THE CRAFTSMAN RESTAURANT: BY A VISITOR

Novel experiences, as we grow older, are worth having, and it was somewhat of a novel experience for me to find myself thinking in a restaurant; more than that, to be in a restaurant that made me think. Most restaurants seem designed to discourage thinking, to distract the attention. Doubtless there are enough people who seek them to get away from their thoughts. But here, in the upper story of a modern building in the heart of New York itself, I discovered myself thinking. It came over me, with a sort of mild surprise that the atmosphere was conducive to thought.

About me people were lunching quietly, without haste and without boisterousness. Soft-treading little men of Nippon brought delectable viands on dainty dishes. A stringed orchestra was playing softly something familiar from Grieg or MacDowell—I hardly noticed what.

My host had left me for a few moments to greet some friends at another table, and I found myself, not unnaturally, philosophizing on the not altogether original topic of eating.

It is odd, when you stop to think of it, what a rite and ceremony this physical act of eating has become among us. Brought to its last analysis, it is about as crude and vulgar as anything we do. The invention of forks and spoons has made it less so, and yet it is a purely animal and unintellectual function.

That humankind has made a social ceremony of eating is perhaps an evidence of our ability to rise above the plane of the beasts. However that may be, we have become gregarious and social in our eating. The breaking of bread and the sharing of salt have come to hold a meaning for us. By feast and banquet, wedding breakfast and afternoon tea, we celebrate the things that are dearest to us. Eating together has become one of the testimonials of friendship.

To be sure, we have overdone it, just as we are prone to overdo and coarsen most of the more intimate expressions of our lives. There is too much feasting, too much dining out, too much conviviality. It is a pity that we cannot all of us confine the observation of the friendly rite to the home table, where only intimates and true friends may gather to pour out their temperate libations to the household gods. But it cannot be so. Men and women will continue to gather at the public inns and cafés in spite of our moralizing. “Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there will be no more cakes and ale?” Moreover, the arrangement of modern life often makes it necessary for men and women to be away from home at that urgent hour when their country cousins are listening for the dinner horn.

It is therefore an indication of progress when a man deliberately
THE BIG TILED CHIMNEYPIECE IN THE CRAFTSMAN RESTAURANT, NEW YORK: THE LOG FIRE ON THE OPEN HEARTH GIVES THE PLACE A PARTICULARLY HOMELIKE AIR.

ONE END OF THE SIMPLY FURNISHED DINING ROOM: IN WHICH THERE IS SEATING CAPACITY FOR THREE HUNDRED GUESTS.
THE SIDEBOARD IN THE CRAFTSMAN RESTAURANT, WHICH, LIKE THE REST OF THE FURNITURE, WAS SPECIALLY DESIGNED AND MADE IN MR. STICKLEY'S WORKSHOPS AT EASTWOOD, NEW YORK.

AN INVITING CORNER IN THE RESTAURANT: THE FUMED OAK FURNITURE AND BROWN WILLOW SETTLE ARE EFFECTIVE AGAINST THE WALLS OF GOBELIN BLUE.
A VISTA THROUGH THE MANY-WINDOWED CRAFTSMAN DINING ROOM GIVING SOME IMPRESSION OF ITS SIZE: ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING FEATURES OF THIS RESTAURANT IS ITS CONNECTION WITH MR. STICKLEY'S HOMESTEAD, CRAFTSMAN FARMS, FROM WHICH THE POULTRY AND DAIRY PRODUCTS ARE BROUGHT FRESH EACH MORNING.
sets out to equip a restaurant that shall possess, so far as is humanly possible, the simplicity and quiet and intimate charm that home-loving hearts crave in the great city. That is what Gustav Stickley has done on the twelfth floor of the new Craftsman Building. It is unique; there is none like it. In comparison, even the little tea rooms in the side streets seem insincere, and the hotel restaurants with their noisy cabarets become artificial and restless.

It would be difficult to analyze the atmosphere of this place; the spirit of it is what counts for most. But the material manifestations of that spirit are not without interest and significance.

To me it goes without saying that a product of the Craftsman establishment is beautiful. The room is long and airy, with soft-textured walls of warm, rich Gobelin blue, brightened at the top by a frieze of conventionalized nasturtium leaves and blossoms in tones of light and dark green and deep red. Here and there are framed sepia photographs giving glimpses of the homestead and wooded hillsides, the grazing cattle and pasturelands of Craftsman Farms.

A singularly restful glow is shed upon the room by the indirect lighting, the rich cream color of the ceiling reflecting the rays from suspended copper bowls—a point that adds much to the quiet homelike atmosphere.

The floor is of maple, stained a mellow brownish-gray, and is dressed with rugs in soft tones of brown. The furniture, especially designed and built at the Craftsman Workshops, is of brown fumed oak, and the chairs have seats of brown and gold haircloth. The oak tables vary in size, some being round, some square, and some hexagonal. Also in close harmony of browns are the handsome sideboard, china cabinets, leather-cushioned settles and piano, while over the windows are coffee-colored net curtains, with brown velour hangings at the sides, bearing a stenciled nasturtium border in dark green, dull red and orange.

One of the most attractive and homelike features of the room is the fireplace, which is faced with Grueby tiles of brownish-mauve, bound with bands of hammered iron. The hood, of iron-bound hammered copper, bears in raised letters the motto:

Where young men see visions  
And old men dream dreams.

On the tile hearth are massive wrought-iron andirons, iron fire set and wood basket, and a fender of hammered copper and iron with a leather-cushioned rail, each piece contributing to the general air of simple craftsmanship that pervades the place.
THE CRAFTSMAN RESTAURANT

The Irish table linen, the brown willow baskets in which rolls are served, the tasteful silver and glassware, the brown-bordered china, and the pale brown flower vases are all in carefully studied harmony, unconsciously producing the same effect as the orchestra of piano, violin and 'cello, which discourses sweet melody during the meal hours.

The genius of the place is Mrs. Cutting, who holds the unique post of hostess—unique for a commercial restaurant. To her, in large measure, I understand, is due the credit for the decorations of the restaurant as well as of the rest rooms and club rooms on the eleventh floor.

It has not yet been my privilege to visit the Craftsman Farms in New Jersey, but I have partaken of their product, for the dairy and poultry at the Farms—Mr. Stickley’s Holsteins and White Leghorns—furnish the Craftsman Restaurant tables with milk, cream, butter, and eggs, and the drinking water comes from the springs in his hill-sides. Next season Mr. Stickley expects to bring in also his own fruit and vegetables.

The menu is simple, wholesome, varied, and daintily served, and is cooked in a kitchen that is a model of modern scientific sanitation and efficiency. The waiters are Japanese, drilled to the highest point of quiet skill by the Japanese steward.

Are details wearisome? So much has been necessary to give a slight idea of the physical aspects of the Craftsman Restaurant. Its spirit, its atmosphere, its intangible soul—for you feel that it has one—is the Craftsman spirit, which is another way of saying the life ideal of one man. From the time Gustav Stickley opened his first little furniture shop in Syracuse—and long before that—his achievements have been the result of a sincere ideal of work, the ideal of the Thing Well Done. It is that which has woven itself into the sturdy beauty of the Craftsman furniture, into the mission of the Craftsman magazine, into the model dairy at the Craftsman Farms, into this big idea of service of the Craftsman Exposition, into the Craftsman Restaurant whose broad and sunny windows look across the grime and sordidness of a great, self-seeking city to the green fields and blue hills of God’s country beyond.

(For additional description and illustrations see page 397.)