

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE DOCTOR'S MIXTURE.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XVIII. NEW GAME FOR THE DOCTOR.

No wonder that he was enjoying himself. The Doctor was giving one of his charming little dinners. There were present Colonel Bouchier, Captain Molyneux, Billy Webber, young Lord Seaman, but not Captain Montague, who had indeed been asked, but who had coldly declined, hearing the sort of party it was to be. "Oh, if you are going to have one of the rollicking symposia, I should be quite out of place." And the next day he wrote a note to Polly to beg she would be good enough to send him back some books of poetry that he had lent her, which included the one containing the marvellous lines which had so amused her.

Notwithstanding this loss, it was the gayest of little parties, of which Polly was the queen. Never had she looked so radiant: a bouquet of gentlemen all clustered round that glowing flower. Where was that honest dislike to the dangerous Captain Molyneux, whom she now received with a sort of pout and pretended anger? The young lord made no secret of his admiration for her glowing charms, and told her plainly that he had never seen any one so handsome. Already dreams of coronets and a splendid presentation in London! Dreams not so incorporeal, after all, considering that she had earnest, as it were, in the highly successful match of her sister. But the handsome captain was not a man to be put aside easily, and he seemed rather to resent the approaches of the new "young puppy." He had that cool, weighty manner, which presses heavily on the object, and cannot be ignored. He had age and experience; the young lord felt

the inferiority of youth, which knows not the genteel art of giving a stroke without being rude. Polly herself was a little distracted from her sense of being flattered by such attention, that unconscious preference for the handsome captain struggling with her sense of business. For, to say the truth, this impulsive girl would, if she could, have consulted her own inclinations in every case; but her longing for a settlement, not her will, consented.

"How you are setting your little cap at that Flibbertigibbet," he said to her coolly, "but it's the idlest of games. The boy hasn't an idea above his cricket-bat or billiard-cue. I am afraid he is low enough to have said as many sweet things to the barmaid of the Red Lion."

"What do you mean?" said Polly, flushing. "Please don't mention me and barmaids together!"

"Why not? A barmaid is a fellow-Christian; and, let me tell you, a very dangerous fellow-Christian sometimes, if she is pretty. The next fancy ball you go to, go as a barmaid."

"You are saying all this to provoke me. I know you are."

"Why should I not, as you have announced that you are to hate me? Though I don't think you do quite as much as you did."

"You stupid man!" said Polly, blushing; "don't you see I am only trying to keep up a decent appearance with you for Peter's sake? Go away now."

"Yes, and leave you to carry out your designs on that boy lord. If you would take the advice of your warmest admirer, whom you hate," he added, with a bow, "you would not waste time on such a cub."

"I know what you mean," said Polly, angrily. "It's very rude of you to say so."

It's as much as saying ~~that I am trying to~~ take him in. It's very free of you to speak in that way to me!"

"How do you know that it doesn't come from a thing called jealousy, and that I might be much distressed to see you handed over to a cubling of that sort? I would, indeed, though you don't think it. Blame me, hate me as much you like."

Polly began to pout, poor weak, untrained child! She was not displeased.

Meanwhile, Peter Findlater had the young cubling in hand, listening to his disquisitions with the greatest interest and a smiling attention.

"They've settled it all for you, my lord, up yonder—your mother and my good Mrs. Leader. A splendid match for the daughter; they'll be taking the measure of your cor'net for her brows."

"Not if I know it," said the young gentleman, winking. "I'm too wide awake for that."

"Oh, I see," the Doctor said, lost in wonder and admiration; "you didn't want to be rebellious or to refuse to go on with the scheme, but to let facts speak for themselves! That's like a true man of the world. I see how it is."

"Exactly," said the young lord; "no use going against the grain of the mother. Let her find it out for herself. You know I can't afford to marry except amongst the tip-top swells. You, as a man that knows the world so well, must see that. I have to look out among the nob's of the party—fish out some high-and-dry Lady Mary or other—you see."

"Of course, my dear sir. But the gossips here have all their spy-glasses on Leadersfort at the present moment, and swear that a certain noble lord has been enticed down here. But I needn't tell you—you have made out the little game before this, the hoodwinking that poor Leader, making him a tool in the nefarious plot against my poor fellow, Cecil. To be sure, you saw what was going on."

"Didn't I! But they'll not get much help out of me, that I promise you."

Having done this capital stroke of business, the Doctor "left well alone," and turned to his other friends, Billy Webber and the colonel. The good spirits of the night were now being fast wound up, a certain boisterousness set in—those "small plays," of which we saw a specimen at the beginning of the present history. Such peals of laughter—such true schoolboy enjoyment! It was no wonder that his

lordship, only recently a schoolboy himself, was perfectly enchanted. There was that flow of roystering spirits for which the Doctor's house had such a deserved reputation—that enjoyment of pure fun and honest laughter. The hours passed by; from eleven till twelve, and even until one. All this while every one remained, Captain Molyneux included, who seemed, notwithstanding Polly's loudly pronounced hatred, to be making great advances in that young lady's regard. He proclaimed openly during the night, that what he was anxious about was to remove this extraordinary hatred in Miss Polly's mind. He appealed to every one—to the Doctor himself—was it not very hard that she should entertain such feelings towards him, and was it not fair that he should try and remove them by all means in his power? Here Polly pouted and laughed, and said he was only wasting his time; that she wished he would leave her alone, and indeed it was high time he should go home. On which Captain Molyneux would sit down beside her just to argue the matter. Then came up the traditional little supper, so appetising and snug, with the hot components, and a mysterious jar of what the Doctor called "Fin's D.D.," which was indeed called for and insisted on by the colonel and others, and which letters, it was whispered to the young lord, stood, in the Doctor's peculiar tongue, for "Devil the Duty!" What songs at the round table! Billy Webber entrancing all by his tender Love thee, Dearest, which, though heard for the hundredth time, delighted the colonel and the other rude souls present. It was two before they rose to go.

"I say, my dear boy," said the Doctor, taking the young lord aside, and putting his arm round his shoulder, "see here. You can't go hammering at the castle-gate at this hour; the draw-bridges will be all up. They are very strict."

"I never thought of that," said the young man.

"But I did," said the Doctor. "And I tell you what, my lord, if you will do us the honour, there's Katey's old room, sweet as the flowers of May, and sheets like a prairie, over which you can expatiate till your limbs are tired. It's only a stretcher, I know—I mean, of course, a four-poster; but still, such as it is, you are heartily welcome."

The young man hesitated. It was very tempting. A cold drive home; then ringing, knocking them up. Some mischievous

thought, too, of "worrying the women" by his absence; so he consented.

"I say," said the colonel, as he walked home with Captain Molyneux, "Fin has got his fishing-rod out again, with the other bit of bait on it."

"Yes; but the fish won't bite, and I'll take care he don't."

CHAPTER XIX. THE DOCTOR MAKES A FRIEND.

UP at Leadersfort, when the family found themselves again sitting into the small hours, waiting for the young lord, and when again it was known, next morning, that his lordship had not even then returned, something like consternation was abroad. Mrs. Leader was in her guest's room at once, and a sort of agitated council held. Mr. Leader was sent for, and presented himself with a sort of guilty bearing. The guest was really angry.

"I wonder," she said, "how you can tolerate this sort of conspiracy against your authority—allow a low creature like this to do what he pleases. Here, now, he is trying to get hold of my son, I declare!" continued she, in great agitation. "I shouldn't wonder if he managed, with that girl of his, to entrap the foolish boy. Something *must* be done, Mr. Leader."

"Oh, it is very improper, and very wrong," said the unhappy little gentleman; "going quite too far."

Lady Seaman looked at him, waiting for him to go on. "Is that all?" she said, contemptuously. "Surely you will take some step to protect your family? This Doctor is a most unscrupulous and clever adventurer, and has laid out that he and his gang shall take possession of this place. You will be helpless in his hands."

"But what am I to do?" said the bewildered Mr. Leader.

"Well, if you ask me, at once take some step to set them at defiance. Show them that you do not care for them."

"Of course," said he, peevishly. "I am quite sensible of all that. They have behaved outrageously. I shall know how to assert myself. Yes, their attempts ought to be put down in a summary way. It is going quite too far."

"And you saw the way Cecil treated you last night," said his wife, "set on, of course, by that man."

All these stimulants had their effect. About four o'clock that day the Doctor, in the highest spirits, was coming out of the Leader Arms, when a brougham from "the Fort" drove up, out of which stepped a gen-

tleman with a black leather bag, "smelling strong of the office," the Doctor thought. Then he recognised the face as that of the solicitor who had come down to Folkestone, and, as he said, "felt a scrape along his heart."

"Ah, Doctor Findlater," said this gentleman, "we have done better this time." And he tapped the little bag. "I haven't a moment to lose. Must start for home."

This was a blow indeed. Old crab face yonder had scored a point against him. The horde of scheming women had at last succeeded in intimidating the poor, shivering little apology for a man. What was to be done now? After all his trouble, all his slaving, if he was only to succeed in marrying his daughter to an invalid pauper—this would be but a poor finish.

He felt rather ashamed of himself. "Well, Peter, you're a poorer creature than I took you for. But I am not done. I'll pickaxe something out of my head yet!"

Indeed it was necessary for him to take some speedy steps; for, to say the truth, he was beginning to be much pressed for money, harassed and hunted by the tradespeople, who had, indeed, given a respite on the news of the great match that had been accomplished, but who, if they once learnt that any hostile steps had been taken, would set on him like fox-hounds. But in truth our Doctor, as the reader will have guessed, has been all this time living on his wits—which are at best but a series of bills drawn at short date, and which must be taken up. What else had he been living on all this time? He had neither money in the funds nor estate.

The Banshee had long since passed out of the family, and as for the little office he held in the infirmary, why, as he often said, "Leader's butler there" had more a year. But his practice? Well, somehow these jovial country doctors do not enjoy extensive confidence; people prefer the stupid, silent men, who cannot even make one laugh. But, worse again, even the frail support on which he was leaning was giving way, and it was now said in the town that no money could be got from the Leader family in answer to many pressing demands. This was now beginning to be remarked as something very odd, though of course it was obsequiously accepted; still, from M'Intyre's, where there was a bill of one hundred and odd pounds, down to the local grocer, to whom only ten pounds was owing, no one could get any money. The Doctor's security being thus looked

on with suspicion, he himself naturally shared the fate of his warranty, and was beginning to be baited in the place.

Some step must be taken. So returning home, and lighting one of the havannahs, he shut himself up in his room to think. Half-an-hour's council—yes, that was the only chance. He set out in the morning for Leadersfort. He got into the demesne, walking through the woods, under cover, as it were, and advancing cautiously towards the garden. He knew that the ladies used to walk there after lunch. Keeping still concealed, he presently heard voices, and saw, on the broad walk, the three ladies walking up and down, no doubt chuckling over the morning's victory. The Doctor waited very patiently for half an hour, when his wishes were gratified. Of a sudden that butler, whose salary exceeded the Doctor's, came out to Mrs. Leader with some message, and that lady followed him obediently. When she was gone, the Doctor emerged, met the others face to face, and took off his hat.

The great lady drew herself up for battle, ready to engage him. Mary Leader was not in the least startled.

"I am so glad of this meeting," he said, "as it gives me an opportunity of speaking to my Lady Seaman."

"To me, sir?" said that lady, haughtily; "I have no wish to consult you on any matter."

"It is of importance to yourself and to your family," said the Doctor, with infinite humility, "and I think you would not be sorry, my lady, when you have heard what I have to say."

