

A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION.

(From Chambers' Journal.) Soyle is the capital one of the smallest counties in England; it is an assize town, and its funny man (O, yes we have one; he once sent a joke to Punch) asserts one very opportunity, that the persons who conferred that honor upon it, were very bad judges of assize. The population indeed only consists of two thousand inhabitants, and I am one of them, as junior partner in the bank, open on ordinary occasions from eleven to three, on market days from ten to five, I may add, an important one of them.

Our street is broad, our shop-windows beautiful, the red bear which squats "begging" (as if for custom) over the portico of our principal inn, is of gigantic size, and as a work of art, unique. Yet the passing stranger might think us dull. He would however be mistaken; the assizes are followed by a ball; the militia training is followed by a ball; and there is an annual country ball. Four balls in the year! On these occasions the Red Bear, on whose premises the assembly rooms are situated, is full, overflowing into beds out; in general strangers are scarce, unless you except the bagmen, who make themselves at home everywhere, and are never really strangers—all the world's their shop, and all men and women merely buyers.

It was different in the days of coaches (not so distant as you may imagine), for then travelers on their way to a picturesque country twenty miles further on, would often sojourn with us for a night; pedestrian tourists almost invariably did so. Now they all pass up by railway trains without notice, unless some lover of architecture cries out, "What a fine church for such a poky little place!"

Of course we have dinners and other private parties; but the only public entertainment provided for Soyle and its environs, besides the balls, is a billiard-room, also attached to the beneficent Red Bear. Here there is a pool every afternoon, from three till half-past five or thereabouts. In the evening the room is full of the bagmen and tradesmen of the place, so the gentry never enter it after dinner. This is no great disadvantage, for most of them live from four to five miles off. The doctor indeed, has a house in the actual town, the vicar, (who, however does not indulge in pool,) resides within a stone's throw of the church, and I have to lodge at the bank; but we are exceptions.

I hope that no one will be shocked; I know that all games of billiards are looked upon with dread by many an anxious mother, and that more than one respectable gentleman, who would rather forego his dinner than allow the balance at his banker's to sink below three figures, would frown at the idea of that banker making a habit of attending at a board of green cloth every afternoon. But really we are not fast. Colonel Rayner, if he ever had any wild ideas, had long since abandoned them.

Mr. Rice, chairman of the Board of Magistrates, never shows any desire, like Shakespeare's Beaulieu, to do those things for which he punishes others; Capt. Woodwall, R. N., has lost all his naval habits except an occasional hasty interjection, with his left leg; Mr. Long of Model farm celebrity, is as innocent as one of his own fat bullocks; Dr. Kane is respected by all except the rabbits and frogs, which come into his experimental hands, and if he has a secret penchant, it is merely for manslaughter; Mr. Ricketts indulges in punning; but that is his only vice. If you observe that it need be, I will not contradict you. There are several others who occasionally drop into the billiard room—men generally engaged in hunting, or shooting, or fishing, or who only reside in the neighborhood for a portion of the year, and some of these may have reprehensible inclinations, but if so, they repress them, over-awed by the virtue of the habitues. Of these latter, I am the youngest, and used till lately pass, therefore, as the most frolicsome. Yet I was, and am the slowest of the slow. The school at which I was educated was conducted on Pestalozzian principles; the private tutor who had charge of my adolescence, for I never went to college, was a mild clergyman. I have had no fiery ordeal to pass through, and do not particularly regret the fact. It seems to me that all young men who have been "wild" suffer from debt and indignation.

One wet afternoon last autumn we had a very full meeting; three dogs and a two-wheeled omnibus stood under the shed in the yard of the Red Bear as I passed through it on my way to the bank; and six players were assembled in the billiard room, some taking their cues from the boxes in which they were kept securely locked, others were chalking the tops, all preparing for the combat in some way or other, except Mr. Rice, whose age, trembling hand, and gouty toe, unfitted him for playing himself, though he took great delight in officiating the performances of others from the raised seat which he occupied, and at times, when the chances were considerably in his favor, staking six-pence on the division of this or that competitor. Joe the marker gave out the balls; he was but a lad and his voice was cracking; indeed he had been a chorister till lately, but the failure of his organ had unfrocked him.

