

from the garrison scuttled our boat, killed our commanding officer with half the crew, and the few who were left of us were made prisoners.—It is no use bothering you by telling how we escaped from the French prison. We did escape; and Tom will once more fill his vacant chair."

Should any of our readers wish farther acquaintance with our friends, all we can say is, the new year was still young when Adam Bell bestowed his daughter's hand upon the heir of Marchlaw, and Peter beheld the once vacant chair again occupied, and a namesake of the third generation prattling on his knee.

DINING,

AS IT IS PRACTISED ABOUT BEDFORD SQUARE.

THE clock struck seven, and I congratulated myself upon the character I should acquire for punctuality, as the hackney-coach, which had conveyed me from my chambers, drove up to No. — Upper Woburn Place. I knew that I could not as yet be supposed to be detained by multiplicity of business; and I thought it would speak well for me, in the outset of my legal career, to be an exact keeper of hours. On this occasion, however, I was mistaken; and I could see by the bustling manner and turned-up cuffs of the footman who admitted me, that I had made my appearance somewhat too soon. He attempted to snatch my hat from me, and would also have deprived me of my favourite cane, but I managed, with some difficulty, to remain master of both, and then gave him an opportunity of vociferating my name to another domestic, who had posted himself at the foot of the stairs during the skirmish, and whose ink-ingrained fingers led me to surmise that he sometimes served my host in a more professional capacity.

On being ushered into the drawing-room, I found the mistress of the house prepared to receive her guests. As I advanced to make my bow, she rose in all the full-blown dignity which the present style of female dress is calculated to impart. She was young, and rather pretty, but somewhat new to dinner-giving; and while her flushed cheeks and awkward manner betrayed the real state of her mind, she thought it necessary to assume an easy, languishing manner, which, no doubt, she would herself have described by no other term than that of fashionable. My friend Dewitt had taken care not to encumber himself with a wife, until he had insured the means of giving, with becoming splendour, the weekly entertainments at which she was to preside. This desirable end being attained, and feeling himself competent to vie with any one in those banquets, which are at once the pride and solace of the tired votaries of the law, he had, a short time before, chosen a partner whom he thought fitted to share in such pleasures with him. Amongst her other qualifications, she had the merit of being a native of the *West-end* of the town; and this was a circumstance which she did not suffer to escape the recollection of her friends.

"What a warm day it has been, considering the season, Mr. H—," she began; "I really thought I should have been overpowered in Grosvenor-Square. Lady A— was quite distressed to see me in such a state." I assented to the first part of this speech with the proportion of sympathy which was becoming, and the respect which the end of it was intended to call forth. A silence ensued; during which Mrs. Dewitt looked interesting; and I, thinking it was my turn to volunteer a remark, glanced round the room in hopes of picking up a subject. The apartment, however, though as neat as a scanty allowance of smart furniture could make it, did not furnish many ideas; but a piece of pink tape, peeping from under the sofa, afforded a suggestion. "I suppose Mr. Dewitt is perpetually busy at this time of the year; at least he always appears so when I see him in court." "Indeed," answered the

lady, with an expression which proved to me that I had not been fortunate in my topic, "I believe that he has a great deal to do, for I see but little of him: but fortunately for me, although our house is not exactly in the situation which I have been accustomed to, it is out of the reach of that tiresome business. But, by the bye," added she, smiling graciously, "I ought not to disgust you with *the profession*. You are a novice in these things, as I was a few months ago, and I can enter into your feelings."

Just as this sympathy of souls was established between us, I was prevented from exhibiting my sense of it, by the entrance of her husband. He hurried into the room, rubbing his hands, and looking like a boy released from school. My hand, and indeed my whole arm, immediately received a dislocating swing. "Here you are, H—! punctual as usual. I saw you make your appearance in court to-day, just as the Chancellor came in. A great many remarks upon your wig, I can tell you. You youngsters have time to study the becoming, but *you* won't always—I prophesy that."

Two other guests were at this moment announced; and the mode in which they were welcomed, assured me that they were intimate friends of Dewitt. "Well, Marsden," said he, inflicting on him as severe a shake as the one he had bestowed on me, "this is friendly. I was afraid those heavy papers in Pringle and Hopkins, would have taken up all your time, and kept you from us." The gentleman thus addressed was an elderly person, with a short, square figure, and a complexion that spoke plainly of long attendance in unwholesome courts. He had a voice and manner that would have tired the patience of Sir William Grant himself. He answered in the most deliberate tone, which contrasted strongly with the smart, eager manner of my friend. "Indeed the case is a very complicated one——" "But," interrupted the heavy barrister's companion, "we were determined not to miss coming to your very first dinner, whatever might be the consequences." The last speaker was a fat, elderly lady, with a face and manner as jolly and unrestrained, as her husband's were solemn and measured. Her dress (for a lady's mind betrays itself in her dress, and I am, therefore a careful observer of it) appeared to have seen many changes of fashion before it had arrived at its present amplified condition:—an immense structure, between a cap and a turban, surmounted her head, and a huge black prunella foot protruded from beneath her orange silk petticoat.

