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## The Romance of Silverware

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# The Romance of Silverware

By MARGARET MARNETTE

**T**HE knife, fork and spoon, which so ably assist us to partake of our daily food, have a long and honorable history. Their progress has had an important part in man's conquest of nature. From man's ten fingers, which he used as natural instruments, to the invention of the fork, which is the latest of the three to appear, progress is recorded in table ware.

The primitive man felt the need of some container for water when he had to dip it out with his hands, and could not keep it for any time, nor carry it any distance. From an oyster shell he developed a fairly satisfactory device. The Latin word for shell, "cochlea", has the meaning "spoon".

The Saxon first used wood as a means of providing instruments for food. The word "spon" in their language meant splinter of wood. A form of their early spoon was one which had a handle and a pointed end. This form might be said to be the first fork to be made, but the development of it was delayed for many years.

The Egyptians were considerably more fastidious in their selection of tableware, for they used ivory spoons to remove the marrow fat from bones. A few wooden spoons may be found in the collection of instruments taken from old tombs.

The first spoon, which was made in America in 1660 by John Hull of Boston, had an elliptical bowl and a straight handle. The handle is only slightly enlarged at one end and is not decorated at all. Utility, rather than beauty, seemed to be the aim of this first spoon maker. Teaspoons and dessert-sized spoons were then generally used in England.

Spoons were made in America long before knives or forks. The process for making spoons was extremely simple. Small heaters and simple machinery were required. Coin silver was the favored material because it had the requisite degree of hardness.

The greatest variation in American spoons is found in the handle and in the joining of the stem and the bowl. The "slip stem" spoon which John Hull first made has a short V-tongue projecting into the back of the bowl. The

long rat-tail joint on the back of the bowl was common in early days, but later spoon makers made the V into more ornamental figures.

Prominent among early silver spoon makers was Paul Revere, best known

for developing for tempering steel, steel became the favored cutting material.

A history of early days reveals that an instrument resembling a meat ax was used to prepare pieces of meat to fit the hand. Greeks and Romans, even when well-to-do, preferred eating with their fingers. Yet there were some Romans not without desire for improvement, no matter how we might consider it today. In several old books there have been found scenes of a Roman eating with his knife.

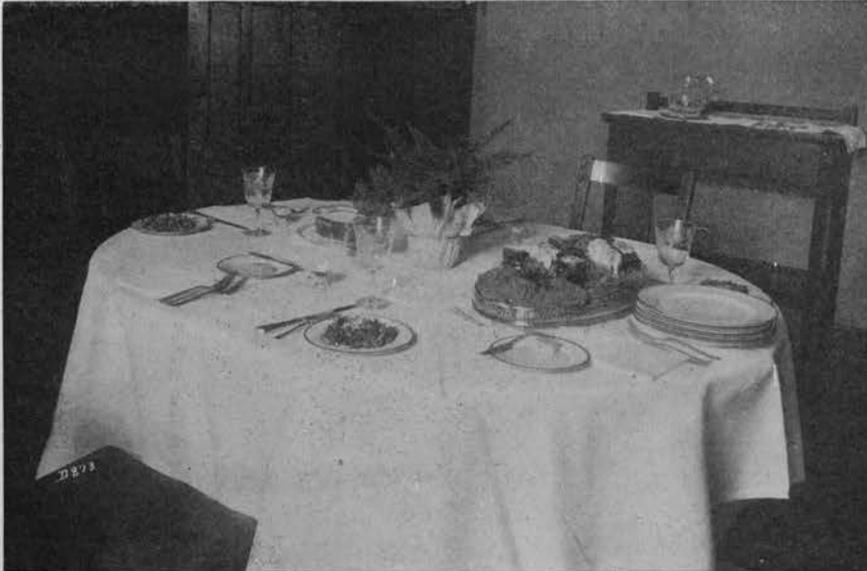
The present fork is a development (believe it or not) of the ancient pitch-fork. However, two-tined forks were often used to assist in turning meat upon huge spits or in digging bread and other foods from the hot ashes. A skewer was the first table fork as developed in England. A guest was cautioned not to "pick his teeth with his knife, nor with a straw or stick," according to an old book, "The Boke of Curtasye."

The table-fork seems to have been invented first in Italy. About the year 1060 the Cardinal Pretro Damiani preached a sermon against the unholy use of this article. He believed it to be a symbol of luxury and thought that, inasmuch as the Creator had given each person five fingers on each hand they should not flout nature by this two-pronged tool. But the unconcerned Italians went right on making the forks, often of gold and silver, with precious stones stuck into them.

Queen Elizabeth started the vogue for table forks, as she did for so many other things. She had two forks and kept them with her whenever she went visiting. Sermons were often preached in England against the use of the fork, but Ben Johnson, one of the finest writers the history of literature has known, wrote that "forks were brought into custom here, as they are in Italy, to the saving of napkins."