"Perhaps you had better hear what Doctor Findlater has to say," said Mary Leader. "I am sure he would not trouble you if it was not important."

"Well, what is it?" said the lady, struggling with curiosity and dignity.

Mary Leader then went away.

"It's about your son. He remained at my house last night. He wants to come there to-day again. He says he will come back after you have left, and stop a month with us."

The lady turned red and pale. "You tell me this. It's scandalous, disgraceful——"

"Whisht!" said the Doctor, "just a moment. Now this looks serious, doesn't it? Well, it ain't for me, I needn't tell you, and we don't want it. D'ye see, my lady?"

Intelligence slowly came back to her eyes.

"You see," he went on, "it comes to this: when a man sees that there has been a set made against him, a sort of solemn league and covenant to put him down, why, ma'am, he can't have human flesh, and blood, and bones, if he doesn't do his best, and stick at little short of nothing. I've not been well treated by this family."

"I don't really see, Doctor Findlater," she said, more mildly, "what I have to do with that."

"Well!" said he, "I don't know. They are a poor sort of rustics, these Leaders, and couldn't manage anything by themselves. This last stroke showed your genius, madam." And he made her a bow.

The lady was pleased in spite of herself. "I really don't understand. Doctor Findlater——"

"Oh, the odds are too much: a man must take care of himself. I have had to do it before," the Doctor said, with great meaning, "when I was put to it. A young man that I was attending took such a fancy to me that he settled an annuity on me for life by bond; ay, and held to it in spite of all his family. I was put to it then. That young man yonder took a similar fancy to us, and I made him hold to it in spite of all they could do. Well, I was put to it there. And in the present case, if I *am* put to it—— It's worth reflecting upon, Lady Seaman."

The lady did reflect. There was weight and force in what the Doctor said. She said at last:

"Upon my word, this is very curious."

"Curious or not," he said, "here's Mrs. Leader coming back, so yes or no? I know what they've been at to-day, but that's no matter. But you could get me—to—see my child. I don't like intruding, you know. Yes or no."

"Well—yes," said the lady.

Here was Mrs. Leader aghast with astonishment, ready to drop with genuine rage. "What does this mean?"

"My dear," said her friend, suddenly, "this gentleman had a little private conversation with me about my son."

"I had no wish to intrude," said the Doctor, bowing, "and I merely wished to see Lady Seaman. Just one word more with your ladyship in private. Tell *her* the whole thing at once, and above board. That will be the readiest way. Secure me access to my child," he added, "and from this day you need have no further anxiety about your son."

The Doctor withdrew. Mrs. Leader still

all agape and not understanding, listened helplessly to what was to come next. Lady Seaman at once frankly tells her "how it is." She had helped Mrs. Leader so far, and with success, the latter must now help her without *façon*, and put aside any pride. The man had got hold of Seaman, who was such a fool, there was no knowing what might happen. So she had thought it best to temporise. "And so, my dear Mrs. Leader, we must have the man to come and go whenever he likes."

Mrs. Leader started back. "I'll not have him in the house to insult me. Never."

"Do as you please," said the other, coldly; "think it over at least."

The ladies parted rather angrily. But Lady Seaman had an ally who was to be of use.

SIX MONTHS IN THE EAST.

THE WILDERNESS OF JUDEA.

THE Cave of Adullam is rarely visited by the Eastern traveller, and Alee had never been there in his life. He had no doubt but that he could find it, he said, and pilot us safely afterwards across the Wilderness to the rocky plateau near the desolately-placed convent of Mar Saba, on which we had ordered the tents to be pitched for the night; but, to avoid all chance of miscarriage, he would hire a Bedouin familiar with the ground, to act as guide. The day is lovely. The German waiter at the hotel, when we were scanning the cloudy sky in the early morning, had remarked, "It will be fine—it never rains here except when the sky is black in the West," and had reminded us of the sacred words, "When ye see a cloud rise out of the West, straightway ye say there cometh a shower, and so it is." His remark was volunteered while we were at the inn-door inspecting our steeds, and seeing that they were supplied with European saddles. Formerly it was necessary for the traveller who wished to escape the rough torture of a Turkish saddle—an instrument which makes an uninitiated occupant feel as if he were balancing himself on a garden-roller studded with knobs, and which, by the shortness of its stirrups, jolts his knees agreeably into his mouth at every step—to purchase his own harness before starting for Palestine. This is still the best plan for a fastidious rider, for although we escaped the annoyances inseparable from using the saddle of the country, we were never out for many hours in succession,

without some portion or other of our harness giving way. There were stirrups of rope; bridles, the several halves of which were sewn together by thread; leather seats, which turned round of their own accord; slender straps, where the holes merged into rents, and which came to pieces from old age; and belly-bands, composed apparently of some tinderous substance, which crumbled at the touch. If it had not been for Alee's readiness of resource and unflinching cheerfulness, I doubt whether we should have had the courage to proceed on our day's journey. But our dragoman's demeanour and assurances carried all before them, so we started gently, out of deference to the frailty of our harness. There were as many Arab helpers and hangers-on assembled in the narrow Jerusalem street to see us off as if our departure were an event of public interest. Bare-headed, bare-footed youths, in gaudy discoloured robes; ostlers, who were remarkably like Joseph's brethren in the picture-books of childhood; venerable old men in beards, who reminded one of Fuseli's phrase, "patriarchs of poverty;" all murmuring softly "backsheesh," or charging at us with the same fell word by look and mien.

We leave the city by the Damascus Gate, which is close to our hotel, and skirting its walls, traverse the road overhanging the Valley of Hinnom, and so, past the modern English burial-ground and the Potter's Field, we are soon on the main road to Hebron. The sun gains power every minute, and the lizards and chameleons are darting rapidly in and out of the stones exposed to its rays. On the bank rising from the opposite side of Hinnom, stands a row of neat modern dwellings, which would not look out of place in the neighbourhood of Battersea. They are the new almshouses erected by Sir Moses Montefiore for indigent Jews, and are all occupied. But, as was our invariable experience in Jerusalem and its vicinity, the real and apocryphal traditions crowd upon us so quickly, that we have difficulty in mastering the externals of each. On that lonely and blighted tree, seen high up to the left yonder, Judas Iscariot is said to have hanged himself. It is close to the ruins of the house of Caiaphas the high priest, and on the naked crown of the Hill of Evil Counsel, which rises abruptly on the north side of the ravine before us. The Potter's Field consists of a broad natural terrace half-way up this ravine, Hinnom below it, and the

house of Caiaphas above. The photographs and pictures of this spot make it gloomier than it appears in reality, by reason of their almost invariably bringing its harsh rocks and ancient burial-places into prominent relief. By these means that accursed and blighted look is given it which accords so well with its shocking traditions, but which is, as we decided, misleading. The Potter's Field is more fertile than the rest of the ground near. The olive flourishes on it, and the view over the valley and towards Zion is comprehensive and picturesque.

The plain of Rephaim, where David conquered the Philistines, is before us, and leaving the towers and spires of Jerusalem on our left, we cross it, and after an easy ride of about a mile come to a well surrounded by rough stones, the story of which reminds us that we are on the road the Wise Men followed when they were dismissed by Herod, and were on their way to the new-born babe at Bethlehem. When stooping to draw water here, they saw, it is said, their guiding star mirrored in its waters, and followed it. We are in no mood this morning to dispute or affirm any such tradition. We are bound for the Cave of Adullam, and are full of speculation as to the chances of our reaching it, and of what we have seen and left unseen in Jerusalem. We had visited the Leper Colony the afternoon before. This wretched place is close by the Zion Gate, and consists of small cottages, built apparently of wattle and dab, and with their backs to the passer-by. Neither door nor window in this colony is allowed to look upon the public street, and it was as if one were walking through a thoroughfare both sides of which had by some freak been reversed. The miserable lepers must not offend the senses of those whose business or religion takes them through the Gate of Zion, or to the Armenian Convent, or the Tomb of David, hard by. So they are shut off in the way described, wretchedly poor, but intermarrying among themselves, and perpetuating a race given over to disease. They are allowed to leave their houses. Basking in the sun on the opposite side of the road to us, were three male and two female lepers, who begged by signs, but did not venture to approach us, or to leave their place. Their flesh was not white as we had expected, but was covered with ulcerous sores and swellings, reminding one of the worst examples of scrofula aggravated by dirt, climate, poor living, and neglect. We threw them some

small coins, Lipman telling a woman who was nearly blind the position of those which fell short, and giving her permission to crawl to the spot and pick them up after their excellencies (ourselves) had left.

It is while we are talking over this experience of the day before, discussing leprosy and the means taken to alleviate its horrors, asking Alee's opinion, and finding that he has a profound contempt for the medical art, that we come to the convent of Mar Elias, and to a rock by the wayside, which is said to be marked miraculously. Against its stony surface Elijah reposed under the shade of an olive tree, when flying from Jezebel, and here angels supplied his wants. We dismount and examine the impression which is shown as that left by Elijah's form, and pronounce it singularly unlike what it pretends to be; while Alee looks to the straps, and ropes, and bandages which do duty with us for harness. There have been one or two breaks in it already, and George, in the profundity of his horsey knowledge, has insisted upon exchanging his steed for the pony belonging to one of Alee's staff. We have ridden leisurely, and it is not more than three-quarters of an hour since we left Jerusalem. Now, however, the white and shining city disappears altogether from view. We pay but scant attention to the grey walls of the convent of Mar Elias, for Alee warns us that Bethlehem is in sight, and that we are approaching what Jew, Christian, and Mahomedan agree to be Rachel's tomb. Bethlehem looks like a fortified town, and its vast block of convents—Greek, Latin, and Armenian—strongly built of stone, and commanding the plain of Moab, resembles a feudal castle. The road we are on now deviates to the left, and would take us to the village in less than an hour. We have determined, however, to defer our visit to Bethlehem, and so take the bridle-path, into which the highway to Hebron resolves itself. We have to ride in single file, and over slippery blocks of stone, for the road gets more and more rugged, and we are dependent solely upon the sure-footedness of our horses for our safety. After leaving Rachel's tomb: in which we find a wandering Bedouin devoutly prostrating himself in prayer, and which consists of a venerable stone building with three sides, and a niche, or Mahomedan praying-place: the scene becomes wilder every moment. The bridle-path is as the dried-up bed of some tempestuous torrent, and our horses clamber rather than walk over its gigantic

masses of smooth, slippery rock. Mountains stretch up on each side of us, and form a vista of grey stone so thickly studded with smaller blocks of the same hue, as to resemble a crowded graveyard.

We have read of the countless wild blossoms of Syria, and of the brilliant carpet they form; but here we see no vestige of leaf, or shrub, or flower. It is all cold stone, and of an unvarying neutral grey, which makes the landscape appalling in its deadly want of colour. Upon its rocks the hot sun beats down fiercely, and the horses slide as often as they walk. The main road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem had been rough enough, but there had been signs of cultivation on either side. Where we are now is as bare as absence of soil can make it.

