

GLINTS IN AULD REEKIE.

As soon as one comes to know Edinburgh, he feels a gratitude to that old gentleman of Fife who is said to have invented the affectionate phrase "Auld Reekie." Perhaps there never was any such old gentleman; and perhaps he never did, as the legend narrates, regulate the hours of his family prayers, on summer evenings, by the thickening smoke which he could see rising from Edinburgh chimneys, when the cooking of suppers began.

"It's time now, bairns, to tak the beuks an gang to our beds, for yonder's Auld Reekie, I see, putting on her nicht-cap," are the words which the harmless little tradition puts into his mouth. They are wisely dated back to the reign of Charles II., a time from which none now speak to contradict; and they serve as well as any others to introduce and emphasize the epithet which, once heard, is not forgotten by a lover of Edinburgh, remaining always in his memory, like a pet name of one familiarly known.

It is not much the fashion of travelers to become attached to Edinburgh. Rome for antiquity, London for study and stir, Florence for art, Venice for art and enchantment combined, — all these have pilgrims who become worshipers, and return again and again to them, as the devout return to shrines. But few return thus to Edinburgh. It continually happens that people planning routes of travel are heard to say, "I have seen Edinburgh," pronouncing the word "seen" with a stress indicating a finality of completion. Nobody ever uses a phrase in that way about Rome or Venice. It is always, "We have been in," "spent a winter in," "a summer in," or "a month in" Rome, or Venice, or any of the rest: and the very tone and turn of the phrase tell the desire or purpose of another

winter, or summer, or month in the remembered and longed-for place.

But Edinburgh has no splendors with which to woo and attract. She is "a penniless lass;" "wi' a lang pedigree," however, — as long and as splendid as the best, reaching back to King Arthur at least, and some say a thousand years farther, and assert that the rock on which her castle stands was a stronghold when Rome was a village. At any rate, there was a fortress there long before Edinburgh was a town, and that takes it back midway between the five hundredth and six hundredth year of our Lord. From that century down to this it was the centre of as glorious and terrible fighting and suffering as the world has ever seen. Kingly besieged and besiegers, prisoners, martyrs, men and women alike heroic, their presences throng each doorway still; and the very stones at a touch seem set ringing again with the echoes of their triumphs and their agonies.

To me, the castle is Edinburgh. Looking from the sunny south windows of Prince's Street across at its hoary front is like a wizard's miracle, by which dead centuries are rolled back, compressed into minutes. At the foot of its north precipices, where lay the lake in which, in the seventeenth century, royal swans floated and plebeian courtesans were ducked, now stretches a gay gardened meadow, through which flash daily railway trains. Their columns of blue smoke scale the rocks, coil after coil, but never reach the citadel summit, being tangled, spent, and lost in the tops of trees, which in their turn seem also to be green-plumed besiegers, ever climbing, climbing. For five days I looked out on this picture etched against a summer sky: in black, by night; in the morning, of soft sepia tints, or gray, — tower, battlement, wall, and roof, all in sky

lines; below these the wild crags and precipices, a mosaic of grays, two hundred feet down, to a bright greensward dotted with white daisies. Set steadily to the sunrise, by a west wind which never stopped blowing for the whole five days, streamed out the flag. To have read on its folds, "*Castell-Mynyd-Agned*," or "*Castrum Puellarum*," would not have seemed at any hour a surprise. There is nowhere a relic of antiquity which so dominates its whole environment as does this rock fortress. Its actuality is sovereign; its personality majestic. The thousands of modern people thronging up and down Prince's Street seem perpetrating an impertinent anachronism. The times are the castle's times still; all this nineteenth-century haberdashery and chatter is an inexplicable and insolent freak of interruption. Sitting at one's Prince's Street windows, one sees it not; overlooks it as meaningless and of no consequence. Instead, he sees the constable's son, in Bruce's day, coming down that two hundred feet of precipice, hand over hand, on a bit of rope ladder, to visit the "wench in town" with whom he was in love; and anon turning this love lore of his to patriotic account, by leading Earl Douglas, with his thirty picked Scots, up the same precipices, in the same perilous fashion, to surprise the English garrison, which they did to such good purpose that in a few hours they retook the castle, the only one then left which Bruce had not recovered. Or, when morning and evening mists rise slowly up from the meadow, veil the hill, and float off in hazy wreaths from its summit, he fancies fagots and tar barrels ablaze on the esplanade, and the beauteous Lady Glamis, with her white arms crossed on her breast, burning to death there, with eyes fixed on the windows of her husband's prison. Scores of other women with "fayre bodies" were burned alive there; men, too, their lovers and sons,—all for a crime of

which no human soul ever was or could be guilty. Poor blinded, superstitious earth, which heard and saw and permitted such things! Even to-day, when the ground is dug up on that accursed esplanade, there are found the ashes of these martyrs to the witchcraft madness.