Two-tined forks were the rule until the opening of the 18th century, when it became possible, but not correct, to eat peas with a fork. The knife was remodeled about this time so that a fair mouthful of such elusive foods

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would fit comfortably in the hollowed end of the utensil.

A knife, in early English days, was called a "whittle," from which we have our term "whittling". The Latin word was "cutter", from which we get "cutlery".

The finest steel has been used for centuries, at least since the 14th century, in England, where, at that time, Sheffield made the first forks and knives of steel.

Forks and spoons have been rather rare for many years, and in the wills of persons in the time of Shakespeare, it was considered proper to will spoons and forks with jewels and money.

Although it is true that fingers were made before forks, it has taken man many centuries to learn to use these man-made instruments instead of his fingers in transporting tempting morsels from his plate to his mouth.

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## Value of Rural Clubs

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ence has shown that the club work of the farm bureau is more efficiently conducted by the use of project or special committees. It is therefore suggested that the farm bureau board of directors be first fully acquainted with what club work aims to accomplish and then they should annually appoint a county junior committee. Two committees are found best where both boys' and girls' projects are to be conducted, one for each line of work.

The county committee is carefully selected to insure that it is composed of interested and active persons who will represent all interests in the county. The committees should consist of 5 or 6 members each. Additional members may be representatives of breeders' associations, women's organizations, or be any other interested individuals."

The County Junior Committees after carefully studying county conditions and the farm bureau program, decide upon a tentative club program, which is then presented to the farm bureau directors. The program includes kinds of clubs to be organized, plans and regulations for each, club budgets and prizes, cooperation from other organizations and methods for organizing the clubs in the community.

The community chairmen assist with the local club organization and arranges with county junior committees for a meeting of all prospective club members and their parents, at which the farm bureau agents and a member of the county club committee is present.

One can not be a club leader if he can not be in close contact with the members on account of other duties. The best leaders are farm people, both men and women, who have had practical experience in the project to be conducted. Cattlemen usually make good leaders for calf clubs, poultry growers, good poultry leaders; and homemakers good leaders for girls' clubs. Sometimes teachers can be used as leaders, providing they are in the community the entire year. Former club members are rapidly taking up leadership of clubs and should provide valuable leaders in the future.

No better type of service can be given in a community than to help a group of boys and girls by accepting leadership of a club. The club work is now limited because of not having sufficient capable leaders more than anything else.

The colors of the "Four-H Club" are white and green—the white for purity and the green emblematic of the great out-of-doors.

The emblem is the four leaf clover with an H in each leaf. These H's stand for Head, Hand, Heart and Health—"the training and proper care of which will be the best asset a boy or girl can possess. In club work the things learned train the head to think correctly, the work done is the best possible training for the hands, the

cooperation in clubs builds up the proper attitude of the heart, while health is being emphasized thru the health contests, recreation and better living."

The motto of the club work is: "Make the best better." The slogan is: "To win without bragging, to lose without squealing."

The chief activities are the individual work of the member such as securing and feeding an animal, or studying clothing problems; the demonstrations, exhibits and contests; the tours, picnics, rally and achievement days, and the club meetings.

Individual work of members is of a wide variety and depends upon the project undertaken and the goal set by the club.

Demonstrations are classed as follows:

1. The example demonstration.
2. The public demonstration.

The work of every club member is an example demonstration. Whatever the member is doing is always being watched by the parents in the home and others in the community. All club work is based upon the demonstration idea; therefore, boys and girls in club work are required to do things with their hands and these operations are then demonstrated.

All club members are encouraged to enter some product of their work in an exhibit. Livestock exhibits, clothing or food exhibits are very common types shown at fairs and other such events.

Much of the club work is placed on the contest basis. It is found that this plan stimulates interest and activity with young people as nothing else will do. Wholesome competition, properly directed, is strongly approved.

A tour by the members, parents and leaders to see the work of other members or to visit some place of interest in the community is very helpful. Often times the clubs go to the city to study and see the manufacturing centers and places of interest. This all gives them a broader view on life, so that they are not narrowed on just farm activities, and they appreciate farm life by not being one-sided.

All day picnics often take the place of regular meetings. A rally day helps to get the groups of a county together. This helps create more interest in the work. The achievement day is held when all the clubs of a county bring together the products of their work and give reports of the work accomplished.

Every club should have regular meetings. These meetings should be made the important events of the club projects. It is from the meetings that the proper spirit and interest is developed. Suggestive subjects, outline of talks, songs, plays and other helpful material can be secured thru the county office.

Club work has accomplished remarkable results in many ways. "It is not logical nor possible to put a money value on club work." The results secured by a member, in his or her single

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