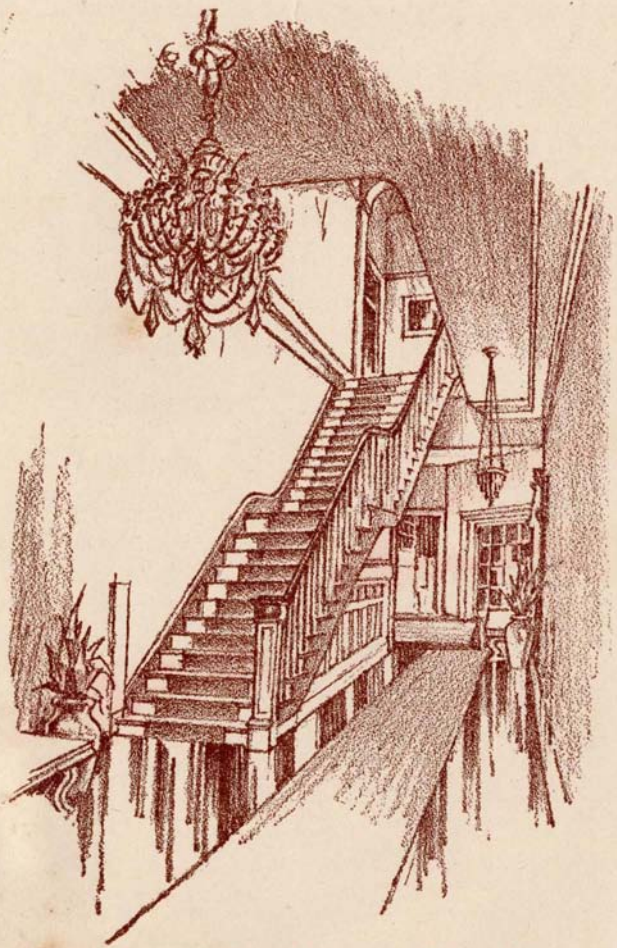

LOUISIANE
Mme. FERD. J. ALCIATORE, Jr.
PROPRIETOR.

Printed in U. S. A.



Main Entrance Hall and Stairway to Banquet Rooms.
La Louisiane Restaurant

L'Histoire de la Louisiane

or

The Three Generations

Sometimes Called

Anatole, le Maitre

Par
Georges
L'Escritoire


RESTAURANT DE LA LOUISIANE

GENESIS

In the Beginning, There Was the Swamp Primeval—
But Now, There is New Orleans
and La Louisiane

When in the Year of Our Lord 1718, Sieur Jean Baptiste Lemoyne de Bienville touched the point of his sword to a spot of damp earth on the bank of the Mississippi river, some 100 miles above its mouth, and said, "Here we will build a city," he spoke as a man of real vision. But it is much to be doubted if this foresighted and gallant gentleman so much as suspected that the city of his founding would one day become known and accepted as "America's Most Interesting City." Nor is it probable that he foresaw that this city, which is in all essential things thoroughly American, should retain so much of the old-world character which quite naturally distinguished it in its early and formative years. And we may safely conclude that the high-born adventurer would have been agreeably surprised and a trifle incredulous if some prophet, standing at his velvet-clad elbow, had said, "Monsieur, this city which you have in mind to build, will one day attain world-wide fame as a successful rival of Paris in the matter of good cooking."

Remarkable as these possibilities may have appeared at that remote period, they nevertheless are accomplished facts today.

New Orleans, with many claims to greatness, still wears most proudly its degree of distinction as a city that has a character entirely and indisputably its own, and it acknow-

ledges no peer in the matter of good cooking. Other cities the world over may advance their claims to culinary greatnessness. New Orleans graciously concedes these, with the single stipulation that there is room for only one at the top and New Orleans has long ago taken and intends forever to hold that unique position.

It is quite natural that New Orleans should be different as a city and famous as well for the quality and variety of its cooking. Conditions here are different and New Orleans' development has been different.

The French, who were the city's first settlers, have for centuries held cooking to be one of the fine arts. The Spanish, who controlled the colony of Louisiana for some 39 years, were not far behind the French in their appreciation of the finer things of the table.

