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Autumn 2020

LAST POST A LITERARY JOURNAL FROM THE FORD MADOX FORD SOCIETY

VOL. 1, NO. 5

LAST POST



**A Literary Journal from the
Ford Madox Ford Society**

LONDON • NEW YORK

ISSN 2631-9772

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Five: Autumn 2020

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Printed in the UK by Joshua Horgan Print & Design
Witney, Oxon
01865 246762
www.joshuahorgan.co.uk

ISSN 2631-9772
© Published by the Ford Madox Ford Society, 2021

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Acknowledgements

My thanks go to the members of the *Last Post* editorial board, particularly out-going Society Chair, Sara Haslam and current Chair, Seamus O'Malley. To Jan Serr & John Shannon for their foundational support: to Meghan Hammond and Max Schleusener; and to the global members of the Ford Society.

My continuing thanks to our anonymous peer reviewers.

Paul Skinner, Editor

A Note from the General Editor

Paul Skinner

‘We were away for Christmas’, the novelist Mary Butts wrote to her friend Ada Briggs on 29 December 1919, ‘and got back late last night. We spent it with a friend four miles from a station who is so proud of his cooking that we were never left in peace for a moment because of all the fresh things he had brought us to eat. He cooks à la Provençal with cream and oil and garlic, and stuffs quiet birds like chickens with almonds and chestnuts soaked in rum. He loses his temper if you don’t go on and on.’¹

Butts and her husband, poet and publisher John Rodker, had spent those few days at Hurston, Pulborough, where Ford Madox Ford and Stella Bowen had lived together in that ‘tumble-down cottage’ Red Ford since June. From a job-lot of oak boards of which Ford ‘was inordinately proud’, he had built ‘a cock-eyed lean-to outside the kitchen door to accommodate the oil stove on which we cooked, and which had a habit of belching smuts all over the tiny kitchen which was also the pantry and the scullery.’ There was, Bowen added, ‘just one spot where you could stand upright as you tended your stew pots’ since, when it rained, ‘the floor became a puddle bridged by an oak plank.’ Nevertheless, she was first instructed there on the importance of food, Ford being ‘one of the great cooks.’ Of course, she recalls, ‘he was utterly reckless with the butter and reduced the kitchen to the completest chaos.

Paul Skinner

When he cooked, one kitchen-maid was hardly sufficient to wait upon him.’²

These observations almost comprise, as Ford’s friend Ezra Pound might claim, an ideogrammic representation of Ford’s life and work. To borrow the title of the 2002 exhibition, curated by Lola Wilkins, of Stella Bowen’s paintings, those elements were art, love and war. That Christmas visit of Butts and Rodker—the conscientious objector calling on the recently demobbed Army officer—is, too, wonderfully redolent of several strands of the Fordian story, the setting in the same frame of the makeshift and the sophisticated, the homely and the exotic, the *bricoleur* and the modernist virtuoso. There is also a productive ambiguity in the friction between contrasting versions of one incident of that visit: Mary Butts showing the manuscript of her novel *Ashe of Rings* to Ford, hoping that he’ll recommend publication to Duckworth. Butts’ journal entry for that Christmas Day consists solely of the book’s title; the Boxing Day entry begins: ‘Complete misery’, while the entry for the next day, when Butts and Rodker returned to London, reads: ‘Ford. Amends—a kind of laying out to a mutilated corpse.’³ Bowen, of course, remembers it differently while the list of writers Ford offered to Pound in July 1920 includes ‘[a]nd of course Mary Butts.’⁴

Ford’s art—the blurring of genres, the repetition with variants, the mastery of both tiny detail and panoramic sweep, the intense Englishness and the equally intense internationalism—and his cooking are intimately connected, as is often remarked (not least by some contributors to this issue). But

while his writing about cookery—and gardening—can sometimes arouse suspicions of symbolism and even, on occasions, of allegory, I've always felt that he really *is* writing about cooking and gardening: the wider applications, if discernible, may be left to his readers. So here, in a manner of speaking—as Ford might say Henry James might say—we are. An improving cook myself, I am still grateful and pleasantly surprised if my pastry behaves as it should. Others are rather more expert. Helen Chambers has brought together her knowledge of Ford, of literature and of—particularly—French cookery, and produced an impressive and enjoyable bill of fare in collaboration with her accomplished contributors. We're extremely grateful to her for doing so and invite you now to take your seats at the table.

Notes

1 Quoted by Nathalie Blondel, *Mary Butts: Scenes from the Life* (New York: McPherson & Co., 1998), 451-452 n73.

2 Stella Bowen, *Drawn From Life* (London: Collins, 1941), 65, 66, 67.

3 Mary Butts, *The Journals of Mary Butts*, edited by Nathalie Blondel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 128, 129.

4 Bowen, 40-41; Brita Lindberg-Seyersted, editor, *Pound/Ford: The Story of a Literary Friendship* (London: Faber & Faber, 1982), 34.

Paul Skinner

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Ford's Foodways from Toulouse to Toulon

Helen Chambers

In 1935 Ford, in *Provence*, wrote: 'But somewhere between Vienne and Valence, below Lyons on the Rhone the sun is shining and, south of Valence, *Provincia Romana*, the Roman Province lies beneath the sun. There there is no more any evil for there the apple will not flourish and the Brussels sprout will not grow at all'. These sentences have resonated since 1965 when I first read them, in the introduction to Elizabeth David's path-breaking book *French Provincial Cooking* (1960), and they accompanied my own subsequent railway journeys down the Rhône valley. Now after twenty years in south-west France, my journeys along Ford's 'foodways' (to quote Laurence Davies in the present volume) are on a different railway line, from Toulouse to Narbonne and thence, via the Mediterranean coast and its dry hinterland, to Marseilles and Toulon. The morning *Intercité* express, though travelling rapidly, allows a good view of the changing landscape, with its Roman and medieval towns, its vineyards (Minervois, Corbières, Frontignan, Costières de Nîmes), the peach orchards of the Crau, the olive trees, and everywhere the rough dry herb-covered *garrigue*.

The journey starts in Toulouse, with its own version of *cassoulet*, and where the street signs are bilingual in French and Occitan, and where, almost opposite the main railway station, a narrow street (now housing sex shops and Vietnamese grocery

stores), commemorates Bertran de Born, one of Ford's troubadours. The railway line follows the windy Aude valley, first passing Castelnaudary, the alleged birthplace of *cassoulet* and where Ford probably first sampled it with Violet Hunt. It skirts Viollet-Le-Duc's 19th century Disneyfication of the citadel of Carcassonne, which also boasts a third version of *cassoulet*, and then stops briefly at the Roman provincial capital of Narbonne. The line then swerves east-north-east, passes the cathedral city of Béziers from where, to the north west, you can just make out the village of Capestang, unsung birthplace of another Fordian troubadour, the ill-fated Guillem de Cabestanh, he whose heart Ford imagined was cooked with garlic, olives, tomatoes and spices. After Montpellier, a city Ford reportedly found rather dull, the train crosses the Rhône to enter Provence proper (previously we were in Languedoc). Very close to the bridge you can see the towers of the small cities Beaucaire and Ford's much-loved Tarascon, facing each other across the river, and just over there is the road bridge where the wind blew away all Ford and Bi-ala's savings. Easily visible soon afterwards are the sharp bare limestone ridges of the Alpilles and, hidden on their far side, the ghost-like village of Les Baux. Before arriving at Marseilles, it is possible on a clear day to pick out, beyond the oil refineries of the Étang de Berre, the little fishing port of Martigues where Ford enjoyed garlic and saffron fish stews.

On arriving at Marseille-Saint-Charles, the literary echo is that of the young Conrad, crisscrossing France through this station, and eating *bouilla-*

baisse in the tall dark houses of the old town nearby. You change here to the local train from Marseilles to Toulon, the service terminating at Hyères, with its echoes of Edith Wharton's elegant lifestyle, and, on the nearby Giens peninsula, of Conrad's late novel *The Rover*. Between Marseilles and Toulon the train closely follows the shore passing Cassis, Bandol and Sanary-sur-Mer, with their rich early 20th century literary associations, including D. H. Lawrence and Katherine Mansfield. The line runs high above the *calanques* where Ford's fish-based banquets took place. On arriving in Toulon you can, in five minutes, walk straight down to the Quai Cronstadt for a generous 15 euro *aïoli garni* with a glass of rosé, not far from the Navigator statue and Ford's favourite, the Grand Café de la Rade, just along the quayside from the now demolished building which once housed the studio that Ford and Stella Bowen leased from Otto Friesz.

A major naval base and now also a main ferry port to Corsica and Sardinia, Toulon is not a tourist city. Its waterfront has not succumbed to the overpriced *bouillabaisse* restaurants which now line the Vieux Port of Marseilles, and its celebrated street market on the Cours Lafayette is still there. Ford would not have been disillusioned.

Helen Chambers



Ford at Villa Paul, Cap Brun, Toulon (c. 1930s)

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“What Shall I Say About His Curry?": Ford Madox Ford In The Kitchen.

Venetia Abdalla

‘Ford Madox Ford, Cook, Baron, Novelist brings Zest to Faculty’¹ – just before he left Olivet in 1937, Ford gave an informal interview in which he joked that he wished to be remembered primarily for his culinary skills. Now an old man ‘mad about writing’² and cooking, he was widely acknowledged in America as an authority on food and the culinary arts and in demand as a speaker on the subject. His practical skills were also sought after and he produced a memorable first course of leg of venison *grand veneur*, purée of chestnuts and julienne of new string beans for a dinner given by the American Society of Amateur Chefs, ‘a stag club of celebrities, writers, explorers, artists and actors,’ men who met together ‘to putter in the kitchen.’³ This was all very different from the dubious reception his cooking elicited years earlier when he presented a friend with a plate swimming in a sauce ‘almost jet black with richness.’⁴ Conrad screwed in his monocle, tasted Ford’s offering and then politely requested the previous day’s leftovers and a lettuce leaf.

In the intervening years Ford had physically grown into the role of a competent cook – ‘an obese porcine Falstaff’,⁵ he came to resemble a ship’s caterer in a Conrad novel, ‘coming on board blowing like a porpoise’.⁶ He never achieved his ambition to write a cookery book but he served up a substantial bill of fare in his writing. We see Ford cooking on several occasions and are given access to his larder which

contains ‘a mutton bone with a little meat attached to it, some old Brussels sprouts, some cold potatoes, half a stale loaf of bread’.⁷ Characteristically expansive in his views about food, Ford explored its international aspects in *Great Trade Route*, in a lengthy dietary diatribe against refrigerated and preserved ‘inedibilia’ (*GTR* 44) and, in *New York Is Not America*, speculated on a worldwide conspiracy of restaurant cooks who ‘telepathically communicated their terrible secrets of the preparation of tepid underdone beef, sauces compounded in imitation of billstickers’ paste’ (*NYINA* 207). He focussed on a contemporary food controversy closer to home in *Mr Fleight* in which Captain Hemsterley’s opposition to Mr Gregory’s portable pig sties is both an acknowledgment of pre-war fears of contaminated sausages and growing anti-German sentiment:

He has the theory that pork is not sufficiently eaten in England. Every continental doctor would back him up in that. But the Hemsterleys have got several doctors to swear that pork is a highly dangerous food.⁸

Ford’s prolific food journalism, in which he fulminated against flabby, processed food, enzymes, and ‘a pinkish substance called “cake”⁹ with added gypsum, and wrote hagiographies in praise of garlic and ‘that most exquisite of all flatfish, turbot’,¹⁰ provided yet another outlet for his tireless gastro-economic enthusiasm and culinary crankiness.

Yet pen and ladle had not always co-existed so comfortably in Ford’s hands and, in his earlier years,

his relationship with food was a troubled one. In the hope of curing his neurasthenia and chronic indigestion, he endured punishing dietary regimes of pork and ice cream, rice and Pepsin tablets and was reduced to the stature of an ‘Animated Match’ (RY 260). Later in life he used his dietary hypochondria to manipulate people – Ford was an expert wheeler. During the birth of his daughter Julie in 1920, he became a wheezing invalid and demanded ‘very special dieting’ in the form of ‘a devilled sirloin bone’ (meat rationing was in force) followed by ‘a pathetic request for clear soup with plenty of oysters.’¹¹ Perhaps his alimentary anxiety can be traced back to his childhood, to the time when his Wagner-obsessed father threw gold into the Rhine – not a ring but young Fordy’s breakfast egg which he had attempted to tackle American-style: ‘my longing to eat eggs out of a glass, their gold mingling with that of butter and salt was something in which you would not believe’.¹² Real or imagined, this is a typical Fordian moment dominated by an overbearing father-figure and Ford said that it left him with ‘a complex’ so that, whenever he saw eggs on a breakfast table ‘something subconsciously paralysing rendered my hand powerless’ (IWN 345-346). It may well account for his dislike of breakfast tables, often potential battlefields in his writing, and his distrust of formal dining. Apart from the fortified Duchemin breakfast in *Some Do Not. . .*, Henry Martin endures ‘a preposterous breakfast’¹³ with cold toast and yet more gleaming silverware in *Henry For Hugh*; Dudley Leicester, with his fear of formal occasions, dreads being taken ill ‘between the soup and the fish’¹⁴ in *A Call*, and as for that ‘nickel-silver basket of rolls’¹⁵ passed around the

table in the dining room of the Hotel Excelsior at Nauheim. . .

‘A dinner which lacks any traces of sensuality’¹⁶ – Heidi Ziegler’s description of the coming together of the ‘nice people’ (*GS* 30) in *The Good Soldier* emphasizes the sterile artificiality of both food (which barely merits a mention) and setting with its papier-mâché fruit. Emotions are stifled, no enjoyment acknowledged and it is evident that the Asburnhams and the Dowells have ignored Ford’s advice about eating out: ‘You must eat, when you eat in restaurants, in tiny places...where there are no gilding, palms or music’ (*NYINA* 211). There is a miniature version of this dreadful dinner, the exact opposite of what Ford believed a meal should be, ‘companionship, reminiscence and communion’ (*NYINA* 191), later in the novel when Leonora announces that Nancy will go to India – ‘No one spoke. Nancy looked at her plate. Edward went on eating his pheasant’ (*GS* 156). Their gustatory rigidity contrasts strongly with Ford’s sensual response to food, his visual and tactile delight in fruit and vegetables; grubbing for potatoes in ‘flesh-warm soil’ was for him, an intimate experience, ‘like finding the breast of a woman’¹⁷. In *Some Do Not. . .*, frigid Sylvia Tietjens lobs a plate of ‘cutlets in aspic’¹⁸ at her long-suffering husband whereas the wholesome Valentine cooks him ‘an admirable lunch of the cold lamb, new potatoes and mint sauce variety, the mint sauce made with white wine vinegar and soft as kisses’ (*SDN* 145). Equally conscientious in her choice of both food and words, she looks at the devitalized Londoners around Kensington Gardens and struggles to find *le mot juste*: ‘Not sham! In a

vacuum! No! “Pasteurised” was the word! Like dead milk. Robbed of their vitamins...’ (*SDN* 330). The staccato rhythm of her thoughts mirrors the way a cook chooses ingredients in a larder and anticipates the culinary roll-call of words on the painted panels of the cook-house in *No More Parades*:

‘TEA! SUGAR! SALT! CURRY PDR! FLOUR! PEPPER!’¹⁹

‘The whole of Art consists in Selection’,²⁰ Ford wrote in his memoir about Conrad, a maxim which seems at odds with Gringoire’s explanation of his cooking methods in *No Enemy*, ‘you take any old thing’.²¹ Adamant that ‘cooking is an art’ (*IWN* 95) Ford knew exactly how to get his desired effects in his books and in the food he produced. In *A Mirror To France* the process is likened to that of choosing a fresh cabbage in a market, as opposed to purchasing a tasteless shop specimen; the vegetable is tapped, shaken at the ear, bargained for at length in a theatrical transaction in which even the words appear flavoursome: ‘you relieve your feelings in elaborately rhetorical French running so deliciously off the tongue, the magic words *c’est honteux* recurring again and again like the burden of a pantoum’.²² Finally, Ford takes his hard-won cabbage back to his kitchen to be ‘glorified’ (*MTF* 185) with slices of succulent bacon, sausage and partridge.

The quasi-religious glorification of this humble brassica should come as no surprise given that Ford’s kitchen is a place of magical transformation in which pretty much anything can, and does, happen. ‘You never realised that the venison was mut-

ton',²³ Robert Lowell wrote after a dinner cooked by Ford. Even when he was not cooking, Ford exerted power from a distance over food. Stella Bowen recalled the innumerable delays to meals which he demanded when busy writing with the result that the food cooked for their ravenous guests became 'an ever retreating mirage'.²⁴ Ford could cook (and write) anywhere so his kitchen is sometimes nothing more than a crock on a pot hook suspended over a fire. This might contain a stew with shallots such as Ford cooked on his first night at Red Ford, but it could equally be something less appetising. 'An immense cauldron' (*DFL* 76) on a great hook bubbling over the living-room fire at Bedham contained food for Ford's pigs. In New York in 'rambling, old gloomy apartments' (*IWN* 333) on West Sixteenth Street, Ford had a kitchen which was not there, a kitchen which vanished. He only found it after opening a door into a passage after several weeks. His fictional kitchens are similarly fantastic places and can spring up anywhere – the nightclub musicians who carry 'wrapped-up instruments that resembled soup ladles'²⁵ are grotesque caricatures of cooks in *The Marsden Case* and the military cook-house in *No More Parades* is 'like a cathedral's nave' thronged with ladle bearers, at once absurd and terrifying, 'white tubular beings with global eyes' who await the arrival of General Campion, 'the building paused as when a godhead descends' (*NMP* 247).

In an earlier novel by Ford, *Mr Apollo*, a godhead does descend into a kitchen which doubles as a bathroom and sounds much more like the type of kitchen in which Ford might have cooked. In its

dim light, Frances Milne is busy preparing a rabbit carcase for the table but her thoughts are quite elsewhere as she contemplates the series of Home Education articles which she is writing 'slowly and with much conscientious difficulty in the desire to express herself exactly'.²⁶ One can almost hear Joseph Conrad's agonised groans resounding around the tiny space at this point. Frances chops and dices her carefully selected ingredients and the combination of her culinary and literary activities functions as a working example of Ford's impressionism. Mentally preoccupied with a lengthy poem that she is writing, a version of the legend of Daphne, it is appropriate that when she raises her eyes from the chopped bay leaves she sees a godhead standing by her gas-stove in the form of Mr Apollo. Mere coincidence or has her simple cooking summoned him, her ability to 'push a fork into a jar of meat on a stove' (*MA* 182) and produce a meal of rabbit and vegetables? This is typical of the true food of the gods in Ford's world – it was never going to be a matter of Wellsian Boomfood or those nasty little pellets which H.G. anticipated in some future Utopia in which 'you would be able to carry a week's supply of nourishment in your vest-pocket' (*DWT* 104). So if we eat Frances Milne's food, some of her own recipes, those 'Eightpenny Dishes For Gas-stove Users' perhaps (*MA* 157), a more economical version of Gringoire's cooking with its similar emphasis on those two Fordian essentials, herbs and condiments, we too should expect to be pleasantly surprised. Ford promises much in his confident assertion that 'when you eat a good cassoulet there is no end to what you may see' (*DWT* 109). A golden yolk in a glass, a godhead, Ford wheezing by

that stove?

Ford's prose, his literary criticism in particular, in which fine writing is often presented as enjoyable and appetising, is well seasoned with carefully chosen food imagery so as to appeal to both the reader's taste buds and intellect. His conviction that 'food is the basis of health, and health is the basis of mentality' (*GTR* 251) suggests that good taste has both literary and culinary connotations which link the library to the larder. William de Morgan's fine novel *When Ghost Meets Ghost* is to be savoured as 'a slice of the very best Buzzard's cake that used to be sent in our hampers at school',²⁷ whereas Tennyson's poetic prolixity is mastication misery: 'you eat for a long time through a joint of fat, insipid meat, to come now and then on the purple patch of a truffle' (*ML* 701). Indiscriminate gorging of mass-produced food or words was anathema to Ford as it had been to Henry James, impatient with Dickens and Thackeray, who wrote without any discernible artistic faith in the naïve belief that 'a novel is a novel as a pudding is a pudding and that our only business with it could be to swallow it.'²⁸ Scornful of 'nuvvles',²⁹ contemptuous of canned food, Ford took pride in discernment and looked on in disgust as Violet Hunt guzzled cake in Germany: 'the sneer of the Dieted was on his face'.³⁰ Not for him those laden banquet tables with their 'immense prawns. . . ice pudding filled with pistachios and scalding chocolate sauce, a mishmash of fruits in a silver tazza', to be found in 'that home of orgies', the nightclub (*MC* 90, 88). Ford extolled and cooked the kind of food produced by Jeanne Becquerel in *Henry For Hugh*: 'everything she cooked

was as light as a feather and laced with flavours as a fugue of Bach's', the very opposite of tasteless and tepid English food, 'the dreadful dish called gooseberry fool' (*HH* 78).

