did not care for it, claiming it smelled of rotten  
eggs--containing large amounts of soluble sulphides.

Sir John Harington's translation of Regimen Sanitatis  
contains this opinion of water:

"Some to drinke onley water are assign'd  
But such by our consent shall drinke alone  
For water and small beere we make no question,  
Are enemies to health and good digestion".

Water borne infection must have been so common that it had been  
established that generally it was safer to drink wine or beer.

In Mediaeval times, the lord of the manor and his guests  
drank ale, cider, perry, metheglin (a kind of mead) or wine. These,  
with the exception of wine, were made on his own estate. The  
villagers brewed their own crude ale.

In the Beowulf, feasting and drinking are described at great length. The mead hall with its overhead beams and wooden benches was the center of communal life. Salzman notes<sup>1</sup>: that in the Saxon guild hall, glasses were round on the bottom. Indeed ox-horns were often used and since these could not be set down on the table and must perforce be held in the hand, it was natural to drink ale freely.

English ale seems to have been of good quality for when Thomas a Beckett visited the French court in 1157 he took casks of English ale with him<sup>2</sup>: Cider was imported from Normandy and then its manufacture became firmly established in Sussex and Somerset.

Chaucer refers to ales so frequently that it may be considered the usual drink. Quality of ale was regulated by law, officers known as "ale-conners" being appointed to pass on the quality.

The practice of adding herbs, especially hops, to ale, was introduced from Flanders early in the 15th century. Charges of adulteration were made against the ale brewers and protests about beer were made. Henry VI tried to help the innovation and called "biere, notable, healthie and temperate", but it was many years before its content of hops was accepted by the people and it

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1. Mediaeval English Industries, L.F. Salzman, The Clarendon Press.

2. Ibid.

became popular. Hops, due to the large amount of resins which it contains, had a marked effect of improving the keeping quality of the beverage. Consequently the ale need not be brewed as strong when it contained hops.

After the Norman conquest, grape culture was introduced into England and much wine was produced. In Tudor times the culture of vineyards was neglected, due chiefly to the dissolution of the religious houses and the dispersal of those who understood the care of the vines.

One place definitely associated with literary production was the Mermaid Tavern, where Jonson, Shakespeare, and other worthies gathered. It is certain that ale and wine played some part in furnishing inspiration for discussion which was part of that literary circle, whose members produced drama that made the Elizabethan theatre our finest literary heritage.

Francis Beaumont in his Letter to Ben Jonson pays tribute to Jonson and the other worthies:

"What things we have seen  
 Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been  
 So nimble, and so full of subtle flame.  
 As if that every one (from whence they came)  
 Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest".  
 . . . . .  
 "Ben when these Scenes are perfect, we'll taste wine!  
 I'll drink thy Muse's health! thou shalt quaff mine!"

John Keats too salutes these worthies of a former  
age in Lines on the Mermaid Tavern:

"Souls of poets dead and gone  
What Elysium have ye known,  
Happy field or mossy cavern,  
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern".

Shakespeare has given many pictures of convivial  
scenes. Falstaff is, without doubt, the "brightest" character  
among the food and drink heroes. Prince Hal twits him<sup>1</sup>:

"Thou art so fat-witted, with drinking  
of old sack".

And in the same play Falstaff says<sup>2</sup>:

"A plague of all cowards, I say, and a  
vengeance too! marry and amen!--give  
me a cup of sack boy."

The Boar's Head Tavern, at Eastcheap, was a favorite  
rendezvous for this "sweet beef" as Prince Hal called him<sup>3</sup>  
together with other wild companions of the Prince.

In Henry IV, the Chief Justice politely upbraids  
Falstaff<sup>4</sup>:

"You have misled the youthful prince".

Yet this fat, sack drinking rascal must have had many friends  
for in the same play the Hostess of the Boar's Head Tavern says<sup>5</sup>:

"Well fare thee well: I have known thee these  
twenty-nine years come peasecod time; but an  
honester and truer-hearted man--well, fare thee well".

