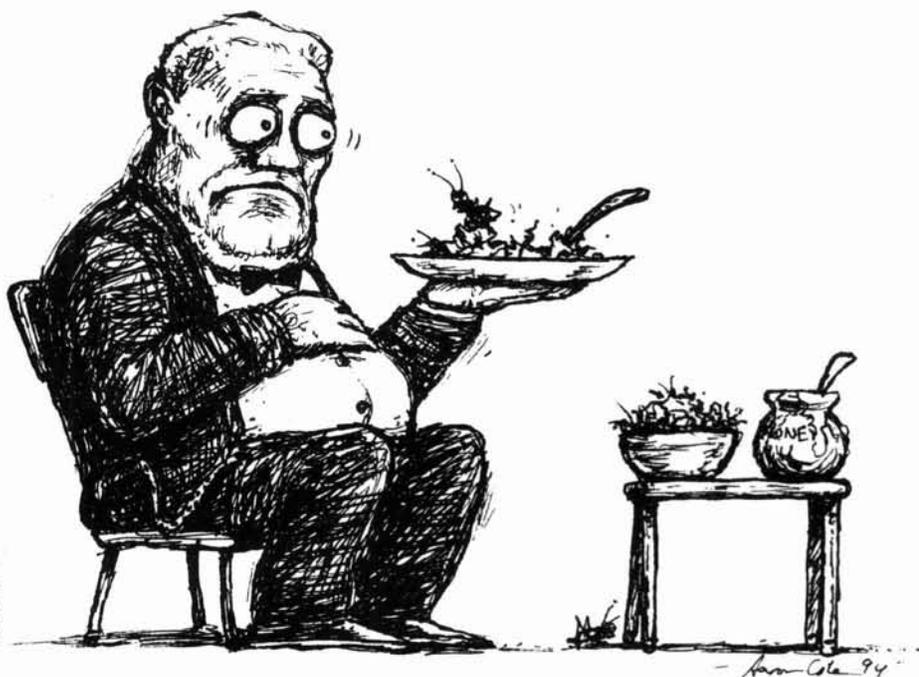


TURNING THE TIME OVER TO...

Samuel W. Taylor

THE GOURMET
JOHN TAYLOR

At their encampment, John Taylor watched the women grind insects with stones and mix them with honey for the meal. But, while he knew that John the Baptist had lived on locusts and honey, he had no appetite for it.

I NASMUCH AS John Taylor spent some eight years on foreign missions, and since he married sixteen wives, each of whom vied at setting the best table when it was his turn to sit at it, I must conclude that he not only ate well but was an appreciative epicure of most every dish known to civilization.

His wives prepared regional dishes from their places of origin: the Isle of Man,

SAMUEL W. TAYLOR, grandson of John Taylor and author of numerous books and articles, lives in Redwood City, CA. As a kindergartner at the Brigham Young Academy he once was tied up and locked in a closet by his teacher.

Scotland, New York, Tennessee, Connecticut, Virginia, Utah, and various locations in England. Amazing that he didn't get fat under such treatment; however, he watched his weight, took long walks, worked on his farm at Taylorsville. Being handy with tools kept him busy with the endless tasks of keeping the houses of Taylor Row—where the Salt Palace later stood—in repair, and, of course, keeping the various wives happy by remodeling, taking out and putting in walls, patios, windows, doors, and whatever. When I think of my own duties in that regard—well, they were giants for sure in those days.

In his native England, John Taylor had his tea with crumpets, his tea with fish and

chips, his tea with roast joints of beef or mutton, his tea and herring, his tea and tarts, his tea and kidney pie, his tea and sausage, his tea and mutton chops, his tea with ham and eggs. And, of course, the tea contained milk and sugar.

If I seem to emphasize tea, it is because it is virtually impossible to overstate the importance of tea to the British. They must have it at every meal, at mid-morning and mid-afternoon tea breaks, and at every social occasion. Nothing must interfere with tea time, as I found out during two years in England while sweating out World War II. The British were furious at the Germans for bombing London, particularly since Jerry did so at tea time. Utter barbarians is what those Germans must have been, to be sure.

If London residents from the East End moved to the West End, they became unhappy about their tea. So they would consult their tea merchant, who would supply them with the special blend prepared for conditions in the West End. Then they were happy again. (And when I was desk clerk at the Roberts Hotel in Provo while attending BYU, I will remember the visits of Sir Harry Lauder on his annual farewell tour. The Scottish entertainer never ate a single meal at the hotel without complaining bitterly to me about the miserable quality of American "tay." The stuff was pig swill, is what it was.)

To the end of his life, John Taylor had his tea, strong with milk and sugar, and he made no bones about it. As for the Word of Wisdom, during his era it was considered to be counsel on moderation and a healthful diet. For example, there were breweries at Nauvoo, operated by members in good standing, the product consumed by good Mormons, including Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and other ranking people. If you doubt this, spend an afternoon in Special Collections at the University of Utah Marriott Library, reading the account book of Amos Davis, who ran a hotel on the hill near the temple. Or if this research is inconvenient, read *Hearts Made Glad* by LaMar Petersen. It actually wasn't until the administration of Heber J. Grant that the Word of Wisdom took its present interpretation.

For another example, consider the four men in Carthage Jail, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Willard Richards, and John Taylor. Shortly before the mob attacked, they sent out for pipes, tobacco, and a bottle of wine. "It has been reported by some that this [wine] was taken as a sacrament," Taylor related. "It was no such thing; our spirits were generally dull and heavy, and it was sent for to revive us."