"Red plays upon white," he squeaked out in a shrill treble. "Yellow's his player," he added in a gruff bass. Red was Capt. Woodwall, who balanced himself on his leg of flesh, while the timber one stuck out stiffly behind him, and dribbled his ball up to the white with that care which the commencement of every enterprise demands. "Yellow on red (bass.) Green's his player (treble)." The owner of green was the doctor, six foot two in his stockings, thin as an eel, and very short-sighted. He adjusted his spectacles, blew his nose,

placed himself about two yards from the table, on which he almost lay, and looked along his cue as if it had been a gun, as he made his stroke.

Mr. Long played next. "Tut, tut, dear me," he said when the ball had ceased rolling. "I have left you tight under the cushion, doctor. I am sorry. I did not do it on purpose, I assure you. I have left the ball safe," he added to me, who played next—quite unintentional I assure you, and green is such a very bad color to play on—I dislike being on it very much myself.

"No," cried Mr. Rice, "it's as safe as a church."

"An Irish church, then?" cried Ricketts as the ball rolled into a pocket—not the one I had in view though. Some of us tried a smile but it was forced—Ricketts had made that joke so often.

So the game went on, the best player being Colonel Rayner, who, however, rarely ever touched a pool, as he always played for hazards and never for safety. Indeed he evidently liked to be killed out, because he could sit up by Mr. Rice, and chat with him about county business uninterrupted. Not but what conversation was an important item with everybody—the proceedings often being suspended for several minutes while some subject of general interest was being discussed; and what with that and Dr. Keane's elaborate rubbing of his spectacles, and Mr. Ricketts's jokes and Capt. Woodwall's habit of taking a pinch of snuff before he played, and the general custom of going round the table to inspect the ball to be aimed at as narrowly as if it were an apple which William Tell did not shoot off the paring of his son's hair, we did not get through many pools in the afternoon.

This first game however, was terminated at last, and Joe was collecting the balls in his wicker bottle, preparatory to giving them out afresh, when the door of the room opened, and the eyes of all turned upon that rare phenomenon—a stranger. He was a man who, I suppose, must be called good-looking, for his features were regular, his hair and moustache black, and his figure well set up. He was dressed as if for a wedding, with shining hat and boots, and a flower in his button-hole, and gloves that fitted like a lady's. He had a very small umbrella in his hand and a very large cigar in his mouth, and though we all glared coldly upon him, he was not abashed one jot, but strolled carelessly up to the cue-rack, and observed as naturally as possible:—"Marker, I will take a ball."

"Well, why not?" It was a public room, though we were in the habit of appropriating it. The stranger was in his rights.

"Have you no other cues than these boys' horns. Never mind; this is pretty straight, I think it was originally a punt hole; still it will do."

It did do; if the tool was bad the workman was good, and he slaughtered us all round in a brilliant manner. He was welcome to do that, but I did not like the air he gave himself. When he found that the value of a life was but sixpence he smiled superciliously. When he had to pay one, Mr. Long having fluked him, he pulled out a handful of gold to search for the most useful ointment; when that gentleman remarked that his success was the result of an accident, he begged him not to apologize, and when shortly afterward, Mr. Long missed putting him into an easy pocket, and explained that it was in consequence of there being no chalk on his cue, he told him there was still less cause for excuse, and he forgave him entirely. He also asserted that the table, of which we were proud, was a "boast." Worse still, he silenced our wit. He was just about to play upon Ricketts, when some one called the marker's attention to the fact that the fire was going out.

"Is it? Look the door, then quick!" cried our joker.

"I say," cried the stranger, rising from his contemplated stroke, and looking the culprit gravely in the face, "before dinner you know!"

"I am aware of Dr. Johnson's opinion," said Ricketts, rather discomfited, "and I suppose you agree with him, that the man who would make a pun would pick a pocket."

"He will have to pick a ball out of one, said the stranger and plumed him in.

Mr. Long was somewhat hypochondriacal, and felt the need sometimes of a little stimulant; but as he could do nothing without an apology, he always carried a medicine-glass in his pocket, and measured his brandy out by it. He went through the performance on the afternoon in question; the brandy that was brought by the waiter, was as usual an ordinary wine-glass full, and exactly fitted his measure; but he poured it from the little "go" into the graduated medicine-glass with the utmost gravity mixing it with water into a tumbler and made a face as he swallowed the first gulp.