As our party went stumbling along, its members made an amusing contrast to the beings familiar to friends and relatives at home. The sheik made not the slightest concession to climate and circumstance. He dressed as nearly as possible in the habit of his political life. This he did conscientiously, wearing white shirts, with good stiff turn-down collars, tightly-fitting light kid gloves, neat boots, and trousers, waistcoat, and coat which would have done honour to the Row. A stiff black felt seaside cap, round which was twisted a handkerchief, not with flaunting ends, but tightly fastened down like a white hat-band, was the only thing about him which differed from his ordinary dress in London, and throughout our wanderings the sheik might have been taken as he stood, and transferred to the Steyne at Brighton, without suggesting incongruity. Edward was nearly as conventional, though in a different way. Constantinople, Egypt, and the desert had played havoc with the faultless raiment he brought from England; so, before leaving Alexandria, he bought at one of the European shops which abound in the Frank quarter of that unsavoury city, one of those suits of ready-made slop clothes which look so charming on the wax figures in the Minories. After a few days' rough wear on horseback these shrank and gave way, became baggy where they should have been tight, and contracted where ease was necessary, and long before our travels were over our friend's attire became a painful subject to touch upon. An ordinary felt slouch hat, with a streaming puggaree, completed it, and formed an efficient protection for head and neck. To picture George to yourself, you must have seen the virtuous young

farmer in a Surrey melodrama; be intimately acquainted with the get-up of the rustics who enlist on market day, and wear their colours ostentatiously; and have stayed at the house of a trainer of English race-horses. Besides combining the characteristics of the three types quoted, he, the only hunting man in the party, rode by preference what looked in the distance like a rat, with his feet nearly touching the ground on either side. A light-coloured hunting-hat with inside ventilators, and decorated with an Arab keyfea, which streamed gaily in the wind, and a bucolic shooting-suit, made up his costume. Your servant wore a yachting-jacket and trousers of thin blue serge, recalling the "bold smuggler" from Whitechapel, who used in former years to whisper hoarsely in your young ear of bandannas and cigars. He, further, tied up his head in Eastern fashion. First a white skull-cap, and over this a native fez, then a thick layer of white wraps, and lastly the keyfea of striped silk, and found this accumulation to make a capital head-dress, and an efficient protection against the sun. We had, before leaving Egypt, reduced our baggage to modest compass, and when beginning tent-life we left much of what remained at the Jerusalem Hotel until our return there. Two large travelling-bags held a complete change of clothes, and all necessities for the four; so that if we were caught in one of the pitiless mountain storms of Palestine, we could make ourselves comfortable at night. In addition to these were the waterproofs and overcoats, which Alee carried, with the lunch, on his saddle or in its bags, and our stock of clothes proved ample.

We dressed for dinner every night. That is, we put off the clothes we had ridden in for those in our bags. Alee's staff of Arabs, with the bedding, tents, and baggage, had always gained the rendezvous before us, and a sponge bath and an entire change before the meal of the day, were welcome luxuries after spending long hours in the saddle. In short, our life in the Wilderness was, in every particular, more like travelling in civilised lands than we had believed possible. Wherever Englishmen are in the present day, the form and colour of their dress—I am not speaking of its texture—is pretty much what it is at home, and the Arab contractors for food, horses, and shelter, are such masters of their business, and have gained such experience of our national habits, that we found our departure from every-day cus-

toms to be far rarer and more unimportant than we had anticipated.

Our guide to the Cave of Adullam turned out a fraudulent impostor. He was a Bethlehemite whom Allee had engaged after due inquiry, and we thought from the very first that he looked too picturesque to be useful. A heavy crimson turban, long black curls falling over a swarthy face and neck, moustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers, dark gleaming eyes, stout white linen trousers so full as to seem petticoats, a sheep-skin jacket lined with bright scarlet cloth and worn inside-out, bare brown calves and feet, the latter thrust into red slippers, a large knife in brass-bound sheath, a long single-barrelled gun across the shoulder, a habit of singing barbaric ditties at the top (or bottom, for he was very gruff) of his voice, and a jaunty devil-may-care air—such was our false guide. He was picked up in Bethlehem, was hired solely for the Cave of Adullam, and undertook to pilot us thither, and to Mar Saba afterwards, it being stipulated that we were to go to the latter place direct. With this understanding we started again, the villager leading, and Allee lingering for a few minutes to complete the purchase of some Bethlehem wine we had commissioned him to buy, to supplement the rapidly decreasing stock of sherry and claret we had brought from England. Let me remark, in passing, that we found this “wine of the country” to add a new pang to the terrors of thirst. It tasted like a decoction of the skin, stone, and stalk of the grape, from which every drop of juice had been excluded, and was never touched without a succession of shudders and wry faces.

Onward rides the handsome vagabond our leader, singing always, and cantering or trotting as it pleases his wayward will, and with scant consideration for the poor old dappled grey he bestrides, and presently he leads the way at a smart pace down a rugged glen, and we pass through a miserable little village, from the doors of which savage Bedouin faces look out, and where every house is in ruins. A few begrimed vessels of tin are the only furniture these dilapidated huts contain; and the all-covering abyieh, or robe of coarse camel's hair, is the sole garment of those within. Few things change in the East, and “raiment of camel's hair,” with a “girdle round the loins,” comprise the ordinary and sufficient dress of the men of the Wilderness. We scour barren plains,

and pass up rocky defiles, looking now and then to our pistols, and not unfrequently stopping for Allee and the Bethlehemite to exchange civilities with some wandering member of the wild Ta'âmrah tribe, who starts from behind a rock, or gallops down upon us from afar. The character of this tribe does not stand high, but we find its members inoffensive, and when we resolve to climb the almost horizontal path leading to the summit of the Frank mountain, the Bethlehemite—who as we discover subsequently has never been over the ground in his life, and has already taken us miles out of our way—philosophically remains below and holds amicable converse with half a dozen of the Ta'âmrahs, all armed, who emerge one by one from the square, small black tents which are clustered at the mountain's side. The genuine Bedouin's tent is always black and always small; and there is a strong family likeness among the children of the desert, their owners. “Riding up the dome of St. Paul's on horseback is the only pursuit I can compare to our ascent of the Frank mountain, for it was slippery, unprotected, and inconceivably steep,” is recorded in my journal. This mountain is, however, the only eminence in the Wilderness of Judæa which stands out conspicuously, and we were amply repaid when we reached its summit. The ruins on the mountain-top, consisting of a circle some seven hundred and fifty feet in circumference, surrounded by the remains of a stout wall with four heavy round towers at the cardinal points, are unmistakably Roman. But history is silent concerning them, and tradition is as wild and contradictory as ever. This solitary mountain was held by the Crusaders for forty years after the fall of Jerusalem; it is the site of the fortress and city of Herodium, erected by Herod the Great, and to which his body was brought for burial from Jericho; it is the Beth-haccerem, or House of the Vineyard mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah, as a well-known beacon station—all these things are said. What enchanted us was the comprehensive view we obtained of the ground over which David roamed with his followers, and evaded the mighty Saul. This Wilderness of Judæa is the very spot for one at odds with authority, being full of strong natural defences, and so bare as to make it impossible for any host to creep up unobserved. Neither tree nor shrub is visible. Low-lying rolling mountains, like vast billows of stone and barren soil, stretch round us,

one behind the other for miles. Adullam lies hidden behind yon stony crest; that precipitous chasm which makes so rude an opening in the rocky hill-side runs below its Cave; the mountains of Moab, crimson, rigid, and stern, the sheeny waters of the Sea of Death, dazzlingly blue; the building on a ridge beyond Jerusalem, which the Mahomedans declare to be the tomb of Samuel; and the cairns formed by the wandering Mahomedans, each of whom adds a small stone on his first beholding a holy site, are all gazed at in turn. But it is the deadly barrenness of the vast and solemn Wilderness, and its obviously unaltered character since the scenes of sacred history were enacted in it, which impress one most strongly. We have before our eyes exactly what David saw, and yonder simple shepherd-lad, singing to his flock, is perchance spending his morning as David did.

We descend, and after another hour's ride up the hills and over the dales of a pathless solitude, losing our way often through the pestilent incompetence of the Bethlehemite, we are scrambling on foot down the steep circuitous path which leads to the entrance to Adullam. We have collected three or four Bedouin followers, in the course of our devious wanderings, and the Bethlehemite, who is quite untouched by the reproaches we have translated to him by Alee, recognises some fellow-villagers who have come over here for—how strangely it sounds!—partridge shooting. They all insist upon accompanying us. Alee has tethered the horses on the plain above, and confesses his fear that they will be stolen while we are in the Cave. The men with us are armed, and are more numerous than ourselves, so we hit on the expedient of buying their swords as relics, a transaction which is accomplished after much chaffering between Alee and the vendors, and one of these, in its common brass-bound wooden scabbard, hangs before me as I write. The swords bought, Alee leaves our Bethlehemite, with many threats and pointings to the pistols, in charge of the horses, and we clamber along the narrow ledge leading to the mouth of the Cave. It is infinitely difficult and rugged, and consists of a tortuous path a few inches wide, which twines along a jagged precipice five hundred feet high, on the other parts of which there is not footing for a wild goat. It is dizzy work, but we keep our eyes on the wall-like rock which stretches above us, avoid looking into the chasm below, and move slowly onwards, continu-

ally using both hands and feet. A huge block of stone has fallen across the broken pathway close to the entrance to the Cave. We clamber over it—not without the sort of help the Arabs give strangers at the Pyramids, and which consists of butting you from behind, while half dislocating your shoulders by tugs in front—and are at the opening to a small grotto, which leads to a natural winding gallery some thirty feet long. We pant and squeeze through these, doffing most of our clothing, on Alee's advice, and find ourselves at last in a noble natural chamber one hundred and twenty feet long, and from thirty to forty-five feet wide. This is the Cave of Adullam. The candles we have brought with us are attached to the walls, and the arches and stalactites of the lofty roof are seen through the darkness, irregular and dim. There is ample space here and in the recesses round for several hundred men; and when we consider its all but impossible approach, the ease with which it could be defended from the attack of what would be an overwhelming force elsewhere, its comparative nearness to Bethlehem, and weigh the evidence for and against the accuracy of the site, we come unanimously to the conclusion that tradition is in this instance right. Here it must have been that David longed for "the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate," when the village was garrisoned by the Philistines; and along this cleft in the rock the three "mighty men" came after they had broke through the enemy's lines, obtained the coveted water, and were bringing it in triumph to their chief. There are several narrow passages branching out of the great Cave, one of which runs for forty yards, and takes the explorer to a pit ten feet deep, into which he must drop, and there creep on all-fours, and finally crawl for seventy yards more, when he reaches another immense natural chamber. This is the end of the Cave, so far as European travellers know, though the Arabs insist that subterranean passages extend from it for miles, even to Tekoa and Hebron. When we emerge into the blessed sunlight again, dusty, heated, and out of breath, Alee spreads his snow-white cloth and produces lunch. The Bedouins watch us from a distance, and we eat, drink, and smoke in a small cleft in the hill which overlooks the Wâdy and the terrible defile between Adullam and the outer world.