With so auspicious a beginning, there were additional factors assisting in the creation of a cuisine which is admittedly superior, as a whole, to any other. New Orleans is situated in the center of a region which produces an immense variety of foodstuffs. From the Mexican gulf and its myriad inlets come oysters, shrimp and fish in great number and of unusual delicacy of flavor. Fruits, vegetables, poultry, meats and game have always been plentiful and fine-flavored. (The game, sad to say, can no longer be served.) Thus, the materials requisite for the creation of a distinctive cuisine were, and are, present in abundance. As a further encouragement to the native chefs to do their

A CHAPTER, dear friends, on Anatole. His portrait, as you will observe, appears with some frequency in these chronicles. Anatole, who is more a personage than a person, is the spirit which rules the kitchen of La Louisiane. Upon your visit to this establishment, you may or may not see him. That is a matter more or less on the knees of the gods.

But, at the table, when the pompano papillotte is deftly disclosed to your view, or when the baked Alaska extends a frigid but hearty welcome, you will know that Anatole is with you in spirit, if not in his own amply upholstered person.

He is the personification of the skill of New Orleans chefs; the present incarnation of masters who have long since gone to their well-earned reward, and the sign and symbol of that happy state wherein cooking is properly regarded as a fine art and an appreciation thereof as the mark of an esthete of the first degree and, as well, a gentleman and a scholar.

utmost, there is the interesting fact that the appetite, in New Orleans, situated so near to the tropics, needs stimulation. Seasoning—sometimes powerful, other times delicate, always noticeable—is necessary if one is to eat with greatest relish.

So, we have in New Orleans the tradition of good cooking, the materials wherewith to perform the function to the finest degree and the need for so doing. In consequence, there are in New Orleans several restaurants whose fame is widespread and a great number which stand high with at least their little circle of local patrons.

It is perhaps permissible to say, without overstepping the bounds of a reserved modesty, that the *Restaurant de La Louisiane* stands at the head of those establishments which have done so much to build up the New Orleans reputation and are still doing a good piece of work in upholding the old traditions.

La Louisiane, located today—as it has been for all of its 49 years—at 725 to 731 Iberville Street—was founded by Louis Bezaudun who killed the proverbial brace of birds with a single stone by naming his place "La Louisiane," a title which at one stroke indicated his ownership and identified the restaurant with the state of Louisiana, which in French is called "Louisiane." From M. Bezaudun and his wife—a most capable assistant and helpmate in the true French manner—the restaurant passed to Fernand J. Alciatore, Sr., their nephew. The rise to fame of this elder

Alciatore is of itself an interesting story and deserves a place in these pages.

At the early age of 10, he announced to his father that it was his intention to follow in the paternal footsteps. Alciatore *père* then took him into the kitchen and set him to doing the many and varied small tasks which are the foundation of a true chef's education. He was taught, for example, how to set a table and how to serve a meal. It is to be understood that he was initiated into the mysteries of dishwashing, the scouring of pots and pans, the paring of potatoes, the handling of the fire and the proper and efficient ways of preparing foodstuffs of many kinds as preliminary to the finer work of the chef.

By the time he had arrived at the mature age of 15 years he was sent to Paris to acquire from the masters in "the city of light," such training in the technique of fine cooking as would be difficult for his busy father to impart to him. His first job was with Brabant, who did so great a service to humanity by originating the Brabant potato. It was while the studious young man was with Brabant that he won recognition; and the occasion was spectacular in the extreme. A high potentate of one of the many then existing European monarchies dropped in at Brabant's for a meal. With the rashness of youth, the fledgling chef offered to prepare for the royal personage an omelette. M'sieu Brabant, after nearly succumbing to the apoplexy which his amazement had induced, gave consent. The omelette was prepared and

into it young Alciatore put all the knowledge and skill which he had acquired in his father's kitchen—plus the necessary eggs and other things, of course. High praise of the dish was carried back to the kitchen. Less than a year later, the then 17-year-old Alciatore was chef of the Grand Hotel at Marseilles. It was in this position that he acquired his intimate knowledge of the several dishes for which Marseilles has always been famous, particularly the bouillabaisse Marseillaise. This dish, as it is now prepared in La Louisiane, is rated as superior to the Marseilles concoction, not only because of the perfection to which its preparation has been brought, but because of the greater delicacy and finer flavor of the ingredients obtainable in the New Orleans area.

