

THE EVENING NEWS.

Saturday, June 1, 1872.

THE ENGLISH AT HOME.

This representative man, the squire, was simple, frank, blunt, hospitable, with virile mind and body. He was public-spirited, read the "Times" every day, personally interested in his own farms, was director in neighboring companies, and knocked about in an active way for several hours, which worked off the bulky nourishment and heavy draughts of old port. Besides, a sword of Damocles hung over his toes and stimulated him to this exercise, for he was afraid of the gout.

There was a calm, glib satisfaction in the performance of his religious duties, and then he had discovered all the shadows and overlooked much of the sunshine. The Americans have the same trait, inherited from English fathers. These soul-troubles have ever afflicted the race since it attained to anything like civilization. Whatever our system of theology may be, we are sure to find its thorns, while the Latins as easily find its flowers. The Catholic Church, for example, in France and Italy, from an aesthetic point of view, is attractive; in England it becomes austere and bare in comparison.

The heavy feeding of the squire made his mind slower in its operations, but it does not follow that they were less thorough than those of the nervous American. There is the broad difference in the British, which extends prolonged over life. Weak health and weak stomachs are sorry breeding for a vigorous brain. The Englishman may beat about in superfluous strokes before accomplishing his object, but will give a more massive supply of ale and porter, the massive joint, and the singular combination of stout Lancashire ale peculiar to England, a republican monarchy or a monarchized republic, plenty of out-door exercise, personal contact with the horse, his newspaper, his fireside, and his religion, and he is as happy as a man of this kind may be.

Another house, which I was an inmate of, was a day's ride further from London than the former, situated in a beautiful, rolling country. Its occupants were higher in the social scale than those of the other household. They had a town-house in the West End of London, and another in the castle-circles of that quarter. They had lived in most of the capitals of Europe, were well-mannered and familiar with current events, spoke good English, and one or two other languages with reasonable facility. Besides myself were nine or ten guests, whose acquaintance I made so quickly as if we had been brothers. The chief and likeliest way of taking a stranger into the confidence of the household, is one of the most agreeable features of English country life.

The family consisted of an elderly lady and her daughters. At nine o'clock of the morning a bell-bell was rung, which was a summons to religious service conducted in a great hall, where the matron stood at one end, on one side, the family and guests, or those of them who were up, in a row; and on the other side in a similar row, the servants. All were provided with the prayer-book of the Established Church as they came in, and the matron read the service, to which the response were distinctly made. Not more than half of the guests were usually at this service, while not taken omis, independence being regarded as one of the guest's chief rights. At half-past nine the major part of the household were at breakfast. After breakfast, the servants retired without exception. The women poured tea and coffee for the men, and each helped himself as he pleased. The men carved meats at the sideboard for the tea-pourers and themselves, which gave to the repast the air of a family meal. The absence of servants allowed the company to be free and intimate, which was evidently the object in dispensing with them.

After breakfast there was general lounging. No apparent effort was made to amuse the guests, who enjoy the freedom of hotel life without its publicity. At eleven the letters and newspapers were delivered in the drawing-room, when the society occupied itself in writing letters. There was a well-selected library of five thousand volumes, to which, with others, I often repaired to while away a half hour. Besides this, packages occasionally arrived from Mudie's, containing the latest books. The men were garbed in easy morning dress, their coats and knickerbockers instead of trousers, their feet encased in stout leather-strung shoes; the women in simple robes, their heads covered with flats. During the hour following breakfast there was polite badinage and a little flirtation, as the members of this colony sauntered about the veranda or leaned against its columns.

One or two, lunch, at which were discussed the projects of the day. Rides on horseback or in carriages, fishing parties, shooting excursions, or walks, usually followed the repast of the afterpart of the day. Walks and shooting were generally in favor with the men, when they did not feel constrained by courtesy to join the excursions planned by the hostess.

The subject of pounds, shillings, and pence was never mentioned. No business talk of any kind. London business men were referred to by one or two in a tone containing a suspicion of something not complimentary. The chief question was recreation.

Between six and seven in the evening one could see lights glancing through the windows of the bed-chambers. The house was occupied in making its toilet. After seven the drawing-rooms, brilliantly lighted, wore a sultry air. The change was striking. Those whom one had seen an hour earlier in coarse gray suits and stout shoes, simple robes and straw hats, were arrayed in black swallow-tails and white cravats, decollets silk and satin, the bare arms and bosoms glistening with ornaments. At half past seven the company passed into the dining-room where a bright chandelier stood down on a broad table adorned with flowers and sparkling with crystal, an imposing sight of handsomely dressed servants stood in the background.

The dinner usually lasted from an hour to an hour and a half, and was garnished with pleasure and humor and some rather heavy wit. It had not the spontaneity and quick repartee of the French dinner, because Englishmen are not Frenchmen, who seem to have been created to shine in a prudential way.

To be continued.

Jas. W. Stainborn, Wm. M. Guernsey.
Stainborn, Gillespie & Gould.

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Editor of "Mormon Magazine," Salt Lake City, Utah.

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J. T. STEWART.
April 24th, 1872.

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