It is not until after a long and pleasant rest that we set forth again, and that the Beth-

lehemite's fraudulent pretence culminated. He had been paid beforehand by Alec, making this a condition of accompanying us; and on our gaining a mountain-path, which we remembered to have ridden along in the morning, attempted to give us the slip. He had understood that he was engaged to lead us back by way of Bethlehem, he said (a palpable falsehood), a proceeding which would, if we had allowed it, have landed him at home, and left us with the worst part of our journey to perform after sundown. We were resolute against this, and determined, while finding our own way across the Wilderness, to keep our faithless guide with us as a punishment. He protested vehemently, and tried hard to sneak off. But we were better mounted than he, so we surrounded him, and kept him prisoner. One or other of us always had him within touching distance, and when he eased his mind by yelling, we shouted our loudest in return; when he waved his gun wildly over his shoulder we smiled, to show him we were used to it; and when he stuck spurs into his steed we quickened our pace, so that the distance between us should not increase. We were lost in the trackless Wilderness, which was no longer stony, but a succession of barren moors. Alec, however, once more proved himself equal to the occasion. There was not a vestige of road or pathway, the impostor would only direct us towards Bethlehem, and there was every prospect of our not finding the tents, and of having to spend the night in the open, without food or shelter, and with jackals and perhaps a stray hyena for company. But, after hours of what seemed like purposeless wandering, Alec recognised a landmark. Soon after this we gained our tents, with their smoking, savoury dinner, and their welcome fire. The impostor became quite cheerful when he found we were the stronger, and at the close of the day presented himself for a bonus of backsheesh, with the beaming confidence of a man who feels his acts and intentions to have been so meritorious as to call for extra reward.

A LOST LITERARY ART.

WE seem to have lost the art of writing epigrams. It may perhaps be added that we were never conspicuous in this respect; yet at one time we made at least a decent figure, whereas now we doubt if there is a good epigram-writer in the English language, or even a bad one, so completely

has this particular kind of literature decayed. In making the remark, we may be understood as using the word "epigram" either in its modern and restricted sense, or in its ancient and larger signification of "a writing on," "an inscription," such as were associated with offerings in the temples of the pagan divinities. Similar sentences were afterwards inscribed on statues of gods, heroes, &c., and on public buildings; and ultimately any terse little poem, giving expression to a single and not complex sentiment, feeling, or reflection, came to be called an epigram. With us, however, an epigram must be a pungent sally of wit, with a sting at the end of it—in fact, a sarcasm very finely pointed and exquisitely polished. The Greek epigram might be that; but it might be many other things as well, and was as often amiable or pathetic as bitter. "It was adopted," says the preface to the first English translation of the Greek Anthology (1806), "by the lawgiver to convey a moral precept, and by a lover to express a tender sentiment, but most of all by those who wished to perpetuate the affection felt by the living for the dead; and as very little can be done in the compass of a few couplets, the principal aim of each writer seems to have been to do that little with grace." Greek epigrams, ordinarily, did not exceed six or eight verses, though they would occasionally run to much greater length; and their simplicity was often so extreme, that with the French an "epigramme à la Grecque" means an epigram devoid of point. With the Latin writers, the epigram was generally much sharper and more bitter than with the Greeks; indeed, it was sometimes actually brutal in its severity; and it is noticeable that with ourselves this form of composition is commonly used as a weapon of offence. Even in the restricted sense, however, we have no epigrams in the present day. Assuredly our times offer abundant material for the epigrammatist; but the epigrammatist is not to be found. The immense amount of so-called comic writing that is poured forth every week at the present day has led to a degeneration and vulgarisation of the art. The whole thing has become base and mechanical—a manufacture, instead of an inspiration. Jokes are contracted for, farmed, supplied to order, as per sample. The keenness of the edge has gone with use; the steel is hacked and dull, and often wielded by a clumsy hand.

During the last century, we had several very fair writers of epigrams of the sharp

and bitter kind. Garrick and Quin were famous for this sort of impromptu, or assumed impromptu; and the power to produce such verses seems to have been regarded as a necessary qualification of the man of wit. The early part of the present century had its epigrammatists also. Canning, and the other contributors to the *Anti-Jacobin*, possessed a great facility in this respect; and although the periodical alluded to belonged to the closing years of last century, the writers were young men, and earned their chief distinction at a later date. Then came the brilliant wits and poets of the days of the Regency and George the Fourth, many of whom could throw these stinging little darts about with much effect; but the Victorian era has for the most part been barren enough in the particular branch of literary art which we are now considering. Of the gentler kind of epigrams, such as the Greeks excelled in, we have not many specimens in the English language, excepting such as have been translated. Ben Jonson wrote a whole book of epigrams, and seems to have contemplated publishing others; but those we possess are chiefly satirical and savage, and many do not at all answer to our conception of an epigram. The best of the complimentary poems is that On Lucy, Countess of Bedford, which is certainly most delicately wrought. The verses on the death of the poet's youthful son have something antique in their character; but the handling is clumsy, with the exception of two exquisitely touching lines, to which, we cannot but think, it would have been better if the whole composition had been confined:

Rest in soft peace, and, ask'd, say: Here doth lie
Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry.

Herrick—who, though an English clergyman, had very much of the ancient pagan in him—has left us a great many epigrams; some pointless, some coarse beyond expression, and some of the purest and most fascinating beauty. His epitaph on his maid-servant is very Greekish in tone and manner; full of a certain depth yet continence of pathos, and as delicately scented as the flower it mentions:

Underneath this turf is laid
Prudence Baldwin, once my maid.
From her happy spark here let
Spring the purple violet.

Of modern Englishmen, no one has written epigrams of such a pure Hellenic beauty as Walter Savage Landor, who had so imbued himself in the literature of anti-

quity, and had lived so long under the southern sky, and surrounded by the classical associations of Italy, that he seems to have lost all his Anglo-Saxon uncouthness, and to have acquired the peculiar graces of the ancient civilisation. It is unfortunate that some of his compositions of this nature should have shown the objectionable qualities of that civilisation also; but we gladly pass away from these considerations, and fix our thoughts on such gems of feeling and perfect workmanship as the little poem on Rose Aylmer, a lady to whom Landor had been attached, and who died, while very young, in India:

Ah, what avails the sceptred race,
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see;
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.

Lamb, writing to Landor, said of this poem that it had for him a charm he could not explain, adding: "I lived upon it for weeks." The charm is, indeed, difficult to define; yet it is there—intangible, but intense. Examined in detail, one might find a touch of commonplace in the opening lines; but the conclusion is exquisite, and the whole trembles with the very music of emotion. The same writer's *Dying Speech of an Old Philosopher*, written in January, 1849, when he had still nearly sixteen years to live, is also admirable in its calm, human dignity and courage:

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife:
Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art:
I warm'd both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Among modern translations from the Greek and Latin, one of the best is Leigh Hunt's version of Martial's epitaph on the child Erotion:

Underneath this greedy stone
Lies little sweet Erotion;
Whom the Fates, with hearts as cold,
Nipp'd away at six years old.
Thou, whoever thou may'st be,
That hast this small field after me,
Let the yearly rites be paid
To her little slender shade.
So shall no disease or jar
Hurt thy house or chill thy Lar;
But this tomb here be alone
The only melancholy stone.

This charming little poem, like all the best of the pagan utterances about death, has an indescribable aroma of tender regret, lingering, as it were, about the inevitable decrees of Nature, and sweetening the bitterness of mortality. If such modes of regarding the great mystery open no gulf

of immeasurable being beyond the narrow portals of the grave, they bring no terrors either, but sound like a hushing and affectionate voice out of the common motherliness of earth. And, indeed, there is nothing of materialism in such thoughts. The shade of little Erotion hovered about the "melancholy stowe" that covered her handful of dust, and might in time float up, a winged Psyche, into the Elysian fields.

To Leigh Hunt we are also indebted for a paraphrase of an epigram by the Greek poet, Melægor, of which the translator says that he always seems to scent the very odour of it, as if he held a bunch of flowers to his face. It is certainly supremely beautiful:

A flowery crown will I compose:
I'll weave the crocus, weave the rose;
I'll weave narcissus, newly wet,
The hyacinth and violet;
And myrtle shall supply me green,
And lilies laugh in light between:
That the rich tendrils of my beauty's hair
May burst into their crowning flowers, and light
the painted air.

The great body of Greek epigrams is that of the Anthology. An "anthology," strictly speaking, is a collection of flowers, and it is used metaphorically to denote a set of short, choice pieces, culled, like a nosegay, from various sources. There are Latin as well as Greek anthologies, besides many in the Oriental languages, such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Indian, Chinese, &c. An admirable epigram is translated by Sir William Jones from the Persian poet, Firdusi—admirable for the feeling which dictated it, and for the point with which it is expressed:

Ah, spare yon emmet, rich in hoarded grain!
He lives with pleasure, and he dies with pain.

The collections best known to the western world are those in the Greek tongue, made at various times by various persons, and since combined into one work. An English translation in prose, with some metrical versions added, is published in Bohn's Classical Library. Some of the pieces seem to us moderns singularly trivial and pointless; others, again, are delightful for their simplicity and grace, and for the beautiful translucency of the thought and the expression. The Greek epigram, from having been, as we have shown, originally inscribed on votive offerings, on temples, and on statues, has a kind of clear-cut, sculpturesque character, very pleasing for its effect of completeness and definition. Many of those in the Anthology are like pictures cut on gems. A healthy percep-

tion of beauty was the happy portion of the Greek; and it is noticeable that, although he was often immoral, he was seldom gross. You cannot say the same thing of the Romans. Even Catullus, despite his poetry, and the somewhat Hellenic tendency of his mind, is often abominably coarse; and so is Martial. Certainly, the Greek Anthology itself is far from irreproachable, considered on moral grounds; but it is not externally revolting—at least, judging by the English translation to which we have alluded; and it contains much that is blameless as well as beautiful. We add a few specimens:

A PIOUS OFFERING.—Ye lowly dwellings, and holy hill of the Nymphs, and rills under the rock, and pine, a neighbour of the water, and thou, Hermes, son of Maia, the saviour of fruits, and Pan, who keepest the rock pastured by goats—kindly receive these slight cakes, and this bowl full of wine, the gift of Neoptolemus, the son of Æacides.—*Leonidas of Tarentum.*

A PRAYER FOR FUNERAL RITES.—Ye shepherds, who tend goats and fine-fleeced sheep while walking over this back-bone of a mountain, pay, I pray by the earth, a slight but agreeable tribute to Cleitagaras, for the sake of Proserpine underground. Let the sheep bleat for me; and let a shepherd on the unpolished rock pipe gently to them while feeding; and let a person of the place in earliest spring cut down flowers in the meadow, and adorn my tomb with a garland; and let him bedew it thrice with milk from an ewe that has fine lambs, by holding her udder full of milk over it, moistening even the base of my tomb. There are favours paid to the dead, and there are returns made even by the dead.—*The Same.*

A VIRGIN'S PETITION.—O thou [Cybele] who takest thy course around Dindyma and the peaks of Phrygia, burning with fire, mayest thou, O mother most venerable, cause to grow tall the little Aristodicé, the daughter of Seilenó, to Hymen and to a marriage; for which I have strewn many things before thy fane, and near thy altars my virgin hair here and there.—*The Same.*

A LOVER'S CONCEIT.—With her eye has Didymé caught me: woe's me! I melt, like wax by the fire, on seeing her beauty. But if she were black, what then? Nay, even charcoal, if we warm it, shines like rose-buds.—*Asclepiades.*

CUPID SLEEPING.—When we arrived at a grove in deep shade, we found within the child of Cythéra, like, as to his mouth, to ruddy apples. He had neither an arrow-holding quiver, nor a bent bow; for they were hanging on wide-spreading trees; and he was slumbering, fettered by sleep, and smiling among rose-leaves; and brown bees above him kept going to his wax-shedding lips, for the sake of getting honey.—*Plato.*

AN INVITATION TO REPOSE.—Here, throwing yourself, wayfarer, along the green meadow, rest your limbs, rendered soft by laborious suffering, where the pine-tree, agitated by the breath of the zephyr, shall soothe you while listening to the music of the tættix [a species of grasshopper or cricket, the same as the cicada], and the shepherd on the mountain is playing on the pipe his mid-day tune near a fountain, and in a thicket, under a shaggy plane-tree, is avoiding the heat of the autumnal dog-star; and to-morrow you shall pass the grove. To Pan, who says this to you, be duly obedient.—*Uncertain Author.*

A great deal more might be written on the subject of epigrams. The object of this article, however, was not to exhaust the topic, but to suggest that a very pleas-

ing form of poetry might be once more cultivated to the advantage of our literary manners.