M'sieu Alciatore returned to America after having studied under Marguery (to whom the world is gratefully indebted for filet de sole Marguery) and Escoffier—the last-named recognized as one of the greatest chefs of all time. The returning voyageur brought back a unique distinction; he was the only American citizen to be awarded a diploma for excellence in cooking by *Le Revue Scientifique, Industrielle et Agricole de France.*

M'sieu Alciatore, some years before his death, turned over the reins of management to his eldest son, Fernand J. Alciatore, Jr., who has been in full charge since 1904, and who is ably and faithfully upholding the tradition of super-excellence established by his father and his grand-uncle and grand-aunt.

THE OYSTER, as Anatole so emphatically puts it, "is the noblest game fish of them all."

It must be explained that the game, in this case, is not in the catching of the oyster, which is an unexciting though picturesque pastime, but in the preparation of His Bivalvular Majesty into the infinitude of dishes for which he is so admirably adapted. "Even the frying of an oyster," says Anatole, "which is the simplest form of preparation—is a function, if properly performed; and when one considers the oyster a la Rockefeller, en brochette and thus wise, even I must be at my best if the result is to be what it should."

Anatole is here shown demonstrating with his well known grace and skill the correct method of breaking and entering the oyster's tightly locked home—a performance punctuated, we are grieved to say, by an occasional expletive in Anatole's remarkably expressive French.

One of many interesting facts regarding La Louisiane is that the building it occupies was, in earlier times, the home of the Zacharie family. It was erected in 1837 and is therefore close to the observance of its centennial. The building, despite the inevitable changes necessitated by the march of progress, stands, outwardly at least, as it did in the days of the Zacharie occupation. The balconies—or "galleries," as they have always been called in New Orleans—still protect the passerby from sun and rain and offer a pleasant lounging place for the building's occupants in the cool of the evening. They are enclosed by the wrought iron railings which are so distinct a feature of the New Orleans architecture. The original owner, James Waters Zacharie, according to local history, was a merchant prince who flourished in the early nineteenth century. Mr. Zacharie, who was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of hospitality, entertained many distinguished guests in his palatial home. Iturbide, who preceded Maximillian as Emperor of Mexico, was probably the most famous of these guests. An interesting figure, because of the glamor reflected by his association with transcendent greatness, was Henri Gratien Bertrand, who accompanied the emperor Napoleon to St. Helena. William Makepeace Thackeray, who achieved a notable distinction in the world of letters, was several times a guest of honor. On one occasion he was so moved by the excellence of his entertainment that he broke into poetry to the extent of several lines extolling the bouillabaisse which had been pre-

pared for his special delectation. At the risk of destroying some illusions among the admirers of Thackeray these lines are quoted here.

This bouillabaisse a noble dish is,
A sort of soup or broth or brew
Or hotch potch of all sorts of fishes
That Greenwich never could outdo.
Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffron,
Soles, garlic, trout and dace,
All these you eat at Derre's tavern,
In that one dish of bouillabaisse.

The recipe for bouillabaisse, as now followed in the kitchen of La Louisiane, if one would read it, would disclose that the great writer drew somewhat on his fertile imagination in listing the numerous ingredients which go into the making of a bouillabaisse. As to his poetry, the laws of hospitality, which are binding even unto the fourth generation, forbid comment.

It has been said of New Orleans architecture that it is unique—different entirely from any other. There may be indications of a derivation from other schools of architecture but, in the main, the type of building found in the Vieux Carre can be seen nowhere else on earth. And this is to a large extent true of New Orleans cooking. The French and Spanish influences were the foundation for the local cuisine, but in the course of the years the great skill of the city's chefs, their sincere devotion to their art and the opportunities

Main Dining Room of the Restaurant de La Louisiane, decorated in the style of the Louis XVI Period—an adoption of the interior of the Restaurant Larue, of Paris.

afforded by the natural resources of the New Orleans area have at last culminated in a method of cooking that stands as an inspiration for all others and which so far has not been imitated with any great degree of success.