That grand old master gunner, too, of Cromwell's first following: each sunset gun from the castle seemed to me in honor of his memory, and recalled his name. "May the devil blaw me into the air, if I lowse a cannon this day!" said he, when Charles's men bade him fire a salute in honor of the Restoration. Every other one of Cromwell's men in the garrison had turned false, and done ready service to the king's officers; but not so Browne. It was only by main force that he was dragged to his gun, and forced to fire it. Whether the gun were old, and its time had come to burst, or if the splendid old Puritan slyly overweighed his charge, it is open to each man's preference to believe; but burst the gun did, and, taking the hero at his word, "shuites his bellie from him, and blew him quyte over the castle wall," says the old record. I make no doubt myself that it was just what the master gunner intended.

Thirty years later, there were many gunners in Edinburgh Castle as brave as he, or braver,—men who stood by their guns month after month, starving by inches and freezing; the snow lying knee deep on the shattered bastions; every roof shelter blown to fragments; no fuel; their last well so low that the water was putrid; raw salt herrings the only food for the men, and for the officers oatmeal, stirred in the putrid water. This was the Duke of Gordon's doing, when he vowed to hold Edinburgh Castle for King James, if every other fortress in Scotland went over to William. When his last hope failed, and he gave his men permission to abandon the castle and go out to the

enemy, if they chose, not a man would go. "Three cheers for his grace," they raised, with their poor starved voices, and swore they would stay as long as he did. From December to June they held out, and then surrendered, a handful of fifty ghastly, emaciated, tottering men. Pity they could not have known how much grander than victories such defeats as theirs would read, by and by!

Hard by the castle was the duke's house, in Blair's Close; in this he was shut up prisoner under strict guard. The steps up which he walked that day, for the first time in his life without his sword, are still there; his coronet, with a deer hound on either side, in dingy stone carving, above the low door. It is one of the doorways worth haunting, in Edinburgh. Generations of Dukes of Gordon have trodden its threshold, from the swordless hero of 1689 down to the young lover who, in George the Third's day, went courting his duchess, over in Hyndford's Close, at the bottom of High Street. She was a famous beauty, daughter of Lady Maxwell; and thanks to one gossip and another, we know a good deal about her bringing-up. There was still living in Edinburgh, sixty years ago, an aged and courtly gentleman, who recollected well having seen her riding a sow in High Street; her sister running behind, and thumping the beast with a stick. Duchesses are not made of such stuff in these days. It almost passes belief what one reads in old records of the ways and manners of Scottish nobility in the first half of the eighteenth century. These Maxwells' fine laces were always drying in the narrow passage from their front stair to their drawing-room; and their undergear hanging out on a pole from an upper window, in full sight of passers-by, as is still the custom with the poverty-stricken people who live in Hyndford's Close.

On the same stair with the Maxwells lived the Countess Anne of Balcarres,

mother of eleven children, the eldest of whom wrote Auld Robin Gray. She was poor and proud, and a fierce Jacobite to the last. To be asked to drink tea in Countess Anne's bed-chamber was great honor. The room was so small that the man-servant, John, gorgeous in the Balcarres livery, had to stand snuggled up to the bedpost. Here, with one arm around the post, he stood like a statue, ready to hand the tea-kettle as it was needed. When the noble ladies differed about a date or a point of genealogy, John was appealed to, and often so far forgot his manners as to swear at the mention of assumers and pretenders to baronetcies.

There is an endless fascination in going from house to house, in their old wynds and closes, now. A price has to be paid for it, — bad smells, filth underfoot, and, very likely, volleys of ribald abuse from gin-loosened tongues right and left and high up overhead; but all this only emphasizes the picture, and makes one's mental processions of earls and countesses all the livelier and more vivid.

Some of these wynds are so narrow and dark, that one hesitates about plunging into them. They seem little more than rifts between dungeons: seven, eight, and nine stories high, the black walls stretch up. If there is a tiny courtyard, it is like the bottom of a foul well; and looking to the hand's-breadth of sky visible above, it seems so far up and so dark blue, one half expects to see its stars glimmering at noonday. A single narrow winding stone stair is the only means of going up and down; and each floor being swarming full of wretched human beings, each room a tenement house in itself, of course this common stairway becomes a highway of contentions, the very battle-ground of the house. Progress up or down can be stopped at a second's notice; a single pair of elbows is a blockade. How sedan chairs were managed in these cork-

screw crevices is a puzzle; yet we read that the ladies of quality went always in sedan chairs to balls and assemblies.

In the Stamp Office Close, now the refuge of soot-venders, old-clothes dealers, and hucksters of lowest degree, tramps, beggars, and skulkers of all sorts, still is locked tight every night a big carved door, at foot of the stair down which used to come stately Lady Eglintoune, the third, with her seven daughters, in fine array. It was one of the sights of the town to see the procession of their eight sedan chairs on the way to a dance. The countess herself was six feet tall, and her daughters not much below her; all strikingly handsome, and of such fine bearing that it went into the traditions of the century as the "Eglintoune air." There also went into the traditions of the century some details of the earl's wooing, which might better have been kept a secret between him and his father-in-law. The second Lady Eglintoune was ailing, and like to die, when Sir Archibald Kennedy arrived in Edinburgh, with his stalwart but beautiful daughter, Susanna. She was much sought immediately; and Sir Archibald, in his perplexity among the many suitors, one day consulted his old friend Eglintoune.

