

TIRED MOTHERS.

A little elbow leans upon your knee,
Your tired knee, that has so much to bear,
A child's dear eyes are looking lovingly
From underneath a thatch of tangled hair,
Perhaps you do not heed the velvet touch
Of warm, moist fingers, folding yours so
tight;—

You do not prize this blessing over much,
You are almost too tired to pray to-night.

But it is blessedness. A year ago
I did not see it as I do to-day,—
We are so dull and thankless: and too slow
To catch the sunshine till it slips away.
And now it seems surpassing strange to me,
That, while I wore the badge of motherhood,
I did not kiss more oft, and tenderly,
The little child that brought me only good.

And if, some night when you sit down to rest,
You miss this elbow from your tired knee;
This restless, curling head from off your breast,
This hisping tongue, that chatters constantly;
If from your own the dimpled hand had slipped,

And ne'er would nestle in your palm again;
If the white feet into the grave had tripped,
I could not blame you for your heart ache
then!

I wonder so that mothers ever fret
At little children clinging to their gowns;
Or that the foot-prints, when the days are wet,
Are ever black enough to make them frown.
If I could find a little muddy boot,
Or cap, or jacket, on my chamber floor;
If I could kiss a rosy restless foot,
And hear its patter in my home once more:

If I could mend a broken cart to-day,
To-morrow make a kite to reach the sky—
There is no woman in God's world could say
She was more blissfully content than I.
But ah! the dainty pillow next my own
Is never rampled by a shining head;—
My singing birdling from its nest is flown;
The little boy I used to kiss is dead!

The Aldine.

ENGLISH CHARACTERISTICS.

England is a mellow country, and the English people are a mellow people. They have hung on the tree of nations a long time, and will, no doubt, hang as much longer; for windfalls, I reckon, are not the order in this island. We are pitched several degrees higher in this country. By contrast, things here are loud, sharp, and garish. Our geography is loud; the manners of the people are loud; our climate is loud, very loud, so dry and sharp, and full of violent changes and contrasts; and our goings-out and comings-in as a nation are any thing but silent. Do we not occasionally give the door an extra slam, just for effect?

In England, every thing is on a lower key, slower, steadier, gentler. Life is, no doubt, as full, or fuller, in its material forms and measures, but less violent and aggressive. The buffers, the English have between their cars to break the shock, are typical of much one sees there.

All sounds are softer in England; the surface of things is less hard. The eye of day and the face of Nature are less bright. Every thing has a mellow, subdued cast. There is no abruptness in the landscape, no sharp and violent contrasts, no brilliant and striking tints in the foliage. A soft, yellow, pale sunlight, is all one sees in the way of tints along the borders of the autumn woods. English apples (very small and inferior, by the way) are not so highly colored as ours. The blackberries, just ripening in October, are less pungent and acid; and the garden vegetables, such as cabbage, celery, cauliflower, beet and other root crops, are less rank and fibrous, and I am very clear that the meats also are tenderer and sweeter. There can be no doubt about the superiority of the mutton; and the tender and succulent grass, and the moist and agreeable climate, must tell upon the beef also.

English coal is all soft coal, and the stone is soft stone. The foundations of the hills are chalk instead of granite. The stone with which most of the old churches and cathedrals are built would not endure in our climate half a century, but in Britain the tooth of Time is much blunter, and the hunger of the old man less ravenous, and the ancient architecture stands half a millennium, until it is slowly worn away by the gentle attrition of the wind and rain.

At Chester, the old Roman wall that surrounds the town, built in the first century and repaired in the ninth, is still standing without a break or a swerve, though, in some places the outer face of the wall is worn through. The cathedral, and St. John's Church, in the same town, present to the beholder outlines as jagged and broken as rocks and cliffs; and yet it is only chip by chip, or grain by grain, that ruin ap-

proaches. The timber also lasts an incredibly long time. Beneath one of the arched ways, in the Chester wall above referred to, I saw timbers that must have been in place five or six hundred years. The beams in the old houses, also fully exposed to the weather, seem incapable of decay; those dating from Shakespeare's time being apparently as firm as ever.

I noticed that the characteristic aspect of the clouds in England was different from ours—soft, fleecy, vapory, indistinguishable—never the firm, compact, sharply-defined, deeply-dyed masses and fragments so common in our own sky. It rains easily but slowly. Storms accompanied with thunder are rare; while the crashing, wrenching explosive thunder-gusts, so common with us, deluging the earth and convulsing the heavens are never known.