The concept of fugal food is an enticing one, suggestive of the way in which multiple flavours are combined in a satisfying meal. Ford expanded further on this theme with a painterly reference when Henry Martin recalls how 'a damfool painter' criticised the addition of condiments to cooking: 'it was as if a painter mixed a lot of bright pigments on a palette. The result was mud-colour' (*HH* 84). Insistent on the use of condiments to bring out flavour, Ford took an opposite view – without them, food is tasteless, 'monotonously nauseating' (*MTF* 185) and, like most English food, indeterminate and indigestible. Ford's food is never just food, be it an egg or a shallot or Marie Leonie's porcine turnip whose comical little tail can suggest such fantastic tales: 'That was a turnip to amuse you; to change and employ your thoughts'.³¹ It is always part of a composite picture, a concoction of visual, audible, historical and aesthetic associations. *Return To Yesterday* is a noticeably edible memoir, its pages offer an extensive menu of figs, catsup, fennel, kidneys and kippers, and countless other comestibles, and eating is essential to its overall structure. Ford started the book 'to the tune of agreeable noises in West Twelfth Street' where he enjoyed Caribbean food, and completed it at Cap Brun where the 'rhythm of the sirocco' (*RY* 5) agitated the sweet corn he would grill for supper. His joyous and synaesthetic celebration of both food and the written word brings to mind Virginia Woolf's 'enlightened

greediness . . . which few masculine writers have expressed', as E. M. Forster remarked, adding that her numerous references to food signify more than 'a statement beneath a dish cover', an attempt to create a sense of culinary realism – Woolf wrote about food 'because she tasted it, because she saw pictures. . . because she heard Bach'.³² Ford, of course, went one better and heard an entire orchestra – Jeanne Becquerel's 'simplest soups were whole symphonies' (*HH* 85).

Much like reading, eating good food stimulates the imagination: memories, visual and audible, converge and can move us around the globe and through time. There are no limits to where we can go or to what we can see; the written word offers us limitless horizons: 'You can cast yourself on the menu as into a sun-warmed stream and swim where you like' (*MTF* 208). We can see Ford exploring these ideas earlier in *Between St Dennis and St George* in which he praises the care taken by French cooks as they select ingredients for *bouillabaisse* so that everything is proportionate, decorative and 'as impressionist as any Japanese work'.³³ Food would become a catalyst for seeing for Ford, and his manner of writing about it was another variation of his literary impressionism. The taste of a briny oyster facilitates the visualisation of a vast panorama: 'we see frigate warfare. . . we see the limitless verges of eternal oceans, the blue of Capriote grottoes' (*NYINA* 200). We are travelling back in the direction of Ford and Conrad's collaborative novel *Romance* because Ford reflects that 'one of the chief values of food is the reminiscential romance that it causes to arise' (*NYINA* 200). He

found romance in a well-cooked turbot served with bread and butter and washed down with a glass of good sherry (the Fordian equivalent of Proust's madeleine dipped in lime blossom tea?), a delicate repast which prompted him to write:

Real Epicureanism has a quality and a poetry of fugal music. You eat a tiny portion of each of the seven courses at a dinner...in order to taste certain flavours in sequence and to be moved by the almost infinite trains of association that will arise in your brain as the tongue communicates to it these savours. (*DWT* 104)

The 'tiny portion' mentioned here recalls Ford's definition of a good literary style, 'a constant succession of tiny unobservable surprises' (*JC* 197). It is also a link to some of his earlier critical tenets, his commentary on the sequential aspect of Holbein's Basle Altarpiece and his enthusiastic response to Christina Rossetti's longer poems: 'beads of pure beauty, the links between are little quaintnesses, little pieces of observation. . . they make you read on to the next place.'³⁴ This demonstrable relationship between cooking and good writing emphasizes Ford's conviction that the cook is an artist, not a starving Bohemian in a garret existing on thin oatmeal, but a performer. The Mephistophelean patron of a French kitchen who juggles 'blood, calvados and the rest' (*MTF* 216) thrills his onlookers and induces the same kind of excitement experienced when reading the work of James Joyce, the result of 'his skill in juggling words' (*ML* 302). Together with his fellow artist, the novelist, the cook understands the importance of technique which is 'sim-

ply what lies below the art of pleasing' (*ML* 388). There is something particularly gratifying and appropriate in this context about Ford's account of the genesis of the impressionist novel; the fact that its ingredients, such as 'the minutiae of words and their economical employment'³⁵ are discussed in the cafes and restaurants of Paris by the writers in Flaubert's set. There is a sense in which the novel is cooked up, its contents carefully measured out. The result of a collaborative enterprise; culinary skills, food and fellowship have contributed to its appearance – all those excitable authors have stoked up well.

Despite its frenetic appearance, Ford's own cooking is a measured process – those 'tiny portions', those 'little pieces', the minutiae demanded by both arts, called for the kind of economy Ford practised both in the kitchen and on the page. He distanced himself from the gluttonous Ancient Lights who consumed six eggs for breakfast followed by plum pudding at lunch before writing lifeless lines of verse gulped down by their adoring public 'as if it had been pineapple juice' (*ML* 696). Gringoire's cool shandygaff 'that has a little edge of lime-juice given to it' (*NE* 282) is the very opposite of its cloying sweetness and promises so much more. Just like his curry, perhaps, a truly dynamic dish which produces a sensation of speed, 'of swooping downwards on the little railways you get at Exhibitions or in fairgrounds' (*NE* 288). So, with an overall emphasis on economy and minimal amounts, is there just the faintest flavour of Marinetti's *The Futurist Cookbook* with its strident demand for 'a rapid sequence of dishes no bigger than a mouthful or even

less than a mouthful'³⁶ in Ford's gustatory meanderings? This is not to suggest that he would have approved of the kind of molecular gastronomy anticipated here. Dowell, 'a rather greedy man' would be similarly disapproving of Futurist food. He told the saddest and best story of all and with his 'taste for good cookery, and a watering tooth' (*GS* 94) would definitely prefer turbot.

Yet we do not want to join Dowell in the dining room of the Hotel Excelsior with its meaningless murmurings and non-existent food; neither do we want to be somewhere where we might have '*Salade à la Ford*' (*NYINA* 220), a dreadful concoction of shrimps and alligator pears in garish purple dressing. We would happily settle for Gringoire's lobster curry or for any of those 'piquant messes' (*NE* 283) cooked by Ford Madox Ford, master chef, in a kitchen which is perhaps no more than 'a disreputable shanty' (283) reduced to a state of 'completest chaos' (67). Ford was proud of his ability to produce chaos and boasted: 'I use everything in sight in a frenzy resembling a whirlwind' (*NYINA* 213). Despite the apparent randomness of the ingredients used, and any unspoken 'misgivings mingled with anticipations' (*NE* 288) we may have, when replete, we shall look back with gratitude to see how 'miraculously, it all came together in the end.'³⁷ All the flavours combine, all the strands of the untidy story converge, despite their apparent meandering, just like those 'netted patterns' (*RY* 3) on a musk melon which, for Ford, symbolised the apparent formlessness of both art and life whilst simultaneously affirming their overall pattern and structure.

We shall never know whether Ford really hid greasy bacon rashers in Dr Tebb's priceless first editions or if he acquired his interest in cooking from an exiled Polish count who showed the boys how to cook gipsy-style and produced 'the most wonderfully succulent meal of hedgepig' (*RY* 99). These might be no more than Fordian fantasies, which should be read, of course, as 'just possible' stories. Yet we should believe Ford's boast 'I can cook' (*RY* 185). We know that it was never a case that 'any old thing' went into that crock over the fire, 'though he surely believed what he said' (*NE* 289). Ford convinced himself it was true because he worked in a frenzy which camouflaged the care he took in acquiring and cooking fine food, in feeding his obsession. Familiarity with his writing underlines the fact that above everything else, and particularly in later life, when he left England 'where food is no more talked of than love or Heaven' (*MTF* 217), Ford loved to talk about eating. Still puttering in his cook-house, he is now determined to have the last word and his voice is just audible in the twilight – 'You have poked your fun at me as writer and as cook' (*NE* 278). Time to go with him to replenish supplies, to fetch 'the sugar and the onions'³⁸ and, if we are lucky, he may cook us trout for supper.

Notes

1 Quoted in Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, two volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), II, 515; hereafter Saunders.

2 Ford, *The March of Literature* (1938; London: Allen and Unwin, 1947), 6: hereafter *ML*.

3 *The Times* (Shreveport, Louisiana), 15 August, 1940, 4: <http://www.newspapers.com/image/210292635>. Carle Hodge, 'Society of Amateur Chefs Aims To Prove Men Are Best Cooks', *The Central New Jersey Home News* (New Brunswick, New Jersey), 24 March, 1946, 11: <http://www.newspapers.com/image/321636958>.

4 Ford, *Return To Yesterday* (1931; edited by Bill Hutchings, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1999), 217; hereafter *RY*.

5 Quoted in Saunders, II, 502.

6 Wyndham Lewis, *Rude Assignment: A Narrative of My Career Up To Date* (London: Hutchinson, 1951), 122.

7 Ford, 'Literary Portraits: XXX. Mrs Belloc Lowndes and "The End of Her Honeymoon"', *Outlook*, 33 (4 April 1914), 459-460. The sprouts are a surprise as Ford often maligned them. Those 'fields of brussels sprouts growing black in the wet soot below factory chimneys' are suggestive of a Fordian Waste Land: *Great Trade Route* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1937), 101; hereafter *GTR*. In *New York Is Not America* Ford states his preference for 'a little bully beef, a raw onion, some good strong cheese, a leaf or so of cos lettuce and salt, some good crusty bread and plenty of fresh butter' as opposed to a meal of 'wild duckling with marrowfats and orange-peel sauce': *New York Is Not America* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1927), 190; hereafter *NYINA*.

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8 Ford, *Mr Fleight* (London: Howard Latimer, 1913), 230; hereafter *MF*. See also Keir Waddington, "We Don't Want Any German Sausages Here!" Food, Fear, and the German Nation in Victorian and Edwardian Britain', in *Journal of British Studies*, 52, 4 (October 2013), 1017-1042, for more on this sizzling subject.

9 Ford, 'The World On A Flabby Diet', *Forum and Century*, 4, Vol. XCIX (April, 1938), 241-247, 246.

10 Ford, 'Dinner With Turbot', in *Vogue's First Reader* (New York: Julian Messner, 1942), 104-109 (104); hereafter *DWT*. Ford's essay first appeared in *Vogue*, 94, 6 (15 September, 1939), 104, 130-131.

11 Margaret Cole, *Growing Up Into Revolution* (London: Longmans, Green, 1949), 82.

12 Ford, *It Was The Nightingale* (London: William Heinemann, 1934), 345; hereafter *IWN*.

13 Ford, *Henry For Hugh* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1934), 245, hereafter *HH*. Ford attended breakfasts given by Galsworthy similarly dominated by silverware and menacing tea urns: 'I have always hated comfort and all its accompaniments, but here something ascetic mingled with the tempered luxury' (*IWN* 34).

14 Ford, *A Call* (1910; Manchester: Carcanet, 1984), 32.

15 Ford, *The Good Soldier* (1915; edited by Max Saunders, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012),

32; hereafter GS.

16 See Heidi Ziegler, 'Food On Intertextual Demand: *The Blood Oranges* (John Hawkes); *The Good Soldier* (Ford Madox Ford); *As You Like It* and *What You Will* (William Shakespeare)', in *The Pleasures and Horrors of Eating: the Cultural History of Eating in Anglophone Literature*, edited by Marion Gymnich and Norbert Lennartz (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2010) 323-339, 333.

17 Ford, *The Heart Of The Country* (London: Alston Rivers, 1906), 95.

18 Ford, *Some Do Not . . .* (1924; edited by Max Saunders, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2010), 193; hereafter *SDN*.

19 Ford, *No More Parades* (1925; edited by Joseph Wiesenfarth, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2011), 248; hereafter *NMP*.

20 Ford, *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (Boston: Little Brown, 1924), 195.

21 Ford, *No Enemy* (1929; New York: Ecco Press, 1984), 288; hereafter *NE*.

22 Ford, *A Mirror To France* (London: Duckworth, 1926), 185; hereafter *MTF*.

23 See Robert Lowell in *The Presence of Ford Madox Ford: A Memorial Volume of Essays, Poems and Memoirs*, edited by Sondra J. Stang (Philadel-

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phia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981) 204-205, 205.

24 Stella Bowen, *Drawn From Life* (1941; London: Virago Press, 1984), 67; hereafter *DFL*.

25 Ford, *The Marsden Case: A Romance* (London: Duckworth, 1923), 102; hereafter *MC*.

26 Ford, *Mr Apollo: A Just Possible Story* (London: Methuen, 1908), 159; hereafter *MA*. Mr Fleight expresses a wistful desire for the food of his poverty-stricken past: 'Strong, cheap tea at the end of the day, and cheap, strong cheese. And a rabbit that's been poached': *MF* 173.

27 Ford, 'Literary Portraits: XXIV. Mr William de Morgan and "When Ghost Meets Ghost"' in *Outlook*, 32 (21 February, 1914), 238-239, 239. Buzzard's was a famous cake-maker in Oxford Street. See David Cecil, *Max: A Biography*, (1964; London: Constable, 1983), 438, for mention of 'the Dundee cake brought by Buzzard's weekly cart' and also John Burnett, *England Eats Out: A Social History Of Eating Out In England From 1830 to the Present* (London: Routledge, 2014), 217.

28 Henry James, 'The Art of Fiction' in *Partial Portraits* (1888, London: Macmillan and Company, 1894), 375-408, 376. James's essay was originally published in *Longman's Magazine*, 4 (September 1884) and was re-published with emendations in 1888 in *Partial Portraits*.

- 29 Ford, *The English Novel* (London: Constable, 1930), 84.
- 30 Violet Hunt, *The Desirable Alien* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1913), 75.
- 31 Ford, *Last Post* (1928; edited by Paul Skinner, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2011), 16.
- 32 E. M. Forster *Virginia Woolf: The Rede Lecture*, 1941 (Cambridge University Press, 1942), 18-19.
- 33 Ford, *Between St Dennis and St George: A Sketch of Three Civilisations* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 195.
- 34 Ford, 'The Collected Poems of Christina Rossetti' in *The Fortnightly Review*, New Series, Vol.75, (January-June 1904), 393-405, 400.
- 35 Ford, 'Techniques' in *The Southern Review*, I (July 1935), 20-35, 23.
- 36 Filippo Marinetti, *The Futurist Cookbook* (1932; translated by Suzanne Brill, edited by Leslie Chamberlain, London: Trefoil Publications, 1989), 56.
- 37 Paul Metcalf to Max Saunders: quoted in Saunders, II, 526.
- 38 Ford, 'When the World Was in Building' in *On Heaven: And Poems on Active Service* (London: John Lane, 1918), 27.

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From the Soil: hunger, *haute cuisine* and food production

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Ford and Elsie Martindale married in May 1894. After a honeymoon in Devonshire, they moved to Bloomfield Villa, a semi-detached house in Bonnington in Romney Marsh. According to Max Saunders, they were living on about £3 per week – what Lloyd George, in a 1909 speech in the House of Commons, said a working-class family would need ‘for reasonable food, clothing, and shelter’.¹ Here they set up home with some of the furniture of the recently-deceased Christina Rossetti, and, as Ford put it, for the next ten years, he ‘buried’ himself in the country, and ‘for three or four years hardly saw anyone but fieldworkers’.² Although there is some exaggeration in this statement, during the year and a half they lived at Bonnington, he developed a strong attachment to some of the local people he befriended, including Meary Walker and Ragged Ass Wilson, whom he wrote about in his 1906 book *The Heart of the Country*.³

The sketches of Meary Walker and Meary Spratt, which had first appeared in Ford’s series ‘Women and Men’ in the *Little Review* (1918), were republished in *Women and Men* (Paris, 1923) and again in *Return to Yesterday* (1931), where he introduces Walker and Wilson through a story about needing ‘some mushroom catsup’ (RY 139, 141). Mushroom ketchup was an ingredient Victorian cooks used to enhance the flavour of roasts, casseroles and pies (in the way in which one might now use Worces-

ter sauce). In *Mrs Beeton's Cookbook*, the recipe involves 7lbs of mushrooms and half a pound of salt with which to sprinkle the mushrooms for their three days in a glass jar; then, half an ounce of allspice, half an ounce of ground ginger, a quarter teaspoonful of pounded mace and a quarter teaspoonful of cayenne to add to the liquor produced when the mushrooms are cooked and strained.⁴ More recent recipes involve malt vinegar, mace and nutmeg, garlic and black pepper. Jessie Conrad's less well-known *A Handbook of Cookery* does not provide a recipe for 'mushroom catsup', but she does include it in her list of kitchen essentials (along with the bottle of cooking sherry).⁵ It features in her recipe for Clear Ox Tail Soup (69) – Thick Ox Tail Soup also includes another of her essentials, Worcester sauce – and in her recipe for Stewed Steak (75). Like Worcester Sauce and Bovril, which she also uses to add piquancy, mushroom catsup was commercially available. Indeed, in 1857, it had been Crosse & Blackwell's most popular sauce.⁶

Ford begins what he calls his 'peasant biographies' (RY 139) with a description of the dispersed village of Bonnington, standing on what had originally been 'common ground', which had been claimed for domestic use through squatting (RY 141).⁷ Each 'small dwelling' stood in a 'close' bordered by hawthorn hedges, and each close had 'a few old apple- or cherry-trees, a patch of potato ground, a cabbage patch, a few rows of scarlet runners . . . a few plants of marjoram, fennel, borage or thyme' (RY 142). These were clearly traditional cottage gardens providing fruit, vegetables and herbs for the inhabitants. Ford retails his first encounter with Meary

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Walker as he returned from an unsuccessful search for catsup at the village shop. She was digging up potatoes in a field belonging to Hungry Hall, Aldington. After he helped her carry her two trugs of potatoes to her garden gate, she turned up at his cottage next morning with 'two bottles of Meary Spratt's catsup' (*RY* 144). (His subsequent portrait of the noisy Spratt describes her waking him up at 4.00 a.m. with her excited yells and screams as she picks mushrooms 'in the early morning among the dews', despite her rheumatism.) Walker's childhood, in the Hungry 'Forties, had been 'a matter of thirst, hunger and frequent chastisements' (*RY* 145); once she settled in Bonnington, after a period of wandering with her Roma husband, she picked hops, 'she helped the neighbours with baking and brewing', she 'planted the potatoes and cropped them', and she was 'the first cottager in East Kent to keep poultry for profit' (*RY* 146). Through these two portraits, Ford deftly sketches in the working of a subsistence-level rural economy and gestures towards some of the acts of generosity and kindness that helped it function.

His portrait of Ragged Ass Wilson fills out this picture of rural labour and the rural economy. He was 'a wonderful gardener'; he could 'make a stake and binder hedge better than any other man'; and he could 'get out of underwood' a whole range of 'woodcraft produce': 'Hop-poles, uset-poles, stakes, binders, teenet, faggots, wattle-gates, field gates, clothes-props, clothes-pegs, gate-posts, kindling' (*RY* 152). Ford is referring here to the commons right of estovers: the right to take wood from the commons for the implements of husbandry,

hedges and fences, and for firewood. The commons of estovers specifically refers to a right to take 'underwood', and, in his choice of this word, Ford intimates this legal framework. At the same time, his list of 'woodcraft produce' asserts his familiarity with a specialised field of rural work. In retrospect, Ford also presents his own place in this world of labour: 'I seem to have leased, bought, inhabited, mended, extended, patched up, cleaned out, more houses, households of furniture, carts, harness, waggon-sheds, plots of ground, than there are years to my life' (*RY* 152). In this sentence, Ford covers, among other things, his own activities, in Romney Marsh, as a small-producer with tomato frames and ducks (Saunders, I, 99).

Having described Wilson's life of unending labour, Ford nevertheless concludes: 'I think he was happy. In fact, I think all these people were as happy as they were wise' (*RY* 153). He elaborates on this with a more detailed (and somewhat rosy) explanation of rural economics: 'They made good money; thirteen and sixpence a week with a cottage and garden for eighteen pence. They would have a pig in the pen, a chicken or two, a poached rabbit, a hare when they were in luck . . . And American beef was fourpence a pound at Ashford market and fresh butter fivepence at Grist's' (*RY* 154).⁸ Most importantly, according to Ford, food was cheap, and the village 'was full of sociability'. This latter is evidenced by the treatment of 'Shaking Ben', the village idiot, who 'got his bellyful twice a day from one cottage or another on his beat' (*RY* 154). Here Ford alludes to the traditional system of mutual aid that existed between the poor within the agrarian

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community (*Swing* 36). One formal aspect of this collective spirit was the ‘village friendly society’ (*Swing* 18) or Benefits Club, which Ford refers to when he mentions the ‘club’ which Meary Spratt’s husband was going to defraud by claiming his benefit from the club even though he had been paid for a week’s work by Ford.

However, he painted a different picture of contemporary agricultural life in his poem ‘From the Soil (Two Monologues)’, which he published in 1904.⁹ In the first monologue, ‘The Field Labourer speaks’, the field labourer challenges the parson about the inequalities in society: ‘If so be God’s like we and we like He / The man’s as good’s his Master’.¹⁰ He’s aware of the radical implications of this statement, as his reference to ‘burning stacks’ suggests, and there is even, perhaps, an implicit threat in his use of these words. The phrase draws on a folk memory of ‘Captain Swing’ and the ‘Swing Riots’ of 1830, when agricultural workers in the low-waged south and east of England, in protest against their progressive impoverishment through wage cuts and unemployment, destroyed threshing machines and burned tithe barns and hayricks. His use of the legal term ‘arson’ (the crime with which arrested rick-burners were charged) confirms this link. The field labourer enumerates some of the problems men in his position faced:

I tell you, sir, we men that’s on the land
Needs summut we can chew when troubles brewing,
When our ol’ ‘ooman’s bad an’ rent is due
'N’ we no farden,

'N' when it's late to sow 'n'still too wet to dig the garden,
Something as we can chew like that ol' cow be chewing.
(SP 26-27)

Although his demand is for 'Something told plain' rather than the mystery of the Trinity and the fear of eternal punishment, the metaphor he uses also asserts its literal meaning: the basic need for food in times of poverty.¹¹ Nor is the choice of the parson as addressee arbitrary (or confined to his role as God's representative): the parson was 'a symbolic representative of the hierarchy of rule' (*Swing* 57). Not only was he the beneficiary of the system of tithes (which affected farmers rather than labourers), but he was 'more often than not a landowner and magistrate' (*Swing* 57) and (along with the farmer and the squire) part of that 'collective conspiracy of the village rich' who had taken away the traditional rights of the country labourer (*Swing* 52).¹² The 1795 revisions to the Poor Law tied the labourer to the parish. In addition, by setting up a system of means-tested wage-supplements rather than fixing a minimum wage, the Berkshire Bread Act (intended to address the problem of rural poverty) also effectively pauperised full-time workers by making them dependent on in-work benefits.¹³ The Poor Law provision was no longer something to fall back on in times of need; it became the framework of the labourers' life (*Swing* 47). It is noticeable that those counties which adopted this system were particularly affected by the 'Swing Riots'.