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1. First Part, King Henry IV, 2,2,1.
  2. Ibid 2,4,120.
  3. Ibid 3,3,104.
  4. Second Part, King Henry IV, 1,2,132.
  5. Ibid 2,4,345.

Falstaff will always be associated with conviviality--  
 an exceptionally well drawn character. He himself sums up much  
 of his life in these words <sup>1</sup> :

"We have heard the chimes at midnight,  
 Master Shallow".

Pepys in his Diary often speaks of ale or wine taken  
 at meals and at one entry he speaks of a special drink<sup>2</sup>:

"Last of all to have a flagon of ale and  
 apples drunk out of a wood cup as a  
 Christmas draught".

On November 10, 1666 he tells of:

"Drinking lamb's wool (ale mixed with sugar,  
 nutmeg and pulp of roasted apples".

He also records the drinking of metheglin--a Mediaeval drink--  
 "made of honey and water, boiled and fermented".

The sale of ale and beer had long been regulated; at  
 the time of Edward VI it had been made illegal to sell these  
 except at public houses. In the early years of the 18th century  
 spirit drinking became common due chiefly to the sale of cheap  
 gin and other raw, crude spirits.

Henry Fielding in An Enquiry into the Causes of the late  
 Increase of Robbers describes the terrible conditions:

"The drunkenness I here intend is that acquired  
 by the strongest intoxicating liquors and,  
 particularly by that poison called gin".

The Frank Matthew Bramble comments on the situation in 1771<sup>3</sup>:

1. Second Part, King Henry IV, 3,2,162.
2. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Jan.4,1667.
3. Expedition of Humphrey Clinker, Tobias Smollett.

"The intoxicating potion sold for wine....  
 a vile, unpalatable, and pernicious  
 sophistication, balderdashed with cider,  
 corn spirit and the juice of sloes".

Small beer, which was no stronger than today's lager  
 beer, was the usual table drink of the young. In the Memoirs of  
 the Verney Family 1899, Molly and Ralph were:

"Very ill of a fever and pains with a short  
 cough very fast"

yet they would not say where they felt pains and refused

"to be blouded or vomited and would take  
 nothing but small beere".

It was common practise to soothe a fretful child at  
 night by giving it a piece of bread soaked in wine. Usually  
 this made the little one sleep soundly and not disturb the  
 parents.

School boys drank small beer which had a value of  
 150-200 calories per pint. This was the only food value in it  
 since the Vitamin B originally present in the grain would be  
 lost when the yeast was skimmed off and the beer was fined.

Even the scholarly and devout Dr. Samuel Johnson  
 stated his opinion regarding suitable drinks <sup>1</sup> :

"Claret is the liquor for boys,  
 Port for men; but he who aspires to be  
 a hero must drink brandy".

The qualities of a "hero" were displayed by the waiter

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1. Life of Johnson, James Boswell, p.271.

in David Copperfield<sup>1</sup>. He offered to drink David's ale for him since it was "too old, and it oughn't to be drawn, that's a fact". Of course the poor homesick lad agreed and thus emboldened the waiter proceeded to eat practically all David's dinner. In Chapter 6 of the same volume, David is advised by an older boy at the school "to lay out" his two half crowns on a little feast and among the purchases was "a bottle of currant wine".

It was in 1764 that Dr. Samuel Johnson and his friends formed The Literary Club which met at The Turk's Head Tavern. Some famous men associated with it were Goldsmith the Irish writer, Boswell the Scotch biographer of Johnson, Burke the statesman, Reynolds the painter, Garrick the actor and many others. Here for a quarter of a century Dr. Johnson held sway. Just as Ben Jonson had quaffed sack at the Mermaid, so Dr. Johnson drank endless cups of tea or a little wine and enjoyed the friendship of these men, even though he overcame argument with shouting and completely domineered over the company.

