

The Club Smoking Room

By HAVANA.

French Menus.

FRENCH COOKERY," began the cynic, laying down his newspaper, "has a great reputation, but it has never been popular with John Bull, who infinitely prefers his roast beef and Yorkshire pudding to what he calls the made-up messes of the froggies. Our late Minister for Roads and Bridges evidently found the road through a French menu to be full of awkward ruts, and he seems to have got stuck in some places, and ploughed his way through others. His valiant attempts to twist his tongue round some of the names hardly met with the credit they deserved. I never could see any object in printing dinner menus in a foreign tongue. It is difficult enough to say what a dish is going to be when the menu is in English, but when it is in French goodness only knows what you are going to get. The generic names of stew and curry cover all sorts of abominations, but the different sauces labelled a la somebody or something may conceal frogs, or snails, or even rats."

Paper Money.

"The unknown," commented the banker, "is always magnificent, and to most people there is a great charm in a high sounding name. Pommes-de-terre au naturel both sound and taste better than plain, boiled spuds. The Minister seems to have come the greatest cropper over his advocacy of paper money. It is awfully funny how people who don't know banking from the inside imagine that you can solve all financial problems by an unlimited issue of bank notes. In reality paper is merely a convenient way of carrying and transferring large sums of money. A cheque for ten thousand pounds can be carried in the waistcoat pocket, or posted for a penny to any address. The same sum in gold coins would tax the strength of the strongest man to lift, and would cost a fortune to send by mail. Imagine also the task of counting a sum like that."

Mixed Coins.

"I would risk that," answered the impetuous one, "if anyone would try me with it. It would be a joy to me to count out ten thousand lovely sovereigns, and feel they were all mine. In Tahiti you see some funny things in the way of money. They have French francs, English sovereigns, Chili dollars, and American dollars. If you change a sovereign, you get a mixed assortment of coins, and it takes you half a day to reckon up the value of what you have got. The Chili dollar is about the size of a cart wheel, and is worth about one and ninepence. When you get a few pounds' worth of the things, they take some carrying, I can tell you. I have seen sailors, who have just been paid-off, draw all their money in Chili dollars, and they cart them about in buckets from pub to pub. It gives a man the appearance of being a millionaire."

French Politeness.

"I reckon," said the financier, "that Tahiti is as jolly a place as one could find anywhere round New Zealand to spend a holiday in. The French are awfully polite, and the gendarmes are civility itself. I spent a few months there once, and took a manservant with me to look after things. The fellow got on the spree one day, and the froggies collared him, and put him in a place they call the calaboose, or some such outlandish name. I tried to bail him out, but they insisted on keeping him there till the pubs shut. When

they let him out, he was awfully indignant at being locked up without a trial, and wanted to hurt the Habens Corpus and the Bill of Rights and Magna Charta, and all that sort of antiquated misbit at them. But the old Johnny, who looked after the show, was not having any just then. He asked a lot of questions in broken English, and got more or less truthful answers, which he jotted down on official blue paper. My trusty retainer had to state where he was born, his age, his occupation, his father's age and occupation, and all that sort of Tommyrot. Then he asked the official why



OUTSIDE THE RING.

"Ulloa, Joe—ow did ye come down?" "First class—standin' room only—carrage full of parsons—church conferences on somewhere. I felt like a lion in a den of Daniels!"

they had locked him up. He said: 'What is the charge against me?' His erstwhile gaoler looked at him with a smile of comprehension, and said: 'There is no charge; it is all free.'

High Life.

"Funny people the French," mused the previous speaker. "They are just as fond of picking up English phrases and English fashions as many English people are of picking up French phrases and French fashions. I remember a chap in Paris telling me a thing was very 'big beef,' and I couldn't think what the dickens he was after. I told him I had never heard the word before, and he said it was a common English expression. I racked my brain to think what it could be, and at last, as we were passing a tailor's shop, he said: 'There you are. That is what I mean.' Then I understood. In the window of the establishment was a card on which was inscribed the legend 'High Life Tailoring.' I am sure I should never have guessed his meaning from his pronunciation of the words."

The Game of Bluff.

"As Mr. Hogg's Baconian epigrams have brought us round to things Gallic," put in the professor, "I would like to suggest that if England had taken a bolder stand at the time of the Franco-Prussian war she would not now be confronted with a German peril. At that time both France and Germany thought their forces would be almost equally matched. If England had stepped in, when appealed to, and declared that she would take the side of which ever nation was first attacked, it is safe to say that there would have been no war. France would still have been a dangerous foe for Germany to reckon with, the war indemnity of two hundred millions would never have gone to help to build up the German fleet, and quite possibly the unification of Germany would never have taken place. Bismarck's treaty of Berlin by sheer bluff, and similar tactics in 1870 would

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MOTHER SEIGEL'S SYRUP.

A lawyer by the name of Mayne, who was a highly respected but decidedly heavy person, had risen to a judgeship, while Jeffrey Keller, who had entered on his legal career at about the same time with Mayne, but was more noted as a wit than as a lawyer, was still much in want of clients and fees. The latter was in a court-room one day, when Mayne was solemnly presiding, and he turned to a friend who sat beside, and plucked at his sleeve. "Sit there!" he whispered; "there sits Mayne, risen by his gravity, and here sits Keller, sunk by his levity. What would Sir Isaac Newton say to that, I'd like to know?"