The second monologue, 'The Small Farmer soliloquizes', is similarly bleak:

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I wonder why we toiled upon the earth
From sunrise until sunset, dug and delved,
Crook-backed, cramp-fingered [. . .]
And nothing came of it. (*SP* 27)

The small farmer's lot is almost as hard as the field labourers'. The monologue evokes a life of 'futile toil'; the threats of 'parched up land, dried herbage, blighted wheat'; and the threat of ruin from 'the long droughts and bitter frosts and floods' (*SP* 28). And there is always the admonitory sight of 'the workhouse [. . .] just above the downs' (*SP* 28). The Victorian workhouse had its roots in the Elizabethan 'House of Correction' for those unwilling to work. At the end of the eighteenth-century, the 1782 Relief of the Poor Act promoted Gilbert Unions, larger work-houses designed to accommodate the elderly and infirm (with 'outdoor relief' for the able-bodied). The New Poor Law of 1834 which was largely prompted by the 'Swing Riots', effectively replaced welfare payments with the regime of the workhouse for the unemployed and 'economically inactive'.¹⁴ The East Ashford Union Workhouse, to which the poem refers, was built in 1837, designed to accommodate 350 inmates. *In Return to Yesterday*, Purdey, the 'particularly disagreeable old man', whom Meary Walker had taken in 'for the love of God' (*RY* 147), ends his days in the workhouse when she dies (and Walker herself is buried in the workhouse cemetery).

Hobsbawm and Rudé begin *Captain Swing* with an account of agricultural England in the nineteenth century. After the boom years of the Napoleonic Wars, land-owners and farmers experienced a rel-

ative drop in profits. They tackled this by getting a succession of protectionist Corn Laws passed in Parliament (1815-46), which imposed tariffs and restrictions on imported grain, and by cutting wages for agricultural labourers (*Swing* 30). At the same time, the rising cost of poor relief during the recession was managed, during the 1820s by making its administration harsher and more humiliating for claimants, thus successfully cutting back costs despite rising unemployment (*Swing* 76).¹⁵ Machine-breaking and incendiarism began in 1815 and reached its peak in 1830 (*Swing* 17). The campaign (which later acquired the name ‘Captain Swing’ from the signature on threatening letters sent to some farmers) started in Kent in August 1830 with the destruction of a threshing machine at a farm near Canterbury and spread over a score of southern and eastern counties in the next three months. The threshing machines put men out of work during the winter months, but arson was also a familiar weapon of rural protest. By September 1830, the *Times* reported, ‘scarcely a night passes without some farmer having a corn stack or barn set fire to’.¹⁶ The basic aim of the campaign was to end unemployment (and under-employment) and to gain a minimum living wage. As it developed, there were also complaints about taxes, tithes and rents: if farmers paid less tax and the parsons lowered the tithes they claimed from farmers, farmers would be able to raise the labourers’ wages.¹⁷ To that extent, the labourers and the small farmers (who had suffered bad harvests in 1828 and 1829) had a common cause. Kent saw the start of the ‘Swing’ campaign and also its close, but rick-burning continued as a form of protest for another twenty years or so

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(*Swing 17*). In *Return to Yesterday*, Ford mentions that Meary Walker and Meary Spratt are women in their seventies: for them, rick-burning was perhaps not just a folk memory but part of their lived experience.

A 'little plot of ground'¹⁸

In *Return to Yesterday*, Ford observes that 'the idea of putting tiny dark objects into the ground' fascinated him: 'Over their germination and growth there is something mysterious and exciting' (*RY 171-172*). He ends his 'Dedication' to that volume, written in Cap Brun on 14 July 1931, with a reference to the 'ears of sweet corn' that he sees 'agitated in front of the Mediterranean azure' and the anticipation 'I shall grill myself an ear or two for my supper' (*RY ix*).

In January 1931, Ford went with his new partner, Janice Biala, to stay in Stella Bowen's studio in Toulon, and, while there, they found the Villa Paul at Cap Brun, 'high above the sea' and with a long sloping garden growing figs and oranges.¹⁹ They rented the ground floor, two rooms and a *terrasse*, which they used for outdoor meals. Ford, not unusually, was severely short of money. As he wrote to George Keating, he had now been 'writing for thirty-eight years' and was still 'forced to beg' for his bread.²⁰ He wrote to Hugh Walpole, 'we live a life of a frugality which would astonish and for all I know appal you'. This included 'almost complete vegetarianism' – not on principle, but out of necessity – and 'agricultural labours that begin at dawn and end after sunset'.²¹ In addition to growing veg-

etables, they kept rabbits and chickens to furnish the table with meat and eggs. In the early mornings, according to his daughter Julie, who came to stay with them that summer, Ford would water his vegetables, while thinking about his writing.²² In *Provence*, Ford presents the schedule for a day at Cap Brun: up at 5.00; digging until 7.00, when he had his coffee: irrigating till 9.00; writing till 1.00, when he had a tomato salad for lunch; a siesta till 3.30 or 4.00, followed by more gardening; and then, on this occasion, writing from 5.00 until 7.00, since he wasn't cooking dinner.²³ He wrote the *Buckshee* poems there during this time.

His best poem of this period, 'L'Oubli – Temps de Sécheresse' was written in response to the drought of that summer. The poem begins with the problems the drought poses for their garden and its produce:

We shall have to give up watering the land
Almost altogether.
The maize must go.
But the chilis and tomatoes may still have
A little water. The gourds must go.
We must begin to give a little to the mandarines
And the lemon trees. Yes, and the string beans.
(*SP* 151)

While Ford decides on his priorities (gourds require a lot of water), he also indicates the basic necessities which the garden had provided. The main priority, he affirms, is to 'get through to the autumn' (*SP* 151). His financial position means that this is not just a matter of ensuring that some of

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their produce survives; there is a more desperate undertone to the poem. He wrote to Pound: 'we are now approaching literal starvation'.²⁴ They had relied on the garden to feed them – 'now the drought has brought even that nearly to an end'.²⁵ After contemplating the likely weather conditions from August to October, Ford declares that, in the meantime, 'we must trust to the fruits':

The muscats are done.
The bunch that hangs by the kitchen door is the last but one.
But the wine-grapes and figs and quinces and gages will go on
Nearly till September. (*SP* 152)

Ford concludes this careful summary of resources with thoughts about the preservation and preparation of the muscat grapes:

(If you lay down some of the muscat wine-grapes
on paper on the garret floor
They will shrink and grow sweeter till honey is acid
beside them.) (*SP* 152)

Later on, in a direct address to Janice, he recalls their shared time together and the labour that has transformed their garden:

Do you remember what grew where
the egg-plants and chilis now stand?
Or the opium poppies with heads like feathery wheels?
Do you remember when the lemons
were little and the oranges smaller than
peas?

We have outlived sweetcorn and haricots, The

short season of plentiful water and the rose
That covered the cistern in the time of showers
(*SP* 153)

The lines celebrate the productivity of their gardening, but they also celebrate his own survival (after the heart attack of December 1930) and their continuing love in these precarious medical and financial conditions. As Alan Judd says, this poem (like all the poems in *Buckshee*) is ‘redolent of late love’ (405). The gathering in of the harvest and the contemplation of ‘the time of all fruits being done’ (*SP* 154) with which Ford concludes his little Georgic of the vegetable garden captures precisely that precarious balance of achieved happiness and its apprehended end, a balance made all the more precarious by the impact of the drought on the kitchen garden on which they have relied.

À la Provençale

Quite apart from the threat of starvation, food was an important element in that happiness in other ways. Mizener describes the ‘many visitors’ who came to Cap Brun and ‘lingered far into the evening at the table by the balustrade looking out over the Mediterranean, after one of Ford’s special dinners and many bottles of wine’ (399). He cites Louise Bogan’s letter to Janice recalling ‘the goat cheese and the casserole full of Ford’s magnificent cooking’. In 1932, Ford had proposed to write ‘a sort of book of travel [. . .] another book of reminiscences [. . .] containing a good deal about cookery’.²⁶ This book did not happen, but, in 1934, he began *Provence*. At the outset he declares that Provence

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is 'a frame of mind' (*Pr* 13). Provence, 'the country of the vine, the olive tree – and the lemon' (*Pr* 16) with its profusion of herbs and spices (*Pr* 163-164), represents, for Ford, 'the frugal, temperate, and infinitely industrious strain of mind' (*Pr* 101). As he proceeds, he presents Provence as the embodiment of civilised values, and civilisation is presented in terms of kitchen gardening, good cooking, good humour, and poetry – from the Troubadours to the *Félibrige*. He describes himself accurately as an 'inveterate kitchen gardener' (*Pr* 27), and he celebrates the gardeners' familiarity with the plants in their garden and the value of a life where 'your throat knows the stimulation of the juice of your own grapes that you have pressed, of the oil of the olives that you have gathered and crushed, of the herbs you have grown in the mess of pottage of your own beans, of the cheese whose whey was pressed from the milk of your own goats' (*Pr* 110-111). He also describes, with similar gustatory pleasure, the ritual of the French café – 'a single apéritif before dinner, a cup of coffee with a possible *fine*, afterwards, or a *bock* at odd moments' (*Pr* 36) – savouring each of these French and German words as he writes them.

However, while he was obliged to live 'the frugal life of the Provençal peasant' at Cap Brun, it is Ford the gourmet who is foregrounded in this narration.²⁷ There is the promised recipe for 'the real, right and only best way to make *bouillabaisse*' (*Pr* 20), which is provided, some dozen pages later, in a lengthy footnote (*Pr* 33-34). There is the regional mapping of cooking with oil, butter, or pork fat, which concludes with the flourish: 'But it is not until you get

to Castelnaudary – of the *cassoulets* – that cooking with goose fat begins, and *foie gras* and truffles and the real *haute cuisine* of the Toulousain district and the real, high wines of the Bordelais’ (*Pr* 31-32). There is the account of the opera ‘The Troubadour’, which ends with the husband making his wife ‘drink her lover’s blood and eat his heart’, to which Ford adds ‘no doubt prepared as you prepare *rouelle de veau Mistral*, with plenty of garlic, olives, tomatoes and spices’ (*Pr* 52). Elsewhere he recalls a ‘wonderful meal in the farmer’s ordinary’ in Arles, where he ate ‘*petits oiseaux*’ and ‘an inimitable *soupe de poissons*’, and another occasion, in a wine-vault in Nimes, where he ate a memorable ‘*pieds de mouton à la ravigote*’ (though his personal preference is ‘sheep’s trotters à la sauce poulette’ as ‘more classical’ (*Pr* 37). What he calls *poulet béarnais* (actually chicken with forty cloves of garlic) comes in for particular mention. The first time it is prepared by ‘one of the best cooks in London’ with two pounds of garlic per chicken, and you eat the stewed cloves ‘as if they were *haricots blancs*’ (*Pr* 145-146); the second time, the American who prepares it ‘had a couple of capons cooked and had them stuffed each with twenty-five cloves’ rather than the correct method with the garlic ‘stewed under the fowl’ (*Pr* 322). By contrast to this display of French gastronomy, English food is represented by ‘tepid, pink, india-rubber beef, wet potatoes, and wetter greens’ (*Pr* 32).

These various food references culminate in Ford’s account of an ‘Homeric banquet’ in the summer of 1932 consisting of ‘half a hundred weight of bouillabaisse’; ‘twelve cocks stewed in wine’; ‘a salad in

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a dish as large as a cartwheel'; 'sweet-cream cheese with a sauce made of marc'; and sixty-one bottles of wine for sixteen adults (*Pr* 285-286). The banquet was provided for the rehearsal of a *pastorale*, a performance by local people. Ford's companions were Allen Tate and his wife, Caroline Gordon. As Saunders observes, the point of this anecdote is that this 'banquet on the shore of the sea of Virgil' prompted Tate (with some encouragement from Ford) to write his poem 'The Mediterranean'. Ford was, as Saunders says, a 'cultural hedonist' (Saunders, II, 431): the story combines an exceptional meal with a deeper cultural resonance: literary associations that stretch from Homer and Virgil to a new work by a young American poet. Although Ford's anecdote explicitly differentiates the roles of poet and chef, food and poetry are inextricably imbricated in this anecdote, in *Provence*, and in Ford's life.

Notes

1 Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I, 88; hereafter Saunders. Arthur Mizener estimated that Ford and Elsie were living on about £100 per year. See *The Saddest Story: A Biography of Ford Madox Ford* (New York: Carroll & Graff, 1971), 34.

2 Ford, *Return to Yesterday* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1931), 139; hereafter *RY*.

3 Ford, *The Heart of the Country* (London: Alston Rivers, 1906), 152.

4 Isabella Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household*

Management [1861] (London: Ward, Lock, 1907), 1183.

5 Jessie Conrad, *A Handbook of Cookery* (London: William Heinemann, 1923), 63.

6 'A Tinned History of Crosse & Blackwell, 1706-1914', Let's Look Again: A History of Branded Britain. www.letslookagain.com/tag/crosse-blackwell/ (accessed 09/10/2020). Crosse & Blackwell were founded in 1830.

7 This is a misnomer. As Hobsbawm and Rudé point out, unlike some other European countries, England in the nineteenth-century 'had no peasants': E. J. Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970), 1; hereafter *Swing*.

8 This 'thirteen and sixpence a week' should be compared with the £3 a week mentioned by Saunders as a living wage. His focus on the availability of food should be set next to Mr Spratford's answer as to why he married Meary Spratt late in life: as 'poor people', they could afford only 'one blanket apiece', but, if they married, they could have 'two blankets atop of us at night' (RY 150).

9 It was collected in Hueffer, *The Face of the Night* (1904).

10 Max Saunders, editor, *Ford Madox Ford: Selected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1997), 25-28, 26; hereafter *SP*.

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11 Ford describes how the sermons of the Bonnington parson, though very popular, ‘were above the heads of his congregation’ (RY 157).

12 The parson at Bonnington seems to have been an exception. Ford describes him as living on a stipend of less than £250 per year and providing ‘considerable’ charities to his parishioners during the winter (RY 157).

13 This is better known as the Speenhamland System after the area in Berkshire where the local magistrates met to devise a way to deal with the distress caused by high grain prices. They linked poor relief to bread prices.

14 The British Home Secretary Priti Patel, 19 February 2020, proposed that the 8.5 million ‘economically inactive’ inhabitants of the UK could be retrained to fill job vacancies.

15 Cf. Ken Loach’s film ‘I, Daniel Blake’ (2016).

16 *The Times* (17 September 1830), quoted, *Swing* 99.

17 Tithes were the compulsory payment of one tenth of the yearly produce of land and stock to the Church of England. They were ended by the Tithes Commutation Act of 1836.

18 RY 171.

19 Stella Bowen, *Drawn From Life* (London: Collins, 1941), 191.

20 Ford to Keating (26 May 1930), quoted by Mizener, 397.

21 *Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Richard M. Ludwig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 193-194, quoted by Saunders, II, 380.

22 Alan Judd, *Ford Madox Ford* (London: Flamingo, 1990), 403.

23 Ford Madox Ford, *Provence* (1935; New York: The Ecco Press, 1979), 321; hereafter *Pr*.

24 Ford to Pound (18 August 1931), *Pound / Ford: The Story of a Literary Friendship*, edited by Brita Lindberg-Seyersted (London: Faber, 1982), 93.

25 Ford to Pound (23 August 1931), *Pound / Ford*, 94.

26 Ford to Bradley (8 June 1932), *Letters*, 205-208.

27 Ford to his sister, Juliet Soskice; quoted Saunders, II, 475.

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Ford on the beach, Cap Brun, France

*Courtesy of: The Ford Madox Ford Collection, #4605. Division of
Rare Books and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library*

Losing and finding balance: food as Fordian diagnostic

Sara Haslam

Now more than ever, I find, I am looking to books for escape, or for answers, in addition to whatever else they offer.

The Russia House is my current bedtime book of choice, so, in this case, I'm reading instead about others seeking answers. Somewhat bizarrely in a novel set in the Cold War, it seems comparatively (when I think of my current questions about the world) straightforward to find them. The British Secret Service must recruit, train, and deploy into the field, a small-time publisher who made a drunken promise at a dacha during the Moscow Book Fair.

The Mirror & the Light, which I finished last New Year's Day, was intended as an escape – into Mantel's incomparable recreation of Tudor England. (Though, in 'Tudor Places', a short reflective essay about finding and setting her protagonist, she begins in Antwerp and a 'cutting wind' by the river Scheldt.)¹ Breath-stoppingly compelling though this novel of narcissistic, misogynistic, paranoid and power-driven malignity is, it wasn't really an escape.

But Mantel does, of course, in her magisterial command of detail, use food in part to diagnose the ills of that day. 'There are those who believe', she writes, 'that the health of the land depends on the

health of its prince'.² Even as Thomas Cromwell's power waxes, as Privy Seal, as Earl of Essex, he cannot grant Henry's doctors' requests and persuade a King who over-eats and no longer hunts for hours to rise earlier from table. And so results a dangerous, and apparently untreatable, 'imbalance of the humours and congestion in the organs, a sluggish digestion and a fat liver' (337). Mantel's Henry has always been frightening and murderous. Does he become more so as his health recedes? As this final novel in her trilogy progresses, the king's unpredictability, his inconstancy, is the killing thing. Memory of his not inconsiderable physical, musical, intellectual ability is suffocated by heavy, and yet always startling, terror. Perhaps, given the focus of his doctors, balanced humours and a more sprightly digestion would have rendered Henry less lethal, to Cromwell at least, and to rue his loss before, rather than after, his execution? Instead, the king marries Katharine Howard on the day his most brilliant and loyal counsellor/bully-boy goes to a public scaffold on Tower Hill.

Ford's most successful historical fiction, *The Fifth Queen* trilogy (1906-8), charts these years as well, and, intensely visual as his writing is throughout these books, he also uses food and the signs of bodily imbalance to diagnose the condition of England. Henry at the outset is both inconstant ('he is very seldom an hour of one mind', says Cromwell) and extravagantly physically unstable: a 'huge red lump ... his face suffused with blood'; soon after he is 'grey and heavy', with bloodshot eyes, having been 'suffused with purple blood'.³ There is no route here either for the lightening, pleasure-giving

arts into such a body. ‘He had been a composer of music and a skilful player on the lute, but no music and no voices could any more tickle his ears’ (40). Ford’s Katharine, a young fan of small cakes made of a paste ‘sweetened with honey and flavoured with cinnamon’ (189), provides Henry with temporary rejuvenation – he had dramatically recoiled, as Mantel, Ford, as well as historians recount, from Anne of Cleves (who resembled to Henry, Ford says, ‘a pig stuck with cloves’ (41)).⁴ But we know quite how temporary that rejuvenation was.

Ford’s understanding of food, despite this entry via the reign of Henry VIII to his thinking on the subject, was astoundingly modern. Gut health now enjoys prominent attention in doctors’ surgeries and food magazines, recognized as influential in ailments even including depression. Fermented food is the new Fletcher diet (the highly influential Horace Fletcher, ‘the great masticator’, advised chewing food 32 times, and Henry James was among those who did so). But in the 1930s, Ford wrote of food as a ‘source of not merely nourishment but all the mnemonic and psychological benefits that good food which is being properly raised, manured, fattened, and marketed can bestow’.⁵ While he told the Gourmet Society on East Fifty-fifth Street in New York City that, as he saw it, much more than one living system’s real-life balance and health was at stake. And on this occasion, it was also much more than the cultural assault of ‘Northern barbarism’ against southern French cuisine that he diagnosed.⁶ ‘Bad Food Causes World Discord Ford Madox Ford Tells Gourmets’ – according to the headline in the *New York Times* write-up. Because ‘People Cannot

be Amiable if They Have Indigestion.⁷ He didn't stop there. Replying to an editorial, almost certainly about the same lecture, in a letter to the *Times* editor a couple of days later Ford warned that as 'world cooking deteriorated' from the 1890s, 'wars flashed all across the world' (3 March 1937).⁸ Profigate use of garlic ('sovrán ... against most of the ills of the flesh'),⁹ he always believed, would help. But how else did he use food to demonstrate the potential for restoring healthful balance where discord ruled, in the individual, or in the body politic?