"Bide a wee, Sir Archy," replied the earl, — "bide a wee; my wife's very sickly." And so, by waiting, the fair Susanna became Countess of Eglintoune. It would seem as if nature had some intent to punish the earl's impatient faithlessness to his sickly wife; for year after year, seven years running, came a daughter, and no son, to the house of Eglintoune. At last the earl, with a readiness to ignore marital obligations at which his third countess need not have been surprised, bluntly threatened to divorce her if she bore him no heir.

Promptly the spirited Susanna replied that nothing would please her better, provided he would give her back all she brought him.

"Every penny of it, and welcome!" retorted the earl, supposing she referred to her fortune.

"Na, na, my lord," replied the lady, "that winna do. Return me my youth, beauty, and virginity, and dismiss me when you please:" upon which the matter dropped. In the end, the earl fared better than he deserved, three sons being given him within the next five years.

For half a century, Lady Eglintoune was a prominent figure in Scottish social life. Her comings and goings and doings were all chronicled, and handed down. It is even told that when Johnson and Boswell visited her at her country place, she was so delighted with Johnson's conversation that she kissed him on parting, — from which we can argue her ladyship's liking for long words. She lived to be ninety-one, and amused herself in her last days by taming rats, of which she had a dozen or more, in such subjection that at a tap on the oak wainscoting of her dining-room they came forth, joined her at her meal, and at a word of command retired again into the wainscot.

When twenty-first century travelers go speiring among the dingy ruins of cities which are gay and fine now, they will not find relics and traces of such individualities as these. The eighteenth century left a most entertaining budget, which we of to-day are too busy and too well educated to equal. No chiel among us all has the time to take gossip notes of this century; and even if he did, they would be dull enough in comparison with those of the last.

Groping and rummaging in Hyndford's Close, one day, for recognizable traces of Lady Maxwell's house, we had the good fortune to encounter a thrifty housewife, of the better class, living there. She was coming home, with her market basket on her arm. Seeing our eager scenting of the old carvings on lintels and sills, and overhearing our

mention of the name of the Duchess of Gordon, she made bold to address us.

"It waur a strange place for the no-beelity to be livin' in, to be sure," she said. "I'm livin' mysil in ane o' the best of 'im, an' it's na mair space to 't than ud turn a cat. Ye 're welcome to walk up, if ye like to see what their dwellin's waur like in the auld time. It's a self-contained stair ye see," she added with pride, as she marshaled us up a twisting stone stairway, so narrow that even one person, going alone, must go cautiously to avoid grazing elbows and shins on the stone walls, at every turn. "I couldna abide the place but for the self-contained stair: there's not many has them," she continued. "Mind yer heads! mind yer heads! There's a stoop!" she cried; but it was too late. We had reached, unwarned, a point in the winding stair where it was necessary to go bent half double; only a little child could have stood upright. With heads dizzy from the blow and eyes half blinded by the sudden darkness, we stumbled on, and brought out in a passage-way, perhaps three feet wide and ten long, from which opened four rooms: one the kitchen, a totally dark closet, not over six feet square; a tiny grate, a chair, table, and a bunk in the wall, where the servant slept, were all its furniture. The woman lighted a candle to show us how convenient was this bunk for the maid "to lie." Standing in the middle of the narrow passage, one could reach his head into kitchen, parlor, and both bedrooms without changing his position. The four rooms together would hardly have made one good-sized chamber. Nothing but its exquisite neatness and order saved the place from being insupportable! Even those would not save it when herring suppers should be broiling in the closet surnamed kitchen. Up a still smaller, narrower crevice in the wall led a second "self-contained stair," dark as midnight, and so low roofed there was no stand-

ing upright in it, even at the beginning. This led to what the landlady called the "lodgers' flairt." We had not courage to venture up, though she was exceedingly anxious to show us her seven good bedrooms, three double and four single, which were nightly filled with lodgers, at a shilling a night.

Only the "verra rayspectable," she said, came to lodge with her. Her husband was "verra pairticular." Tradespeople from the country were the chief of their customers, "an' the same a-comin' for seven year, noo." No doubt she has as lively a pride, and gets as many satisfactions between these narrow walls, as did the lords and ladies of 1700. Evidently not the least of her satisfactions was the fact that those lords and ladies had lived there before her.