"Ah, thanks for reminding me!" cried the stranger; "it is my medicine-time too. Waiter, bring me a peg, double shotted."

"Yes sir," said the waiter; "but I rather think we are out of it."

"What! No soda water?"

"Oh, yes sir."

"I see; you don't understand civilized English here. Put two glasses of brandy to one bottle of soda, and bring it. Is that plain?"

Thus he asspersed our civilization, as he had slandered our table, and chaffed some of ourselves. Yet I cannot say that he was absolutely insolent; all that he said might have passed off very well if he had been even slightly intimate with us, and it seemed absurd to resent it. It was his manner which provoked me more than his actual words, and that I cannot describe. Not that he was vulgar; the fellow had lived a good deal in the society of gentlemen, and his ease was not altogether ill-bred. Col. Rayner's name was called once when he neglected his turn to play; the stranger caught it, and when the

Colonel had finished his stroke, he addressed him, said that he had a letter of introduction from his son, and began to take that opportunity of delivering it. The old man ran his eye over the note, smiled cordially and held out his hand to the young man.

"A friend of Charles's is sure of a welcome," said he. "You have left the regiment?"

"Yes," said the stranger. "I was sick to death of India, and having come into a property which made me independent of the service. I resolved to quit it."

"Well, Mr. Saurin," replied the old Colonel, "I cannot blame you, for I did much the same thing myself, only rather later in life."

"And I want to follow your example in another matter also," said Saurin, "and that has brought me to Soyle. You are colonel of the militia of this county, and I am going to ask you for a commission in it. I have a theory that a man who has been in the service ought to turn his experience to some account, though he may find soldiering all the year round an Indian life tooirk-some."

"Quite right, quite right," cried the Colonel, whose hobby was pricked. "Where are you staying?"

"I have got a bed in this house."

"Oh, that must not be; you must shift your quarters to my place—tomorrow."

The Colonel remembered, just in time, that Mrs. Rayner did not like a guest being brought into sleep without due notice being given.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Female Traveler.

"M. Quad" took charge of a lady, on a railroad car, the other day, and thus details his woes: Perhaps the man meant to do me a favor when he came up to me at the depot, with a spinster hanging on his arm, and wanted to know if I wouldn't take charge of her from Chicago to Detroit. Many men think a railroad journey rendered really pleasant by the companionship of an unprotected female. She insisted on counting her hand-box and traveling-bag as soon as we got seated. She counted. There were just two. I counted and made no more nor less. Then she wanted her parasol put in the rack, her shawl folded up, and her hand-box counted again. There was just exactly one hand-box of it. As we got started she wanted to know if I was sure we were on the right road to Detroit. I was sure. Then she wanted her traveling-bag counted. I counted it. By this time she wanted the window up, and asked me if it wasn't a hot day. I said it was. Then she felt for her money, and found that it was safe, though she was sure that she had lost it. While counting it she related how Mrs. Grass, in going East about five years ago, lost her purse and three dollars. She wound up the story by asking me if it wasn't a hot day. I said it was. Then she wanted her hand-box counted, and I counted him. He was still one hand-box. There was a pause of five minutes, and then she wanted a drink. I got it for her. Then she wanted to know if we were on the right road to Detroit. I assured her that I was positive of the fact. The brakeman here called out the name of the station in such an indistinct manner that the lady wanted me to go and see what the name really was. I went. It was Calumet. She wanted to know if I was sure that it was Calumet, and I put my hand on my sacred heart and assured her that I would perish sooner than deceive her. By this time she wanted her traveling-bag counted, and I counted her. She figured up as before. I had just finished counting, when she wanted to know if I didn't think it was a hot day. I told her I did. We got along very well for the next half hour, as I got her narrating a story about how she got lost in the woods eighteen years before, but as soon as she finished it she wanted to know if I was sure we were on the right road to Detroit. I told her that I hoped to perish with the liars if we were not, and she was satisfied. Then the parasol fell down; she wanted me to change a ten cent piece, and the window had to go down. When we got down to Marshall she wanted to know if the place wasn't named after court-martial, and whether it wasn't barely possible that the station was Niles instead of Marshall. The hand-box was counted again and he was just one. Then the window went up, and she asked me if, in my opinion, it wasn't a hot day. I replied that it was. Then she related a story about her uncle, and another about a young lady who had been deaf several years. During the day I counted that hand-box 300 times; raised the window thirty times; said it was a hot day until my tongue was blistered; arranged that parasol twenty-one times; got her sixteen drinks of water, and inquired the names of thirteen stations. She said it was so nice to have a man in whom a stranger could place confidence, and I dared not reply for fear of bringing out another story. When we reached Detroit I counted the things three times over, helped her off the cars, got her a hack, directed her to a hotel, told her the street, price, name of the landlord, head waiter and cook; assured her she would not be robbed nor murdered; that Detroit had a population of 100,000; that the fall term of school had commenced; that all Detroit hack-drivers were honest and obliging. Poor woman! I hope the landlord didn't get out of patience with her artless ways. —Detroit Free Press.