Personally, Ford knew how debilitating indigestion could be. He suffered badly and consulted doctors about it. Some of his remedies look alarming – and hardly different from the regimes he was forced to endure as a nerve cure patient.¹⁰ In his fifties he showed the influence of Fletcher still in the story he used to conclude his piece 'O Hygeia!', published in *Harper's* in May, 1928. It gets more detailed (and slightly different) treatment in *Return to Yesterday*, published three years later. In *Harper's*, the striking thing about one Dr Hare's 1906 advice, which Ford calls his 'salvation', to 'eat always what you like and nothing but what you like', is the simultaneous lack of balance it involves:

If what you like disagrees with you, eat it all the more. I mean, if you like grilled lobster and it disagrees with you, eat it every night for a fortnight before retiring. At first you will feel bad-dish, but you will know what is the matter with you and will have no extraneous fears. And the unpleasant feelings will lessen as your stomach disciplines itself until at last you will feel no in-

convenience at all. Do that with all the food you like, in turn, and you will arrive at the happy condition of a diet that you like and no indigestion. That being so, you will be immensely improved physically and much brighter mentally.¹¹

It's like an extreme form of aversion therapy, almost masochistic in intensity. A far cry from the 'wonders' of garlic, and his recommendation of foods that will bring not 'internal discontent' but 'gentle satisfaction' to arrest cooking's decline, and its contemporary ill effects, in the 1937 speech. More in keeping with the idea of restoring balance was Dr Hare's instruction to Ford never to eat when he did not want to, and never to eat more than his fill. Overall, though, it's hard not to speculate that either irony or wishful thinking are more prominent than they purport to be when Ford is told, as he puts it in the *Return to Yesterday* account, that 'your appetite and your appetite only should be your guide. It is infallible' (RY 258-259). Surely this cannot apply to a patient who confesses himself 'appallingly hypochondriacal when it comes to diet' (RY 229) and who 'weighed practically nothing' (*Harper's* 775) at the time he heard the advice? Perhaps the conceptual stretch needed to accept the possibility is, rather, a marker of the extent of Ford's desire in *Harper's* to puncture populist 'health-talk', and to restore to the 'ordinary citizen' knowledge and control over 'his own destinies' (768)? And in the *Return to Yesterday* version, along with the idea of self-knowledge and self-reliance, Ford is also trying to establish the narrative of his new-found well-being in New York (258). It's certainly a reso-

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lutely clubbable, urban version of himself and humanity in general that he's both channelling and championing as the *Harper's* version of the story concludes:

We never insist upon our horses, cats, pigs, dogs, or poultry consuming diets unnatural or distasteful to them; we are ready to allow that all wild animals know what is good for them. Why, then, do we enforce these measures upon ourselves? Is man with his lofty intelligence, with his achievements, his methods of government, of warfare, of justice, of communication – is man who aspires to the heavens with his skyscrapers and scoured them with his aeroplanes – in this particular a little lower than the beasts that perish and the worm that never sees the light?

I know how we're supposed to answer that rhetorical question. I also think I know how the Ford newly rooted in the country over a quarter of a century earlier would have answered it. That Ford, I suggest, would have considered that humanity had in all truth forgotten what was good for it, and to a degree directly proportionate to the height of the skyscrapers and the number of planes in the sky. To remember, and thereby find balance, meant getting closer to the dark earth, not further away from it.

What was left of the Englishman in Ford as he wrote *Return to Yesterday* was rediscovered along with what have become known as his 'peasant biographies'.¹² Inspired in particular by Meary Walker, a character who loomed large in the domestic life he

shared with his wife Elsie (who wrote about her as well, in an unpublished diary and in fiction),¹³ these deeply affectionate and closely-observed character sketches are some of the most memorable he ever wrote. 'If, as I undoubtedly do, I love England with a deep love, though I grow daily more alien to the Englishman, it is because of them', Ford gratefully observed about Meary, and Ragged Ass Wilson, and others (*RY* 110-111). Meary has her hands in the English soil when Ford first sees her – she is digging potatoes – and she immediately solves a food problem for him. He is craving, and searching for, 'mushroom catsup' (also known as 'ketchup'). Meary Spratt makes it, and Walker tells him where to find her (apparently in all seriousness), 'up by Hungry Hall' (*RY* 112). These descriptions of his rural neighbours take Ford nearly to his momentous 1898 meeting with Conrad, an event which 'forced my nose hard down again on the grindstone of writing' (*RY* 131). Before Ford's nose is quite fully engaged, however, and while he is also mourning, in a way that takes us back to where we began, the life of Henry VIII he was planning to publish until a historian got there first, it becomes clear how deeply those women and men of the 'old common land' (*RY* 111) shaped his thinking.¹⁴ When food production, food poverty, and equality are brought into the mix we find Ford offers world-sized answers to world-sized problems:

The physical side of life had at that time gripped me. I wanted to hunt, to hit a ball, and to make things grow. Writing seemed to me an unmanly sort of occupation. I still want to make things grow and indeed now again have my little plot

of ground. But I no longer regard writing as an unmanly occupation though I much dislike doing it. Nevertheless the idea of putting tiny dark objects into the ground fascinates me. Over their germination and growth there is something mysterious and exciting. It is the only clean way of attaining the world's desire. You get something for nothing. Yes: it is the only clean way of adding to your store: the only way by which you can eat your bread without taking it out of another's mouth. (*RY* 132)

And, seven years later, in possession of that 'little plot of ground' to which he refers in *Return to Yesterday*, he is even more uncompromising:

Only, in one sunlit triangle of the earth to the right of the Rhone looking North, the frame of mind which is Provence shall sit keeping her sheep on the sun-baked rocks, amidst the unnumbered tufts of pot-herbs. She shall spin to the drone of the false-wasps that Fabre wrote about.¹⁵ In her apron pocket a clove of that plant that is soveran against not only true-wasp stings but against most of the ills of the flesh. She shall sit and spin and spin, awaiting the return from the North of her Gentleman spouse. And when we shall have succeeded in slaying or in starving through over-production the one the other until no more is left of the peoples of the earth than shall comfortably populate the Roman Province and its kin triangle of the Narbonnais, the Good King shall come again and civilization begin once more its upward climb. . . . And who knows that we shall not by then

have learned the wisdom of the Good King's lesson? (*Provence*, 69-70)

Small farms, local production, land husbandry, equality of distribution: 'the only clean way of attaining the heart's desire'. If Henry VIII had only eaten what he had grown, and encouraged others to do the same, how different history would look. It sounds ridiculous, of course. But how much more ridiculous is it that we have not either 'learned the wisdom' or listened properly to writers and thinkers like Ford, and, busy destroying natural balance, no longer venerate the mysteries of the earth.

Notes

1 Mantel, 'Tudor Places' in *The Mirror & the Light* (London: 4th Estate, 2020), 899.

2 *The Mirror & the Light*, 336.

3 Ford Madox Ford, *The Fifth Queen* (1906-08; edited by Graham Greene, London: The Bodley Head, 1962), book I, *The Fifth Queen*, 32, 31, 40.

4 'It was at Rochester on New Year's Day [1540] that King Henry had his first and famously disastrous glimpse of his new bride ... [inspiring] instant repugnance': Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell* (London: Penguin, 2018), 514.

5 Harvey extracts this piece, 'Food', published in *Forum* in April 1938. David Dow Harvey, *Ford Madox Ford 1873-1939: a Bibliography of Works and Criticism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University

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Press, 1962), 267.

6 Ford Madox Ford, *Provence: from Minstrels to the Machine* (1938; Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2009), 32.

7 'Bad Food Causes World Discord Ford Madox Ford Tells Gourmets', *New York Times* (1 March 1937), 21.

8 'Observations on Cooking' (letter to the editor), *New York Times*, 22 (3 March 1937). I haven't been able to confirm that the editorial is referring to the same speech (he made more than one that month on similar themes). The *New York Times* editorial, 'Bad Food, Bad Temper', can be found in Harvey, E774, p. 411.

9 *Provence*, 69. For more detail on garlic, see Nannette O'Brien's essay in this number of *Last Post*.

10 See for details, for example, the chapter 'Some Cures' in *Return to Yesterday: 'On the Lake of Constance they had fed me on dried peas and grapes—one grape every quarter of an hour—for sixteen hours out of the day'* (1931; Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1999), 203; hereafter *RY*.

11 Ford Madox Ford, 'O Hygeia!', *Harper's Monthly* (May 1928), 768-776 (776).

12 Ezra Pound was a particular fan of these accounts. See Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I, 95.

13 Elsie Hueffer, 1899 diary; Lamb family archive. Elsie's story, 'Going Home', was published in the *Speaker* on 22 July 1905 – and was the basis for an exultant letter sent by Ford congratulating her after that date (thus correcting the archival record of this letter at Cornell, as Max Saunders has established).

14 Albert Frederick Pollard's *Henry VIII* came out in June 1902. Ford, on advice from Richard Garnett, wrote *The Fifth Queen* once he had got over the experience (RY 132-133). Pollard's book is available from Gutenberg, and has vocal online fans even today.

15 Probably Ford is referring to well-known French naturalist Jean-Henri Fabre (1823-1915).

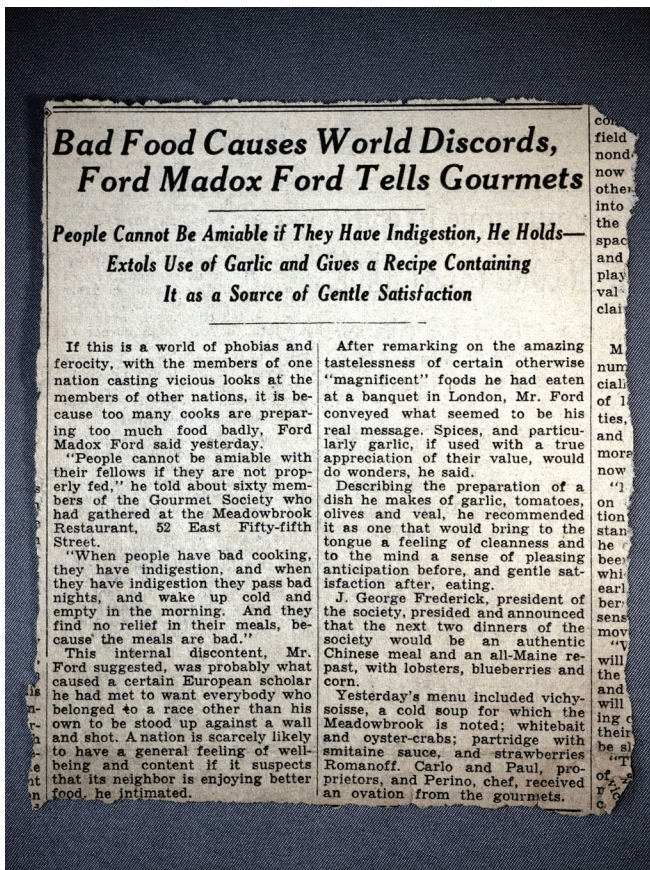


Image courtesy of: The Ford Madox Ford Collection, #4605. Division of Rare Books and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library

A FOODIE, FORDIE... Ford Madox Ford in heaven...

Michael Vince

To cooking, like all you did, you gave complete attention, the task in hand shutting out complication and confusion, whether as an unlikely officer serving in the Trenches –

were you really admired by the Army and asked to sign on as a Regular after the Armistice? – or whether as writer singly seeking out the right word. The good food of the peasantry

was what you loved, you said, and your wildly contradictory and untrustworthy touches, well-seasoned in the making, can be savoured like a good meal. Similarly you admired

the exemplary life of the self-sufficient small producer feeding off his own land after working it with the hoe, an art learnt, you said, by studying the subject in Paris:

food for thought, as if you were the Flaubert of market-gardening. There was marital redefinition, nerves, gassing and shell-shock and bitterness for France betrayed and British hard-headedness,

but further off there was always a tumbled cottage with a pig and hens and comedy retainers. Was it truly a leg of lamb braised with shallots that you ate that night in Red Ford cottage,

your famous crisis of starting again, or was it a slice of beef or half a chicken stewed: it hardly matters if you served up a different dish to different readers. That's how cooking

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works, adapting to ingredients, never exactly the same
twice over, for never the same taste. Mostly you could afford
small hotels and low-rent houses with home-made furniture,

but later, on the slopes of Provence, above the sea in a borrowed
paradisical villa, there were beans, squash, aubergines,
tomatoes and *fine herbes*: even, you suggest, your own wine.

The heat necessitated abstemious meals, yet you lost no weight-
it was olive oil and the *fines herbes*, you said. You were growing old,
and here you watered and wrote in your last idealised *terroir*,

old time peasant, self-sufficient, before and beyond your time.
You stand there portly in your apron waiting for curious guests
who will need a drink and some olives after their exhausting climb.

Reprinted from *Plain Text* (Wivenhoe: Mica Press,
2015), with the permission of the author.

On Glamour and Garlic: Ford Madox Ford's Food Writing in Glossy Magazines

Nanette O'Brien

'Civilized man—man who must live in great cities—cannot do without condiments'.¹ This is the sweeping claim with which Ford Madox Ford opens a 1937 article written for New York *Harper's Bazaar*, entitled 'In Praise of Garlic'. This introductory claim moves from the gentle, sophisticated sibilance of the soft 'c' and 's' sounds of 'civilized' and 'cities' to the hard consonants of 'cannot' and 'condiments' (a comic word, which nevertheless rounds the sentence off with another soft 's' sound). Ford's tripartite sentence announces his pleasure and confidence in writing about everyday cooking life. In the article, Ford goes on to articulate what, for him, is a necessary unification of urban life and the preparation and consumption of food that make up his idea of 'civilized life'. His tone is both pompous and practical, contrasting the refined and the ordinary. He acknowledges that even, or perhaps especially, the aspirational readership of a glossy magazine requires mass-produced condiments (like his beloved Worcestershire sauce) to season food. Condiments provide a 'taste' of the kinds of foods that would be difficult to acquire for some, especially in the context of the Great Depression. And Ford's writing here provides a 'taste' of his longer meditations on this theme in later cultural writing, including *Provence* (1935) and *Great Trade Route* (1937).

While Ford's periodical writing and editorial work has received much attention, his lesser-studied

food writing in popular and glossy magazines is also an important part of his legacy. Many of these essays appeared near the end of his life in the 1920s and late 1930s. Ford died in Deauville, France in June 1939, but he was ill with heart trouble from 1937 until his death. Examining articles written in the 1920s and 30s for the *New York Herald Tribune Sunday Magazine*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Vogue*, I will argue that Ford's magazine food writing allows him to crystallize a valedictory style that emphasizes his interest in recipe-creation and the rhythms of daily cookery throughout his life. His experience with the substitutions and variations that the mastery of cooking requires and the waiting and repetitions that are intrinsic to cooking itself are mirrored in his writing technique. His repeating words and anecdotes, and use of hesitations, ellipses and dashes create a rhythm that mimics the methods and solutions of a daily home cook. His culinary magazine writing also adopts the refracted nature of his literary Impressionism. In these food essays, Ford provides deliberately hazy anecdotes, memories retold from his books or in other essays for his magazine audiences, and often less-than-precise recipes that encourage the reader to make their own way with their cooking experiences. Yet he maintains awareness of the social circumstances of his readers, stating that fresh ingredients are often more expensive than tinned, for example, and recommending alternatives. His topics juxtapose glamorous and ordinary meals, and his anecdotes are playful while reflecting back on his life and considering the future. While this magazine writing helped Ford make ends meet, it also displays his lightness and humour in difficult times.² From

proselytising about the benefits of garlic to remembering the post-war soup that brought him out of a depression, Ford conveys the idea that food always extends beyond itself as a cultural and historical signifier and source of wellbeing.

Ford uses his food writing in popular magazines to speak broadly and nostalgically about food and its potential to provide comfort and spiritual renewal. His writing investigates transformations: carrying ideas, words, and recipes across genres, while looking forwards and backwards in time. The capaciousness of his culinary and literary vision is related to his Impressionism – to recount an impression of a previous meal is to both remember and rework the past. He does this in his many-varied accounts of his memoirs, *Return to Yesterday*, *It Was the Nightingale*, and in his later cultural writing, *Provence* and *Great Trade Route*. Ford's recounting of similar culinary stories and themes across both journalistic and more literary genres allows him to look through the many windows of the past to see the reflection of the present.

Ford and 'the public' readership

Although he never unreservedly embraced the necessary commercialism of the publishing industry, Ford's relationship to his magazine readers in the 1920s and 1930s can be understood in the context of his growing desire to reach a wider public over time. Ford's founding and editorship of his literary journal the *English Review* in 1908 was a project that was always dependent on a market, though he wanted to create a platform for dialogue. As Mark

Morrisson has argued, Ford initially hoped the *English Review* would reach a broad readership, fulfilling his ideal to provide a critical space for debate as modelled on Enlightenment thinking, and by making reading new literature a crucial element of that public space.³ But Ford worried about whether he was reaching his readers. In 1909, he wrote anonymously as the editor of the *English Review* that 'the public mind, under the perpetual assaults upon its attention, cannot remain for very long steadfast to any particular subject'.⁴ In 1911, in *The Critical Attitude*, he wrote that the English public was 'overwhelmed every morning with a white spray of facts' from the popular press.⁵ Ford's early critique of the public's distraction and inattention is one of a magazine editor establishing the tone of his own periodical: it separates its audience from the general public. Patrick Collier reads Ford's use of the term 'public mind' here as troubling, finding it both overly general and possibly excluding 'Ford himself, and the readers of the *English Review*', assuming they were of a more focused order.⁶

And in England, the pejorative term 'what the public wants' was associated with the rise of the penny dailies and attributed to Alfred Harmsworth, Viscount Northcliffe, the founder of the *Daily Mail* who died in 1922. In Collier's interpretation, Ford 'felt that western society was in decline'.⁷ Nevertheless, Collier cites Mark Morrisson's analysis of Ford's editorship of the *English Review* as presenting "counterpublic spheres based on heterogeneity, critical public discourse, and a rejuvenating public function for the arts".⁸ This interpretation of Ford's editorial vision sheds light on the urgency

of his projects and his desire for his own and other new writing to become part of a larger discourse. However, at this point in 1909, Ford had not yet written for the even wider American audiences he would reach through the *New York Herald Tribune*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Forum and Century*, and *Vogue*, in the 1920s and 30s. And one topic that perpetually interested both the public and Ford was food. His longstanding interest in cuisine was well matched to the market for this kind of writing, primarily middlebrow readers who cooked for themselves and subscribed to glossy magazines.

Although Ford saw the French Enlightenment as the ideal model for western culture, he was enamoured of certain elements of English popular culture and understood its value. In his last book, *The March of Literature*, published in 1938, he cites the dependence of the writer on the reading public, who are influenced by other writers and genres, including magazines. He labels the 'reading public' as the 'arbiters of life and not infrequently of death' for writers. Wary of the publishers, Ford reiterates his confidence in these readers: 'It is the public that from the beginning has made new art forms triumph—and it has done it in the face of the violent opposition of the critics, professors, clergy, publishers and dilettante cognoscenti and the serious and comic papers. It knows what it wants.'⁹ With this in mind, we can take Ford's food writing in magazines as his attempt to reach that public which makes 'new art' triumph.

The magazine essays

The image of a shallot shedding its skin is central and repeated in Ford's writing about his life after his service in the First World War. His essay 'Rough Cookery' (*New York Herald Tribune Sunday Magazine*, 29 July 1928) features a post-war stew with shallots; it also appears in his memoir *It Was the Nightingale* (1933). In 'Rough Cookery' Ford looks back on a little miracle of shallot skins floating to the surface in a soup when he is too exhausted to peel them by hand. He writes that waiting for 'the first stock pot of that era of reconstruction' to boil 'constituted the most depressed period of my life'.¹⁰ At the time, he was recovering from the horrors of the battle of the Somme, where he was concussed when a shell exploded near him, and he lost his memory for three weeks. Having also seen action in the Ypres Salient, he experienced lung damage both from pneumonia and probable exposure to poison gas.¹¹ He was sent back to England and spent the remainder of the war attached to the Staff of the Welch Regiment; and for a long time afterwards he was unable to express himself creatively and write at all. He describes in the magazine essay how his powers of expression return with the miracle of this soup lifting him from his exhaustion and despair:

And just a little touch of the benevolence of Providence acted on me like a friendly wink. For though I had washed those shallots I had been too dog-tired to skin them, and all the while I sat waiting for the pot to boil I was subconsciously worrying as to what would happen to those shallot skins. But would you believe it?

—when I came with the tin cup that was part of my officer’s kit, to skim the fat that had risen to the top of the soup all the shallot-skins had risen with that scum and there were the bulbs themselves (I believe that, strictly speaking, an onion is not a bulb, but a rhizome!) floating tenderly below. [...] And the curious thing is that, boil shallots as I may, from that day to this I have never known the skins to rise to the surface of the soup. (‘Rough Cookery’, 19)

Shallots are in fact bulbs – which is significant because they can spread widely by dividing from themselves in the same kind of way that Ford spreads his anecdotes, dividing them across his different genres of writing. Bulbs like shallots, garlic and onions can also be understood, in their interconnected roots and bulb-spreading, to behave like the more clearly rhizomatic ginger and turmeric – which are stems that grow rapidly and horizontally, underground. The image of the spreading rhizome represents both Ford’s style and an apt metaphor for his intention for food writing to reach an ever wider public. Crucially, Ford wanted the shallot to be a rhizome, something that spreads quickly in many directions. In this way, this anecdote resembles his idea of food itself as a carrier of culture and memories in addition to nutrients and flavour. He also wanted the shallots to be floating here – which suggests they were perhaps old and low in water content, making them light enough to rise to the top of the soup. Ford presents himself sympathetically to his readers – the endearingly bumbling, exhausted veteran. Those long sentences, the question to the reader—‘would you believe it’ and

the reminder of his recent exit from the army as an aside ('the tin cup that was part of my officer's kit') – who hasn't been too exhausted to cook 'correctly' at some point? But Ford breathes mystery and miracles into the experience – it is a one off ('from that day to this I have never known the skins to rise to the surface of the soup'). The reader is taken on a journey with Ford, looking back on this memory from nearly a decade ago – to witness the survival instincts of a traumatised soldier now romanticised into an inspired cook and writer. Ford offers a kind of 'if I could get through it, you can too' perspective to his post-war American readers.