Lenore Kay, special writer for the San Francisco Chronicle said, among other nice things about the city: "New Orleans cooking is a legacy from a storied past whose glamorous ghosts still linger in every street of the Old Quarter."

This unusual excellence in cookery, as was said before, is due in some part to the fact of the large variety of foodstuffs that have always been ready to the hand of the New Orleans chef. For example, oysters. New Orleans oysters, are said by folks who know to be finer than any that are found anywhere else in the country. They lend themselves better to cooking in various styles than the oysters of Europe. This superlative excellence is due to the favorable conditions under which our oysters are grown. The local supply comes from the bays and inlets on the Gulf of Mexico along the Louisiana coast, south and southeast of New Orleans. In this area the fresh waters of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers and several important bayous combine with the salt waters of the Gulf to produce an oyster that is fine in texture, moderate in size and flavored with that degree of saltiness which is considered perfection. The oyster is an outstanding example of the influence of local supplies of foodstuffs on our native cuisine. With so splendid a flavor and working up so nicely in cooking, it is no wonder that visitors to New

Orleans indulge rather liberally their taste for oysters. At La Louisiane, oysters are served on the half shell, fried, a la Rockefeller or en brochette and they take an important part in the making of soups and stews, dressing for chickens and turkeys, flavoring for Creole gumbo and other dishes.

A similar delicacy of flavor distinguishes the fresh and salt-water fish obtained from the waters around New Orleans; and this, again, accounts for the prominence which fish occupies in the menu of every first-class New Orleans restaurant. In La Louisiane, the two feature dishes are pompano papillotte and bouillabaisse Marseillaise. Buster crabs, soft shell crabs, and crab meat, served as canape crab Louisiane; shrimp, served plain-boiled or remoulade, and crayfish served plain-boiled or as bisque ecrevisse Louisiane, are also important items in the Louisiane list of native specialties. Redfish is made up as courtbouillon and trout dishes include broiled tenderloin trout or filet de truite Marguery.

La Louisiane enjoys a world-wide fame for the general excellence of its cuisine. Constantly, there are requests from prominent persons all over the country for some of La Louisiane's recipes. Usually these requests are courteously denied; in rare cases the information is given. Simply to afford the readers of this booklet an idea of how much thought and care are expended on every Louisiane dish, a few selected recipes are printed herein. These recipes, it will be seen, are hardly the sort that can be produced successfully in a home kitchen and it is difficult, if not impos-

sible, to interpret them with satisfactory exactness in restaurants outside of New Orleans—for two reasons: One is that most of the ingredients are obtainable only in the New Orleans area, and if they are to be found elsewhere, the quality and flavor do not match with those produced here; the other is that the indefinable something—the craftsmanship, we might call it—which has made New Orleans cooking famous, is so often lacking in other centers. Here, the aim has always been to produce something unusual, something worthy of being exclaimed over, and the matter of cost or profit has not entered into the question at any point. It is not so elsewhere, or at least, less so. Nevertheless, for all who care to read, the following are printed.

Oysters Rockefeller Louisiane

With oysters Rockefeller Louisiane, the sauce is the thing. To make this sauce one puts together chervil, tarragon, curly lettuce, spinach, green onions and garlic. These flavorings are then ground as finely as possible in a machine and, to heighten their pungency, are amplified by the addition of salt, pepper, nutmeg, cayenne pepper, Worcestershire sauce and peppermint extract. Obviously, no set quantities can be named for these seasonings; one must have the "*savoir faire*" as a prerequisite to success in such compoundings. Butter is at last added to the mixture and the whole is worked into a smooth paste. And now for the oysters! These are carefully opened and allowed to remain on the half shell. A thick layer of coarse or rock

"WHILE IT may not be altogether true that fish is a brain food," admits Anatole, "it is certainly the fact that a preference for fish in its finer table manifestations is an indication of an intelligently directed taste in matters of the cuisine. And it is equally true that the high forehead is usually characterisitc of those who prepare fish properly in the kitchen."