Nowhere are Auld Reekie's antitheses of new and old more emphasized than in the Cowgate. In 1530 it was an elegant suburb. The city walls even then extended to inclose it, and it was eloquently described in an old divine's writings as the place "*ubi nihil est humile aut rusticum, sed omnia magnifica.*"

In one of its grassy lanes, the Earl of Galloway built a mansion. His countess often went to pay visits to her neighbors, in great state, driving six horses; and it not infrequently happened that when her ladyship stepped into her coach, the leaders were standing opposite the door at which she intended to alight.

Here dwelt, in 1617, the famous "Tam o' the Cowgate," Earl of Had-dington, boon companion of King James, who came often to dine with him, and gave him the familiar nickname of Tam. Tam was so rich he was vulgarly believed to have the philosopher's stone; but he himself once gave a more probable explanation of his wealth, saying that his only secret lay in two rules: "never to put off till to-morrow that which could be done to-day," and

"never to trust to another what his own hand could execute."

To-day there is not in all the world, outside the Jewish Ghetto of Rome, so loathly wretched a street as this same Cowgate. Even at high noon it is not always safe to walk through it; and there are many of its wynds into which no man would go without protection of the police. Simply to drive through it is harrowing. The place is indescribable. It seems a perpetual and insatiable carnival of vice and misery. The misery alone would be terrible enough to see, but the leering, juggling, insolent vice added makes it indeed hellish. Every curbstone, doorsill, alley mouth, window, swarms with faces out of which has gone every trace of self-respect or decency: babies' faces as bad as the worst, and the most aged faces worst of all. To pause on the sidewalk is to be surrounded, in a moment, by a dangerous crowd of half-naked boys and girls, whining, begging, elbowing, cursing, and fighting. Giving of an alms is like pouring oil on a fire. The whole gang is ablaze with envy and attack: the fierce and unscrupulous pillage of the seventeenth century is reenacted in miniature in the Cowgate every day, when an injudicious stranger, passing through, throws a handful of pennies to the beggars. The general look of hopeless degradation in the spot is heightened by the great number of old-clothes shops along the whole line of the street. In the days when the Cowgate was an elegant suburb, the citizens were permitted by law to extend their upper stories seven feet into the street, provided they would build them of wood cut in the Borough Forest, a forest that harbored robbers dangerous to the town. These projecting upper stories are invaluable now to the old-clothes venders, who hang from them their hideous wares, in double and treble lines, fluttering over the heads and in the faces of passers-by: the wood of the Borough Forest thus, by a strange

irony of fate, still continuing to harbor dangers to public welfare. If these close-packed tiers of dangling rags in the Cowgate were run out in a straight single line, they would be miles long; a sad beggars' arras to behold. The preponderance of tattered finery in it adds to its melancholy: shreds of damask; dirty lace; theatrical costumes; artificial flowers so crumpled, broken, and soiled that they would seem to have been trodden in gutters; there was an indefinable horror in the thought that there could be even in the Cowgate a woman creature who could think herself adorned by such mockeries of blossoms. But I saw more than one poor soul look at them with longing eyes, finger them, haggle at the price, and walk away disappointed that she could not buy.

The quaint mottoes here and there in the grimy walls, built in when the Cowgate people were not only comfortable, but pious, must serve often now to point bitter jests among the ungodly. On one wretched, reeking tenement, is: "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. 1643." On another, "All my trist is in ye Lord."

A token I saw in the Cowgate of one life there not without hope and the capacity of enjoyment. It was in a small window, nine stories up from the ground, in a wynd so close that hands might be clasped from house to house across it. It was a tiny thing, but my eye fell on it with as much relief as on a rift of blue sky in a storm: it was a little green fern growing in a pot. Outside the window it stood, on a perilously narrow ledge. As I watched it I grew frightened, lest the wind should blow it down, or a vicious neighbor stone it off. It seemed the brave signal flying of a forlorn hope, of a dauntless, besieged soul that would never surrender, and I shall recollect it long after every other picture of the Cowgate scenes has grown dim.

The more respectable of the pawnbrokers' or second-hand-goods shops in Edinburgh are interesting places to rummage. If there were no other record of the slow decay and dwindling fortunes of the noble Scottish folk, it could be read in the great number of small dealers in relics of the olden time.

Old buckles and brooches and clan badges; chains, locketts, seals, rings; faded miniatures, on ivory or in mosaics, of women as far back as Mary's time, loved then as well as was ever Mary herself, but forgotten now as if they had never been; swords, rusty, bent, battered, and stained; spoons with forgotten crests; punch ladles worn smooth with the merry-makings of generations, — all these one may find in scores of little one-roomed shops, kept perhaps by aged dames with the very aroma of the antique Puritanism lingering about them still.

In such a room as this, I found a Scotch pebble brooch with a quaint silver setting, reverently and cautiously locked in a glass case. On the back of it had been scratched, apparently with a pin, "Margret Fleming, from her brother." I bore it away with me triumphantly, sure that it had belonged to an ancestor of Pet Marjorie.