This is a story with many versions, like a theme and variations, and the reworking of Ford's focus on the shallots escaping their skins is a powerful one. While in the magazine essay the basis for the broth is beef-bones, the scene appears in another location as the description of his first meal at Red Ford in a letter to his then partner Stella Bowen as a meal of 'fried chicken & beans & oranges'.¹² When he details this memory in a much longer scene in *It Was the Nightingale* the main basis for the soup is mutton-neck but the shallots are still what save the day. The scene in *It Was the Nightingale* focuses on Ford's extreme fatigue and his closeness to despair. The feeling of a miracle is offset by the suggestion that he is surrounded by the otherworldly, the scene reading like something from a Henry James ghost story: 'whilst the crock boiled over the sinking fire the cottage was filled with a horde of minor malices and doubts. The stairs creaked, the rafters stirred'.¹³ The story is told in this way across Ford's work – he ruminates, he expands on the metaphors,

yet always he returns to the food itself and its power to renew his sense of himself and his voice.

Bulbs (of garlic) again emerge as the focus of Ford's work in a glossy magazine nearly a decade later, when, in August 1937, 'In Praise of Garlic' appeared in New York *Harper's Bazaar*. Ford's opening line on civilization and condiments, 'Civilized man—man who must live in great cities—cannot do without condiments' (as I quoted above) reminds his readers that civilization and the circulation of spices are a major theme in Ford's work ('Praise' 104). This topic is as suited to his magazine readers as those of his longer works because he flatters them; they are civilized readers living in cities. And he is also suggesting that what they eat, whether it be ketchup or Worcestershire sauce, has a compelling origin story that connects them more broadly to the world and history.

Ford exhorts his American readers to eat condiments, like garlic or the garlicky Worcestershire sauce, and not to pretend that they will not or cannot digest such things. Instead of transporting us around the world, however, in the essay, we are taken on a trip through the internal organs and back in time to when folk wisdom dictated that garlic was beneficial to health. He writes: 'We are the descendants, all of us, of men who fought for spices and condiments for their digestion's sake. For thousands of years mere salt was treasured above rubies. Holy Writ is full of the eulogies of spices' ('Praise' 126). In a metaphor that extends the sensory aspects of the meal, Ford goes on to explain how condiments work both for deepening the fla-

vours of a meal and for enhancing its digestibility:

When you eat the almost divine meats of a great French chef, you never know how his sauces are compounded. You notice that they make the meat incomparably delicious and your tongue, savouring it, catches faintly the flavour of one herb after another fugitively: literally, as the ear half-catches the phrases of the multiple voices of a fugue of Bach. ('Praise' 126)

He is firm about this point: 'This is not overwriting or sentimentalizing. The parallel is exact' ('Praise' 126). Ford links the unusual adverb 'fugitively' to the musical term 'fugue' and both refer to an act of running away or fleeing – to take flight. Ford's tasting conjures up a flight of fancy or a flight away from something. For Ford's readers, stuck in economic depression and a time of political upheaval, his words offer the same kind of opportunity to flee the worries of everyday life or to find pleasure in them. The sublime layering of flavours or music or even of Ford's writing here takes us across time, back to when spices were a precious commodity to be treasured. The writing style and the metaphor can also be understood as rhizomatic – this theme and variations stretch and repeat across Ford's writing as well.

In 'In Praise of Garlic', Ford goes on to describe not recipes but suggestions for dishes where 'the three great condiments' which include Worcestershire sauce, 'a mixture of Parmesan and Gruyère cheese, grated; and finally curry powder' are helpful for those 'short of time and money' ('Praise' 129). His

meal suggestions are off-hand riffs that come with deep knowledge of complementary flavours:

Thus grilled salmon [...] with melted butter and *pommes a l'Anglaise* is very good. But if you make a white sauce and macerate into it a certain quantity of fennel, you will see that salmon and indeed, most other fish except, perhaps, mackerel, are lonely orphans if they have not the fennel to look after them. On the same principle, the best sirloin of beef is widowed without a little horseradish; venison with or without sauce *piquante* is helped by preserved cherries.' ('Praise' 126)

Both pragmatic and whimsical, Ford personifies his ingredients so they are characters with their own stories—fish without sauce become 'lonely orphans' and beef is 'widowed' without horseradish.

Ford also recommends adding Worcestershire sauce as a 'respectable substitute for garlic, on occasions where, say, one is going to a dance and one's dance partners themselves may not have consumed any garlic' and similar suggestion for curry powder ('Praise' 129). But on the subject of the possible offensive odour after consuming garlic, Ford remarks that as long as only a little is used and it is cooked, his readers should not fear it: 'never once has a dancing partner shuddered in my arms nor palely subsided on the ground' ('Praise' 129). We can only take Ford at his word here. But his anecdote reminds us of things like dancing and eating dinners with friends, glamorous activities that the readers of *Harper's Bazaar* will be planning—or at

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least hoping for—some day.

Dipping again into his tales of long-ago revelries, the light-hearted tone of Ford's dinner party reminiscences in 'Four in the Morning Cookery' (British *Harper's Bazaar*, December 1938) captures the pre-First World War *zeitgeist* at the eve of the second. The opening lines promise escapism to Ford's readers:

The gayest season that this writer can remember was that of London in the summer before the war. It had a quality of irresponsibility that was not the recklessness of New York's prosperity-plus-prohibition days, nor yet the strenuousness of Montparnasse, seeking the good time, of 1923-4. It was just an irresponsibility. ('Praise' 129)

Ford's almost Fitzgeraldian prose almost makes us believe, with its repetitions, that the delights of 'irresponsibility', of youth, are something we might recapture in his writing. He takes us with him to the after-party parties: 'the chafing-dish parties, that always at dawn or towards it, finished the day—on a flat roof, on a stoop, or in a garden, and in peace, to the great sound of the orchestra of London's awakening birds'.¹⁴ The portability of the chafing dish, which is a metal pan for cooking on a stand with a heating source (chafing fuel, usually alcohol) burning below it, and the novelty of planning for cooking and eating outdoors, very late at night either with friends or alone, makes the experiences this essay describes particularly poignant. A great deal of care has been put in to make a special

social occasion even more lovely. With '*Huîtres à la Shelby* (for four)' Ford suggests a recipe for oysters cooked in wine and beefstock. It appears more accessible and affordable to his readers because, 'scandalous as the statement may appear, they [the oysters] are almost as good when they come out of a tin' ('Four in the Morning Cookery', 103). Garlic too, Ford reminds his readers, makes everything better, especially when consumed with others who are part of the chafing-dish adventure:

Take good friends; make a good flame—preferably with spirits of wine; a clean silver chafing dish; a good man to use it...and then the rigours of the game! ... And don't forget that every one of these recipes will be rendered more heavenly if before cooking you rub the chafing dish energetically with a good big clove of garlic. You will then digest better, sleep better, find your nice man still nicer...and, since you will not be going on anywhere, no one will know any better. ('Four in the Morning Cookery', 104-106)

For Ford's 1938 readers, his conclusion echoes what merriment they might try to embrace with whatever resources of time, money and energy they have left. We might imagine this merry-making is suggested or encouraged by those hesitations and ellipses (what 'games' and adventures will the reader get up to with their 'nice man?'). Ford wrote that in the time he was making these dishes before the war: 'Within a fortnight there was Armageddon.... But I think we might yet recapture those last fine raptures if sufficiently we would use the chafing dish.... Try!' ('Four in the Morning Cookery', 106). That

last exhortation, the imperative 'try', is remarkably direct in reaching out to his readers in varied circumstances. Ford has moved from the Impressionist flight of fancy to a directive that many readers might be pleased to find pushed them to embrace this playfulness and experimentation with food.

That feeling of Armageddon also overshadows Ford's final magazine essay, in which he again took up the comparison between fugues and flavours. His posthumously published 1939 US *Vogue* essay 'Dinner with Turbot' appeared three months after his death and in the first month of the Second World War. The article opens with Ford's recounting that 'the greatest shock of my career' was delivered to him when H. G. Wells predicted that 'in the Utopian state you would be able to convert the hat-rack from the hall into mutton-chops or pâté de foie gras'.¹⁵ According to Wells, the ultimate 'perfection' would be 'a week's supply of nourishment [...] in the form of little pellets' that also contained indigestible fiber 'to produce the feeling of distension that forms humanity's chief delight in feeding' (*DWT* 104). For Ford, this suggestion is appalling: to reduce a meal that should be experienced to pellets is degrading. The words 'feeding' and 'distension' have distinctly medical overtones and perhaps are evocative of army-rationing memories. One way to resist the over-mechanization of food and the mental dreariness of eating and cooking during wartime is to focus on the few pleasures remaining, even if they are only memories.

Ford instead describes for his readers what he calls the 'real epicureanism': the thrill of eating as a syn-

aesthetic experience:

Real Epicureanism has a quality and a poetry as of fugal music. You eat a tiny portion of each of the seven courses of a dinner, not to arrive at repletion, but to taste certain flavours in sequence and to be moved by the almost infinite trains of association that will arise in your brain as the tongue communicates to it those savours. Those reminiscences may be exceedingly complex and may range half across the globe. (DWT 104)

Ford believed in the expansive capacities of food to transport the consumer to other geographies. One eats for the tasting pleasure, yes, but also for the complexity of layered flavours that evoke here music, memory and ‘almost infinite trains of association’. I have discussed elsewhere how this passage is both a reference back to Ford’s early essay on Impressionism and a direct response and homage to the eighteenth-century French gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, whose ideal dinner consisted of *turbot au gratin*, a large flat fish cooked in bread crumbs and a béchamel sauce, bread and butter and a glass of sherry.¹⁶ Ford often looked at French cuisine in its historical, almost mythical contexts and prized its ability to induce a feeling of communion with those other places, past, present and future.

The final image of his *Vogue* essay is a *cassoulet*, a long-stewed dish of beans, pork or goose, tomatoes, topped with browned breadcrumbs, that Ford envisages as part of the medieval rampages of the En-

glish 'Black Prince', Edward of Woodstock (1330-1376), across France. Ford imagines 'The Black Prince making his *chevauchée* [a medieval raid] down through France, leaving a five-mile wide swath of burning farms behind him', but sparing 'The Inn of the Queen because of its beans, its Périgord pasty, and its claret wine' (*DWT* 131). The *cas-soulet* outlasts the Inn, and indeed is passed down to Ford, and from Ford to his readers in *Vogue*, that they too may glean some hope from what endures beyond wars and across time and continents.

Conclusion

These essays display only a snippet of the concentric circles of Ford's fascination with digestion, spices, history and humanity that are expanded upon in his book-length reflections on these subjects, particularly in *Great Trade Route*. Yet the style he hones in these magazines reflects a preoccupation with reaching a wider literary market that several other modernists share, which is evident for example in *Vogue's First Reader* (1942), which included previously published selections by Ford, Ernest Hemingway, Rebecca West and many others. To give examples from other glossy magazines, *Vanity Fair* published modernist art and literature in the 1920s and 30s, and *Harper's Bazaar* published visual and literary works by Jean Cocteau, Salvador Dali, Osbert Sitwell, Sean O'Faolain, Edward James and Virginia Woolf (who also published six essays in *Good Housekeeping*). And while these magazine pieces perhaps force Ford to write in a more condensed format than he would take in his longer works on a similar theme, he nevertheless

retains his expansive sentence-lengths and liberal use of em-dashes, ellipses, and asides. Ford's prose circles back on itself but traverses the world, centuries, and his own memories, while emphasizing the everyday, rhythmic patterns of food preparation that many middlebrow readers also knew.

When considering what about Ford's style is valedictory, the very act of culinary reminiscing evokes a Proustian understanding that food takes us back in our memories to what we know cannot be relived. Ford's magazine writing makes clear that food has this suggestive potential for all those magazine readers as well as those who read his longer works. Ford's last partner Janice Biala paid fitting tribute to his culinary sensibility when she dropped a *bouquet garni* of herbs in his grave at his funeral. This image of a beloved culinary ingredient resting in Ford's grave speaks to how cookery, specific ingredients and condiments have the capacity to evoke the spirit of a time or a person.

In many of the magazine essays discussed here, Ford expresses his sense of impending doom, but this is mitigated by his discoveries of pleasure in culinary exercises and memories of carefree re-pasts. While subtly reminding his readers that he is aware of the political stakes of the times, a note of frivolity cuts through in his food writing for popular magazines. Rather than dismissing the history of society before and after the First World War, he looks back on those times for what can be reaped or gleaned from those memories. Throughout his work, Ford evokes the distinctive temporal qualities of food – its simultaneous immediacy and longev-

ity in that it occupies our minds in states of being fresh or tinned, hot or cold, the repetition inherent in the processes and rituals of its preparation and consumption. He also draws comfort from its long and expansive cultural significance as a powerful trigger for memory and feelings of belonging, reminding us of these in our isolation and loneliness, our desires both for novelty and for familiarity.

Notes

1 Ford Madox Ford, 'In Praise of Garlic', *Harper's Bazaar* (New York) (August 1937), 104, 126, 129; 104; hereafter 'Praise'.

2 Max Saunders notes that when Ford was writing 'In Praise of Garlic' and 'Four in the Morning Cookery' in 1937 for *Harper's Bazaar*, both of which will be discussed here, Ford's 'usual altruistic activities [had] left him broke' and though *Great Trade Route* (1937) had received critical acclaim, it only sold 'about 1100 copies in America and 1400 copies in Britain.' See his *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, two volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), II, 506; hereafter Saunders.

3 Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 18.

4 Ford, quoted in Patrick Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 15.

5 Ford, *The Critical Attitude* (London: Duckworth, 1911), 125, cited in Mark Wollager, *Modernism*,

Media and Propaganda: British Narrative from 1900 to 1945 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), xii.

6 Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street*, 16.

7 Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street*, 27.

8 Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street*, 16 and Morrison, *Public Face*, 27.

9 Ford Madox Ford, *The March of Literature: From Confucius' Day to Our Own* (1938; Normal: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998), 831.

10 Ford Madox Ford, 'Rough Cookery', *New York Herald Tribune Magazine* (29 July 1928), 18-19, 23; 18-19; hereafter 'Rough'.

11 Saunders, II, 23.

12 Ford to Stella Bowen, 'Thursd[ay]. Night' [3-4 April, 1919]: Sondra J. Stang and Karen Cochran, editors, *The Correspondence of Ford Madox Ford and Stella Bowen* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 60.

13 Ford Madox Ford, *It Was the Nightingale* (1933; Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2007), 100.

14 Ford, 'Four in the Morning Cookery,' *Harper's Bazaar* (London) (December 1938), 82, 103-106; 82: hereafter 'Four in the Morning'.

15 Ford Madox Ford, 'Dinner with Turbot' *Vogue*

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94.6 (NY) (September 15, 1939), 104, 130, 131, 104;
hereafter *DWT*.

16 Nanette O'Brien, 'Tasting Notes and Ways of Seeing in Brillat-Savarin, Gertrude Stein and Ford Madox Ford', *The Modernist Review*, 24 (2 October 2020): <https://modernistreviewcouk.wordpress.com/2020/10/02/tasting-notes-and-ways-of-seeing-in-brillat-savarin-stein-and-ford/>. I also briefly discuss this same passage and its connections to Brillat-Savarin in my doctoral dissertation, 'Culinary Civilization: The Representation of Food Culture in Ford Madox Ford, Gertrude Stein and Virginia Woolf' (D. Phil., University of Oxford, 2017), 23-26.

Growing, Cooking, Eating: Ford as a Protoecologist

Laurence Davies

Nature should be regarded as a landscape of patches big and little, patches of all textures and colors, a patchwork quilt of living things, changing continually through time and space, responding to an unceasing barrage of perturbations. The stitches in that quilt never hold for long.

Donald Worster, "The Ecology of Order and Chaos"¹

England

À propos of food, a hard to forget anecdote in *Return to Yesterday* recounts an interview with the Lord Chancellor, whose role at the time was not only head of the judiciary of England and Wales but presiding judge of the court of Chancery. As readers of *Bleak House* may recall, Chancery was responsible for protecting wards of court. In the interests of a young relative who was in that situation, Ford claims that he went to see the Lord Chancellor at his club, where he was at lunch.² The great man started off with a tumblerful of sherry,

And half of the upper side of an enormous *Turbot au Gratin*. [...] Then he had two immense beef-steaks, the greater part of an apple-pie, at least a quarter of a pound of Stilton and some grilled herring-roes on toast. With the turbot

after the sherry, he drank a bottle of hock, with the steak a bottle of Burgundy, with the cheese and savoury two dock glasses of port and he topped it all with a small glass of very good wine. His conversation was of a singular joviality on the side of salaciousness.³

The turbot is a costly and delectable flatfish which can grow so large that in well-to-do kitchens a special rhomboid pan, known as a *turbotière*, was in use. The savoury following the cheese was another feature of Edwardian times (and still popular in some traditionalist quarters). Hock, an abbreviation of Hochheim am Main, was a general term for German Rieslings. A dock glass was a goblet holding a quarter pint, so not far short of half a bottle of port accompanied the cheese and savoury. ‘Immediately afterwards he delivered in the House of Lords a judgement in a peerage case – of extraordinary acumen, clearness of language and memory of details. [...] I don’t know what he had for dinner’ (RY 82-83). Ford, who presumably tasted none of this plenty, quotes as a counterpoint the judgement of Brillat-Savarin that ‘the perfect lunch consists of a small slice of *Turbot au gratin*, a glass of sherry and a slice of thin bread and butter’.⁴

This is one of those multivalent Fordian anecdotes that, inaccurate or not, ought to be true by virtue of its resonance. It’s an example of late Victorian and Edwardian gluttony, of power taking its ease, of clubland masculinity, of the ‘extraordinary assimilative powers of statesmen’ (RY 83), of a Rabelaisian ‘do what you will’; although the encounter with the judge is probably set in the early twentieth century,

it belongs in a chapter called 'In Darkest London', its title echoing Margaret Harkness's indictment of East End poverty in the 1890s; it recalls cooks selling leftovers to street vendors 'so the cook would get a new hat and some tobacco for her father in the workhouse' (RY 74). The allusion to Brillat-Savarin is not a polemical and glib comparison between English excess and French restraint; it is a tribute to an author whose major work is broad indeed. It concerns not only the physiology of taste, but its psychology; it draws on chemistry, medicine, history, philosophy, ethics, exile, foreign travel, culinary traditions, oenology, personal anecdotes, and, yes, recipes. It is, after all, an economy and ecology of cooking. Brillat-Savarin writes on its finances, its personnel, its variations and enthusiasms by class, gender, region, and occupation, its raw materials, its spiritual, and bodily virtues; he provides the addresses of inns, restaurants (an innovation at the time), butchers, patisseries, fishmongers, bakers, vintners, chocolate and coffee shops; he lauds the virtues of companionship. For Ford, he was not just an authority, but a kindred spirit.

There is a distinctive strain of ecological critique and observation in Ford's own works. That strain is also visible in his literary friendships and enthusiasms. Ford (and his creation Tietjens) loved the writings of the eighteenth-century Anglican priest and naturalist Gilbert White, a meticulous observer and, appropriately for Ford, a student of avian migration. In *Return to Yesterday*, Ford sees a kinship between naturalists and the 'imaginative writer': 'But I think a certain delicacy in handiwork goes often with accuracy of observation, just as

the patience of the field naturalist goes with good prose'. He praises the Scottish naturalist and shoemaker Thomas Edward: 'the writer whose cadences have most intimately influenced me' (RY 48).⁵ Along with other members of Edward Garnett's circle, Ford admired the *Sportsman's Sketches* of Turgenev, lyrical and sometimes comical, yet critical of pre-emancipation Russia, and its social landscapes. Then there was Edward Thomas, who explored ancient byways, their history, their flora and their fauna, and W. H. Hudson with his precisely seen studies of English and Argentinian biospheres. Here is Ford in *Portraits from Life* recalling Hudson's thatched-roof 'hide-hole' in a village on Salisbury Plain, a fine example of a 'patch' and ripe with local knowledge.

There he was a gipsyish man who had been in foreign parts but knew the pedigree of every shepherd's dog on the Plain and the head of game that every coppice carried and the hole of every vixen and the way every dog fox took when at night he went ravaging at a distance . . . for the fox never takes poultry near his home. Not he! For fear of retribution. [...] And you may see the fox cubs play in the sunlight with the young rabbits from the next burrow. . . . Hudson had told the villagers that and they recognized how true it was.⁶

Another enthusiasm, felt particularly by Garnett himself, was for the writings of Richard Jefferies, which include detailed observations on growing and cooking varieties of potato in the novel *Amaryllis at the Fair* (1887), the life of a rural commu-

nity during the great agricultural depression of the 1880s in *Hodge and His Masters*, a post-catastrophe rewilding of England in *After London* (1885), and panegyrics to nature in the vision-rich autobiography *The Story of My Heart* (1883).

These writers, Ford included, recognise patterns, connections, and systems without being for the most part rigorously systematic. I use the words ecology and ecological to include tendencies, convergences, and overlaps. In books such as *The Heart of the Country* and *Return to Yesterday*, there are portals into a maze of observations, gossip, traditions, present-day realities, and remembered ‘moments’: in *The Heart of the Country*, page 101 for the field sportsman; 102 for the field naturalist; and virtually the whole chapter ‘Across the Fields’ for country folk in general.⁷ That chapter is linked quite literally as well as metaphorically with footpaths across the landscape.