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It seems as though all unusual or unnatural deeds must eventually die out. For instance, the Shakers of New Lebanon have greatly decreased in strength. In fifteen years one half of their number have died or deserted. They have few converts, and the larger part of the whole community are aged members. Formerly they were able to do all their work among themselves, but now the greater amount of their labour is hired from outside. The completion of the railroad, bringing them into closer communication with other people, has been their death-blow. They are doomed to pass gradually away, and no doubt but a few years will see their fine large building, fitted with all modern conveniences, used as boarding-houses for summer visitors.

Dying Out.

A certain mechanic found, at the age of twenty-one, that he possessed a fancy for books, cigars, and liquor—extravagant tastes all. Well, he thought the matter over, and, knowing that he must be dependent on his skill for a home and education, he decided to lay out in books every year the sum which he estimated it would cost a moderate drinker for liquor. He also calculated what it would cost him for tobacco and cigars, for theatres and Sunday riding, and set apart that money in the same way. The result was, that in a few years he owned a library of several hundred volumes. In this library he has a row of shelves labelled Liquor, Tobacco, Theatres, Livery Stables, which are now filled with the books bought with the money he would otherwise have appropriated for those purposes. Young men, this little story needs no comment—but think of it.

Follow the Example.

The whole human figure should be six times the length of the feet. Whether the form be slender or plump, the rule holds good; any deviation from it is a departure from the highest beauty of proportion. The Greeks made all their statues according to this rule. The face, from the highest point of the forehead where the hair begins, to the chin, is one-tenth of the whole stature. The hand, from the wrist to the middle finger, is the same. From the top of the chest to the highest point of the forehead is a seventh. If the face, from the roots of the hair to the chin, be divided into three equal parts, the first division determines the place where the eyebrows meet, and the second the nostrils. Height from the feet to the top of the head is the distance from the extremity of the fingers when the arms are extended.

DYSPEPSIA OR INDIGESTION.—Who of our readers has not suffered from the ill and varied forms of this hydra-headed tormenter, which originates from loss of tone in the stomach, or more particularly in its muscular or fibrous coating, which becomes pale and feeble. It will require pages to describe all the symptoms and various sympathetic affections of indigestion, and the torture to which the dyspeptic is subjected, but which may be compressed in one brief comprehensive sentence: You feel sick, depressed and unfit for the duties of life. Nevertheless, there is nothing more certain than that dyspepsia in all its phases, can be thoroughly eradicated.

There is but one way to cure indigestion, viz: by toning and strengthening the stomach and general system, gently relaxing the bowels if constipated, and regulating to liver if disordered. A remedy for this human peace-destroyer is CALIFORNIA VINEGAR BITTERS, which have the rare merit of containing no alcohol, the virtues of the medicinal California Plants, which constitute their healing and curing agencies—being extracted by a new chemical process. The popular verdict is that they are the most perfect article for the stomach, and are to be taken as circumstances may require, with the fullest confidence, and that my their means can the return of this distressing malady be prevented. We are satisfied this remedy is of great value.

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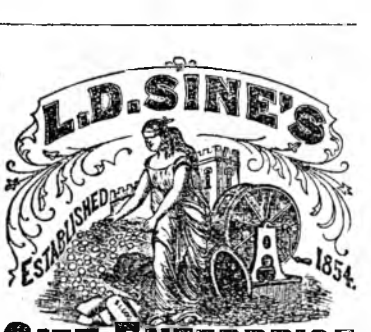
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