Almost as full of old-time atmosphere as the pawnbrokers' shops are the antiquarian bookstores. Here one may possess himself, if he likes, of well-thumbed volumes with heraldic crests on title-pages, dating back to the earliest reading done by noble earls and baronets in Scotland; even to the time when not to know how to read was no indelible disgrace. In one of these shops, on the day I bought Margret Fleming's brooch, I found an old torn copy of Pet Marjorie. Speaking of Dr. Brown and Rab to the bookseller, — himself almost a relic of antiquity, — I was astonished and greatly amused to hear him reply, —

"It's a' a feecion. . . . He can't

write without it. . . . I knoo that darg. . . . A verra neece darg he was, but — a — a — a" — with a shake of the head, "it's a verra neece story, verra neece. . . . He wrote it up, up; not but that Rab was a verra neece darg. I knoo the darg wull."

Not a word of more definite disclaimer or contradiction could I win from the canny old Scot. But to have hastily called the whole story a lee, from beginning to end, would hardly have shaken one's confidence in it so much as did the thoughtful deliberation of his "He was a verra neece darg. I knoo the darg wull."

One of our "cawdies," during our stay in Edinburgh, was a remarkable fellow. After being for twenty years a gentleman's servant, he had turned his back on aristocracy, and betaken himself to the streets for a living; driving cabs, or piloting strangers around the city, as might be. But his earlier habits of good behavior were strong in him still, and came to the surface quickly in associations which revived them. His conversation reminded us forcibly of somebody's excellent saying that Scotland would always be Scott-land. Not a line of Scott's novels which this vagabond cawdie did not seemingly know by heart. Scottish history too he had at his tongue's end, and its most familiar episodes sounded new and entertaining as he phrased them. Even the death of Queen Mary seemed freshly stated, as he put it, when, after summing up the cruelties she had experienced at the hands of Elizabeth, he wound up with, "And finally she beheaded her, and that was the last of her," — a succinctness of close which some of Mary's historians would have done well to simulate.

Of Jeanie Deans and Dumbiedikes he spoke as of old acquaintances. He pointed out a spot in the misty blue distance where was Dumbiedikes' house, where Jeanie's sweetheart dwelt, and

where the road lay on which Jeanie went to London.

"It was there the old road to London lay; and would n't you think it more natural, sir, that it was that way she went, and it was there she met Dumbiedikes, and he gave her the purse? I'll always maintain, sir, that it was there she got it."

Of the two women, Jeanie Deans and Mary Queen of Scots, Jeanie was evidently the vivider and more real in his thoughts.

The second day of our stay in Edinburgh was a gay day in the castle. The 71st Highlanders had just returned from a twelvemonth's stay at Gibraltar. It was people's day. Everywhere the bronzed, tired, happy-looking fellows, in their smartened uniforms, were to be encountered, strolling, lounging, sitting with sweethearts or wives, — more of the former than the latter. It struck me also that the women were less good looking than the men; but they were all beautified by happiness, and the merry sounds of their laughter, and the rumble of skittles playing filled all the place. Inside the castle, the room in which the regalia were on exhibition was thronged with country people, gazing reverently on its splendors.

"Keep yer eye on 't, as ye walk by, an' mark the changes o' 't," I heard one old lady say to her husband, whose wandering gaze seemed to her neglectful of the opportunity.

A few gay-dressed women, escorted by officers, held themselves apart from the soldiers' sweethearting, and were disposed, I thought, to look a little scornfully on it. The soldiers did not seem to mind the affront, if they saw it; no doubt, they thought their own sweethearts far the better looking, and if they had ever heard of it would have quoted with hearty good will the old ballad, —

"The lasses o' the Canongate,
Oh, they are wondrous nice:

They winna gie a single kiss,
But for a double price.

"Gar hang them, gar hang them,
Hie upon a tree;
For we'll get better up the gate,
For a bawbee!"

Most picturesque of all the figures to be seen in Edinburgh are the Newhaven fishwives. With short, full, blue cloth petticoats, reaching barely to their ankles; white blouses and gay kerchiefs; big, long-sleeved cloaks of the same blue cloth, fastened at the throat, but flying loose, sleeves and all, as if thrown on in haste; the girls bareheaded; the married women with white caps, standing up stiff and straight in a point on the top of the head; two big wicker-work creels, one above the other, full of fish, packed securely, on their broad shoulders, and held in place by a stout leather strap passing round their foreheads, they pull along at a steady, striding gait, up hill and down, carrying weights that it taxes a man's strength merely to lift. In fact, it is a fishwife's boast that she will run with a weight which it takes two men to put on her back. By reason of this great strength on the part of the women, and their immemorial habit of exercising it; perhaps also from other causes far back in the early days of Jutland, where these curious Newhaven fishing folk are said to have originated, it has come about that the Newhaven men are a singularly docile and submissive race. The wives keep all the money which they receive for the fish, and the husbands take what is given them, — a singular reversion of the situation in most communities. I did not believe this when it was told me, so I stopped three fishwives one day, and, without mincing matters, put the question direct to them. Two of them were young, one old. The young women laughed saucily, and the old woman smiled, but they all replied unhesitatingly, that they had the spending of all the money.