In ‘Cabbages and Queens’, a chapter in *Return to Yesterday*, one of several portals is the growing of food. It begins with ‘some peasant biographies’ (150), among them those of Meary Walker and her friend Meary Spratt, who have kept on going through thick and thin, dealing with recalcitrant husbands, untrustworthy men in collars and ties, multitudes of children, and ruinous cottages with flourishing vegetable gardens.⁸ The district where they lived, the parish of Bonnington in the hills north of Romney Marsh, had been common land, and was now occupied by squatters.⁹ (For another commentary on the people and their way of life, see Robert Hampson’s contribution to this issue. His

essay also has a rich description of Ford and Bi-la's garden at the Villa Paul.) In Ford's eyes, they were not, as officialdom and the charitably minded might think, a social problem. This was a quirky but self-sustaining community with a fine variety of skills. Meary Walker, for instance, came from Paddock Wood, a hop-growing area farther north, and was an expert at training and tying hops – not an easy task, since hop shoots do not naturally grow along the strings and must be firmly enough wrapped to survive wind and rain. Moreover, 'she was the first cottager in East Kent to keep poultry for profit' (146) and she also grew potatoes. Meary Spratt made mushroom ketchup, a favourite condiment of the time (now once more in fashion). Ragged Ass Wilson, his nickname earned by 'the frailty of his nether garments' (151), 'could lay bricks, cut out rafters, plaster, hang paper, paint, make chairs, corner-cupboards, fish, poach, snare, brew, gather simples, care for poultry, stop foxes' earths' (153). Above all, he could fashion any amount of wooden tools and supports needed for domestic or agricultural work.

Near the other end of the gamut from growing to eating was the village shop at Aldington Corner in the next parish over. It was a general store of almost rural American variety, and a great place for gossip. 'T'shop was the village Club, the Emporium, the news centre, the employment agency, the bank'. Hanging from the rafters was 'a mysterious inverted forest of unassorted objects' including bill-hooks for hedging and pruning, baggin-hooks for mowing and reaping, ploughshares, hams, red herrings, strings of onions, flasks of olive oil. 'There

was no imaginable thing that you could not buy there – even to books. I once bought off the counter Dostoievsky's *Poor Folk*' (155).¹⁰

What Ford describes is a miniature ecosystem notably different from what might be expected in accounts of the English countryside in the 1890s.¹¹ Nearly everybody is illiterate but armed with necessary knowledge. Agency works horizontally rather than vertically; the sole figure of authority is the kindly Anglican parson, who 'let his flock alone – and was continuously consulted by them' (156-157). There are no nearby squires, and the local policeman is as likely to clout a poacher's head or 'slope away round the corner according to the mood that is on him' (156), rather than haul him up before a magistrate.¹² Life is frugal but happier than life as a labourer toiling on a large farm or big estate. A frequent theme in contemporary discussions of how the agricultural depression of the late nineteenth century was affecting farm workers pointed towards harsher conditions, lower pay, and flight from the land.¹³ Falling prices for meat and grain from overseas were a major reason, but the Bonnington folk could actually benefit from cheaper imported beef at fourpence a pound (154).

Looking back 35 or so years, Ford said of his Bonnington friends and acquaintances:

Those brown, battered men and women of an obscure Kentish countryside come back to me as the best English people I ever knew. I do not think that, except for the parson and the grocer, any one of them could read or write but I do

not believe that one of them ever betrayed either me or even each other. If, as I undoubtedly do, I love England with a deep love, though I grow daily more alien to the Englishman; it is because of them. (152)

He was writing after eight or so years spent in Paris, New York, and Provence. His disillusionment with England, in particular its upper and middle classes, began well before the First World War, but strengthened in its aftermath. He scorns the lack of bookshops outside London (259-262), the consequent difficulties of being a half-forgotten author, and, in *Mister Bosphorus and the Muses* (1923), the hypocrisies and cruelties of England past and present. Having left the country a year and a half earlier, he probably knew nothing of Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin's celebrated speech to the Royal Society of St George on 6 May 1924, 'What England means to me', but it crystallised a kind of self-congratulation that Ford detested: 'The Englishman is all right as long as he is content to be what God made him, an Englishman, but gets into trouble when he tries to be something else. [...] There is yet one other point. I think the English people are at heart and in practice the kindest people in the world'.¹⁴ Therefore Ford hankered for France, which did not lack for cruelties, but offered more enticing and more varied food, above all in the Midi.

It would be wrong to see foodways as the proximate cause of his decampment from England, but in his writings cooking and eating are often emblems or metonymies for his more general unhappiness. The gorging judge is an example. Ford also turns

his gaze on those who doggedly eat the same meal week after week. There was William Morris, who 'was in the habit of lunching daily off roast beef and plum pudding, no matter at what season of the year, and he liked his puddings large'.¹⁵ When a small pudding arrived at table, he threw it at Mary, the cook. Then there was the agent, publisher, and Yorkshireman René Byles: 'He ate daily the same English food wherever he found himself – mutton chops grilled without condiments, potatoes boiled without sauce, a slice of apple pie, some Stilton with pulled bread. He was a martyr to indigestion. He died too young' (RY 236). In a snorting dictum from *Ancient Lights*, Ford writes, 'Always repulsive in appearance and hopelessly indigestible, English plain cooking is dead' (261). At times Ford's rants against English food are hilarious in their excess, as in his indictment of Brussels sprouts, a surfeit of bloody beef, and Eve's real temptation the grapefruit, a condemnation that Julian Barnes numbers among 'Ford's charmingly bonkers theories'.¹⁶ Whenever so inclined, Ford was quite the performer.

France

In the early years after Ford left England he was based in Paris, with occasional visits to Provence. After Janice Biala came into his life, the balance tilted in the other direction, since, 'as soon as you reach the depths of the valley of the Seine you are in a region where the climate is more than dubious, edging on territories that are definitely Northern and only to be visited in snatches when the barometer is at set fair'.¹⁷ Even if the barometer was set

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fair, there was still a smothering blanket of greenery all around. The ideal terrain for ‘the Arts in all their branches, whether called Fine or Domestic¹⁸ [...] should be in a dry, temperate-to-hot climate because the rigors that may present can be mitigated by skilful irrigation’. Living with Biala at the Villa Paul, just on the eastern edge of Toulon and at the head of a chine running down to the sea, Ford spent each early morning watering their flowers, fruit, and vegetables. His aim was to ‘be able to keep in food my own family and guests entirely by the labours of my own hands – except of course for wheat and dairy products and sugar which I could perfectly well produce if I were in the mood’ (*Pr* 310). Biala told her brother Jack:

We have a large garden in which we are growing artichokes, tomatoes, corn, carrots, beans, watermelons, mushmelons, squash [. . .] We have a cherry tree, several pear trees, almond trees, fig trees, orange and lemon trees, peaches, apricots [. . .] We have every imaginable flower, and thousands of roses.¹⁹

This abundance also included ducklings and temperamental chickens.

What stands out here is Ford’s determination to be self-sufficient and to match the grain of the landscape with the nature and quality of the food. Those principles of course had been the practice of most, though certainly not all, gardeners, smallholders, and farmers over countless generations. The point is, though, that he consciously encourages these principles, rather than following unquestionable

patterns (though he does cite that earliest of Roman prose the *Agri Cultura* of Cato the Elder). Moreover, Ford approaches his goals by both historical and contemporary routes while maintaining the views of both cook and gardener. He is a great one for contexts. We might also notice that the menus at Villa Paul were enticingly varied, in contrast to the diet of the nearby anglophile Seigneur who lived on rare beef and tinned peas (*Pr* 315-316). In this case, wealth and boredom went together, while financial hardship went with ingenuity. Referring to a cashless six weeks, Biala wrote: 'We'd have been dead of hunger if Ford couldn't make a wonderful dish out of a few beans and a crumb of bread'.²⁰

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, respect or veneration for the land was not always benign, vested in responsible gardening and farming, conducive to reverie and vision, or calmly scientific. Across the Continent what is often called blood and soil nationalism flourished and it makes Stanley Baldwin's nostalgia seem both gentle and genteel. The phrase *Blut und Boden* originated in late nineteenth Germany and covered a multitude of sins, whether theoretical or repellently literal. In either case, its principal tenets were (and still are) an insistence on cultural and racial purity, a mistrust of city life, an emphasis on sacrifice and purgation, a celebration of military glory, ancestor worship, and the sanctification of the national terrain. At times Ford had his reservations about city living, as in the framing of Philadelphia in *Great Trade Route*,²¹ but in every other way his values were quite the opposite. He was an indomitable cosmopolitan – that identity so loathed by phobic

politicians and their enablers in the press. Right-wing nationalism flourished in the France of the Third Republic (1870-1940). Its proponents, Catholics and secularists, monarchists and republicans, authoritarians and parliamentarians, federalists and anti-federalists fought with the civil powers and among themselves, but they saw French history in a stained-glass glory, and the soil of France as blessed and saturated with the blood of patriots. Ford, who sympathised with the victims of the crusade against the Albigenian heretics, emphatically did not.²²

I am not suggesting that Ford's late works are ripostes to the fuming dragons of the Right, but the contrasts are enlightening. Ford and Biala certainly had a good idea of what was going on in Italy and Germany with Mussolini and 'Mr Hitler'. In France, Ford was aware of the audience for writings by such nationalists as Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras. Ford and Biala were in Paris on 6 February 1934 when rioting by various right wing factions brought about 16 deaths and 2,000 casualties.²³ Ford's writings were notably generous and open-minded at a time of narrowing horizons, when French politicians, journalists, and intellectuals of the Right railed at Jews, Protestants, Freemasons, *les métis* (people of mixed ancestry), and 'cosmopolitans'.²⁴ All the same, there is far too much going on in *Provence* and *Great Trade Route* to read these books tendentiously. Their powers and their pleasures exist in a *perpetuum mobile* which is best not frozen. Novelists, and by extension memoirists such as Ford, swear no oath to be consistent. Nevertheless, the contrast with the ideologues shows two

things: his ecological inclinations were quite literally down to earth and his pronouncements, even at the height of his quirky utopianism, were to be taken with more than a single pinch of salt. A cameo close to the end of *Great Trade Route* expresses the less polemical side of his work, with care for the soil always at the middle of things:

I don't write as a communist – or that may possibly be reactionary. . . . I don't care. I write rather as a man who should go along a road and see some sheep over the hedge who were not doing well. . . . And I should go to the farmer and suggest his throwing a little sorghum cake on the meadow morning and evening. The cake would increase the nitrates in the dung; and the improved dung would help the grass in the meadow. . . . And so on. . . . Talking like that. (425)

Coda: the Ruination of Toulon and the Reforesting of Pennsylvania

A vital part of ecological thinking is a sense of scale in time and place. Change may occur in seconds or in aeons. What is observed can be huge or little, or anywhere in between. Ford's concept of a Great Trade Route, fuzzy though it was, required a great deal of border hopping, part cultural but mostly climatic. It also had its own borders, but they were far more flexible than those of the current world, where Brest to Geneva or Lille to Ventimiglia encompassed a far smaller territory than Beijing to Baton Rouge with its far-flung destinies and ways of life.²⁵ Focusing on a local scale, Ford wrote a fierce protest against the rapid degradation of his beloved

Toulon. In the text of *Great Trade Route*, the city is not named, nor is it listed in the index, but the disguise makes the protest all the more poignant.²⁶ 'There was a city and port there that not ten years ago was near an earthly paradise. [...] and for long my spiritual home has been on its outskirts' (*GTR* 254). It was genial, it was learned, it was vivid, it was kind, it was artistic, and the food in the restaurants 'was fresh and not too inferior'. But now, everything has changed.

And what has been more lamentable from my point of view has been the complete deterioration of the countryside for miles around. The skin disease of tawdry shack-villas has, exactly as in the case of Philadelphia, driven out the truck-growers, small producers, and village craftsmen. The village shops have nothing local or fresh to sell; for miles round the city the little shop windows are filled with nothing but canned goods and packet articles exorbitantly priced. (*GTR* 256)

In *Great Trade Route*, canned goods take over the role of the Brussels sprout in earlier volumes. Ford is haunted by a Philadelphian 'image of the Millions and Millions of Beans passing on endless belting beneath the Eyes of Hawk-Eyed Inspectors before being canned' (253). 'Eating dead peas out of a can is a dullness', whereas 'eating your own live peas twenty minutes off the vine is a mental stimulant both immediately and during several days of anticipation whilst you watch them coming to the exactly right moment for picking' (252). Not all was lost. Ford writes fondly of thick, barbecued wild

turkey and country ham sandwiches in the Cumberland Valley of Virginia, tracked down by Biala, who threatened the conductor of a long-distance bus with dire consequences if he didn't give the pair time enough to forage.

Complaints about canned goods and tasteless food, shoddy building, mass production, smoky factories, and homogeneity were no rarity in the English-speaking world of the 1930s. There were the Southern Agrarians in the USA for instance, and the followers of F. R. and Q. D. Leavis in Britain. Yet, with his sense of historical change and cause and effect, it is Ford who stands out as an ecologist in the making. Here he is, writing about the forests of Pennsylvania, beginning with the arrival of William Penn.

Then began the massacre of trees as brutal as the massacre of sea-lions that Hudson the Navigator initiated – with, of course, the accompanying feature of the drying-up of water-courses, deterioration of climate and of soil, extinction of game and of healthy population and all the rest of the familiar features, so that Pennsylvania threatened to become as barren as the hills of Greece or Palestine. By the beginning of this century, of the 30,000,000 acres of woodlands only 20,000 were left standing. To-day there are again over twelve million acres of forest ground with imported and increasing game and fish-streams galore. . . . And, of course, a population engaged in conserving the woodlands, the game, and the streams; and for another population hunting and pure air are rendered

available. It is a good achievement – but it is an even more important symbol. (*GTR* 235-236)

Ford's argument in the last two sentences echoes the conservationist ethic of Gifford Pinchot, co-founder of the Yale Forest School (1900), first chief of the US Forest Service (1905-1910), and Governor of Pennsylvania from 1931 to 1935, while the references to colonial conquest and settlement are characteristically Fordian.²⁷

It would be wrong to call Ford a synthesiser, but he is a great assembler of anecdotes, facts true, false or both, suggestive details, ambitious generalisations, costings, and contradictions. 'I am aware that I have expressed loathing for lush greennesses in Switzerland and England; but I can't help it. I don't propose to be consistent' (*GTR* 180). He has a sharp eye for unconsidered trifles that, when brought together, turn out to be worth considering. For example, in his pages on farming and gardening in the Thirteen Colonies and on into the early nineteenth century (*GTR* 161-169), he ascribes the high quality of merino rams and ewes in the mid-Atlantic states to the collapse of nomadic grazing in Spain during the Napoleonic invasion; he attributes the flourishing of New Jersey market-gardening to the Pennsylvania Dutch; he specifies the root vegetables available in Virginia in 1649; he deplores the undermanuring of tobacco plantations. It is often said of certain cynics and politicians that they know the cost of everything but the value of nothing. Ford, on the other hand, knew the relative value of many things – not least good food and drink.

Notes

1 *Environmental History Review*, 14.1/2 (1990), 10.

2 Ford might be drawing on his experience of Chancery in 1894, when Elsie Martindale's father, in a vain attempt to prevent her marrying, had her made a ward of court. The ensuing case was heard before Mr Justice North: Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, two volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I, 80-85. The Lord Chancellor at the time was the austere First Baron Herschell. If Ford really did corner a ravenous Lord Chancellor at his club, the most likely candidate is Robert Threshie Reid, Lord Loreburn of Dumfries, who was in office from 1905 to 1912. *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* characterises him as 'A stout, bluff, good natured man'.

3 Ford, *Return to Yesterday* (London: Gollancz, 1931), 82; hereafter *RY*.

4 Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826) published his *Physiology of Taste (Physiologie du goût)* two months before his death. This dictum is not in the volume, but several passages advise against eating two heavy meals in one day and recommend a hearty distance between the times of lunch and dinner.

5 Like others in this discussion, Thomas Edward (Ford calls him Edwardes) devoted himself to a particular territory: in his case, the old county of Banffshire whose flora and fauna he described with

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vivid accuracy. After a turbulent childhood, he came late to literacy. Samuel Smiles published a biography of him in 1877.

6 Ford, *Portraits from Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 53-54.

7 Ford, *The Heart of the Country* (London: Alston Rivers, 1906).

8 Meary Walker had already appeared in the 'In the Cottages' chapter of *The Heart of the Country*, where there are fewer references to food and agriculture and more to her beliefs about life in general. She also features in the fifth instalment of the series *Women & Men* in *The Little Review* (July 1918). Ford's repetitions from book or essay to book are not so much mere padding or forgetfulness as a practice of theme and variation.

9 A likely reason for not enclosing this common land would have been the poverty of the soil, which was much eroded on the slopes.

10 Cured and dried herrings immune to spoiling; olive oil probably stocked for medicinal purposes; *Poor Folk*, Lena Milman's translation of 1894, with pictorial boards by Beardsley.

11 To use a less formal but illuminating vocabulary, one could turn to what the environmental historian Donald Worster called patches or mosaics, as quoted at the head of this essay, and in 'Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History', *The Journal of American History*, 76.4

(March 1990), 1087-1106. Brigit Van Puymbroeck has argued that Kropotkin's advocacy of small self-sufficient communities is a longstanding presence in Ford's works: 'Between the Individual and the Collective: Ford Madox Ford, Peter Kropotkin and the Spirit of Collaboration', *Neophilologus*, 97 (2013), 231-244.

12 In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the area was notorious for violent gangs of smugglers and wreckers, as depicted in Conrad and Ford's *Romance*.

13 These motifs run throughout H. Rider Haggard's two-volume *Rural England: Being an Account of Agricultural and Social Researches Carried out in the Years 1901 & 1902* (London: Longmans, Green, 1902). Although a firm Conservative, Haggard inveighed against the quantity of good East Anglian land given over to vast pheasant shoots, and became greatly impressed by the co-operative movement in Denmark: *Rural Denmark and Its Lessons* (London: Longmans, Green, 1911).

14 *On England and Other Addresses* (London: Philip Allan & Co., 1926), 5. There are passages in the speech that Ford could have welcomed for their preference of old over new, notably the paragraph on the sights and sounds of England: 'the tinkle of hammer on anvil in the country smithy, the corn-crake on a dewey morning, the sound of the scythe against the whetstone, and the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of a hill' (7).

15 Ford, *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflec-*

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tions (London: Chapman & Hall, 1911), 4; hereafter *AL*.

16 Julian Barnes, 'Ford and Provence' in *Ford Madox Ford, France and Provence*, edited by Dominique Lemarchal and Claire Davison-Pégon, *International Ford Madox Ford Studies* 10 (Amsterdam: Brill, 2011), 157.

17 Ford, *Provence: From Minstrels to the Machine* (1935; Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2009), 305; hereafter *Pr*.

18 In the following sentence (not quoted here), Ford echoes the language of 'The Elixir' (1633), a poem by the Anglican priest George Herbert about the sacredness of everyday tasks.

19 Jason Andrew, 'In Provence: The Life of Ford Madox Ford and Biala', in *Ford Madox Ford, France and Provence*, 182.

20 Andrew, 'In Provence', 183.

21 In *Great Trade Route* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1937), he calls present-day Philadelphia 'a gorged monster' and, evoking the classical underworld, 'Avernus' (232, 254); hereafter *GTR*.

22 I shall deal with the French cultural and political context more fully in an essay for *Babel-Littératures plurielles*, a review published by the Laboratoire BABEL at the University of Toulon.

23 Saunders, II, 495.

24 In our own times, *plus ça change*. The nationalists were devoted to the *petits pays*, the specific, culturally distinct parts of France (for instance Lorraine for Barrès, Provence for Maurras) as well as to the country as a resolutely unified whole. Ford had his own devotion to Provence, but not to a militarised, sanctified, and ethnically pure nation.

25 By a spectacular display of gerrymandering, Ford redraws the boundaries of pleasure: ‘let in the Rhône valley where you can eat better than a god for nineteen francs and keep out Geneva, where Calvin walked by Lake Lemman if he ever went out of doors’: *GTR* 258.

26 The key to the city’s identity is an account of three days of rioting and bloodshed in a Mediterranean seaport. This could only be the fighting in and around the Toulon naval arsenal in August 1935 during a strike by munitions workers.

27 On the harrying and dislocation of Native Americans, see *GTR* 154-160.

Martin Stannard

Food For Thought: Ford and Fine Dining

Martin Stannard

To trace the patterns of Ford Madox Ford's eating habits is to trace the pattern of his life as he moved regularly between the metropolitan and the rural, between partners, between countries. This essay suggests that the year 1909 provides the first major point of departure in his tumultuous adult existence, intriguingly focused by the August issue of the *English Review*, and simultaneously marking a shift to his eating out regularly in London clubs and restaurants. The two, it is argued, are connected, and particularly so through his relations with his wife.

Having overcome a massive nervous breakdown starting in 1904, Ford had secured his first big critical successes with the *Fifth Queen* trilogy, and with his non-fiction trilogy about England and the English. As editor of the *English Review*, he at last had real power in literary London. Douglas Goldring, his sub-editor / proof-reader / errand boy, later his first biographer, remarked in 1948 that: 'Great Britain has never seen a literary magazine which can be compared with it, either before or since.'¹ It was a monument to British and European civilization. By mid-1909, however, the project was already foundering, as was Ford's marital life and social reputation.

He had set up the Review's premises during the autumn of 1908 at 84 Holland Park Avenue in a rented three-floor maisonette above a poulterer's

and fishmonger's shop. There he worked on his aunt's (Christina Rossetti's) desk. Manuscripts were stuffed into an inlaid Spanish cabinet, also inherited from his family. The place was something of a museum of Pre-Raphaelite relics. Almost certainly his grandfather's (Madox Brown's) image of him as William Tell's son, innocently staring out at the viewer holding a split apple, was hung somewhere.² Ford had already been living there for at least a year³ and had staked much of his family's money on the venture. Arthur Marwood, however, who had, according to Ford, laid out two-fifths of the huge sum necessary to found the journal,⁴ quickly discovered that Ford's business acumen was negligible. The magazine lost about £120 a week, approximately £10,000 in today's money. Ford also argued with contributors, particularly with Wells and the meticulous Arnold Bennett, over the terms on which they had agreed to supply copy. For a while Ford got away with this kind of thing because his scatty determination to publish only the best had a certain charm. The fact was that he had no interest in facts as a register of reality. Damn the expense: he was going to produce the country's leading literary periodical. And he did.