At meals, John Taylor handled his silverware in the customary British fashion: fork upside down in his left hand to spear food and to have such things as mashed potatoes piled atop it with his knife. He didn't change the fork to his right hand to eat, a practice that seemed to him a silly affectation of the Yankee colonists. He enjoyed green vegetables, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, New Zealand spinach, chard, and artichokes, which thrived in the cool, overcast, and moist climate of his homeland. And of an evening he topped off dinner with a pint of half-and-half and a game of darts at the local pub. In Scotland, he enjoyed haggis, made of the heart, liver, and lungs of sheep, seasoned with herbs and spices, then boiled in the animal's stomach.

In Paris, he would browse the bookstalls along the *quais* beside the Seine, then stroll the Grands Boulevards between the Madeleine and the Rue de Richelieu, where sidewalk cafes were thickest, shops the finest, and girls the prettiest, before sitting at a sidewalk table, sipping an *apéritif* while joining in the fine French art of girl-watching, a diversion enjoyed equally by *les garçons* and *les filles*.

And then, he would begin making hard decisions concerning the meal: Should it be *bifteck aux pommes-frites*, or *escargots cuits dans leurs coquilles*? How about *poule au pot du Vert-Galant*? Or *navarin aux pommes*? Perhaps *fois gras chauds avec des raisins verts*? So many delicious choices! He settled on *poulards a la creme et aux morilles*, and enjoyed the creamed chicken baked with mushrooms, topped off with *tarte aux cerises et a la creme*, a cream and cherry tart. Accompanied, by all means, with a cup of *le thé*.

He took most of his meals in France at restaurants, because the French people jealously guarded their privacy. When he was invited to dinner at a convert's home, it was always a formal affair with the family in Sunday best and an elaborate banquet that could last four or five hours. John Taylor had neither the appetite nor the time for many such occasions.

In Germany, as in the United Kingdom, people were more informal and gregarious. He enjoyed meals at private homes, generally eating sauerkraut and sausages, or *Sauerbraten*, and drinking the fine lager beer that accompanied the meal.

When *im Restaurant*, he had a cup of *der Tee* while considering *verlone Eier* or perhaps *das Rindergulasch*, maybe *der Huhnerbraten*, or *der Fisch*, before deciding on *der Hammelbraten*, with *grene Erbsen*, *gerbratene*

Kartoffeln, and *Gefrorenes*—roast lamb with peas, fried potatoes, and ice cream.

The greatest test to John Taylor's ability to enjoy whatever the natives ate came upon arrival at the Salt Lake Valley. Brigham Young's pioneer party, consisting of strong young men and only three women, had arrived in the valley on 24 July and had planted eighty-four acres to grains and vegetables—too late for the crops to mature. Fields of corn were rows of stubby sticks, stripped bare by crickets. Grains hadn't come into head. The only thing harvested was the potato crop, consisting of a double handful the size of peas.

Brigham Young's party had returned to Winter Quarters. The families of the Parley Pratt-John Taylor company were the actual pioneer settlers and found themselves trapped between the Rockies and the Sierras, dependent for a second winter upon the grain stored in their wagons. This large company of almost six hundred wagons faced the prospect of another winter of blackleg and other ailments due to diet deficiency that had made Winter Quarters a nightmare. And two of Taylor's wives were pregnant. Would the babies be born normal? *Could they be?*

The local Indians, camped at the valley hot springs, were dying of measles, having no resistance to this white man's disease. The chief's twelve-year-old son was deathly sick. Their medicine man came for white man's medicine, but there was none. Taylor, however, administered by the laying on of hands, rebuking the sickness and invoking blessings—accepting the grave risk that he and his group could be held responsible if the child died. But within hours the child was on the mend.

In appreciation, Chief Little Face brought gifts of sego lily and camus bulbs, thistle roots, sunflower seeds, pine nuts, wild honey, and a bag of meal with the rich flavor of cracklings. It wasn't a winter of famine after all. The Saints could live off the land, as the Indians always had: their vegetables grew wild, and meat was to be had for the hunting.

The Indians then harvested the grain fields. They circled a field with torches, igniting it with a ring of fire. As the dry straw burned, clouds of crickets leaped up and fell back into the flames. The Indians moved across the blackened ground, gathering the roasted crickets. At their encampment, Taylor watched the women grind the insects with stones and mix them with honey for the delicious meal.

Taylor took some of the fresh meal home for his pregnant wives. While he knew that John the Baptist had lived on locusts and

honey, he had no appetite for it. If Sophia and Jane liked it, what they didn't know wouldn't hurt them. And their babies were beautiful and strong.

During a mission to England, Taylor had made a convert because of his sweet tooth. Years later, a teenage elder preparing to leave on a mission told how John Taylor held a cottage meeting at his parents' home in the Old Country. While preaching the gospel, Elder Taylor strode back and forth before the dining room table, each time taking a pinch from the sugar bowl. Sugar was imported and expensive. The sugar bowl was set out only upon special occasions. The young boy, listening to John Taylor deliver the gospel while dipping into the sugar bowl, decided the gospel was true and determined that he'd grow up to go on a mission and have access to the sugar bowl. ☞



WATER TEMPLES

winged insects
stitch the river's surface
from steeped reeds and sedges

winks of haloes, water
taking stillness back
like breath

like breath the leaves of aspen
flicker, like prayers
the grasses genuflect

colors haze, unveil—
streak of gold,
blade bowed brown

veined yellow flung
against a husk of sky

furred and feathered seeds
awaiting rising
laved stones for an altar

pods ripe for incense, opening
where you lie down barefoot,
an ancient offering

your body water
sunlight

homeless
home

—DIXIE PARTRIDGE