The formation of this club and others was in part due to the adoption of a new food habit--the drinking of coffee, tea and chocolate. Let us now consider this new development.

John Evelyn, writing in his Diary records the first time he saw coffee drunk:

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1. David Copperfield, Charles Dickens, Chap.5.

"Nathaniel Conopios, later Bishop of Smyrna, was the first I ever saw drink coffee, which custom came not into England 'til thirty years after".

A Turkish merchant opened the first coffee house in London in 1652 at St. Michael's Alley. Many of these "coffee shoppes" gained wide fame as the meeting place of literary, artistic and commercial circles.

M. Misson's Memoirs translated by Mr. Ozell refers to them very agreeably:

"You have all Manner of News there: you have a good Fire, which you may sit by as long as you please: You have a Dish of Coffee; you meet your Friends for the Transaction of Business, and all for a Penny, if you don't care to spend more".

Pepys in his Diary writes of visiting a coffee house and as usual comments<sup>1</sup>:

"Lord how highly the Presbyters do talk in the coffee houses, still".

These coffee houses became informal clubs and men about town dropped in to meet their friends. Alexander Pope in The Rape of the Lock satirized some of the leading men of the day and gave a good description of coffee being prepared right at the tables, after the ladies had finished their game of cards<sup>2</sup>:

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1. Diary of Samuel Pepys, January 16, 1662.

2. The Rape of the Lock, Alexander Pope, Canto 3, Line 40.

"For lo! the board with cup and spoon is crowned  
 The berries crackle and the mill turns round  
 On shining altars of japan, they raise,  
 The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze,  
 From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide".

This would indicate that the coffee berries were ground in a small mill brought to the ladies at the table. Even if Belinda was too much of a coquette, some of her companions prepared the coffee, for line 150 states:

"Coffee (which makes the politician wise)  
 And see through all things with his half shut eye,  
 Sent up in vapors to the baron's brain  
 New stratagems the radiant lock to gain".

Pope paints a delightful picture of the ladies and escorts interested in their game of cards, building up to a climax in this mock heroic, when the Baron, prettily assisted by Belinda's friend, snips a lock from the beauty's head. Despite this levity, much of the literary production of the Augustan Age of English literature is centered about these coffee shops.

Richard Steele was one of the first to build a new type of literature about these clubs which met informally over coffee. He conceived the idea of the character Sir Roger de Coverly, yet it was his schoolboy friend and literary collaborator Joseph Addison who developed this character further. It seems that the idea of the Coverly Papers was Steele's but in Addison he found a co-worker of greater steadiness and finer workmanship than himself. These literary essays were published in The Spectator, which became

very popular and was read and discussed in homes and coffee houses. To Steele's ingenuity and to Addison's powers of description and characterization must be given credit for creating a new type of character in English literature. From the first description of Sir Roger in the essay The Club until the 555<sup>th</sup> number when The Spectator ceased publication, we read with delight of this fine old gentleman. He serves to express ideas upon life, upon philosophy, and upon English customs, which Steele or more often Addison wished to bring before their readers.

Without being disrespectful to the lovable Sir Roger, it may be suggested that he represents the measure and balance of the best in English life of that period, just as Sir John Falstaff represents the exuberance and good living of Tudor times. And, too, it seems fitting that Sir Roger is portrayed by the balanced prose of Addison and that Sir John moves on the pages of Shakespeare's dramas.

In The Rape of the Lock, Pope speaks of tea drinking and in the same couplet pays a neat compliment to Queen Anne<sup>1</sup>:

"Here thou great Anna! whom three realms obey,  
Dost sometimes counsel take--and sometimes tea".

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1. The Rape of the Lock, Alexander Pope, Canto 3, L.9.

Tea was introduced about the same time as coffee, the first supplies of this luxury coming from China. Samuel Pepys wrote <sup>1</sup>:

"Did send for a cup of tee (a China drink) of which I never had drunk before".