The problem was that the facts damned him. By August 1909 the *English Review* was bankrupt. His brother-in-law, David Soskice, was introduced to disentangle the finances in the short term. But the only long-term solution was to sell it to another owner. Goldring is circumspect about why Ford could not go back to Marwood to seek further funding but it seems that Marwood, like many others, had heard derogatory gossip about Ford's

behaviour towards his wife. Enter Violet Hunt, another contributor, who was regularly in the office trying to rectify its chaos. One of her Society friends was Sir Alfred Mond, later Lord Melchett, whom she persuaded to buy the *Review*, and whose first action as the new owner in January 1910 was to sack Ford and Hunt, and to install Austin Harrison, with (from 1912) Norman Douglas as sub-editor. In 1914, Douglas was writing to Ford forwarding an enquiry from Mrs. Lee-Hamilton about the manuscript of her late husband's 'Ezzelin'. It had been sent to the *Review* by Vernon Lee, and publication agreed. The manuscript, the only copy, had not been returned.⁵ Did he know where it was? It seems unlikely. Although Ford was on the brink of writing his masterpiece, *The Good Soldier* (1915), he had in the interim suffered another nervous collapse, and been ostracised by polite society. In a single year he had moved from being an apparently wealthy man-about-town, a king *littérateur*, to an impoverished outcast who sometimes found it difficult even to place his books, and who published under the pseudonym 'Daniel Chaucer', perhaps to avoid claims on his dilapidated estate.

What, you may ask, has any of this to do with Ford's eating habits? Quite a lot, as it turns out. Despite his justified reputation as a serious cook, it would seem that he did very little cooking before 1909. He had been brought up in the households of his parents and Ford Madox Brown, and was often two doors down where his sister Juliet lived with the W. M. Rossettis in St. Edmund's Terrace, Regent's Park. In all three houses, cooks, governesses, chambermaids and parlourmaids were the norm. But the

cook at Brown's house, a boisterous eccentric operating from the basement where she entertained the other servants, the children, and a collection of local working-class droppers-in, was an old family retainer rather than a chef, and she certainly never tutored the young 'Fordie' in the culinary arts.⁶ As a boarder at the eccentric Pretoria House in Folkestone, Ford's food would have been basic, as it would have been during his one year as a day-boy at University College School after his father had died in 1889. Probably his first encounter with fine dining was in Paris when he was eighteen, and trying to ingratiate himself with his rich German relatives by becoming a Catholic.

When in 1894 Ford had eloped with Elizabeth Martindale (with whom he had been at school in Folkestone) she was little more than an idealistic teenager, and they had lived the simple rustic life, eventually moving to be near her parents in a house they provided, The Bungalow at Winchelsea, East Sussex. Elizabeth (Elsie), it seems, had dealt with all of the domestic chores until Ford set up at Holland Park Avenue, and began to live the life of a metropolitan gentleman. From that point he often ate out: at the 'Square Club' (a group of literary critics, including G. K. Chesterton, who met regularly in a Fleet Street restaurant), at the Authors' Club,⁷ at the short-lived New Reform Club, and at the Mont Blanc restaurant in Gerrard Street. As Hunt's guest, he ate at elegant private dinners among her Society friends or, more humbly, at the house she shared with her mother, South Lodge, 80 Campden Hill Road, where simple food was supplied by 'Child', their ancient and rickety maid.

Although The Bungalow was kept on, Elsie had also bought two cottages, outbuildings, and several acres of land in Aldington, Kent. There Goldring had met the family during 1908 while helping to set up the *Review*. Elsie had cooked, providing stewed apples for dessert. He slept in an outhouse, Ford and Elsie in one cottage, their two daughters in another. Ford worked in a shed. 'Officially', husband and wife had two households in the country and one in town, with Ford regularly away on business. In fact, the marriage had been foundering for some time. The daughters, like their father, had both become Catholics, and apparently boarded in a convent from 1908.⁸ Ford, rather like Edward Ashburnham in *The Good Soldier* (1915) with the girl on the train, had a habit of comforting female waifs. One, an adolescent German girl, Gertrud Schablowski,⁹ who may or may not have been a prostitute when he met her, he invited to stay at Holland Park Avenue. There was also a maid and a cook. Goldring had found him an excellent secretary, Olive Thomas, who later assisted Lloyd George. Violet Hunt, in regular attendance, was clearly enamoured of Ford. It is possible that he was having relations with Schablowski, Thomas, and Hunt simultaneously,¹⁰ and that he had had an affair with Mary Martindale, Elsie's sister. It is probable, however, that he had never gone further than kissing any of them. 'Relations' is the difficult word here. Although Ford liked women, and they him, he was sexually shy and the very opposite of a buccaneering 'lady's man'. Above all, he liked to talk to women because they released his essential, uncertain, self.

Max Saunders suggests that Ford and Hunt proba-

bly became lovers on 10 June 1909. This is based on her sending him a poem the next day with the leit-motif of 'Give me another kiss'.¹¹ Her lyric is clearly erotically charged. But it might only have registered their first kiss, and that this intimacy marked her saving him (as they both saw it) from suicide by removing a bottle of prussic acid from his coat pocket.¹² It was a symbolic moment. The coat had belonged to his uncle, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The sleepless and depressive Rossetti had effectively killed himself with chloral. Ford's struggle towards independent masculinity had been a battle to release himself from the Victorian Great, in whose shadow he had grown up feeling perpetually inadequate. Perhaps he saw this moment as the point at which the separation had finally been realised, or at least enacted. One thing does, however, seem certain: that around this time Elsie had been proposing divorce.

In the early days at Holland Park Avenue she had sometimes visited and, unsurprisingly, disliked what she saw. On several occasions he had had his daughters and their governess to stay, and Elsie doubtless found their exposure to his bohemian domestic arrangements even more distasteful. Ford wrote to her regularly and affectionately. He clearly still loved her in a brother-sister fashion, and was devoted to his daughters. Elsie was a talented writer, had published her first novel in 1909,¹³ and he encouraged her independent career. Nevertheless, it would seem likely that the sexual element of the marriage had long since died, and that they were effectively separated while probably for a long time they had avoided discussing that subject directly.

Was Elsie's divorce suggestion an attempt to force Ford into making a decision? She surely did not want to break the marriage. Neither did he - at first. But the result of her ultimatum was to throw him into a self-destructive spin, and into Hunt's arms. Thus Elsie settled into her Aldington cottage in the deep Kent countryside, combined the two houses into one, re-named it 'Kit-Kat', and from there sent articles to Ford for inclusion in the *English Review*. One of these, 'The Art of Dining', appeared in the August 1909 issue.¹⁴

In context, this autobiographical piece makes interesting reading. It depicts her living alone, and sleeping outdoors in the depths of winter in an open-sided thatched 'shanty'. (Mark Tietjens does much the same thing in *Last Post* (1928), signalling by this, and his muteness, catastrophic depression and withdrawal from the unchivalric ruling classes.) If, as seems likely, the time-setting of Elsie's piece was December 1908, it coincided exactly with the first issue of the *English Review*. Canvas sheets could be pulled down and pegged tight to exclude (most of) the wind and rain. Her only (occasional) companion was her gardener, Wedman. An ancient countryman, he had advised against her living like this. Earwigs, he said, would drop on her. Birds would get in. They did. But she was quietly insistent, independent, and convinced that her al fresco existence would eliminate the turmoil of modern life. She doesn't mention it but she had been seriously ill. From childhood she had suffered from an agonising tubercular knee. In 1903 she had fallen ten feet down stone steps. More recently she had developed an unspecified illness requiring a major

operation paid for with money Ford had borrowed from Marwood. Perhaps sleeping outdoors was an attempt to effect a cure when nothing else had worked. There was, however, surely much more to it than this. Her article is a form of open letter to Ford from his abandoned wife, which he bravely publishes. Cheek-by-jowl with it he prints a form of 'reply', the first section of his novel *A Call* (1910), the typescript of which he read dispassionately to Hunt at 84 Holland Park Avenue after she had 'rescued' him from suicide.

A Call centres on a 'Ford figure', Robert Grimshaw, torn between love for two women: the exotic, outspoken Katya, and the homely Pauline whom he has lost to his best friend, Dudley Leicester. The subtitle is 'A Tale of a Passion', altered for book publication to 'The tale of two passions'. In many ways the novel is a dry run for *The Good Soldier* (subtitled 'A TALE OF PASSION'). *A Call* is a story of 'good form' masking disastrous marriages or the agony of a refused proposal. Those who are best suited to each other end up with someone else. "One wants Katya," Robert explains to her sister, "[...] She is vigour, she is life, she is action, she is companionship. [...] One wants tenderness, fidelity, pretty grace, quaintness, and, above all, worship. Katya could give me companionship; but wouldn't Pauline have given me worship?" (*A Call* 13).

Reading this, Elsie must have caught echoes of her problems with Ford. She had given him devoted companionship, as Jessie Conrad had her husband. Both women had been part of the same circle, housekeepers of their partners' genius, tolerant of

their obsession with their art, their erratic moods, their silences. But much good, Elsie surely thought, had this approach done her. Ford was seduced by his Katya, Violet Hunt. Elsie was left in the role of the doll-like Pauline, her 'worship' neglected. Thus 'The Art of Dining' has several coded messages, not least because it turns its back on fine dining and everything it symbolises about metropolitan upper-class culture. Where *A Call* is set in Mayfair, in 'the little island of wealth' bordered by Piccadilly, Regent Street, Oxford Street, and Park Lane, 'The Art of Dining' presents its opposite: rustic simplicity. Where Dudley and Robert dine in elegant mansions, Elsie remembers London and its restaurants with mixed feelings:

It is an entrancing form of excitement, being borne along in spasmodic fits and starts between the lights and the crush of hurrying, glimmering faces and forms. The chilliness of bare shoulders under flimsy coverings creeps through every nerve and makes me more alive to every face and form. [...] At the end of the cold journey I [enjoy] the warmth floating down the staircase from heated rooms, the thick carpets, the waiters with their tactful and attentive airs and the pulsating melodies from stringed instruments, strains that will mingle so well with my red wine . [...] And I lay with my eyes on the silver streak of sea thinking about it for a long time. The more I thought, the more I became charmed with the fancy [...]. But after a time there came a change - I was looking at the people in that electric lighted room - the others around me. Their faces seemed dull, as if they

were watching for something that never comes [...] some act of God, some fire or an earthquake alone would make them feel again that life was interesting, fascinating and wonderful. It made me sad to think that there is no exaltation for them in the art of dining - they are too used to it. The senses are numbed by the continual occurrence of such episodes.¹⁵

Is there not here a sense that she is asking Ford to leave this numbed world of city luxury, and to return to the vital engagement with natural forces that had inspired *The Heart of the Country* (1906)?

A Call presents an image of wealthy metropolitans even less sympathetic than Elsie's. Dining is not about the food but an opportunity for display and spiteful gossip. Most of the characters are unhappy to the point of manic depression, their 'passions' mismatched. Like Robert (half-Greek and essentially seeing himself as a 'dago' despite his Winchester education), Ford (half-German) felt himself to be an outsider among the ruling classes. Nevertheless, Robert, 'having been trained in the English code of manners never to express any emotion at all',¹⁶ abides by their etiquette. Result: misery. There can be little doubt that Ford's examination of Robert's psychology was also an examination of his own.

This was the second rock-and-a-hard place moment in Ford's life, and arguably the more serious. The difference between Robert and him was that Robert 'had forgotten that he possessed emotions' (*A Call* 154). Ford had not. His passions raged, and he was determined to find a *modus operandi* to allow them

to rage freely: in his art and in his domestic sphere. Returning to the stern, arty-crafty Elsie was unappealing. But he returned to the kind of simple life they had led – with other women: with Stella Bowen in Red Ford Cottage and France after the war; with Janice Biala in Provence during the 1930s.

His cookbook survives at Cornell, and reminds us that, when he was at home, fine dining was rarely an option. There are some 70 pages, loose leaves of ‘receipts’, mainly in Ford’s hand, and they largely deal with plain fare: brown bread cake; teacakes; seed cake; shortbread; white currant bread; orange jelly; ‘Devonshire jam’ (made with carrots, lemons and Seville oranges), damson or plum jelly, Johnnie cake (nos. 1 and 2), sweet chutney, chutney sauce, gingerbread cake, ginger bread, rissoles in paste, chocolate cake, caramel pudding, biscuits and brown bread. The nearest it comes to elegant cuisine is a recipe for various kinds of stuffing, forcemeats and seasonings for duck, goose, fowl, turkey, veal, pigeon, and rabbit. There are several recipes for soufflés but they contain quantities of breadcrumbs to bulk them out rather than following the classic French style. It is possible, of course, that what remains of these notes represents merely a fragment. Or that he carried the recipes for classic dishes in his stupendous memory. On the other hand, we know that from the time he split permanently from Elsie, he had very little money, and often had to make do and mend, even in New York and Paris, unless he was being wined and dined by others. Mixed up with the food in his collection of ‘receipts’ are those for making hair oil and gargle.

The cookbook, however, reveals a distinct interest in a range of cuisine. There are several recipes for curries. A variety of herbs, and olive oil, are cited as essential ingredients. It includes recipes from others: from 'Lizzie'; from someone (her sister?) writing to Hunt on 3 July 1889 from Gateshead-on-Tyne, enclosing instruction for making mouseline pudding; from 'Mrs Tate' 'given to me by [sic] at Barnfilly [?]' [from Caroline Gordon, Mrs. Allen Tate, at Benfolly?] for an unnamed baked dish involving butter, cream, sugar and baking powder. Allen Tate testified that when Ford was staying at Benfolly he would eat only French food but this must have been scarce as Tate's cook couldn't cook, unless Gordon took command. We also know that when in later life Ford was admired far more by his American audience, and began spending time in the States on his visits with Biala, he took an interest in American food. He wrote on cooking for *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*. He did a radio broadcast on 'Dinner at Nine'. His later 'non-fiction' books, particularly *Great Trade Route* (1937) and *Provence* (1938) develop a cultural theory centring on Mediterranean cuisine as intrinsic to Western civilization. They represent a campaign against the 'indigestion' of 'Anglo-Saxondom', the psychological and physical trauma, experienced by the fact-loving, northern, materialistic peoples, masters of the 'machine', who are antagonistic to the artist, the imagination, and the impression. '[T]he civilized races', he notes, 'are those that use spices and cook their food, barbarism being denoted by the eating of barely singed meat or matter out of tins.'¹⁷

Provence contains detailed recipes and menus: not

for fine dining in the sense of great expense but in the sense of refined taste. At 'Boeuf à la Mode', a side-street restaurant in Nice that he had used regularly in the 1920s, the price has risen by barely a third in a decade. In August 1934 he lunches with friends 'of the official or professional classes'. Hors d'oeuvres: *Salade Niçoise* and *Aubergines à la Turque*, followed by 'grey—not red—mullet, grilled with a mustard-mixed-with-white wine sauce; *poulet chasseur*; ices and fruit. ... Except for the ices everything was admirable. And French-admirable. ...' The point about this meal is that it is both sophisticated and simple. It is also cheap, as is another cited in a footnote: *Jambon de Parme*, *Loup poché* with *aïoli*, *pêches Melba*. Ever the instructor in matters of food and wine, the post-war Ford is finely discriminating. He does not really approve of the *aïoli* with that trout-like fish as being rather too strongly flavoured ('it is more suitable for conger eel, octopus, haddock, and the like') but he had 'ordered it because I wanted my Anglo-Saxon guest to know what *aïoli* is like when superfinely prepared' (*Pr* 283n1). The average British restaurant-goer in 1938 would rarely have tasted any of these dishes, would probably have disapproved of the garlic and herbs Ford ubiquitously recommends, and would never have encountered *aïoli*, let alone considered to which fish it was best suited. Long before Elizabeth David's *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (1950) and *French Country Cooking* (1951), Ford had explored her culinary territory.

To Ford, the quality of a city's food depended on its immigrants who kept alive the traditional cooking of their homelands:

You cannot to-day in London get food that has any flavour at all. Not in a chop-house; not in Soho; particularly not in any of the immense, be-marbled palaces. In New York you can find food with some taste if you take a long time looking for it – at the restaurants of Italians, Greeks, Smyrniotes, Hungarians; for the expatriate French as a rule lack courage in face of want of appreciation, and being cunning soon fall back on cold pork, shredded cereals and lettuce sparingly cotton-seed oiled. At any rate in what they offer their publics: at home they eat well enough. London, however, steamrollers out the individualities of its aliens far more swiftly and inexorably than does New York, and [...] on Saffron Hill¹⁸ [...] you are today more likely to be offered tepid, half-raw beef than risotto Milanese. (*Pr* 270)

Even French food in France was not always good. One of his neighbours on Cap Brun, a ‘French gentleman’, a ‘seigneur of the ancien régime [...] lives entirely on underdone, rare, saignant—which means bleeding—rosbif’ (*Pr* 323). Roast beef and Brussels sprouts are Ford’s culinary enemies. Fine dining has nothing to do with class or expense but it does concern the cultivation of individuality among a city’s ‘aliens’.¹⁹

Reading these accounts one is struck both by their wide knowledge of good cooking, and by Ford’s desire to impress himself upon us as a man of the world equally at home in the kitchens of ordinary people, and dining, albeit unhappily, in ‘be-marbled palaces’. It is the air adopted these days by ce-

lebrity chefs: Jamie Oliver among his *nonne*; Rick Stein touring the French provinces in his Porsche; Gordon Ramsay fixing his American kitchen ‘nightmares’. Ford claims that he knows what French New York restaurateurs eat at home, and that he eats regularly in the most elegant establishments. We would never guess that while writing this book he and Biala (who did the illustrations) were, for much of the time, living on Cap Brun on a dollar a day, cooked on a rough open fire, and would have starved were it not for his market-gardening and culinary skills. Instead we are presented with his daily regime of ‘an almost purely vegetable diet varied with a little fish’ as typical of Provençal food:

For breakfast at seven-thirty some coffee and a couple of slices of bread and butter; for lunch at one a salad and, very, very rarely, a little goat’s milk cheese; for dinner about two ounces of veal or mutton—never beef—or in the shooting season an ortolan, a grive, a little pheasant, venison or wild boar; one vegetable from the garden—tomatoes, egg plants, *petits pois*, *pois-mangetout*, string-beans or sorrel—and some stewed fruit or jam, of which I make great quantities; and sometimes some junket. Occasionally instead of the meat or game I have two or three grilled, fresh sardines or anchovies, or a grilled *mulet* —a Mediterranean fish that is nearly as good as the *loup* and a tenth of the price of that gift from the gods. . . . Nevertheless I do not lose weight—which I put down to the olive oil and *fines herbes* [. . .] (*Pr* 322-323)²⁰

Thus necessity becomes the mother of invention,

and, having in 1909 lost the mother of his children, and his beloved children, self-invention became his defence against his loss of social reputation. Suffering from a form of (justified) persecution mania, he saw himself as enchained and betrayed. Elsie refused to divorce him. Furthermore, his own reckless generosity was rewarded by sneering about his talents. In the face of what he perceived to be almost universal attack on his gentlemanly credentials, his moral fibre, even on his ability to write well, he responded in the worst possible way, and began to re-imagine his life with himself as the intimate of the rich and famous, consulted by the government, educated at Westminster (then Eton) and the Sorbonne, told by the famous chef, Escoffier, that he (Ford) could teach him how to cook.

Looking back at Elsie's 'The Art of Dining', we can see many links to this watershed in Ford's life. She offers simplicity; he is seduced by Hunt's metropolitan chic. Elsie pictures Wedman, like a character from Hardy, at his wood-sale Michaelmas dinner, enjoying his roast beef, ladling punch with the ancient utensil. She imagines him at a London dinner, not to mock but to admire him. He would look dignified in evening clothes; his skill as a raconteur would be appreciated. He was an *honest* man who cared little for holidays. He liked to work, and to work out of doors, as, she knew, did Ford. 'The Art of Dining' is in fact the title of an article she has recently read in a newspaper. This stated that 'The luxury of to-day is the necessity of to-morrow'. She ponders this. Yes, the world is changing. Only two of Wedman's sons remain at home. The rest have gravitated to the towns, and to better-paid jobs.

The newspaper article is about 'progress': 'It dwelt on these necessities in tender and respectful phrases, as though the pitch of excellence that we think we have now attained must be nurtured and guarded from any devious path.' Clearly she does not believe this. It also seems likely that she believes Ford to have betrayed not only her and her children but also his essential self, and that his adoption of a new metropolitan identity, with its fine dining and influential friends, will end in disaster. '[W]hy is it', she asks, 'that we tire of things as soon as we have much of them?' And she was right: he soon did tire of them. Although he asked Hunt to marry him if he could secure a divorce, although he pretended to have been divorced in Germany and to have married Hunt, although he presided at her South Lodge salons where all the best writers congregated before the war, he remained a moody, restless presence in her company. His passions lay elsewhere. Writers need fame and respect to survive financially. But he had no interest, as Hunt did, in the marble-palace element. He just wanted the space and freedom to write his one thousand words a day about the things that tormented or delighted him, in the company of another artist. In a sense he was always trying to recapture what he had had with Elsie.