RAIDS OVER THE BORDER.

THE LAND OF SCOTT. PART II.

THE King's, now the Queen's Park, to the rear of Holyrood, covers an area of about four miles, and includes Arthur's Seat, and the bold precipices of Salisbury Crags. There is a carriage drive round the base of the crags, which affords a fine view over the city. Why or when the mountain acquired the name of the great mythological king of the Ancient Britons, has never been satisfactorily explained. The derivation of the apparently English name of the crags is equally obscure; though in all probability the English city and plain, and the Scottish cliff, received their appellation from some Celtic word or tradition in those remote ages when the whole population of Britain was Celtic and Cymric. Few cities possess so extensive and romantic a pleasure-ground, combining such hill and dale, such wild and sylvan scenery, and from "the topmost top," eight hundred feet above the level of the sea, such a magnificent panoramic view of land and water, and far-stretching hills on the outer verge of the horizon. In the bygone days of imprisonment for debt, Scottish debtors, when reduced to the last extremity of impecuniosity, were free from arrest within the limits of the King's Park and the Abbey of Holyrood, and had in consequence a far pleasanter Alsatia than fell to the lot of similar unfortunates in other parts of the world. The place is still a refuge for those who, not knowing the elementary rule of life—the making of both ends meet—find themselves at issue with the law and their creditors.

But Arthur's Seat and the Queen's Park have nobler memories than these. The place is consecrated to song and romance. Who has not read the pathetic ballad of "Waly! waly!" a composition that has drawn tears from many a gentle and beautiful eye, and will do so yet again? It is difficult for any traveller, who is ordinarily well read in this class of literature, to walk up Arthur's Seat without recalling the mournful history which the ballad recounts: that of Lady Barbara Erskine, wife of the Marquis of Douglas, repudiated by her husband on a cruelly false charge, and who, in the agony of her unmerited disgrace, wandered, not crazed,

but nearly so, through the glens and up the steepes of Arthur's Seat, drinking of the water of St. Anthony's Well, wishing that she were dead and gone, with the green grass growing over her, and exclaiming piteously:

Oh, waly! waly! and Love is bonnie
A little time, while it is new,
But when its auld it waxeth cauld,
And fades away like morning dew.

Here, too, on the road up the hill, are laid some of the most touching scenes of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, interwoven with the love and the sorrow of the beautiful lily of St. Leonard's, and of the homelier affections of her true-hearted sister Jeanie Deans. Here also was, and is, a well called "Tod's Well," whence Edinburgh in the bygone days, when water was a scarcer commodity than it ought to be in any well-regulated municipality, supplied the city with as much of the pure element as sufficed for that primitive and unsanitary time. It may be mentioned that, as *aqua vitæ* in Latin, *eau de vie* in French, and *usquebae* in Highland Gaelic, severally mean the "water of life," so "toddy," of which the Scotch at home and abroad seldom lose the love or the flavour, seems, if we may believe an allusion in Allan Ramsay's poem, the Morning Interview, to have originally meant water without any whisky in it. Speaking of the adjuncts to the breakfast-table, the tea brought from the eastern, and the sugar brought from the western hemisphere, Ramsay says that Scotland brings to the feast "no costly tribute," but

Only some kettles full of Toddian spring,

and explains the passage by the statement in a foot-note, that "Tod's Well supplies the city with water." The custom in Scotland, in the whisky trade, to invoice whisky as *aqua*, lends strength to the supposition, and tends to disprove the allegation of the dictionaries that the word "toddy," is derived from India, where it signifies a kind of arrack.

The view from Salisbury Crags, by day or night, in fine weather or in foul, is one of the finest in Great Britain. That from the top of Arthur's Seat is unrivalled. Below stretches the ancient city, with its Castle on the Rock, like the crown upon the forehead of a queen, and a little to the north, the new city, symmetrical and palatial, crowned by the Calton Hill and its clustering monuments; among which its mock antique of twelve Grecian pillars in

iron, stands beautifully conspicuous, and beyond the broad estuary, or Firth of the river Forth, with the islands of Inch Keith, the Bass Rock, and the Isle of May, stretching away to the eastward towards the German Ocean. Across the Firth is the county of Fife; and far away to the north-west the mountain summits of Perth, Stirling, and Dumbartonshire, among which Ben Lomond and Ben Ledi rear their summits to the clouds. To the south lie the three Lothians, famous not alone for picturesque beauty, but for a perfection of scientific agriculture; surpassable, perhaps, but as yet unequalled in any portion of the world. Almost immediately under foot, distant about two miles southwards, is Blackford Hill, which Scott has commemorated in *Marmion*, as when looking from it towards Edinburgh, he sees the glorious landscape spread before his sight, and beholds his "own romantic town," where, if canonisation were to the taste, and accorded with the faith of our days, he would certainly be enrolled among the noble company of the saints.

From Edinburgh is no long distance to the Tweed. There are several routes, each equally picturesque; and it is one of the advantages of Scottish travel to a well-read stranger that you cannot go wrong, turn which way you will. My companion, with a strong and all-pervading reverence and love for Sir Walter Scott, decides to go to Melrose and Abbotsford. We go, accordingly. We pass on the rail many famous spots, for the country is thickly strewn with history and romance. Among others must be cited Dalkeith, Dalhousie, and Cockpen. The last mentioned is the scene of the immortal ballad, in which the elderly laird, whose mind is too much taken up with affairs of the state to be able to afford much time for wooing, puts on his wig and cocked-hat, girds on his sword, and mounted on his nag, proceeds to pay court to the thrifty and industrious Mistress Jean, the daughter of the neighbouring Laird of Clavern Hall Lee, "a penniless lass with a long pedigree." How he is discomfited, to the sore surprise of the business-like wooer, who, knowing his wealth in kyne and sheep and broad acres, thinks this particular—perhaps over particular—lass, or indeed any other, must "be daft to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen," is excellently well told in the ballad.

Passing Newbattle Abbey, the seat of Lord Lothian, and the modern castle of Dalhousie, the seat of the marquis of that

name, we catch glimpses of two very different buildings, strongholds of the days of Border feud and chivalry, when every great noble was his own king, lawgiver, and judge; and did as seemed good in his own eyes, until somebody stronger than himself arose to contest the point with him. The first of these that comes in sight is Borthwick Castle, built in 1430, with a solidity that would have enabled it to brave the inroads of time and the elements for a thousand years. It was to this place that Bothwell carried Mary after their ill-omened marriage. It was here, too, that a plot was afterwards laid by the Scottish nobles under the Earl of Morton, to seize upon the royal couple. Mary, when alone in the castle with only six or seven retainers, received a friendly hint of the conspiracy, only just in time to escape in the disguise of a page, and join her husband by a bypath over the hills at Blackcastle. Thence they made their way to Dunbar, and one of the many sensational episodes of the Scottish Revolution was played out, to be followed by other acts of the mighty drama, infinitely more startling, of which to poor Mary the climax was a weary captivity and the headsman's block. The castle suffered greatly at a later period from the guns of Oliver Cromwell, but still stands, venerable and strong in ruin, a remembrance of the bad old times departed, when might, not right, was king of men; and when the chaotic forces of oppression and resistance, force and fraud, light and darkness, superstition and free inquiry, were all struggling, fusing, fermenting, fizzing, cracking, bursting, exploding, and finally assimilating into that great Cosmos of rational liberty which Scotland and England alike enjoy, and in the accomplishment of which Scotland most indisputably had her full share. Before parting with Borthwick Castle, let me note that in the "manse," or parsonage, as it would be called in England, was born the historian Robertson, a writer whose works, though somewhat out of date in our day, are models of classical English.

Crichton Castle, two miles further south, has memories of its own, which to the readers of *Marmion* will be pleasantly familiar. It dates from the time of James the Second (of Scotland), having been built by Sir William Crichton, guardian of that monarch, and chancellor of the kingdom. It contains the remains of a dungeon, remarkable for its name of the Massie More, suggesting, as it is very similar in form, structure, and arrangement, some

affinity with the Mazza Morras—or great dungeons of Spain. Crichton stands on the banks of the little river Tyne, that falls into the Firth of Forth at Tynningham. This fortress in its time has had many masters, among others the Earl of Bothwell, at whose attainder it fell to the Scotts of Harden, now represented by the Dukes of Buccleuch. From them it passed into other hands, almost equally celebrated in Border strife. The story of Lord Marmion's temporary sojourn in the castle occupies a considerable portion of the fourth canto of Sir Walter's poem, though, perhaps, the most interesting passage in it is that which describes the existing state of the ruin, and the pleasure which the poet himself took in surveying its "turrets rude" and "tottered keep," and in tracing the mystic sense of its mouldering shields, and of its scutcheons of honour and pre- tence, quartered in heraldic fashion.

As we roll along, the scene begins to lose its sylvan character, and the bare green hills, dotted with sheep and cattle, give proof of rich pasturage; of milk, of butter, of wool, and of hides. The little shallow stream, that so frequently glimmers in the sunshine as we pass, and which in winter claims to be and acts the part of a veritable mountain torrent, is the Gala, renowned in Scottish song for "the braw lads that live upon its braes, and that tread o'er the moss among the heather," when they go a wooing the equally braw lasses. The song is of no merit; even Robert Burns could make nothing of it in the way of improvement; but the air to which it is wedded is divine, and particularly took the fancy of the great composer Haydn, who wrote upon a copy of it, in his imperfect English, "This is one Dr. Haydn favourite song." The Gala runs a very tortuous course, meandering almost as capriciously as the Forth, and after feeding the busy cloth mills of the thriving town of Galashiels, discharges itself into the Tweed near Abbotsford. The vale of the Gala was formerly called Woedale, or the Vale of Woe, in modern times corrupted into Wedale. Stow-in-Wedale is the name of a village near the boundary line between Selkirkshire and the Lothians, which was formerly the residence of the bishops and archbishops of St. Andrews, in the days before Scotland abjured prelacy. Beyond Stow is the pleasant castle on the hill, called Torsonce, from the Gaelic Tor-sonas, the "tower of good luck."

As we approach Galashiels the face of

the country shows more and more the traces of wealth and comfort, and Galashiels itself, with its tall chimneys, or "lang lums," explains at a glance that a prosperous manufacture is carried on in this cosy nest among the hills. Here upwards of a million of pounds of wool are annually converted into the beautiful fabric known to trade as "Tweeds," for men's attire, and into tartan and other shawls, rivalling those of Paisley, for the comfort and adornment of the ladies, not only of Scotland, but of every part of the civilised world. There is a population of between six thousand and seven thousand, continually increasing. Most of the mills are worked by the abundant water-power afforded by the Gala, and a few remote from the river by steam. Manufacturing towns are seldom picturesque; but Galashiels is a notable exception.