One of the first advertisements for tea appeared in 1658:

"That excellent and by all physicians approved China drink, called by the Chinese Tika, by other nations Tay, alias Tee, is sold at the Sulten's Head--a coffee house in Sweeting's Rest by the Royal Exchange".

At first it sold at the great price of £3 10s per pound and had dropped to £2 in about ten years' time. The importations of tea by the East India Company had by the end of the century brought the price down to 20s per pound. It was well on into the next century before it was cheap enough for wide-spread use. Its general use was condemned by some, notably Eden in The State of the Poor, while others believed that it possessed medicinal value. In 1750 Pechlinus in A Treatise on the Inherent Qualities of the Tea-Herb stated:

"And with drinking of Tea only, and regular living, the Distemper of England (Scurvy) occasioned by our too much feeding upon Flesh, may be cured".

In a few years' time it became cheaper and more popular than coffee and chocolate. Incidentally, with the increase in tea

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1. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Sept.25,1664.

drinking, there was an increase in the use of sugar.

Importations from the West Indies brought the price of sugar down to 6-7 d. per pound. Sugar contributed nothing of dietary value except additional calories.

Chocolate drinking became quite common, too, early in the 17th century. Pepys recorded<sup>1</sup>:

"To Creed's chamber and there sat a great while and drank chocolate".

It soon came to be popular with the rich, perhaps because it was more expensive than coffee.

The relative nutritive values of coffee, tea and chocolate may be seen from the partial analysis in Table VIII. Vitamin A content is expressed in International Units and Vitamin B in micrograms per 100 g.

TABLE VIII

	<u>Protein</u> %	<u>Fat</u> %	<u>Ash</u> %	<u>Vitamin A</u>	<u>Vitamin B</u>
Coffee	17.2	16.5	4.9	Nil	Nil
Tea	24.1	8.2	5.9	Nil	Nil
Chocolate	11.0	53.0	2.6	60	75

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This is sufficient upon this subject to show that ale, beer, wines and even the distilled liquors have been used freely

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1. Diary of Samuel Pepys, Oct.17,1661.

by literary men and their friends, and have been associated with literary production. Just as the Mermaid Tavern was a rallying point for Elizabethan literary men, so the coffee shops of Queen Anne's reign were focal points for artistic and literary discussion.

## C H A P T E R   E I G H T

## C O N C L U S I O N

The eating habits of the English nation have been surveyed in the preceding chapters. Illustrations from literature have been given to prove certain conditions and trends.

It is always dangerous to generalize since a particular set of facts is usually applicable only to a certain set of conditions. Habits of eating and drinking are tempered by economic conditions. There have always been two chief barriers to the provision of an adequate diet; these are scarcity and ignorance.

Scarcity may be national or international due to a definite lack of sufficient quantities, or it may be due to inadequate resources in possession of an individual or family unit to obtain the required amounts. These are economic considerations and of as much importance now as in the time of Chaucer, or Matthew Prior. There is, of course, one fundamental difference between the present century and those preceding, in relation to food production. Briefly, it may be said that the application of the sciences of chemistry and biology to a knowledge

of agriculture (one of the world's oldest arts) has brought about a set of conditions where overall scarcity will practically disappear, except in emergencies due to war or adverse weather conditions. It is only about 125 years ago that Malthus predicted that the world's population would be limited by the amount of fixed nitrogen, that is by the amount available in the world in the form of nitrogen salts. Yet this apparent scarcity was soon overcome and nitrogen salts were made in abundance from the tons of atmospheric nitrogen present over every acre of the earth's surface. This is one illustration of the way in which economic considerations have been upset by the application of the physical sciences, and might be multiplied ten-fold.

The capacity for food production has increased amazingly during the past 25 years and present scarcities are due to the destruction caused by two World Wars. Scarcity on the domestic level is due to a system of distribution which does not permit sufficient goods to enter a door where the need is greatest.

