

A Theosophical love feast in France



A theosophical love feast in France to strengthen the bonds and soften the heart.

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Our Brothers in France had a happy idea in establishing what we might call theosophical *agapæ*, minus the mystic and religious gloom of the latter. These monthly dinners, "purely vegetarian" — we are not told whether they are also teetotal — may do good work in the long run, as promoters of peace, soul-harmony and brotherly love.

A good dinner sharpens wit, while it softens the heart,

we are told by those in whom, of the three souls enumerated by Plato, the "stomach-soul" is the most energetic; the statement being corroborated by Lord Byron. According to the great English poet, of all "appeals," none is more calculated to take hold of the best feelings of mankind

Than that all-softening, overpowering knell,
The tocsin of the soul — the dinner-bell.¹

However it may be, and from whatsoever point we view them, the "theosophical dinners" in France have an undeniable advantage over the "no such dinners" in England. They represent, for Theosophists, a few hours, at least, passed under the white flag of truce; and even that little is a decided relief, and a march stolen on the English members.

Blessed be ye, O dinners, if presided over by the angel of peace, who stands between the fighting and the dead!

The "Hermes Dinner," was not presided over this time, however, by a six-winged angel, "shadow'd from either heel with feather'd mail," but, by our respected friend and brother, the Count Gaston d'Adhémar, who kindly accepted the presidential place of honour at this "exclusively [204] vegetarian repast." The dinner took place on March 23rd at Lavenue's, Boulevard Montparnasse, and was graced, besides the members and associates of the local T.S.² "Hermes," who happened to be then in Paris, by the presence of several distinguished guests interested in Theosophy.

¹ [*Don Juan*, Canto V, xlix]

² [Theosophical Society]

In the words of our *Revue Théosophique*¹ for April,

. . . this banquet passed off most charmingly, thanks to the witty and instructive conversation of its president, who related some of his travelling impressions through America, and notably among the *Mormons*; after which the conversation became general and was devoted to occult topics of the highest scientific, phenomenal, and metaphysical interest.

At 11 pm the members separated, pledging themselves to meet on the same date next month.

For the benefit of the lovers of vegetarianism, we append hereto the *Menu* of this repast, which, “to the surprise of all, was found not only very nourishing, but most excellent.”

Potage à la Normande
Hors d'œuvres
Pommes de terre à la Duchesse
Tymbale de quichys au parmesan
Salsifis frits
Haricots panachés
Salade de laitue aux œufs
Parfait
Desserts

In our great gastronomical ignorance, while rejoicing over the Normandy soup, Duchess potatoes, fried salsify (oyster plant), haricot beans and innocent salad with eggs, we feel rather doubtful about the esoteric meaning of that “Parfait,” which winds up the *Menu*. Is it a liqueur? One of those oily, sweet, dangerously insidious *liqueurs*, so beloved in France, or some respectable and harmless dish, drink or what not, for digestive purposes? If the former, alas for the purity of the Theosophical Agapæ!



¹ Directrice, Comtesse Gaston d'Adhémar; Rédacteur en chef (chief editor), H.P. Blavatsky. Chief office, 10 Rue Leseur, Paris, Comtesse d'Adhémar; and all the chief booksellers of Paris. London, at 7, Duke Street, Adelphi and David Nutt's.