The numerous *specialités de la maison* of La Louisiane in the fish department represent research, ingenuity and freedom from restraining precedent in their development through the years and a high degree of skill in the daily interpretation of the recipes which the earlier and pioneer chefs have "bequeathed as a rich legacy unto their issue."

Our artist asserts that the picture herewith is a faithful portrayal of Anatole in the act of catching the day's supply of fish. This statement, in all delicacy, we must condemn as being highly fanciful.

salt is placed in a circular baking pan. The oysters are arranged thereon in a neat circle and the pan goes into the oven for a thorough baking. When the oysters have arrived at the point of perfection, they are withdrawn from the oven, the sauce is applied and the dish is ready to be served. *Très facile? Essayez-le.*

Pompano Papillotte Louisiane

The process of preparing and cooking the pompano papillotte is as interesting as the serving of it and the whole process is fully justified by the resultant dish which can only be described as having that "*je ne sais quoi*" which is the basis of all charm.

The pompano, fresh from the deep waters of the Mexican Gulf, is boned and the skin removed. The filets and the bones are boiled in water which has been seasoned with salt, pepper, lemon and grated nutmeg. A sauce is prepared from butter, chopped green onions, flour and the water in which the fish has been boiled. This sauce should be made somewhat thick. To one-half of the sauce is added the flesh from the bones of the pompano, plus some crabmeat, shrimp, mushrooms, and truffles— all of which has been chopped together to make a dressing. *En attendant*, that is to say, meanwhile, a sheet of heavy white paper has been cut with the scissors into the shape of a heart, about ten inches high and eight inches wide. This paper is oiled carefully and upon it is placed a spoonful of sauce, then a filet of the pompano and on top of that the

dressing. The paper is folded over in the shape of a half heart and crimped along the edges to form a tightly closed bag. This package, or papillotte, is put into an oiled baking pan and set in the oven for a period of ten to fifteen minutes. The dish is served as it comes from the oven, the waiter using a table knife to slit the top sheet of the papillotte which remains as a secondary service plate for the dish to which it has contributed so much of flavor and unusualness. *Très intéressant, n'est ce pas?*

Baked Alaska Louisiane

This is a dessert which provides the proper finishing touch for the meal that is out of the ordinary.

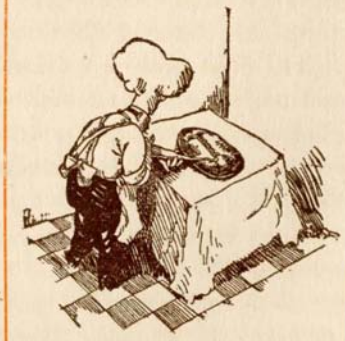
The whites of eggs are separated from the yolks. The yolks are mixed with powdered sugar and flavored with vanilla extract. This mixture should be stirred until very smooth and not too thick. The whites of the eggs are beaten until they have ballooned into a fine and firm-textured meringue. The yolk mixture is added to this meringue which is gently stirred meanwhile. On a flat dish, slices of sponge cake are placed. On this foundation, a layer of the meringue is spread and on this spread a scoop of ice cream is set for each person at the table. The remainder of the meringue is then added and this is built up into the shape of a Mississippi river levee, sloping downward at each end. The mass is sprinkled with powdered sugar and run into the oven for just long enough to impart a rich golden tint to the exposed surface. Some of the

meringue, which has been thriftily withheld, is put into a cornucopia, and with this the completed dish is decorated with figures of birds and hearts and such other quaint fancies, plus the word "Welcome" or a similar greeting and occasionally the given or pet name of the feminine guest of honor. *Soigné? Mais si, mais si.*

La Louisiane's main dining room, recently remodeled, resembles closely the Restaurant Larue, of Paris. It is richly decorated, but with a quiet elegance that invites the calm and leisurely enjoyment of a meal. The spaciousness of the room permits the seating of individual parties so as to provide a degree of conservational privacy—except, of course, in the busiest hours. Music is provided at luncheon and dinner. The selections, while they include popular numbers, do not range downward to the lowest point in the scale of current musical taste. Lenore Kay—already mentioned—has referred most appreciatively to the "twinkly twitter of sweet-voiced canaries overhead." Most of La Louisiane's waiters have been with the house for many years. They are fully grounded in the niceties of fine service, and are especially helpful to the guest who requires or appreciates a little assistance in the ordering of a meal. The dining room is cooled by a typhoon fan system, and the same apparatus is employed in the winter months for renewing and freshening the atmosphere of the room. Electric refrigerators in the store room keep all foodstuffs fresh and appetizing, and the good effects are particulary noticeable in the case of lettuce, celery and other salad vegetables.

