

PALLADIUM SHORT STORY PAGE

TABLE STATUARY



How a Banquet Table Looks After It Has Been Decorated with the Expensive Statues of Ice—Before They Melt!

THE amount of money squandered on expensive banquets by the very rich has long been the subject of comment. In the effort to make these affairs unique, the question of expense is not considered, except where expensiveness alone is relied upon to make the banquet novel, and then, of course, expense is the only thing considered.

Although the most expensive viands are served at these feasts, the main item of their cost lies in the luxurious accessories—the music, vocal and instrumental; the decorations, and the favors. Without referring to some of the freak dinners that have been given from time to time by men and women who had so much money that they didn't know what to do with it, and upon which small fortunes have been squandered, ultra-fashionable banquets are given every day of the week, almost at which thousands of dollars are spent to make the occasions.

The latestfad is that of table statuary made of ice, which enables our ostentatious spendthrifts to see their money literally melt before their eyes. These statues carved out of ice are used to adorn the table, and although they are the work of high-priced sculptors and artists, there is, of course, no way of preserving them.

Just what these ice statues cost depends entirely upon the standing of the sculptor engaged to make them, but an incident which occurred recently in Berlin will give some indication of the amount of money that might be spent upon this simple table decoration.

An American gentleman and his wife were staying at one of the well-known hosteries of the Ger-

man capital and during their holiday it happened to be the lady's birthday. In honor of the occasion the American requested the chef to prepare something unique in the way of dessert or as a table decoration.

When the couple sat down to table they noticed that a number of dishes containing fruits and candies were embellished by what appeared to be little glass statues of different colors, and which were brilliantly illuminated by means of small electric bulbs artistically arranged near them.

"Aren't those favors just too beautiful for anything," declared the wife, delightedly. "I've never seen anything like them before."

"Well, we'll take them back with us and introduce them to the natives," replied the husband.

As the meal progressed, however, it was found that the statues began to lose their original shapeliness, and closer observation revealed the fact that they were made of ice. Long before the meal was over the only remaining evidence of the statuettes were the pools of colored water into which they had melted.

In due course the American presented himself to the chef, complimented him on the artistic manner in which he had decorated the birthday table, slipped the equivalent of a five-spot into the worthy's itchy palm, and quite unsuspecting asked what the cost of the little dinner was going to be. When the chef replied, "\$100 or, rather, the German equivalent of that amount," our friend promptly had a fit. But fit or no fit he had to pay just the same, and this, although he was paying only \$60 a week for his room and board for himself and wife. That little dinner cost him as much, therefore, as two weeks' board.

But at the banquets of the ultra-exclusive, where table statuary of ice is now being employed, \$100 a plate is by no means high, and the artists employed to make the little figures are given carte blanche to spend as much time and labor on their work as they can afford, irrespective of expense.

The figures once carved are kept in a temperature below freezing point until they are actually used for the table, in which they may not lose any of their delicate lines through premature melting, although since the assembled guests have set their eyes upon them no one cares how long it takes for the heat of the illuminations to destroy them utterly.

In making the statues a miniature ice pick is used and the sculptors work with gloved hands that the heat of their fingers may not spoil their work. Ice of different varieties is used that there may be variety in the results obtained.

At banquets on a smaller scale the effect is obtained at a much lower cost by molding the statues in simple forms. Plain water and ice cream are both used for that purpose. But between the ice statues as carved by the sculptor and the statues produced by the mold there is, of course, the difference existing between cut glass and the ordinary pressed variety.

For humble mortals, though, who feel that they must have statues with their meats, these molded figures will no doubt answer all purposes.

Although not in the form of statuary made by high-priced sculptors, the use of ice in the decoration at the famous "North Pole Dinner" given by Mr. George Kessler, the American millionaire and "Champagne King," at the Savoy Hotel in London, and which,

from the standpoint of expense and elaboration of dinner-stage setting, no doubt, holds the record to date. Mr. Kessler proved himself a master of the dinner-stage art. He did not even stop at architectural changes of the hotel's interior, removing the roof of the Winter garden so that real stars might shine down upon the Arctic scene into which the large room was transformed.

From the margins where the ceiling had been hung great icicles, and

the whole floor, excepting a space in the centre reserved for the great dinner table, was piled with realistic hummocks, like those so eloquently described as "old Dr. Cook."

The top of some of these hummocks touch a further polar region, startingly lifelike. The roof being off, the temperature was appropriately arctic.

The great round table represented a waste of arctic snow with a peaked hummock in its centre, through

The New Form of Table Decoration Which Allows the Very Rich to See Their Money Melt Before Their Eyes



A Fruit Dish Adorned by an Artistic Ice Statue Carved by an Eminent Sculptor.

expense of the dinner stage-setting, the dinner cost Mr. Kessler about \$300 per plate for more than a hundred guests. But the gifts of jewelry for each guest amounted to a great deal more than the food, drink and service. The men received pearl and diamond cuffs that cost about \$300 each, and each lady was made happy with diamond earnings worth \$1,000.

In one respect—but for sweet charity's sake—Mr. Kessler was guilty of an anachronism. The ice hummocks had sprouted Christmas trees upon whose branches were hung 400 gifts brought from Paris for inmates of the London Home for Crippled Children.