Cooking was to Ford an essential part of this slow journey back towards a kind of Eden, a therapy. Writing to his mother in 1919, when he was living on next to nothing with Stella Bowen at Red Ford Cottage, he says: 'I do the cooking! I have made 60 lbs of jam so far',²¹ as though this would come as a surprise. Shell-shocked and in love with his young Australian painter, he was shucking off the gen-

tlemanly identity that previously had seemed so crucial to his sanity. All that was now part of the wreckage of the conflict soon to be analysed so brilliantly in *Parade's End*. Finally he could stand up, and if people shot at him, as they continued to do until his death, he no longer cared. Like Voltaire he attended to his own garden, and cooked what he grew there. His mind to him a kingdom was, and, equally important as Aeschylus or Pound to that process of continuous intellectual cultivation were the writings of the great chefs. Ford read cookery books as he read the literature he admired. Both demonstrated impersonal technical precision producing great art. Ultimately, he would have agreed with Elsie: the art of fine dining was quite separate from the element of social display. The great set-piece meal of *Provence* is the *bouillabaisse* cooked over a driftwood fire – and it takes place on a beach. 1909 seems to mark the point at which he began telling what Julian Barnes calls his ‘whoppers’, so it may be that some of his dining stories (not the *bouillabaisse* one, which is verified by Biala’s letters, and by Allen Tate, both of whom were present) fell into that category. He was perfectly aware that he had built up a net of fabrications in which he had become trapped but, post-war, he didn’t care about that, either. In fact, it appears that, even as a young man, a certain amount of ‘fibbing’ had been going on to boost his shaky morale. As he wrote for Juliet in 1895 ‘On the occasion of my sister winning six prizes’:

It really alas! does not matter at all
If I am truthful or not with you

Martin Stannard

For though *sometimes* believed when I *don't* tell the truth
I am *never* believed when I do!

Notes

1 Douglas Goldring, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite, A Record of the Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford* (London: Macdonald, 1948), 151; hereafter Goldring.

2 'Almost certainly' because Goldring (158-159) tells us that Ford's possessions were sent to South Lodge when Ford moved there, and that everything, including this picture, stayed there until Violet Hunt's death in 1942, when all her and Ford's possessions were auctioned off.

3 Henry James wrote from Lamb House, Rye, to Ford at this address on 10 October, 1907, saying that he hopes they might meet if Ford returns to Winchelsea to pick up his books; quoted by Goldring, 110-111.

4 See Ford to H. G. Wells, 2 April 1910, from *The English Review*, 84 Holland Park Avenue; *Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Richard M. Ludwig (Princeton University Press, 1965), 42: 'In November 1908 Marwood and I started the Review, he having a two-fifth share and I three-fifths. Of the £5,000 that we spent [...] he paid £2,200 and I £2,800, I being generally liable for the debts of the undertaking beyond that sum.'

5 TLS, Douglas to Ford, 26 January 1914, from *The English Review*, 17-21 Tavistock Street, Covent

Garden, London W.C.: Cornell.

6 For an account of the 'below-stairs' life in Ford Madox Brown's house see Juliet M. Soskice, *Chapters From Childhood* (1921; New York: Turtle Point Press, 1994), 42-63.

7 See Violet Hunt, *I Have this to Say* (US edition of *The Flurried Years*; New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926), 48. The New Reform Club was at 10 Adelphi Terrace 'where I entertained weekly' to gossip at 'the universal table of Society where I still very much sat.'

8 See TLS from Henry James at Lamb House, Rye, to Elsie ['Mrs. Hueffer'], 12 July 1908, expressing sorrow at her 'sad history' of illness, and joy at 'the happy cloisterment [...] of your little girls.' Quoted in Goldring, 111-112.

9 Violet Hunt, in her typed 'DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS', a key to pseudonyms she had used in *The Flurried Years* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1926), cites the name as: 'GERTRUDE SCHABLOFSKY or ENGEL. I call her "Elizabeth Schultz". Now, I believe, in New South Wales or dead.' She also states that Mary Martindale, 'Sister to Elsie Hueffer' is 'My friend. She lives in Germany', and that the landlord of 84 Holland Park Avenue, Mr. Chandler, was 'A potential witness in the divorce suit, never called and no one knows he was likely to be so. A very good friend to us both. Dead.' Olive Thomas is also described as 'my very good friend. I call her "Hermosa"': Cornell, Violet Hunt papers.

Martin Stannard

10 Goldring, 155-157, talks of retrieving a poem by Ford (signed 'G. Angel') about Schablowski from his waste-paper basket: 'The picture drawn for us [...] is of the weary harassed man of genius, paternally comforting the poor little street-walker [...] the girl selling worthless love, the poet modern rhyme'. Hunt in *I Have This to Say*, 65 and 73, is clearly discomfited by the presence of Schablowski, although she sees little of the girl as she only comes to see Ford 'for half an hour's talk' at midnight: 'another foreigner, the pasty-faced Elizabeth Schultz [Schablowski], bored, pining, discontented, dying to get away, with nowhere to go ... always leaving paper patterns and powder-puffs about the room.' Hunt obscures the question of whether Schablowski comes down from her room at midnight or returns to the house at that time.

11 Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford. A Dual Life*, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I, 287.

12 Hunt, in *I Have This to Say*, 72, dates this moment as 'June'.

13 Elizabeth Martindale, *Margaret Hever* (London: Duckworth, 1909).

14 Elizabeth Martindale, 'The Art of Dining', *English Review*, 3, ix (August 1909), 88-92.

15 Martindale, 'The Art of Dining', 90.

16 *A Call*, 153-154. The statement describes Robert.

17 Ford, *Provence* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1938), 167; hereafter *Pr.*

18 The streets and alleyways of Saffron Hill, Leather Lane, and parts of Hatton Garden, London, form a southern part of the 'Little Italy' area, a focus for Italian immigrants for centuries, north and south of the Clerkenwell Road.

19 See Sara Haslam, editor, Ford Madox Ford, *England and the English* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2003), 'Introduction', xxii-xxiii, for discussion of the 'digestive juices of London' erasing the differences between the city's inhabitants, and re-defining them.

20 An ortolan is a small European songbird, once eaten as a delicacy. A *grive* is a thrush. Ford presumably uses the American 'egg plants' rather than the English 'aubergines' because his main audience in the late 1930s was American.

21 Transcript of ALS, nd [September 1919?], Ford to Catherine Hueffer, from Red Ford Cottage, Hurston, Pulboro': Cornell, Soskice archive.

22 Transcript of ALS, 22 July 1895, Ford to Juliet Hueffer (later Soskice), np: Cornell, Soskice archive.

Helen Chambers

Ford's reading V: 'My favourite gastronomic writer'

Helen Chambers

Before the advent of celebrity television cooks, and their lavishly photographed best-selling books, people, including Ford, acquired their culinary knowledge either from family members,¹ and/or domestic staff, and through observation and conversations in restaurants and cafés. This would be supplemented by ideas and actual recipes from the relatively small numbers (by modern standards) of cookery books available or, by the early 20th century, from food columns in newspapers and magazines. Threaded throughout Ford's work, but most densely woven into *Provence* and *Great Trade Route*, and in an entire chapter of *A Mirror to France*,² are clear and at times detailed descriptions of menus, methods, and recipes, mostly of traditional French food, either acquired by observation and conversation or by reading. As reading historians have noted, evidence of reading, particularly of non-literary and/or ephemeral texts is not always easy to locate – it may be fragmented, rely on oblique allusions or be inconspicuous in footnotes, and Ford is no exception.

There is abundant direct and indirect evidence that he *did* read cookery books and his style of writing shows this. At the very beginning of *No Enemy*, Gringoire soon abandons dictating, after two pages of laborious prosaic details about preparing mutton chops, for a proposed 'Cottager Cookery Book'.³ In *No Enemy*, possibly as early as 1919, ten years

before it was published in book form, Ford seems to have been mocking the style of that most revered of English cookery books, Mary Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management: A Guide to Cookery in all Branches*. In *Mr Apollo* (1908), the rather dull jugged rabbit Frances Milne prepares for her proposed column of 'Eightpenny dishes for Gas-stove Users', flavoured only with bay leaves and a [sic] chive,⁴ echoes Jessie Conrad's recipes, perhaps because, on 2 January 1907, Ford had been sent the manuscript of Jessie's cookbook, *A Handbook of Cookery for a Small House*.⁵ In later memoirs Ford uses French cookery terms with natural ease: in *It Was the Nightingale*,⁶ when describing from memory the neck of mutton stew with shallots he prepared at Red Ford, he twice uses the verb '*rissoler*' (to brown).⁷ He also collected French restaurant menus which he later reproduced with accurate terminology and spelling (see *Pr* 276 for an example).

A more appetising and colourful approach to exploring Ford's knowledge of cookery begins with the 'garlic and saffron flavoured fish stews' which he and Biala remembered eating, for example at Martigues beyond Marseille, (which could have been either *bouillabaisse* or *bourride*) and at the later 'Homeric banquet' among the *calanques* near Cassis, and to which they were invited because of Ford's expertise in making *bouillabaisse* (*Pr* 167, 285-286). Ford may have first become interested in preparing this dish himself during the two winters that he and Stella Bowen spent in Toulon in 1925-1926, as she notes the market on Cours Lafayette where 'you could find all you want for a *bouillabaisse* even to the *rascasse*' [that alarming almost

surreal-looking Mediterranean rock fish].⁸ In *The Rash Act* there is conversation and teasing about Eudoxie's aunt's *soupe de poissons* (and the essential *rascasse*. . .).⁹ But how and when might Ford have acquired this rather localised knowledge? Norman Douglas (a gastronome but not a cook) in 'The Island of Typhoeus', first published in the *English Review* under Ford's editorship, includes a page comparing Italian fish soups unfavourably with *bouillabaisse*. A few issues later Conrad fondly recalls eating *bouillabaisse* in private houses in Marseilles.¹⁰ If however, we are to believe Ford's long footnote in *Provence* (32-33) he was familiar with this dish since the age of eighteen when, in Marseilles in 1891, he rather charmingly implies that he acquired the recipe from Apollon Caillat at the prestigious Hôtel du Louvre et de la Paix. It stretches the imagination to think that the 18-year-old Ford extracted this level of detail directly from this famous *chef de cuisine*. The recipe Ford gives us, with the same ingredients and methodology and with only minor textual variations, is to be found in a number of books easily available to Ford at the time of writing *Provence*, such as the much-reprinted *La Cuisinière Provençale* by Caillat's friend, Jean-Baptiste Réboul. However, one needs to look no further than a compendium work *L'Art du bien manger*, since Caillat donated this recipe to the volume, and Ford's translation derives directly from this.¹¹ Since Ford quotes the recipe so accurately, he must have had ready access to this book and there is abundant evidence that he used it.

In *A Mirror to France* Ford devotes a chapter and a half to praising the way in which thrifty French

housewives function, including creative use of cheap cuts of meat, such as sheep's trotters (217). In *Provence* (37) he extols *pieds de mouton à la ravigote* though he confesses to preferring these with a *sauce poulette* (an even simpler cheap egg and shallot sauce he could make using garden produce), and these two recipes appear side by side in *L'Art du bien manger* (643-644). As other contributors to *Last Post 5* have noted, there is abundant evidence that Ford hugely enjoyed preparing and eating food from ingredients he had grown or raised, and in Provence (though not in Sussex) he was almost entirely vegetarian.

Some of the dishes Ford mentions are mysterious or imaginary including his *rouelle de veau Mistral*, 'with plenty of garlic, olives, tomatoes and spices' (*Pr* 52). *Rouelle de veau* was in Ford's time a common cut (a thick wide diameter cross sectional slice of veal thigh) and though cookery books include recipes for this cut, Ford's suggestion, despite its echoes of the troubadours and of the *Félibrige*, cannot be traced to any specific recipe, ancient or modern. Another mystery is the 'square yard of the garlic and anchovy cake that they call *Paradis de Nice*' (*Pr* 150) also not easily identifiable, but from the description probably some sort of large savoury *fougasse* (a focaccia-like flatbread), or bread spread with *anchoïade* (a garlic and anchovy paste). Or was it actually *pissaladière*, the classic street food of Nice (large thin rectangles of bread dough covered with anchovies, olives, and very slowly cooked onions, though little garlic) and Ford misheard the name?

Ford's culinary joke in 1937 at Boulder, Colorado (Saunders, II, 511) when he cooked *chevreuil des prés salés*, probably depended on his memory of a specific recipe or method. What he cooked was a variation of the standard '*gigot de mouton en chevreuil*' (mutton marinated for some days to taste like venison), a well-known recipe to be found in *L'Art du bien manger* (633) and elsewhere. While he prepared *coq au vin* at Olivet from his experience and imagination, this is not necessarily a complicated dish, and Ford was used to the concept of slow cooking of poultry since his early married life, even if Elsie did the actual cooking.¹²

Ford's fictional representations of food are of interest beyond Frances Milne's economical but dull rabbit stew. The representations of Tudor cooking in the *Fifth Queen* trilogy¹³ are strong evidence that he consulted period cookery books, most likely when he was undertaking his research on Henry VIII in the British Museum Library. The cooking references are most frequent in *Privy Seal* and include the full menu of a supper cooked by the Widow Annot for Magister Udal (245), a recipe for stuffing a young pig for roasting (255) and several references in *The Fifth Queen* to cinnamon and honey cakes. The use of honey rather than sugar, extremely expensive in Britain before the 18th century, helps authenticate these sources as being of medieval or Tudor rather than more modern origin, and further bibliographic investigation is needed to identify these text(s).

In his last novel *Vive Le Roy* Ford refers to provincial French food more than elsewhere in his fiction.

The young American painter Cassie enjoys her first *cassoulet de Castelnaudary*—Ford is precise here as there are three variations of *cassoulet*—that of Castelnaudary, which claims to be its birthplace, but also of Toulouse and of Carcassonne. He again mentions this robust and rather indigestible dish of white beans and mixed baked meats in *Provence* (31, 178) and in *Great Trade Route* (217) he gives us, in a footnote, a detailed recipe (slightly inaccurate as he incorrectly adds grated cheese and butter on top, perhaps a visual confusion with the usual topping of dried bread crumbs). As this impressionistic description does not quite conform to anything in the usual cookery books, he was probably recalling *cassoulet* eaten on journeys through Languedoc with Violet Hunt in 1913, and definitely with Stella Bowen in 1926 (*DFL* 148) or perhaps, like Cassie, with Biala in Paris. The almost mythical dish of stuffed boiled fowl with vegetables, generally known as *poule au pot Henri Quatre* or as *poulet au pot béarnais* (this king was from Béarn) is also mentioned several times in *Vive le Roy* where it serves, as it originally did, a symbolic political rather than a gastronomic function.

Some time in 1906-1907 Ford declared: 'I have long wanted to write a cookery book'.¹⁴ This was around the time when he had received the manuscript of Jessie Conrad's cookery book. In 1929, around the time of the eventual publication of *No Enemy*, Ford again mentioned his dream of writing a cookery book (Saunders II, 367), and also in *A Mirror to France* (207-208). He never did but, threaded through his fiction, letters and memoirs as well as the folio of recipes mainly for sweet dishes at Cor-

nell described in this issue by Martin Stannard, there are enough recipes to construct one posthumously. . .

So, now to Ford's 'favourite gastronomic writer' (*GTR* 105fn.) and later 'my favourite writer on cooking' (*GTR* 390). In the footnote beginning, 'See how you can go astray when one is not *en pays de connoissance*', Ford writes about a Geneva lake fish, the *féra* as described by his 'favourite gastronomic writer'. He gives a definition in French, the first part of which reads like a standard dictionary or encyclopaedia description: 'Poisson du genre corrégone, voisin des saumons' and follows it with 'et TRES ESTIME par les gourmets. Le féra abonde dans le Lac de Génève.' A trawl through digitised editions of encyclopaedic 19th and early 20th century gastronomy and cookery texts, including Joseph Favre, Alexandre Dumas and several others, fails to source the second part of the quotation. Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du goût* (1825) has several comments about the excellent fish in Lake Geneva, but not in these words. Ford's use of the archaic spelling for 'connaissance' hints at a text originating before the mid-19th century. Perhaps he fabricated this description from dictionaries and conversations, and imagined Brillat-Savarin (who came from the region) as writing this? The mystery deepens further when at Gibraltar, the very end of his *Great Trade Route* (391), Ford comments that 'his favourite writer on cooking' has a first-hand knowledge of Moroccan couscous and adds a footnote (in English), which is also a translation from an article in *l'Art du bien manger* (129-130). On the following page (*GTR* 392), he gives us an ac-

curately translated, authentic recipe, for ‘the terrifying Spanish national dish, *gafpacho* [sic]’ which he clearly got from the same French source (*ABM* 171). So I have fairly convincingly identified one of Ford favourite cookery texts,¹⁵ but not his favourite writer, though indirectly Brillat-Savarin pervades his writing. Further bibliographic research, as well as examination of more of Ford’s letters may also yield further clues, direct or oblique, to solve these and other mysteries . . . but at present there is space only for a *menu de dégustation*.

Notes

1 Such as Ford’s recipe for punch from his great uncle Tristram Madox: see Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), II, 281; henceforth Saunders.

2 Ford, *Provence* (1935; Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2009), henceforth *Pr*; *Great Trade Route* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1937), henceforth *GTR*; and *A Mirror to France* (London: Duckworth, 1926), henceforth *MTF*.

3 Ford, *No Enemy* (1929; edited by Paul Skinner, Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2002), 8-9.

4 Ford, *Mr Apollo: A Just Possible Story* (London: Methuen, 1908), 157.

5 Owen Knowles, *A Conrad Chronology*, 2nd edition (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014), 90.

6 Ford, *It Was the Nightingale* (London: Heine-

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mann, 1934), 94-95.

7 By the time Ford wrote this memoir he was a very experienced cook; however, in 1919, demobbed and arriving alone at Red Ford, he was unlikely to be carrying a French cookery book in his pack, and would have acquired this vocabulary later.

8 Stella Bowen, *Drawn From Life* (London: Collins, 1941), 95; henceforth *DFL*.

9 Ford, *The Rash Act* (1933; Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1982), 306.

10 Norman Douglas, 'The Island of Typhoeus', *English Review*, I (February 1909), 416 and Joseph Conrad, 'Some Reminiscences', *English Review*, II (May 1909), 243.

11 Edmond Richardin, editor, *L'Art du bien manger* (reprinted 1904, 1907); henceforth *ABM*. A unique compilation of traditional French provincial recipes dating from the mid to late 19th Century and several times reprinted. It includes recipes from famous hotel chefs, and short reflections on food, part of which seems to be derived from writings of Brillat-Savarin, but further bibliographic research is needed to clarify the publication history of this work. Caillat himself published only one book, a slim volume entitled *150 manières d'accommoder les sardines* (1899).

12 In a very early letter to Edward Garnett in 1898 Ford mentions a rooster who knocked down the infant Christina and was therefore destined for the

pot: *Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, edited by Richard M. Ludwig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 9.

13 Ford, *The Fifth Queen: A Novel of the Court of Henry VIII*, with an introduction (1984) by A. S. Byatt (New York: Vintage Classics, 2011).

14 Ford, *Return to Yesterday* (1931; Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1999), 185.

15 Furthermore, Nanette O'Brien has advised me that in the Cornell TS of *Provence* there is a crossed out footnote with a (translated) recipe for cooking small birds (ortolans) which is directly derived from one of the contributors to Richardin's book (*ABM* 137).

Notes on Contributors

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Having taught at Monash and Glasgow Universities and Dartmouth College, Laurence Davies is currently Visiting Senior Research Fellow at King's College London. He edited the *Selected Letters of Joseph Conrad* and, with a roster of colleagues, the nine-volume *Collected Letters*. Now he is working on the letters volumes of the Oxford Ford Madox Ford. His other interests include literature and science, dystopias, microfiction, global modernism, and the Scottish author and radical campaigner R. B. Cunninghame Graham.

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Sara Haslam is Professor of Twentieth-Century Literature at the Open University, where she is also Faculty Director of Research Degrees. She has published widely on Ford for 20 years, and edited his work, including *A Man Could Stand Up*- in the first critical edition of *Parade's End* (Carcenet, 2011). Among her other recent projects are a critical edition of Evelyn Waugh's *Helena* for Oxford University Press (2020), and articles (2018 and forthcoming in *Literature and Medicine*) on what she has termed 'literary caregiving' during the First World War, while her major current focus, as Co-General Editor and co-volume editor, is *The Collected Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, in 6 volumes, to be published by Oxford University Press.

Nanette O'Brien received her DPhil from Wolfson College, Oxford in 2018. Currently an independent scholar, she is writing a book on food culture, literary modernism and conceptions of civilization and barbarism, while caring for her three-year-old son. Her recent work includes an essay on Brillat-Savarin, Ford Madox Ford and Gertrude Stein in *The Modernist Review* and an essay on modernism and role-play pedagogy in the *Journal of Modern Literature*.

Paul Skinner has edited Ford Madox Ford's *No Enemy*, Carcanet's annotated critical edition of *Last Post*, and the collection *Ford Madox Ford's Literary Contacts*. He is currently editing volume 3 of *The Collected Letters of Ford Madox Ford*. He is General Editor of *Last Post* and blogs at reconstructionarytales.wordpress.com

Martin Stannard is Emeritus Professor of Modern English Literature at the University of Leicester. He has published extensively on Evelyn Waugh, following *The Critical Heritage* (1984) with a biography in two volumes (1986 and 1992). His Norton edition of *The Good Soldier* appeared in 1995 (revised 2012), and his biography of Muriel Spark (2009) was short-listed for the James Tate Black Memorial Prize. Currently he is Co-Executive Editor of OUP's 43-volume *The Complete Works of Evelyn Waugh*, having edited *Vile Bodies* (2017) for this, is researching a new biography of Ford for OUP, and is editing Volume 5 of the Ford letters for the Complete Works of Ford Madox Ford. Professor Stannard is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and of the English Association.

Michael Vince taught in Italy and the UK before emigrating to Greece in 1979, and worked in language teaching. He now lives in Greenwich, UK. He has published poetry since the 1960s in numerous magazines, and his collections include *The Orchard Well* (Carcanet, 1978); *Mountain, Epic and Dream* (Hunting Raven, 1981); *In The New District* (Carcanet, 1982); *Gaining Definition* (R L Barth, 1986); *Plain Text* (Mica Press, 2015) and *Long Distance* (Mica Press, 2020).

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