At Bridgend, below Galashiels, runs down into the Gala a burn, which ought to be dear to all lovers of romance, who remember the adventures of Father Philip with the White Lady of Avenel. The burn is the scene of that famous, but to Father Philip most bewildering chant, Merrily swim we, the Moon shines bright. From this point we soon rattle into Melrose, which Scott's genius has converted into a kind of Mecca for his literary worshippers. As we are of the number for the nonce, we look with becoming reverence upon the shrine, and sally forth, duly refreshed, to make our pilgrimage. There is little of note in Melrose itself, the Kennaquhair, or Don't know Where, of the novel; but the Abbey, per se, were there nothing beside to visit, would be worth a long journey to any pilgrim of the right sort, with the proper amount of antiquarian and poetical lore to excite his imagination and his memory. Sir Walter has recorded, in a well-known passage, that any one who would "visit fair Melrose aright, should visit it by the pale moonlight," a recommendation which, according to the old senechal or guide who did the honours of Melrose thirty years ago, and long before the advent of the bonnie lassie who now fills his place, he did not himself think worthy of observance. "Sir Walter," he used to say, "never visited Melrose by moonlight, unless it were the outside of it. I can testify that he never got in, for I had the keys, and he never either asked for them or had them." But that signifies nothing. Genius is not obliged to look at everything which it portrays; and if it cannot invent,

or see what might be, and what is, without looking at it, it is not genius at all, but handicraft and workmanship—mere manufacture, without an inner and living spirit. Melrose Abbey, where the monks made and ate good kale, “on Fridays when they fasted,” and who never were at a loss for good wine and ale, as long as their neighbours had any which they could beg, borrow, or steal, has so often been described, as to render it difficult for any new foot to go over the well-worn ground, and find a novelty. What impressed me most amid the beauties of the symmetrical ruin (pity that men’s evil passions should make ruins of such places, before time and “decay’s effacing fingers,” are ready for the work), was the fragment of stone over the spot where was, and some say is, deposited the heart of the great Robert Bruce;—next to Wallace, the hero most heroic in all the magnificent muster-roll of the worthies of Scotland. There is nothing to guard the spot from the foot of the passing traveller, nothing even to draw his attention to the place; no “siste viator, heroem calcas!” inscribed upon the wall, or elsewhere, to warn him not to desecrate the dust of the great departed. The body of Bruce is buried in the church of Dunfermline; the whole church is his monument, with its beautiful square tower, and the words, “Robert Bruce, King of Scotland,” tastefully intermingled with the delicate stone tracery at the top; but the heart found a resting-place here in Melrose Abbey, when the attempt of Sir James Douglas to transport, it to the Holy Land was interrupted, and, for all that any one appears to know to the contrary, prevented. The guide-books say, “that here was deposited, in its final resting-place, the heart of Robert Bruce, brought back from Spain by Sir William Keith, after the ineffectual attempt made by James, Lord Douglas, to carry it to Jerusalem.” Scott says that Bruce’s heart, “the flower, the soul of Bannockburn,”

Beneath that ugly, shapeless stone,
Unhonoured, nameless, lies alone.

Is this the fact? If it be, it is surely not honourable to Scotland that “an ugly, shapeless stone,” as Sir Walter truly calls it, without a fence or protection of any kind, and without the slightest inscription to attract the attention of the tourist and the traveller to the spot, should remain subject to the wear and tear of the feet of the irreverent, the unthinking, or the ignorant.

It has for three centuries and upwards

been the fashion to underrate the services rendered to humanity and civilisation in the lawless middle ages by the monks, to laugh at their superabundant love of good cheer, to sneer at their hypocritical pretence of virtue and sobriety, and to represent them as the lazy drones who lived upon the hard work of better people. But all this is wrong. The monks were not lazy. They wrought hard; were good farmers, good gardeners, good shepherds, good brewers, good vintagers, good artists, good architects, ripe scholars, and, in the main, devoted the wealth which their astuteness and rapacity may have first acquired, but which their skill and industry developed and augmented, to very noble purposes. They fed the hungry, they clad the naked, they sheltered the homeless, they held their heads high in the presence of the great and mighty of the earth, and taught them that “a man was a man for a’ that,” and that the poorest and the meanest were the children of the Church and of God, as much as the wealthiest and haughtiest, and dared them, on penalty of future wrath in this world and in the next, to act the part of wolves and worry the sheep-folds of the Almighty. I who write am no Romanist, no upholder of the faith, as interpreted by the venerable pope and his cardinals, who dwell, or recently dwelt, at Rome; but I am Catholic enough, in a wider and a nobler sense of the word, to admit with gratitude the immense good that was done, when such good was sorely needed, by the monks of the middle ages. Every monastery in those days was an oasis of peace in a desert of savagery. There may have been human passions and human frailties at work in the oases—and where are they ever quiescent but in the tomb?—but all the play and fermentation of the passions, violent as they may (or as they may not) have been, were subordinated to the great task which the monks set themselves of succouring the poor, refining the manners and improving the behaviour of the rich, and in keeping alight the lamp, not alone of the Gospel, as they understood it, but the lesser lamp of secular learning. They performed, to a great extent, the part now performed by the press in the days when there was no press; and for that alone they merit the respectful, if not the grateful, mention of posterity.

From Melrose to Abbotsford is a short drive of two miles, and we take in our way the old Border town or Peel of Darnick, which has been in the possession of the family of the Heitons for four hundred

years. It is almost, if not the very last of its compeers, and in a perfect state of preservation. The old Border chieftains built for security rather than for ease; and Darnick Peel has lost its security—which no one in our day would endanger—and has gained in comfort by the modernisation of some of its apartments. But the modernisation has not been carried so far as to destroy the old characteristics of the feudal period; and the Heitons of to-day can dine in the same banqueting-hall which sufficed for their ancestors, without rushing, like Border warriors and reivers in old days, to the Border and beyond it, in search of the fat cattle and sheep of the Englishers. The new lairds of Darnick—new, though of the old race—pay their butchers' bills, and their good wives no longer serve up a pair of spurs as the dish of honour at the table, to tell them that the larder is empty, and that they must boot and saddle, and away into Northumberland, before she can serve them another dinner. Darnick tower is for the present in good and reverential hands, and remains an almost unique specimen of a civilisation—if such it can be called—that has long since passed away.

The Tweed, as we approach Abbotsford, is neither very wide nor very deep. But this is a summer fact, that ceases to be a fact, when the wintry rains make havoc on its bed and banks. At such times it runs, not only a deep and broad, but a very rapid and, as the Scotch would say, "a drumly" river. The Tweed, as everybody ought to know, forms, but for a very few miles of its course, the boundary between England and Scotland; and at Abbotsford it is no boundary at all. There are parts of Scotland south as well as north of the Tweed, so that a man may be born on what is called the English side of that river without being an Englishman at all. The first view of Abbotsford is not cheerful. It lies low upon the river bank, and receives as little of the genial sunshine as if the situation of the house had been expressly chosen to exclude it. Abbotsford has been called "a romance in stone and lime;" but the romance lies in its history, and that of the great man who built and furnished it, and all but ruined himself in the effort, rather than in itself, or in any beauty connected with it. The original name of the farm and the lands adjoining, for which Scott gave a price far beyond the value, was Cartley Hole. It was a bare place at the best; and at the time of his death there was not a tree

growing upon it that he himself had not planted. The woods are now thriving and luxuriant, and Abbotsford sleeps in a shady nest, somewhat gloomy and disappointing, it must be confessed, when seen from the exterior, but warm and snug within, and full of tender and ennobling memories of its founder.

The interior of Abbotsford is an interesting but a mournful sight; and most mournful of all, the study where his teeming brain, his gentle heart, and his industrious hand produced his best novels; the laboratory of the literary alchemist, where he turned inferior metal into gold; the sanctum of a genius as copious as it was beneficent. Here is the cosy arm-chair in which he sat, here are the books of reference which he consulted, the pictures on the wall on which his eyes were accustomed to dwell, and more mournful than all, because to some extent painful (at least they were so to me), the clothes and the hat that he usually wore, still as fresh as in the time—fifty years ago, or nearly—when, his literary work done for the day, he received his friends at luncheon, or roamed through the comparative wilderness, which it was his dearest wish to convert into an earthly paradise. I desired to sit in the great novelist's chair; but the attendant who showed the rooms, a buxom and well-behaved Scottish lass, politely but very firmly refused permission, on the ground that she had been expressly forbidden to grant the privilege to anybody. "The chair," she said, "would soon be worn out, if every one who came here was allowed to sit in it." I respected her orders, but I sat in the chair nevertheless, not simply with the consent and approval, but at the request of the owner of Abbotsford, and the present representative of Sir Walter. Our party enjoyed, moreover, the additional privilege of inspecting many interesting and valuable relics of the departed, which are kept carefully under lock and key, and are not shown to the mass of tourists. For this courtesy I was thankful then—and am thankful now—and carried away from the place a more grateful sense of the benignity of Scott's genius, and a higher respect for his character, than I entertained when I first entered, though even then it would have been difficult to persuade me that my admiration could have been increased, or my love made greater.

For some time before approaching Melrose or Abbotsford, the Eildon Hills, with their picturesque triple summits, have been in sight. These hills are associated

with the name of another Scott and another "Wizard of the North," a wizard supposed to have been one in the literal rather than in the complimentary acceptance of the word. Every reader of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and of Scottish legendary poetry, is familiar with the traditional character of Michael, or Sir Michael Scott, who was really one of the most learned men of the thirteenth century, much too learned for the comprehension of his vulgar countrymen, or of any of his contemporaries, except the monks of Melrose. One of these monks, it may be remembered, tells Sir William of Deloraine, that it was his fortune in a far foreign clime to meet "that wondrous wizard," who by a wave of his wand at Salamanca, could cause the bells to ring in the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris, and who, moreover, had taught him the mystic words by which he was enabled to cleave the Eildon Hills in three, which words to repeat would be a fearful sin, and which, even to think of, without repeating, required a treble penance. The tradition of the country records that Sir Michael was once upon a time much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment, under the penalty of being torn to pieces by him. He commanded him to build a cauld, or dam-head, across the Tweed at Kelso. The job was accomplished in one night; and still remains, says Sir Walter, to do honour to the skill of its infernal architect. Sir Michael next ordered the pertinacious and over-industrious fiend to split the highest summit of the Eildon Hill into three peaks. This work he also performed in one night in the deftest manner. The wizard was for a moment puzzled by the perilous zeal of his servitor. "Make me a mile of rope out of the sea-sand," he said at last; and the demon set to work forthwith, and remained working at the impossible task to the end of Sir Michael's life, thus adding another to the many existing proofs in song and story, that it is, as Coleridge says, "very easy to circumvent the devil." Sir Michael was an astronomer, and like most of the students of the stars in his day, an astrologer also; which explains the reason why the appellation of a wizard was fastened upon him. One tradition records that he and his magic books are buried in Melrose Abbey; another, that he was interred in Cumberland.

Among the spots celebrated in Scottish romance in the near vicinity of Abbotsford and Melrose, are "Cowden Knowes," and

"Ercildoune," where lived Thomas the Rhymer. Every Scottish lad and lass used to know, and many of them to sing, the tender pastoral song, Oh, the Broom, the Broom, the bonnie bonnie Broom, the broom of the Cowden Knowes; but in our time, the more's the pity, Scottish songs have grown somewhat obsolete, except among the peasantry, in whose hearts and on whose lips they still flourish. Thomas the Rhymer appears to have been a contemporary of Sir Michael Scott, and his name, after the lapse of more than five hundred years, is still mentioned with veneration by his countrymen. He was known both as a prophet and a poet, which in fact all true poets are and ought to be. His poetry has gone down into oblivion: but some of his prophecies, quoted by later writers, and preserved in tradition among the country people, are still current. Ercildoune, or Earlstoun, is a little village on the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. "The popular tale of the neighbourhood relates," says Sir Walter in a note to his contributions to the *Border Minstrelsy*, "that Thomas was carried off at an early age to Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge which afterwards made him famous. After seven years' residence he was permitted to return to the earth to enlighten and astonish the world by his prophetic powers; still, however, being bound to return to his royal mistress (the Queen of the Fairies), whenever she should intimate her pleasure. Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends in the Tower of Ercildoune, a person came running in with fear and astonishment, and told that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were composedly and slowly parading the street of the village. The poet arose instantly, and followed the animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. According to the popular belief he still 'drees his weird' (undergoes his doom) in Fairy Land, and is expected, at some future day, to revisit the earth."