In keeping with this elemental control and moderation, I found the character and manners of the people gentler and sweeter than I had been led to believe they were. No loudness, brazenness, impertinence; no oaths, no swaggering, no leering at women, no irreverence, no flippancy, no bullying, no insolence of porters, or clerks, or conductors, no importunity of boot-blacks or newsboys, no omnivorousness of hackmen—at least, comparatively none—all of which an American is apt to notice and I hope appreciate. In London, the boot-black salutes you with a respectful bow, and touches his cap, and would no more think of pursuing you or answering your refusal than he would of jumping into the Thames. The same is true of the newsboys. If they were to scream and bellow in London as they do in New York or Washington, they would be suppressed by the police, as they ought to be. The vender of papers stands at the corner of the street, with his goods in his arms, and a large placard spread out at his feet, giving in big letters the principal news-headings.

Street-cries of all kinds are less noticeable, less aggressive, than in this country, and the manners of the shopmen make you feel you are conferring a benefit instead of receiving one. Even their locomotives are less noisy than ours, having a shrill, infantile whistle that contrasts strongly with the loud demoniac yell that makes a residence near a railway or depot, in this country, so unbearable. The trains themselves move with wonderful smoothness and celerity, making a mere fraction of the racket made by our flying palaces as they go swaying and jolting over our hasty, ill-ballasted roads.

It is characteristic of the English prudence and plain dealing that they put so little on the cars and so much on the road, while the reverse process is equally characteristic of American enterprise. Our railway-system, no doubt, has certain advantages or rather conveniences over the English, but, for my part, I had rather ride smoothly, swiftly, and safely, in a luggage van, than be jerked and jolted to destruction in the velvet and veneering of our palace-cars. Upholster the road first, and let us ride on bare boards, until a cushion can be afforded; not till after the bridges are of granite and iron, and the rails of steel, do we want this more than aristocratic splendor and luxury of palace and drawing-room cars. To me there is no more marked sign of the essential vulgarity of the national manners than these princely cars and beggarly, clap-trap roads. It is like a man wearing a ruffled and jewelled shirt-front, but too poor to afford a shirt itself.

I have said the English are a sweet and mellow people. There is, indeed, a charm about these ancestral races that goes to the heart. And herein was one of the profoundest surprises of my visit, namely, that, in coming from the New World to the Old, from a people the most recently out of the woods of any, to one of the ripest and venerablest of the European nationalities, I should find a race more simple, youthful, and less sophisticated than the one I had left behind me. Yet this was my impression. We have lost immensely in some things, and what we have gained is not yet so obvious or so definable. We have lost in reverence, in homeliness, in heart and conscience—in virtue, using the word in its proper sense. To some the difference which I note may appear a difference in favor of the greater 'cuteness, wideawakeness, and enterprise of the American, but it is simply a difference expressive of our greater forwardness. We are a forward people, and the god we worship is Smartness. In one of the worst tendencies of the age, namely, an impudent, superficial, journalistic intellectuality and glibness, America, in her polite and literary circles, no doubt, leads all other nations. English books and newspapers show more homely ver-

acity, more singleness of purpose, in short, more *character* than ours. The great charm of such a man as Darwin, for instance, is his simple manliness and transparent good faith, and the absence in him of that finical, self-complacent smartness which is the bane of our literature.

A London crowd I thought the most normal and unsophisticated I had ever seen, with the least admixture of rowdiness and ruffianism. I went about very freely in the hundred and one places of amusement where the average working-classes assemble, with their wives and daughters and sweethearts, and smoke villainous cigars, and drink ale and stout. There was to me something notably fresh and canny about them, as if they had only yesterday ceased to be shepherds and shepherdesses. They certainly were less developed, in certain directions, or shall I say depraved, than similar crowds in our great cities. They are easily pleased, and laugh at the simple and childlike, but there is little that hints of an impure taste, or of abnormal appetites. I often smiled at the tameness and simplicity of the amusements, but my sense of fitness, or proportion, or decency, was never once outraged. They always stop short of a certain point—the point where wit degenerates into mockery, and liberty into license; nature is never put to shame, and will commonly bear much more. Especially to the American sense did their humorous and comic strokes, their negro minstrelsy, and attempts at Yankee comedy, seem in a minor key. There was not enough irreverence, and slang, and coarse ribaldry, in the whole evening's entertainment, to have seasoned one line of some of our most popular comic poetry. But the music, and the gymnastic, acrobatic, and other feats, were of a very high order. And I will say here that the characteristic flavor of the humor and fun making of the average English people, as it impressed my sense, is what one gets in Sterne—very human and stomachic, and entirely free from the contempt and superciliousness of most current writers. I did not get one whiff of Dickens anywhere. No doubt, it is there in some form or other, but it is not patent, or even appreciable, to the sense of such an observer as I am.