"It's a' spent i' the hoos," said one, anxious not to be thought too selfish, — "it's a' spent i' the hoos. The men, they cam home an' tak their sleep, an' then they'll be aff agen."

"It 'ud never do for the husbands to stoop in the city, an' be spendin' a' the money," added the old woman, with severe emphasis.

I learned afterward that, on the present system of buying and selling the fish, the fishermen do receive from their labor an income independent of their wives. They are the first sellers of the fish, — selling them in quantity to the wholesale dealers, who sell in turn at auction to the "retail trade," represented by the wives. This seems an unjust system, and is much resented by both husbands and wives: but it has been established by law, and there is no help for it. It came in with the introduction of the steam trawlers. "They're the deestrooction o' the place," said one of the fishwomen. "A mon canna go oot wi' his lines an' mak a livin' noo. They just drag everything; they tak a' the broods; they're dooin' a worrld o' harm. There's somethin' a dooin' about it in the House o' Commons, noo, but a canna till hoo it wull go. They ull be the deestrooction o' this place, if they're na pit stop to," and she shook her fist vindictively at a puffing trawler, which had just pushed away from the wharf.

Whoever would see the Newhaven fishwives at their best must be on the Newhaven wharf by seven o'clock in the morning, on a day when the trawlers come in and the fish is sold. The scene is a study for a painter.

The fish are in long, narrow boxes, on the wharf, ranged at the base of the sea wall; some sorted out, in piles, each kind by itself: skates, with their long tails, which look vicious, as if they could kick, hake, witches, brill, sole, flounders, huge catfish, crayfish, and herrings by the ton. The wall is crowded with

men, Edinburgh fishmongers, come to buy cheap on the spot. The wall is not over two feet wide, and here they stand, lean over, jostle, slip by to right and left of each other, and run up and down, in their eager haste to catch the eye of one auctioneer, or to get first speech with another. The wharf is crowded with women, — an army in blue, two hundred, three hundred, at a time; white caps bobbing, elbows thrusting, shrill voices crying, fiery blue eyes shining, it is a sight worth going to Scotland for. If one has had an affection for Christie Johnstone, it is a delightful return of his old admiration for her. A dozen faces which might be Christie's own are flashing up from the crowd; one understands on the instant how that best of good stories came to be written. A man with eyes in his head and a pen in his hand could not have done less. Such fire, such honesty, such splendor of vitality, kindle the women's faces. To spend a few days among them would be to see Christie Johnstone dramatized on all sides.

On the morning when I drove out from Edinburgh to see this scene, a Scotch mist was simmering down: so warm that at first it seemed of no consequence whatever; so cold that all of a sudden one found himself pierced through and through with icy shivers. This is the universal quality of a Scotch mist or drizzle.

The Newhaven wharf is a narrow pier running out to sea. On one side lay the steam trawlers, which had just unloaded their freight; on the other side, on the narrow, rampart-like wall of stone, swarmed the fishmonger men. In this line I took my place, and the chances of the scramble. Immediately the jolly fishwives caught sight of me, and began to nod and smile. They knew very well I was there to "speir" at them.

"Ye'll tak cauld!" cried one motherly old soul, with her white hair blow-

ing wildly about, almost enough to lift the cap off her head. "Com doon! Ye'll tak cauld."

I smiled, and pointed to my waterproof cloak, down which, it must be admitted, the "mist" was trickling in streams, while the cloak itself flapped in the wind like a loose sail. She shook her head scornfully.

"It's a grat plass to tak cauld!" she cried. "Ye'll doo wull to com doon."

There were three auctioneers: one, a handsome, fair-haired, blue-eyed young fellow, was plainly a favorite with the women. They flocked after him as he passed from one to another of the different lots of fish. They crowded in close circles around him, three and four deep; pushing, struggling, rising on tip-toes to look over each other's shoulders and get sight of the fish.

"What's offered for this lot o' fine herrings? One! One and sax! Thrip-pence ha'! Going, going, gone!" rang above all the clatter and chatter of the women's tongues. It was so swift, that it seemed over before it was fairly begun; and the surging circles had moved along to a new spot and a new trade. The eyes of the women were fixed on the auctioneer's eyes; they beckoned; they shook forefingers at him; now and then a tall, stalwart one, reaching over less able-bodied comrades, took him by the shoulder, and compelled him to turn her way; one, most fearless of all, literally gripped him by the ear and pulled his head around, shrieking out her bid. When the pressure got unbearable, the young fellow would shake himself like a Newfoundland dog, and, laughing good-naturedly, whirl his arms wide round to clear a breathing space; the women would fall back a pace or two, but in a moment the rings would close up again, tighter than ever.