THE OMNIBUS DINNER.

It does not seem a very opportune time now to talk of Paris and dining in the same breath. Nevertheless, I, an old habitué of Paris, relegated by the exigencies of a state of siege to this side of the Channel, cannot help wondering—as I sit in London dining-rooms, and see mountainous

joints of all kinds wheeled in colossal state from table to table, and served out with a bounteous carving-knife, as though the supply of beef and mutton were illimitable—what sort of repast is now being served up at the various places of prandial resort which I was wont at one time or another to frequent in the French metropolis; for there are few kinds of them which I have not visited at one time or another. A suspicion of horseflesh always haunted me, perhaps unjustly, at some of the cheaper restaurants in Paris; but that suspicion must now be turned into stern reality, not only at these, but at such places as Vachette's and Vefours, and what may be the state of mind of the chefs de cuisine at the high-priced restaurants in Paris is really a curious subject for speculation. How do they take the siege? Do they take to the cooking of horseflesh in ragoûts, emincés, and cheval à la mode without a tinge of disgust? Does patriotism spur in them the genius of invention to unprecedented efforts of ingenuity, and enable them to astound their accustomed and besieged diners with new triumphs of the culinary art over rebellious materials; and will they, as the siege progresses, and as the unhappy inhabitants are obliged to descend to still lower orders of quadrupeds, frightful to enumerate, continue to deliver desperate battle with all the resources of Ude and Vattel, and their own to boot, against the ungrateful viands, and extend to unheard-of limits the conquests of the casserole? Every one has heard of the delicious sauce of legendary fame whose eulogies a Frenchman pronounced in saying "*avec cette sauce on mangerait son propre père,*" and it may be that some inventive genius of the white cap, jacket, and apron may produce a sauce with which we might eat anything except the granite of the Parisian quays and bridges. In the siege of Paris by Henry the Fourth, leather became at last an object eagerly sought for comestible purposes, and it may, alas! be so again; and, if such be the case, as the supply of ready-made boots and shoes in Paris always seemed to be immeasurable, there will be an immense deal of work both for cook and client before they get through the store in hand. Fancy dining at the *Café Anglais* off *cuir de Russie* à la sauce Tartare, or a *bottine en chevreau* sauce piquante! And the countless restaurants at two francs at the *Palais Royal*, how do they endure the siege? It was only possible for them to keep up their establishments, even in ordinary

times, by early attendance at the halles, and by buying en masse large heaps of supplies from the provinces. What are they doing at the innumerable *crémeries* and *laiteries*, which used to be found in every street in Paris, and where the workman could get his bowl of *café au lait* and his hunch of bread in the morning for about four sous? All the newspaper correspondents have yet told us about the distribution of food in Paris during the siege relates to the well-to-do people who can pay for their viands, even at the advanced prices; but how fares it with the artisan of the *Faubourg Saint Antoine* and *La Villette*, whose work is stopped, and who has no money to go to market with?

In the siege we have before mentioned—that of Paris by Henry the Fourth—huge caldrons were established in the streets, from which the poor came and got helped indiscriminately to the broth and the substances of which it was made. The broth was made of beef first of all; when the beef was used up they descended to horseflesh; when the horses were used up they descended to asses; and when the asses were used up, they came down, not only to dogs and cats, but to vermin of all kinds, stewed down with such herbs as were to be gathered about the ramparts and in the streets. Then they made broth of tallow-grease and leather, as we said, new and old; but even then the broth grew thinner and thinner, and of course more nauseous every day, till at last the poor were found dying about the streets, one hundred, one hundred and fifty, and two hundred at a time. Yet it may be said that never were the inhabitants of any city ever put upon short allowance, who so well knew how to make the most of what they had as the Parisians. Some of the results of their dexterous management in this way have often appeared to me marvellous, and after paying we always had a sense of having dined gratuitously at the expense of our host. On looking back over my past experiences in this line, none ever struck me as more remarkable than those I occasionally made at certain dining-places in Paris which we will call, for the sake of distinction, the "*omnibus dinner*," and to one of which I once introduced my friend Featherwing.

Featherwing and I had made various gastronomic explorations in Paris, but we had never yet explored the omnibus dinners together. We had investigated the hazard à la *fourchette*, where you dig with a big

fork into a pot, and bring out what you can with one dive for a sou, and bestowed the results of our winnings on little gamins, waiting outside the door. We had even once really dined, among a mass of blouses, at a place where a big man with his shirt-sleeves turned up, and with bare arms, wielded by turns the fork and the knife and the ladle, over a large row of bright smoking saucepans before him, and exhorted his customers to the attack of his viands with the cries: "Il y à du bœuf, messieurs, Il y du mouton rôti, il y à des haricots blancs, et messieurs il y à du maccar-r-r-oni." We had dined more than once at Duval's Etablissements de Bouillon, where you dine on little marble tables without tablecloths, and where you are waited upon by trim serving-maids in uniforms of clean white caps, clean aprons, and brown stuff dresses; where the soup is excellent, and the food plain and good; and where you may dine for about thirty sous if your appetite be small; but where, alas! if it be large, your dinner will cost you as much as at a moderately high-priced restaurant. We had dined together at pretty nearly all the restaurants à prix fixe; and as for all the restaurants of the Boulevards and the Palais Royal, we had dined at the greater part of these until we knew the Christian names of all the waiters, and the proprietor would sometimes shake us by the hand. Well, to-day our fate was to go together for an omnibus dinner.

Why do I call it the "omnibus dinner?" for this is a private appellation of my own, the dinner in question being known by the name of Maison Sophie, Maison-Blond, &c., in the Rue de Mail, Faubourg Montmartre, and other places. This fancy term came into the head of a friend of mine who happened to go with me to one of them, and is apt enough, as the dining takes place at a number of tables in a large room, all of the same size, and all laid out in the same way. The guests drop in one by one, or by twos and threes, in desultory fashion, at any time between about half-past five and eight, and take their places at any of the tables until it is filled up. And when it is complete, gastronomic motion commences for that table, just as an omnibus starts when it is full. The stream of incoming diners continues to flow in, and to go on filling tables two, three, four, five, and six, till all are complete, and each table starts as soon as its places are all occupied. As soon as table number one has come to an end of its dining process, the diners get

up and leave, and a band of handy maidens come swiftly down upon it, remove plates, and dishes, and napkins, and all signs of the finished repast, and in the twinkling of an eye table number one stands forth arrayed again in snowy linen, and provided with fresh napkins, clean plates, clean knives and forks, and spoons. The baskets of bread are replenished, one fresh pint bottle of red wine is put down by each plate, the hors d'œuvres, radishes, olives, cucumbers, &c., are renewed, and table number one wears again a virgin aspect for a few moments, as though it had been innocent of diners as yet for the day.

When Featherwing and I entered on this occasion, a lady, who decidedly ought to command a very high figure in the way of remuneration on any stage where a walking duchess may be required, bowed us a welcome, and conducted us elegantly to table number three, which was in process of filling up. Table number one, I observed, was busily engaged with the rôti, while table number two was well on with its vegetables. Our arrival at table number three was evidently a relief to a gentleman in front of whom we took our places—a faint gleam of satisfaction, as of summer lightning, ran over his features; he was manifestly a-hungered, and wanted to begin. I think he noticed my eye upon him, however, for when the next addition was made to our party, he took a paper out of his pocket and tried to read, as though the matter did not affect him. However, his affectation of unconcern did not last long, for, before the next arrival, he dropped his paper, leaned forward and bravely took some radishes and eat them, looking us in the face. His movement was contagious, and single assaults were made on the hors d'œuvres at other parts of the table, till such time as table number three was complete. A neat-handed Phyllis came and surveyed us, just like an omnibus conductor does his insides; she saw we were complete, then retired towards the kitchen regions, and reappeared like an Angel of Plenty, bearing, not a cornucopia, but a soup tureen in her hands. Our Angel of Plenty had a Grecian profile, with blue eyes, and blonde hair, turned back something after the fashion of old Greek statues. She put down the tureen at a vacant place at the side and in the middle of the table, which is reserved between two chairs for the dispensing of the viands, and then said interrogatively to Featherwing, who happened to be next her, "Monsieur,

foulez-vous du botage?" Featherwing, an impudent fellow, replied at once, "Un ben, Mademoiselle Gretchen, s'il fous plait."

"Alsace, of course," he said to me. "I see half the serving-girls here are Alsatians, and most likely all Gretchens."

Gretchen showed some white teeth as she passed Featherwing his soup, and showed still more of them as Featherwing whispered something to her in a confidential tone; but Gretchen was too much bent upon business to listen to Featherwing's nonsense; she passed the soup right and left, and over the way, sometimes dodging behind the chairs and plumping down the soup before you, then back to the ladle and the tureen, till the tureen was a mere "marine" of a soup tureen, and then she caught it up and took it away, not, however, without saying, before she left, "Messieurs, foulez-vous encore du botage," and not without giving a look at Featherwing, with a grasp at the ladle, as though she would like to hit him with it, but not very hard.

"They put the girls on for the soup, and the vegetables, and the dessert," I said to Featherwing, "but the proprietor himself carves the bœuf and the rôti. Here's the bœuf brought by another damsel. I hope you like bœuf in the pot au feu form—the pot au feu, you know——"

"Stop," said Featherwing. "I know what you are going to say. What choucroute and sausages are to the German, what the puchero is to the Spaniard, what the polenta is to the Milanese, what macaroni is to the Neapolitan, what the couscousou is to the Arab, is the pot au feu to the Frenchman."

"I wasn't going to say all that," I replied. "I was merely going to say it is the French national dish."

"And a very good dish it is, too," said Featherwing. "And as for economy, why it is the cheapest thing going. I'd back myself, too, to make pot au feu against anybody but a Norman paysanne. Ah, if our people knew how to make it, they'd save a lot of money; but it isn't so easy to make as you think."

"No," I said, "the true pot au feu is the product of a whole day's care and watchfulness on the part of a good housewife. She must begin early in the morning by slicing her vegetables, which——"

"Come" he said, "you are going to give me an article by Timothy Trim, in the *Petit Journal*, on the pot au feu. I know it; but the great secret is, as he says, never——"

"To let it boil," I said.

"Confound it," he said, "leave the pot au feu to me, it is my property. I have half a mind to make myself the apostle of the pot au feu among our people, who are still heathens in the way of cookery, with their barbarous broilings, and bakings, and roastings, and dropping half their food in the fire, or steaming it out in ovens. I often think of buying a saucepan and a big knife and a ladle, going about in a cook's white cap and apron and jacket, and giving lectures during the summer months on all the village greens in England by turns—lectures on or over the pot au feu."

"Do it, Featherwing," I said, "and the idlest man of his age may do his country more service than half a parliament of busybodies."