ANATOLE, who leans heavily (as he would, if he leaned at all) towards the unusual in cookery, is especially proud of his baked Alaska Louisiane. This is a dessert dish, which is a toothsome example of the paradox. (A paradox, says Mr. Webster, is something which apparently cant's be so). The baked Alaska Louisiane is, in very fact, a combination of two desserts, one frozen and one baked. And while colorable imitations of it are obtainable here and there the world over it is to Anatole at La Louisiane that one must come for the baked Alaska Louisiane which causes one unfailingly to express a delighted "Oh!" and an appreciative "Ah!" with each ethereal spoonful.

The artist, with skillful pen, here shows Anatole putting his well beloved finishing touches on a portion of baked Alaska Louisiane.



Besides the main dining room, which seats 300 persons comfortably, there are six private dining rooms, with capacities from four to 250. These are arranged for necessary privacy and convenience.

The upper floors of the building, occupied by La Louisiane are fitted up as the Hotel de la Louisiane. All rooms are large and airy, making them delightfully cool in summer; they are comfortably steam-heated in winter, and most of them are equipped with private baths. The result is a cozy family hotel, in which the service is of the highest order and the rates most attractive, especially for extended sojourns.

In every detail of its appointments, La Louisiane is abreast of the newest ideas in restaurant hygiene and efficiency; in other words, what was good in the old manner has been retained and what could be improved upon has been bettered wherever opportunity offered.

The guest book at La Louisiane, in which many prominent patrons of the establishment have been invited to sign their names, is practically a complete register of the men and women who have been in the public eye for the last forty years.

Sarah Bernhardt, the lady with "the voice of gold" was as accomplished a gourmet as she was an actress. On every visit to New Orleans she made it a point to dine at La Louisiane. In the guest book, she wrote in a hand that reflected her remarkable character, "Que Dieu garde M'sieur

Alciatore pour le bonheur de ses clients." (May God preserve Mr. Alciatore for the happiness of his patrons.) Julius Kruttschnitt, a famous gourmet, who went to New York city as president of the Southern Pacific Lines and was probably the first railroad president in the United States to draw a salary of $100,000 a year, was a regular patron of La Louisiane while he lived in New Orleans.

The list of names, which is so lengthy that it cannot be given in full here, includes the following: George McManus, who drew a priceless sketch of Maggie and Jiggs and signed it; Raymond Hitchcock, who drew his own portrait; William Randolph Hearst, Colonel E. W. House, Lothrop Stoddard, Harold Lloyd, Kermit Roosevelt, who wrote, "After twenty-two years, I find Fernand Alciatore as magnificent as ever"; Commander (now Admiral) R. E. Byrd, Suzanne Lenglen, H. Bedford Jones, the author; John Temple Graves, Emile Coue, Theodore Roosevelt, (father and son), William McKinley, before he was president, George Ade, and General John J. Pershing, both officially and incognito.

Henry Watterson wrote: "I have lived at La Louisiane many long and happy years and I know no better kitchen in all the world, nor a more lovable host than Papa Alciatore."

Other signatures and messages are from William H. Crane, the actor; Otis Skinner, General Gouraud of the one arm, who kissed Papa Alciatore for his thoughtfulness in serving a meal where no knife was required; Emma Calve, Julian Eltinge, David Wark Griffith, Al Jolson, Costes and

Le Brix, the French transatlantic flyers; William Fox, Ruth Roland, Ben Turpin, Charles Ray, Monte Blue, DeWolfe Hopper, Admiral Kato, of the Japanese Navy; Rear-Admiral Thomas P. Magruder of the U. S. Navy; William Faversham, John Drew, Alleyne Ireland, Riccardo Martin, Harry Houdini, Fritz Kreisler, Tito Schipa, Commander A. C. Read, U. S. Navy, who commanded the N. C. 4 on her transatlantic flight; General Nivelle of the French Army.