I was not less pleased by the simple goodwill and *bonhomie* that pervaded the crowd. There is in all these gatherings an indiscriminate mingling of the sexes, a mingling without jar, or noise, or rudeness of any kind, and marked by a mutual respect on all sides that is novel and refreshing. Indeed, so uniform is the courtesy, and so human and considerate the interest, that I was often at a loss to discriminate the wife or the sister from the mistress or the acquaintance of the hour, and had many times to check my American curiosity, and cold, criticising stare. For it was curious to see young men and women from the lowest social strata meet and mingle in a public hall without lewdness or badinage, but even with gentleness and consideration. The truth is, however, that the class of women known as victims of the social evil do not sink within many degrees as low in Europe as they do in this country, either in their own opinion or in that of the public; there can be but little doubt that gatherings of the kind referred to, if permitted in our great cities, would be ten-fold more scandalous and disgraceful than they are in London or Paris. There is something so reckless and desperate in the career of man or woman in this country when they begin to go down that the only feeling they too often excite is one of loathsomeness and disgust. The lowest depth must be reached, and it is reached quickly. But, in London, the same characters seem to keep a sweet side from corruption to the last, and you will see good manners everywhere.

We boast of our deference to women, but, if the Old World make her a tool, we are fast making her a toy; and the latter is the more hopeless condition. But among the better classes in England I am convinced that woman is regarded more as a sister and an equal than in this country, and is less subject to insult and to leering, brutal comment there than here. We are her slave or her tyrant; so seldom her brother and friend. I thought it a significant fact that I found no place of amusement set apart for the men; where one sex went the other went; what was sauce for the gander was sauce for the goose; and the spirit that prevailed was soft and human accordingly. The hotels had no "ladies' entrance," but all passed in and out the same door, and commonly met and mingled in the same room, and the place was as much for one as for the

other. It was no more a masculine monopoly than it was a feminine. Indeed, in the country towns and villages the character of the inns is unmistakably given by woman; hence the sweet, domestic atmosphere that prevades and fills them is balm to the spirit. Even the large hotels of Liverpool and London have a private, cosy, home character that is most delightful. On entering them, instead of finding yourself in a sort of public thoroughfare or political caucus, amid crowds of men talking, and smoking, and spitting, with stalls on either side, where cigars and tobacco, and books and papers are sold, you perceive you are in something like a larger hall of a private house, with perhaps a parlor and coffee-room on one side, and the office, and smoking-room, and stairway on the other. You may leave your coat and hat on the rack in the hall, and stand your umbrella there also, with full assurance that you will find them there when you want them, if it be the next morning or the next week. Instead of that petty tyrant the hotel-clerk, a young woman sits in the office with her sewing or other needlework, and quietly receives you. She gives you your number on a card, rings for a chambermaid to show you to your room, and directs your luggage to be sent up; and there is something in the look of things, and the way they are done, that goes to the right spot at once.

At the hotel in London where I stopped, the daughters of the landlord, three fresh, comely young women, did the duties of the office; and their presence, so quiet and domestic, gave the prevailing hue and tone to the whole house. I wonder how long a young woman could preserve her self-respect and sensibility in such a position in New York or Washington?

The English regard us as a wonderfully patient people, and there can be no doubt but we put up with abuses unknown elsewhere. If we have no big tyrant, we have ten thousand little ones, who tread upon our toes at every turn. The tyranny of corporations and of public servants of one kind and another, as the ticket man, the railroad conductor, or even the country stage-driver, seem to be features peculiar to American democracy. In England, the traveller is never snubbed, or made to feel that it is by somebody's sufferance that he is allowed aboard or to pass on his way.

If you get into an omnibus or a railroad or tramway carriage in London, you are sure of a seat. Not another person can get aboard after the seats are all full. Or, if you enter a public hall, you know you will not be required to stand up unless you pay the standing up price. There is everywhere that system, and order, and fair-dealing which all men love. The science of living has been reduced to a fine point. You pay a sixpence, and get a sixpence worth of whatever you buy. There are all grades and prices, and the robbery and extortion so current at home appear to be unknown.

I am not contending for the superiority of every thing English, but would not disguise from myself or my readers the fact of the greater humanity and consideration that prevail in the mother country. Things here are yet in the green, but I trust there is no good reason to doubt that our fruit will mellow and ripen in time like the rest.

JOHN BURROUGHS.

—Appleton's Journal.

A man ran through Detroit shouting that he was looking for "the road to heaven." The crowd called him crazy for looking for it in Detroit.

In a paragraph on vacations the *Christian Union* says: "It strikes us that society is so arranged that the American young lady has a pretty easy time of it, compared with her brother."

A female who ought to know, says: "No women indulge in the disgustingly dirty habit of wearing trains on the street but those whose pedal extremities cover a large amount of real estate."

A wholesome discipline is enforced at the Eastern camp meetings where the reverend preachers notify the speakers in the beginning, "If any man attempts to make a long speech, he will be sung down on the spot."

An old black man expressed to a wild young Virginian the half-unconscious creed of many a white sinner. "Massa Richard," said this hoary evil-doer, solemnly lifting up his hand to emphasize the admonition, "if there is a hereafter, don't carry on—but," and here he suddenly broke into enthusiasm and a broad grin, "if there ain't no hereafter, carry on powerful."