The efforts of those in the outer ring to break through, or see over, the inner ones were droll. Arms and hands and heads seemed fairly interlinked and in-

terwoven. Sometimes a pair of hands would come into sight, pushing their way between two bodies, low down, — just the two hands, nothing more, breaking way for themselves, as if in a thicket of underbrush; presently the arms followed; and then, with a quick thrust of the arms to right and left, the space would be widened enough to let in the head, and when that was fairly through the victory was won. Straightening herself with a big leap, the woman bounded in front of the couple she had so skillfully separated, and a buzzing "bicker" of angry words would rise for a moment; but there was no time to waste in bad temper where bargains were to be made or lost in the twinkling of an eye.

An old sailor, who stood near me on the wall, twice saved me from going backwards into the sea, in my hasty efforts to better my stand-point. He also seemed to be there simply as a spectator, and I asked him how the women knew what they were buying; buying, as they did, by the pile or the box.

"Oh, they'll giss, verra near," he said; "they've an eye on the fish, sense they're bawn. God knows it's verra little they mak," he added, "an' they'll carry 's much 's two men o' us can lift. They're extrawnery strang."

As a lot of catfish were thrown down at our feet, he looked at them with a shudder, and exclaimed, "I'd no eat that."

"Why not?" said I. "Are they not good?"

"Ah, I'd no eat it," he replied, with a look of superstitious terror spreading over his face. "It doesna look richt."

A fresh trawler came in just as the auction had nearly ended. The excitement renewed itself fiercely. The crowd surged over to the opposite side of the pier, and a Babel of voices arose. The skipper was short and fat, and in his dripping oilskin suit looked like a cross between a catfish and a frog.

"Here, you Rob," shouted the auc-

tioner, "what do you add to this fine lot o' herrin'?"

"Herring be d——d!" growled the skipper, out of temper, for some reason of his own; at which a whirring sound of ejaculated disapprobation burst from the women's lips.

The fish were in great tanks on the deck. Quickly the sailors dipped up pails of the sea-water, dashed it over them, and piled them into baskets, in shining, slippery masses: the whole load was on the pier, sorted, and sold in a few minutes.

Then the women settled down to the work of assorting and packing up their fish. One after another they shouldered their creels and set off for Edinburgh. They seemed to have much paying back and forth of silver among themselves, one small piece of silver that I noticed actually traveling through four different hands in the five minutes during which I watched it. Each woman wore under her apron, in front, a sort of apron-like bag, in which she carried her money. There was evidently rivalry among them. They spied closely on each other's loads, and did some trafficking and exchange before they set off. One poor old creature had bought only a few crayfish, and as she lifted her creel to her back, and crawled away, the women standing by looked over into her basket, and laughed and jeered at her; but she gave no sign of hearing a word they said.

Some of them were greatly discontented with their purchases when they came to examine them closely, especially one woman who had bought a box of flounders. She emptied them on the ground, and sorted the few big ones, which had been artfully laid on the top; then, putting the rest, which were all small, in a pile by themselves, she pointed contemptuously to the contrast, and with a toss of her head ran after the auctioneer, and led him by the sleeve back to the spot where her fish lay.

She was as fierce as Christie herself could have been at the imposition. She had paid the price for big flounders, and had got small ones. The auctioneer opened his book and took out his pencil, to correct the entry which had been made against her.

"Wull, tak aff saxpence," he said.

"Na! na!" cried she. "They're too dear at seven saxpence."

"Wull, tak aff a saxpence; it is written noo, — seven shillin'."

She nodded, and began packing up the flounders.

"Will you make something on them at that price?" I asked her.

"Wull, I'll mak me money back," she replied; but her eyes twinkled, and I fancy she had got a very good bargain, as bargains go in Newhaven; it being thought there a good day's work to clear three shillings,—a pitiful sum, when a woman, to earn it, must trudge from Newhaven to Edinburgh (two miles) with a hundred pounds of fish on her back, and then toil up and down Edinburgh hills selling it from door to door. One shilling on every pound is the auctioneer's fee. He has all the women's names in his book, and it is safe to trust them; they never seek to cheat, or even to put off paying. "They'd rather pay than not," the blue-eyed auctioneer said to me. "They're the honestest folks i' the world."

As the last group was dispersing, one old woman, evidently in a state of fierce anger, approached, and poured out a torrent of Scotch, as bewildering and as unintelligible to me as if it had been Chinese. Her companions gazed at her in astonishment: presently they began to reply; and in a few seconds there was as fine a "rippet" going on as could have been heard in Cowgate in Tam's day. At last, a woman of near her own age sprang forward, and approaching her with a determined face lifted her right hand with an authoritative gesture, and said in vehement indig-

nation, which reminded me of Christie again, —

“Keep yersil, an’ haud yer tongue, noo!”

“What is she saying?” I asked. “What is the matter?”

“Eh, it is jist nathin’ at a’,” she replied. “She’s thet angry, she does na know hersil.”