Not to be outdone by her husband with his "North Pole Dinner," Mrs. George Kessler chartered a New York rathskeller and gave an "Abattoir Dinner." The famous Chicago Stock Yards hardly could have furnished a scene more realistic with. Mrs. Kessler had turned that rathskeller into the semblance of the refrigerating room of a modern slaughter house.

The floor was covered with sawdust while white-frosted oilcloth walls gave the impression of an enamel-lined room. Dozens of hidden electric fans made the place as cold as an icebox. Frosted white pipes ran around the room to create the illusion of great artificial cold. Even the electric light bulbs were frosted, and every pane of glass that was visible seemed coated with congealed water.

In the centre of the room were three chopping blocks with enormous ox heads on them, against the walls hung whole hams and quarters of beef and mutton—the real thing. The tables simulated cakes of ice, and on each pigs' heads and raw-pork chops served as pepper and salt receptacles.

The waiters were all dressed in the white duck caps, trousers, jackets and aprons of butchers. The menu was strictly an "abattoir" menu—only beef, mutton and pork being served. Of the former nearly a thousand pounds, mostly in the form of steaks, were served, for the guests were not only distinguished in the society and art worlds, but were numerous. It will be a long time before Mrs. Kessler's "Abattoir Dinner" will be forgotten or surpassed for originality.

The Little Lady of the Lions - By Maude C. Keator

I HAD been familiar with the piny and mournful, met mine pleadingly, odor of sawdust all my life. Yet despite her seeming timidity, there was a conscious strength in the proud poise of her head.

"You came in answer to the advertisement? Please be seated," I said gently.

"Thank you—yes. You wanted a woman? Will I do? Will the position be permanent?" she asked with abrupt eagerness.

For a moment I hesitated. Some way she seemed so childlike, gentle and refined and utterly out of place with the rather rough surroundings.

"I should want to be something more than a—dummy," she broke in, observing my hesitation. "I want to be a trainer. I should be willing to try the lions."

"But," I cried aghast, "you know nothing—haven't the least idea of—the undertaking."

"But I know what I am capable of doing," she urged. "I had ever so many pet dogs and cats that I have trained. Please give me a chance to prove what I can do."

"But—"

"I want the three lions, Pete, Dan and King, to train."

"What do you know of those lions?" I asked in surprise.

"I read their history in the paper last Sunday. I know how Pete killed his keeper, and Dan and King could not be subdued by even the wiles of your great tamer, Mr. Ebers."

"And you expect to train them?" I smiled.

"I think I can," she maintained, with a confidence which staggered me. "If I succeed, it will be a big card for you."

"But it's murder to think of it!" I insisted desperately, feeling myself sick before her sweet insistence.

"If at the end of three weeks I make no progress," she urged, "I'll resign."

Tell the truth, I had not the heart to refuse. So it was against the promptings of reason and experience that I was at last coaxed into yielding to her proposition with the lions.

It was not long after this that we stopped for a two weeks' stay at Elmira. In the afternoon of the second day, as I was watching the performance, an attendant came and whispered to me: "Please, Mr. Stillman, there's a lady in the office waiting to see you."

This was no surprise, for I had advertised the day previous for a lady dummy for the chariot race. By dumb I mean one that is just up for show.

As I entered my office I saw the quaintest, sweetest, strangest little lady that my eyes had ever been blessed with. She rose as she heard me, and stood with a tremulous, hesitating manner that reminded me of a frightened bird. She was gowned in black, and her auburn hair shone the brighter by the light. Her eyes, large, brown and

Ebers to go in the cage with you. As he says, this is their first appearance, and I shall feel easier to know that he is there in case of trouble."

"That's wise," agreed Ebers.

For a moment she answered nothing. She stood very still, with her hands clasped and a silent wonder all about her. Then a light flashed in her eyes.

"It is all right," she consented sweetly, "if you think best. But, she resumed, glancing at Ebers, "remember that my beauties have never been touched with a whip—so be careful." She spoke with effort and I wondered.

The great round table represented a waste of arctic snow with a peaked hummock in its centre, through

which emerged the "Great Nail," as the Eskimo people call the pole. To the pole was attached a gigantic menu card.

The dinner guests were in conventional costume, with the addition of necessary wraps, but the waiters were all attired as Eskimos. The waiters served the most appropriate names, such as "Caviar des Sibériens," "truffled du Peary," "North Pole glace," "Bombe des Esquimaux," and so on.

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that night Norma made her first appearance. Ebers entered the waiting room promptly at 8 o'clock, after making a tour of inspection to see if the lions were in fit condition before being wheeled into the arena. Not long after Norma entered. She was gowned in blue and silver, with a blue bow in her shining hair. Her soft, rounded arms were bare, and her shapeless little body, in its close-fitting dress, was palpitating with eagerness. Her beauty seemed to stand out as waxen, perfect as a jasmine flower. It stabbed me with a hundred warning emotions.

Ebers glanced at her with eyes that were full of wonder. Persons waved warnings to her, and the waiters waved frantically as they rushed forward. As for me, I was half mad and foot with agonizing terror.

Slowly she lifted her head and gazed intently over the multitude, from left to right. Then something in my gaze must have drawn her. Her glance met mine and lingered there an instant. She was a sweet little soul, I thought.

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