By this time the bouilli was placed before us, and, after a gustatory essay, Featherwing's verdict was, "Not so bad." When the next course came on, which consisted of vegetables, sorrel with hard-boiled eggs, and asparagus, the sorrel gave Featherwing another opportunity of dilating on the benighted state of the British mind with respect to cooking.

"Sorrel," said Featherwing, "with an œuf à la coq hard boiled, beaten up like this, is a dish which I really believe has never yet been eaten in England; and as for mussels—why, when I asked Bloker one day, the stockbroker's son, to try them at Vachette's, he shuddered as if I had asked him to try a dish of lobworms! I, however, insisted on having them for myself, and tried to coax Bloker to try one on the end of a fork, but he turned pale, so I was obliged nearly to finish the whole dish myself, to prove to him that I liked them, but I fear the example was lost upon him."

After this came on the rôti, filet de bœuf or mutton, carved from the joints before us, with crisp, clean, well-dressed salad of endive and lettuce. The salad gave Featherwing another opportunity of touching on the merits of mallows and dandelion, unknown, he averred, in the form of salad, to the English public. When the rôti was disposed of, a dark-haired, pretty-looking girl, whom one or two habitués of the place addressed as Justine, placed the dessert on the table. There were bowls of strawberries, cream, preserves of cherries, apricots, and cheese. While Justine dispensed these dainties, the mistress of the house came round and collected the fares.

"How much?" said Featherwing.

"Thirty-six sous," said I.

"What, wine included?"

"Yes."

"Why, it is just eighteen-pence. Well, I do believe you could not dine so well anywhere else in Europe for the money?"

"And yet," said I, "they say they make more money at these places than at the high-priced restaurants. It is the number."

"And the management," he added.

As we went out we observed the tenants of tables one and two had been entirely replaced since we came in; and tables four, five, and six, and others, were all full, while the deck was being rapidly cleared at the scene of our operations. A bow from the duchess, and we go down-stairs.

Such was the omnibus dinner! How has it fared during the siege?

MARKED FOR THE KNIFE.

ABOUT two years before the startling revelations respecting the dissecting trade in Edinburgh had placed the legal supply of "subjects" upon its present satisfactory footing, there occurred to my elder brother, at that time a delicate boy of about fourteen, a singular adventure, involving such a shock to his nerves as, the doctors believed, very much hastened his death, which occurred in less than a year after it.

We then resided in a large white house, with a row of poplars in front, close to one of our canals. Within a stone's throw of our hall-door was a lock and a lock-house, and then followed, in the London direction, one of the longest and most solitary levels to be met with in the United Kingdom.

The canal, at a point about seventy yards from the lock, makes a slight deflection. The consequence is, that neither the lock nor our house are visible from the long, straight level that follows, and which is closely fenced between tall hedges and old trees.

My brother had been ordered walking exercise, and my father generally appointed for his walk. The traffic, never very active, was, at that time, in a state little better than extinct. Not more than two or three boats passed in a day, and chiefly owing to its perfect quietude it had been chosen for the walk of our solitary invalid.

It was now summer, and the hour of his daily walk was from five to seven; the earlier hours of the afternoon being pronounced too hot for exercise.

On the evening in question, he set out alone. His usual walk was to a point two miles up the level, where there was a stone block, on which he used to sit and rest a little before setting out for home.

While he was taking his ease on this stone bench, and listlessly looking up and down the long and deserted reach of water, there emerged, a few hundred yards to his left, from a sequestered path, a singular figure, which approached slowly and passed him by, with only the narrow tow-path between them. It was moving in the direction of our home, and was that of an emaciated man, with a complexion dark as very old box-wood, limping, as it seemed, painfully, very much stooped, and with a big angular hump upon his back. His hair was long and sooty black, he had prominent dark eyes, under thick black brows, and his face and chin were stubbled with a week's growth of beard. He was leaning heavily on a long stick, and walked with a kind of hitch, which resembled a spasm, and gave one the idea that each step was accompanied by a separate sting of pain.

The face of this man expressed extreme weakness and suffering, and might almost be that of a man dragging himself away, with a mortal wound, to some spot where he might lie down and die in quiet.

He had a long and heavy bottle-green coat, which had grown to be, indeed, a coat of many colours, for over the threadbare and greasy ground it was overlaid, with fantastic and extraordinary industry, with a tessellation of patches, of every imaginable colour, in which yellow, and red, and blue, and black were discernible, under a varnish of grease, and toned with a variety of dirt; and even these patches were patched again, and had broken here and there into rents and fissures, and bunches of shreds and tatters. Round his body was buckled a broad discoloured leathern strap, and he wore a wide-leaved felt hat, with a rather conical crown, brown and grimed by time and ill-treatment.

This figure, with long gaiters of rabbit-skin, and shapeless "brogues," limped past my brother without taking the slightest notice of him, and uttering now and then a short groan, as if of suppressed pain, he excited the wonder, and in some degree the compassion of the boy.

He watched the progress of this man, who was moving with great difficulty, and with many halts, in the direction of our home. It was not until he had got on

nearly a quarter of a mile, that my brother got up, now quite rested, to follow in the same direction.

As this strange, crooked man with the stick got on, he appeared to grow more and more exhausted, and at length he tottered into a little recess at the edge of the path, and fell helplessly on his side among the bushes.

The boy quickened his pace, and as he approached the spot, he passed the head of a narrow lane, in which he saw a donkey and cart standing. The cart had in it, upon some straw, a piece of old carpet, from under which emerged some folds of coarse canvas, like a part of an old sack, but he could not see any one in charge of this conveyance, though, being anxious to obtain help, he called repeatedly.

Despairing of succour, he went on, and reached the point where he had seen the man fall. Here he found him. He had crept a little further in among the bushes. He was supporting himself feebly on the ground upon his elbow, his eyes turned up as if he were on the point of swooning, and he moaned faintly.

The boy's courage almost failed him; but the sick man seemed to perceive him, turned his eyes upon him imploringly, and extending his hand toward him, so evidently signalled for aid, that my brother could not help drawing near.

The fainting man then told him, in a whisper, that if he would take his hand and draw him gently toward him, he would perhaps be able to turn himself a little, to his great relief.

My brother did give him his hand accordingly, and the fainting man, instead of taking it, seized his arm above the elbow, with a gigantic hand, in a grip like a vice, and jerking him under, sprang over him, thrusting his other arm round and beneath him, so as to pinion him fast. He had carried in his hand the end of the belt which he had removed from around his own body while waiting for his prey, and with a dexterity acquired, no doubt, by long practice, in a moment, with the now disengaged hand, he drew it and buckled it round the boy's arms and body at a single jerk, with a pressure so powerful that he could scarcely breathe, much less disengage his arms.

In another moment, with his knee on the boy's chest, and one broad hand placed right across his mouth so as to stifle his screams effectually, he hitched round what had seemed to be his hump,

but what proved to be, in fact, a bundle, from which, with the other hand, he took out, with the quickness and neatness of a skilled manipulator, two things; one a sort of cushion about eight inches square, covered with chamois-leather—I have that horrible relic, no doubt intended to aid in the process of suffocation, still in my possession—the other was the renowned pitch-plaster.

My brother had not an idea what he intended, for the disclosures in Edinburgh had not yet enlightened and terrified people of all ages throughout England.

The miscreant kept his face close to his victim's, with his powerful eyes fixed on his. His dark lean features and long beak, and the thick hair that hung forward like a sooty plumage round it, and the long sinewy neck that arched over my poor brother as he lay at his assailant's mercy, gave him, in the fascinated gaze of the boy, the appearance of a monstrous bird of prey.

I dare say this ghoul had an actual power, such as many men are said to possess, of controlling the springs of action, mental and bodily, by some occult power of the eye. To my brother it seemed that it needed a perpetual and desperate struggle of will to prevent a frightful trance from stealing over him.

For a moment the wretch's hand was slightly raised from the boy's mouth. He intended no doubt at this instant to introduce the pitch-plaster, which was to stop both mouth and nostrils. But my brother, now struggling frantically, uttered two piercing yells, which compelled the murderer to replace his hand before he had accomplished his purpose. He was evidently now transported with fury. Up to this he had been operating as methodically as a spider. He looked so fiendish that my brother fancied he would cut his throat, or otherwise despatch him at the moment.

His plans, however, were different. He had no idea of losing sight of his interests, much less of his safety. No principle of his nefarious trade was better established than the absolute necessity of leaving no trace of actual violence upon the persons of his victims. Even the knee with which he held his prey was padded so carefully, that this young boy's breast did not exhibit the slightest contusion, although for so long under a pressure which held him at the verge of suffocation.

Rapidly, and with more success, the villain again essayed his final sleight. One dreadful yell escaped, and the deadly pitch-plaster was fixed on mouth and nose, and

another sound or respiration became impossible.

The leafy bushes above and about him, the figure, the face of the spectre, began to swim before his eyes. He saw the man, still on his knees, rise with a start and pause, with eyes askance, and his dark hand to his ear. In the next instant he had disappeared.

In his struggles the boy now rolled from the lair in which he had been attacked into the clear light upon the open path, where he lay perfectly insensible.

When consciousness returned, which was not for some minutes, three men were about him, drenching his head with water, and all endeavouring to extract a word of explanation, but for long after he could not speak a syllable, nor, for some time, even hear distinctly what they said.

Not a moment was lost, so soon as he was able to describe what had happened, in directing pursuit, wherever any results were the least likely. All my brother could say as to the point towards which the assassin had directed his flight was that, as his sight failed, he thought, though very indistinctly, he saw him pass away obliquely in the direction of the lane in which he had observed the donkey-cart.

It must have belonged to an accomplice, who was there by arrangement. Everything had been prepared to carry away the body of the poor fellow, which would have been secured in the sack, enveloped in the carpet, and covered with straw, and thus secreted in some lonely lock-up yard, until, at dead of night, it would have been conveyed to the dissecting-room. The boy's hat thrown upon the water would have turned inquiry off the scent, and induced delay.

The strap, still buckled with cruel force about the poor fellow's arms and ribs, the chamois cushion I have mentioned, and the pitch-plaster fixed over the lower part of his face, were the only "properties" of the villain left to indicate his visit.

The cool old assassin had carried off every other trace of his presence, and he and his comrade, taking the donkey-cart with them, had decamped with a celerity, and managed their disguise with an art which, as matters then were, and with a full hour's start, had baffled pursuit.

No doubt with the police force now at our

command, the result might have been different. As it was, no clue whatever was discovered; and this was positively marvellous, considering the marked peculiarities of dress and of person that belonged to the culprit. The persons best acquainted with the ways of our criminals at that period were of opinion that the strange details of the dress, the gait, the hair, the complexion, and the distortion of the figure, were parts of an elaborate piece of masquerading.

There was some controversy as to the object of the projected crime. It was not until the terrific exposure at Edinburgh had made all the world horribly familiar with the machinery of that peculiar species of murder that all debate upon the matter ceased, and the pitch-plaster was accepted as conclusive evidence that the body was intended for sale to the surgeons.

No doubt these poachers on a great scale were thoroughly skilled in all the finesse and strategy of their contraband art. The regularity of my poor brother's solitary walk, its favourable hour, and the easy suggestion of drowning as the cause of his disappearance, had all been noted, and the enterprise was, as I have told you, very nearly accomplished, when an unexpected interruption saved him.

My brother was ailing at the time this dreadful attempt was made upon his life. He survived it little more than ten months, and the able physician who attended him referred his death to the awful shock which his system had received.

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