The faces of the Newhaven women are full of beauty, even those of the old women: their blue eyes are bright and laughing, long after the sea wind and sun have tanned and shriveled their skins and bleached their hair. Blue eyes and yellow hair are the predominant type; but there are some faces with dark hazel eyes of rare beauty and very dark hair, — still more beautiful, — which, spite of its darkness, shows glints of red in the sun. The dark blue of their gowns and cloaks is the best color-frame and setting their faces could have; the bunched fullness of the petticoat is saved from looking clumsy by being so short, and the cloaks are in themselves graceful garments. The walking in a bent posture, with such heavy loads on the back, has given to all the women an abnormal breadth of hip, which would be hideous in any other dress than their own. This is so noticeable that I thought perhaps they wore under their skirts, to set them out, a roll, such as is worn by some of the Bavarian peasants. But when I asked one of the women, she replied, —

“Na, na, jist the flannel; a’ tuckit.”

“Tucked all the way up to the belt?” said I.

“Na, na,” laughing as if that were a folly never conceived of, — “na, na;” and in a twinkling she whipped her petticoat high up, to show me the under petticoat, of the same heavy blue cloth, tucked only a few inches deep. Her massive hips alone were responsible for the strange contour of her figure.

The last person to leave the wharf was a young man with a creel of fish on

his back. My friend the sailor glanced at him with contempt.

“There’s the only man in all Scotland that ’ud be seen carryin’ a creel o’ fish on his back like a woman,” said he. “He’s na pride aboot him.”

“But why should n’t men carry creels?” I asked. “I’m sure it is very hard work for women.”

The sailor eyed me for a moment, perplexedly, and then, as if it were waste of words to undertake to explain self-evident propositions, resumed, —

“He worked at it when he was a boy, with his mother; an’ now he’s no pride left. There’s the whole village been at him to get a barrow; but he’ll not do’t. He’s na pride aboot him.”

What an interesting addition it would be to the statistics of foods eaten by different peoples to collect the statistics of the different foods with which pride’s hunger is satisfied, in different countries! Its stomach has as many and opposite standards as the human digestive apparatus. It is, like everything else, all and only a question of climate. Not a nabob anywhere who gets more daily satisfaction out of despising his neighbors than the Newhaven fishermen do out of their conscious superiority to this poor soul, who lugs his fish in a basket on his back like a woman, and has “na pride aboot him.”

If I had had time and opportunity to probe one layer farther down in Newhaven society, no doubt I should have come upon something which even this pariah, the fish-carrying man, would scorn to be seen doing.

After the last toiling fishwife had disappeared in the distance, and the wharf and the village had quieted down into sombre stillness, I drove to The Peacock, and ate bread and milk in a room which, if it were not the very one in which Christie and her lover supped, at least looked out on the same sea they looked upon. And a very gray, ugly sea it was, too; just such an

one as used to stir Christie's soul with a heat of desire to spin out into it, and show the boys she was without fear. On the stony beach below the inn a woman was spreading linen to dry. Her motions as she raised and bent, and raised and bent, over her task were graceful beyond measure. Scuds of raindrops swept by now and then; and she would stop her work, and straightening herself into a splendid pose, with one hand on her hip, throw back her head, and sweep the whole sky with her look, uncertain whether to keep on with her labor or not; then bend again, and make greater haste than before.

As I drove out of the village I found a knot of the women gossiping at a corner. They had gathered around a young wife, who had evidently brought out her baby for the village to admire. It was dressed in very "braw attire" for Newhaven: snowy white, and embroidery, and blue ribbons. It was but four weeks old, and its tiny red face was nearly covered up by the fine clothes.

I said to a white-haired woman in the group,—

"Do you recollect when it was all open down to the sea here,—before this second line of newer cottages was built?"

She shook her head and replied, "I'm na so auld's I luik; my hair it wentit white"—After a second's pause, and turning her eyes out to sea as she spoke, she added, "A' 't once it wentit white."

A silence fell on the group, and looks were exchanged between the women. I drove away hastily, feeling as one does who has unawares stepped irreverently on a grave. Many grief-stricken queens have trod the Scottish shores; the centuries still keep their memory green, and their names haunt one's thoughts in every spot they knew. But more vivid to my memory than all these returns and returns the thought of the obscure fisherwoman whose hair, from a grief of which the world never heard, "a' 't once wentit white."

H. H.

CHRYSALIDES.

NIGHT-BLUE skies of thine,
 Egypt, and thy dead who may not rest,
 Who with wide eyes
 Stand staring in the darkness of the mine!
 Thy woman, Egypt, with her breast
 Two cups of carven gold;
 And hands that no more rise
 In praise, or supplication, or to sound
 The timbrel in the dance!
 White is thy noontide glare,
 But no keen glance
 Of yet created sun
 Can pierce the deeps and caverns of thy dead.
 They are overspread
 With a new earth, where new men come and go,
 And sleep when all is done;
 While far below,