Briggs, the great cartoonist drew a sketch where one of his famous characters was calling out: "Oh, Skin-nay! I ain't mad at nobody! C'mon over!"

Rube Goldberg drew himself at a table. The waiter is asking: "How do you like La Louisiane?" Rube is answering: "If I went to Heaven, would you ask me how I like it?"

Anna Held wrote for her old friend, Papa Alciatore: "I love my home, but oh! you Louisiane! C'est la que je voudrais vivre et aimer."

And a few pages later is the signature of William Jennings Bryan. Others that follow are: Wallace Morgan, Julian Street, Harris Dickson, Wm. "Bill" Hart, Dorothy Dix, Robert L. Ramsey, member of the O. Henry award committee; Edward Meredith, a former secretary of agriculture; Grace King, Roland Holt, her publisher; Marguerite Clark, David Warfield, Frances Carson, who rode to fame as Judy in "Daddy-Long-Legs", Clara Kimball Young, Henry Morgenthau, American Ambassador to Turkey; Nat Goodwin, Albert Spalding, Nellie Melba, James Montgomery

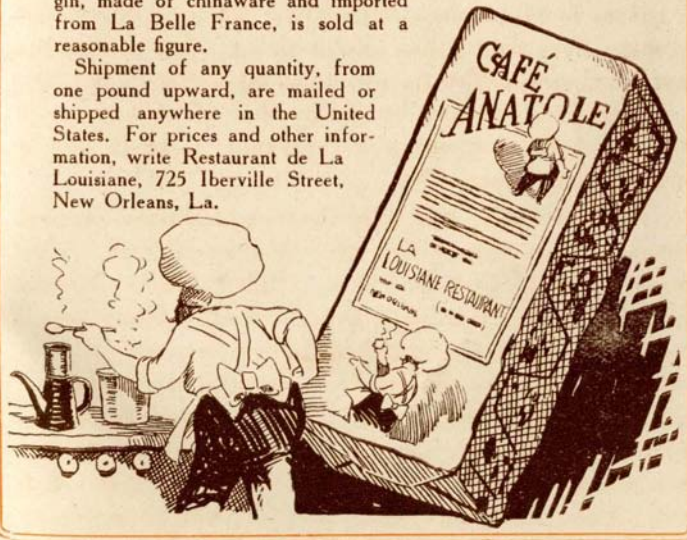
LA LOUISIANE'S
CAFÈ ANATOLE
FOR YOUR OWN USE

The inspiration for the idea of packing La Louisiane's Café Anatole came from the restaurant's patrons. Again and again, they have asked for the privilege of buying a supply to take back to their far distant homes. And similar requests have come by mail.

So, Café Anatole has been put up in one-pound bags and it is now obtainable at a moderate price—regulated, of course, by the fluctuations of the coffee market.

Full directions for making (the French drip method) are furnished. The regulation coffee biggin, made of chinaware and imported from La Belle France, is sold at a reasonable figure.

Shipment of any quantity, from one pound upward, are mailed or shipped anywhere in the United States. For prices and other information, write Restaurant de La Louisiane, 725 Iberville Street, New Orleans, La.



Flagg, William F. Ryan, financier; Emerson Hough, Gertrude Ederle, Sir Thomas Lipton, Edward Lasker, Emilio de Gogorza, Champ Clark, Fritzi Scheff, and Martin Beck.

General H. H. Whitney, wrote: "Je t'adore, Louisiane," in the book.

George W. Cable dined with Papa Alciatore and wrote: "Here is one of the most beguiling and satisfying spots in all my native city."

The management of La Louisiane welcomes inquiries from all quarters. And these requests need not be limited to questions about La Louisiane prices and service. Information as to New Orleans—the place and its people—will be cheerfully given. Letters should be addressed to Restaurant de la Louisiane. 725 Iberville Street, New Orleans, Louisiane.