Ignorance of the proper kinds and amounts of foods has always been an obstacle to proper nutrition. It must be said that

our English ancestors were always concerned with quantities of food. Food of good quality was demanded as well, for there were strict penalties even in the Middle Ages for falsifying or misrepresenting--punishment in the pillory being a usual penalty.

The application of chemistry and biology to the art of nutrition, also one of the oldest arts of the world, has changed many ideas concerning foods. Methods of making chemical analysis of materials and digestion experiments with animals have amassed many facts about the composition of foods and how they are utilized to nourish the body. It is accepted at the present time that dairy products contain nutrients very essential yet our well to do ancestors rather despised these foods as fit only for peasants. Two decades ago, knowledge of the growth promoting substances known as vitamins was very fragmentary yet observant mothers and fathers knew that their children had better health if they had a diet from many kinds of foods. Such a diet was likely to provide all the essential nutrients even if the parents could not describe its content in high sounding names. Facts are present even when there is no one present to catalogue them. And ideas of diet and of proper foods will change much during the next two decades.

Some outstanding general changes in the English diet may be briefly summarized.

First: The English have always been great eaters of meat. Indeed the name Beef-Eater was given to them by the French in the time of Edward III. The survival of such an ancient term is seen in the present guards at the Tower of London. Their uniform goes back to that specified by the strong Tudor King Henry VII. Such a large intake of meat in the diet has served to make up for deficiencies in other ingredients.

Second: The use of fruit and vegetables during the Middle Ages was not extensive. Due to the climate, fruit was not as plentiful as in southern climes and even into the 17th century the use of much fruit was not well regarded. Vegetables in the Middle Ages were few and consisted mostly of the scented herbs. The culture of new varieties was introduced from the Continent and increased particularly in the 18th century.

Third: The well to do lord of the manor and his establishment would eat certain foods and despise others. Yet his poor retainers eating milk, whole-wheat bread and fruit would obtain a better diet.

Fourth: The diet under exceptional conditions, such as times

of starvation due to war or pestilence, or on shipboard, might be woefully inadequate due to scarcity. In boarding schools, or in public institutions, it was often desperately below requirement. The pages of Charles Dickens illustrate this latter type of scarcity. When Oliver Twist "asked for more" he was the one selected to protest against this scarcity due to ignorance and meanness. A study of the diet in such specialized institutions would disclose some deplorable conditions and make one marvel at "man's inhumanity to man" and to children.

From the literature it may be concluded that in general, the English have had a substantial diet. Quality of food has been stressed in domestic production and has been demanded in imports. The Industrial Revolution brought about changes in relation to rural and urban populations and increased very much the amount of food imported. In normal times, food has come from many lands to grace the English table.

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B I B L I O G R A P H Y

In addition to the original sources noted in the text or in foot notes, this list is appended. Part I contains some of the works which have been consulted. Part II lists additional works upon the subject, particularly the nutritional aspect.

P A R T I

The Chemistry and Technology of Food Products	Morris B. Jacob
Concordance to Poems and Songs of Robert Burns	J. B. Reid
Concordance to Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer	J.S.P. Tatlock
Concordance to Poetical Works of John Milton	John Bradshaw
Concordance to Works of Alexander Pope	Edwin Abbott
Concordance to Dramatic Works of Shakespeare	John Bartlett
Concordance to Poems of Edmund Spenser	C.G.Osgood
The English at Table	John Hampson
Encyclopaedia Britannica,	11th Edition
The Literature of England	Woods, Watt and Anderson
Nutritional Charts	H.J. Heinz Co.
The Origin of Food Habits	H. D. Renner
The Structure and Composition of Foods	Winton and Winton

P A R T II

The Bread of our Forefathers	Sir W. Ashley
The Chemistry of Food and Nutrition	H. C. Sherman
Food Inspection and Analysis	A. E. Leach
Process of Flour Manufacture	P. A. Amos
The Social Life of England	John Finnemore
Vitamins in Theory and Practice	L. J. Harris