

# Andreas's Page

## I Cook Dinner And Lose Nine Choice

### Friends . . .

I CAME across a fascinating book the other day by Henri Charpentier, one of France's greatest cooks, whose memoirs are rich with anecdote—the kind to make the salivary glands go “boom.”

He it was who originated the Crepe Suzette—and by an accident which might have had drastic consequences.

When Edward VII. was on one of his periodical incognito trips to Paris (Time: Before he ascended the throne) he was entertaining a charmer, by name Suzette. He always had his repasts cooked before him in a chafing dish—a departure. Hitherto the chafing dish had been confined to the kitchens, but the Prince of Wales's curiosity imposed upon Charpentier that he prepare his meals before him and his lady. He wanted to see how Charpentier made a pancake.

This caused the famous chef to be a little nervous. Up till this time the cordials which transform the ordinary pancake into a thing of dreams were always put in raw; never were they burned. Carelessness and hurry caused the liqueurs to catch fire, and up they went in the manner we all know so well. Henri thought he was ruined. Instead, the fluid turned out to be the most delicious melody of sweet flavors ever tasted. After the ceremony Henri waited to see how the Prince of Wales was taking things. There he sat, faultlessly dressed in pale grey with a cravat of pale blue, a carnation in his buttonhole—beard pruned to the last hair. Now with chin up and nostrils wide, he inhaled the seductive aroma.

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THERE he sat eating his crepe with a fork, after which he captured the syrup with a spoon. He asked for the name of the dish. Henri, thinking fast, said “Crepe Princesse.” Being the world's perfect gentleman, his Royal Highness looked at the lady. “Will you change Crepe Princesse to Crepe Suzette?” The lady rose and dropped him a curtsy. Thus the confection was born and christened—a dish “to reform a cannibal into a cultured gentleman.” The fol-

—a dish “to reform a cannibal into a cultured gentleman.” The following day came a present to Charpentier from the future King of England; a jewelled ring, a Panama hat and a cane!

Here is the famous recipe: 3 eggs, 2 tablespoons of flour, 1 tablespoon of water, 2 tablespoons of milk, 1 pinch of salt, 1 chafing dish.

Stir ingredients till paste is consistency of olive oil. (“Remember,” says Charpentier, “the difference between a French and a German pancake is an indication why those two nations will always be as they are to one another.”) Put a piece of butter as big as one thumb joint into a round-bottomed frying-pan. When sizzling pour in the mixture, enough to cover the bottom thereof. Keep it moving till golden brown. The next movement is described as “turning it upside down, now and again and again.” Then fold. Cut thin piece of lemon rind, enough to put a patch on the ball of that thumb, and a piece of orange peel, then shred. One spoonful of vanilla sugar, quarter-pound unsalted butter, melt together in a fine pan. When bubbling pour in three ponies of equal parts of maraschino, curacao and kirch-wasser. These will catch fire! As the flame subsides add sugar and shredded peels.

Having spent the best part of Monday wallowing in this tome by Charpentier, I spent two evenings

trying to emulate him. That is why I chose nine of my choicest friends to try my culinary arts on. I was almost dead from tasting before they arrived. Of them I have heard nothing since. For them I fear the worst!

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AUSTRALIAN Patrick White, who delights with prose and poetry alike, writes me from Egypt. He exemplifies the change which the last two dramatic years have wrought among the young intelligentsia—who had become used to thinking and acting for themselves alone. Of all the young men of fine intellect and selectivity, I should have been guilty of wagering that he would be among the last to let go of his fixed shibboleths.

to let go of his fixed shibboleths. He had jelled at an early age. Nothing short of an earthquake could alter him. The quake came!

In publishing Patrick White.

passages from his interesting letter, you will see how little I knew my man.

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He speaks of his highly-regarded book, "The Living and the Dead," now published in both the U.S.A. and England (he has not yet seen a copy of it):

"It's an age since I came to this miserable country, with all sorts of ideas about the glamor of Egypt. It has the Nile, I must grant it that in all admiration, but there it stops. It is even difficult to believe in it when you have been sitting in the Western Desert for three months. My consolation is that for ever after I shall be able to cope with a lack of material things. I am flybitten, flea-ridden, sweaty and stinking—washing my own socks in an inch of muddy water. I doubt if I shall ever sink much lower than this.

"The high spot of my life in the R.A.F. is three months with the S.A.A.F. I was attached to one of their squadrons as Intelligence Officer in Sudan, and now here, I found the South Africans more stimulating than anyone else I have met in the Service. They have a

very strong sense of nationality and great enthusiasm. Returning to the English was like taking up a position behind a locked door.

"I am now trying to become a pilot or air-gunner. For one reason to get back to the squadron, and for another, because I am tired of sitting. I want to return a few bombs. A couple of years ago I should have been surprised at myself, but since losing people I am fond of, the war has become a much more personal matter. I am now one of those who would like to see the extermination of the whole German race. Even a good German will breed a bad one. How I wish all this would come to an end! I want to get back to my own work.

"There are five more books I want to write. Gregariousness is getting me down. I want a room to myself and all day to think my thoughts . . . it's a long time since I even spoke my own tongue. I am thinking of coming out after the war—first to the States, then to Australia. I have to go to Central Australia for some reason. Europe, I don't think I could live in any more. It will have to be the States or Australia."

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**W**EDNESDAY The Thirteenth: Don't forget—"The Last Time I Saw Paris" Ball, at Romano's, in aid of the Free French. All sorts of thrills and surprises besides the chance of a cosy night out with your best beloved.

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**T**HIS WEEK'S STORY: Three tortoises dropped into a pub for a drink. They called for beer. Suddenly one of them realised that they had left their money at home. Consternation! None wanted to go home because there was a feeling

Consternation! None wanted to go home because there was a feeling that the third beer would be drunk in the volunteer's absence, so they drew straws. The two who stopped in the pub made a solemn pledge not to touch that beer!

They waited and waited. Hours ran into days, days to weeks, and months to years. They had done five years when at last they decided to divide the third glass. Just as they reached up for it a voice from behind startled them. "If you touch that beer, I won't go home at all."

- Andrew



Cause



And effect.