To do the lady justice, she did not appear to bestow more thought upon her attire than was sufficient to prompt an occasional hasty and coachman-like shrug of her shoulders, when her rebellious garments seemed disposed to fall off. In this respect she formed a striking contrast with Mrs. Dewitt, who looked as if cut out of the *Court Magazine*, and was ever and anon occupied in the contemplation of unrequited arrangement of her toilette. Her smiles were soon called up for the reception of a new guest. The moment he appeared, I perceived that the poor young gentleman had been despoiled of his hat; and he twisted his unhappy, un-

occupied fingers about most unmercifully, while making his obeisance to the lady of the house, and saluting the rest of the party. Dewitt, perceiving his forlorn condition, thus attempted to relieve him: "Aha, King! I know how we have succeeded in getting you. You found out that the fair Emily W—— was to favour us with her presence, and so you have come to get a sight of her." Mr. King looked confused and embarrassed at the supposition of such a thing; and his fingers received a more severe twist than they had yet undergone. "Well, well," resumed his tormentor, "we can forgive you; her beauty is a sufficient excuse." "Her beauty is, indeed, unrivalled," solemnly answered the young barrister. "Aye, that it is," said the other, "so take care of your heart, H——, and see! here she comes."

At this moment the unrivalled beauty in question made her appearance, attended by her brother. She was tall, slim, and fair, with a profusion of yellow locks arranged somewhat in contempt of the fashion; but there was a coarseness in her expression, if not actually in her features; and every movement of her figure, while it suffered one to perceive that the symmetry was very incomplete, betrayed a vulgarity of mind still more offensive. But what pleased me less than all, was the assumption of the airs of a beauty; and I turned from the contemplation of the lady to her brother, who evidently did not think himself a person to be overlooked. A delicate olive-coloured coat, with a broad black velvet collar, adorned his upper man, affording an ample prospect of a black and scarlet waistcoat, and retiring modestly into a point behind, so as to conceal as little as possible of the dark green *trousses*.

The longer I looked upon this sprig of legal ton, the more I was disgusted, and ill humour was fast creeping upon me, when the door opened, and the master of the ceremonies announced in a tone which had acquired more than usual importance, "Mr. Justice Melbourne and Miss Melbourne." If a spirit had descended in the midst of obsequious clouds, and to the sound of soft music, I could not have been more joyfully surprised. A well-known figure entered the room and glided past me, and a bright face gave me a smile of recognition as she made her way into the circle. A general disturbance took place; what was to be done!—The seat of honour, that is, a most unluxurious sofa, the chief ornament of the room, was already quite filled by the fat, taper, and tall persons of the Mesdames Marsden and Dewitt, and Miss Wallace; Mr. Justice Melbourne's niece *must* have a place of distinction; Mrs. Dewitt stood up, still the vacancy was not very apparent; Miss Wallace stuck fast: Mrs. Marsden good-humouredly bustled away, and plunged into an arm-chair, saying, "For my part I don't care where I sit: now Marsden, *he* is so very fond of sitting easy." But before this diversion could be accomplished in Miss Melbourne's favour, she had taken up a less honourable position, and I was at her side. She seemed glad to meet somebody whom she had seen before, for every other person in the room was unknown to her, as she was new to these scenes, and had been invited in compliment to her uncle, whom she had come to London to visit. He bore outward marks of being what fame reported him, a person who might do honour to any profession. I was comparing Miss Melbourne with Miss Wallace, and thinking of the advantage of beauty without vulgarity, and of good breeding without affectation, when Sergeant and Mrs. Oldfield were introduced. While Mrs. Oldfield (a neat and spruce-looking little woman) was whispering to Mrs. Dewitt, an excuse for her late arrival, some little nursery anecdote not intended for the public ear, the proper functionary proclaimed dinner.

Dewitt led off Mrs. Oldfield, the Serjeant had the honour of supporting Mrs. Marsden's portliness, and then came (as I had been carefully calculating) Miss Wallace's turn: I trembled, for I thought there could be

no doubt as to the event; but *the beauty* stood forward to assert her claim, and Mr. Marsden seemed to think himself happy to uphold it. They marched on; Miss Melbourne drew nearer to me, but just then the insufferable and presuming dandy thrust himself forward, and bore her off! Mr. Justice Melbourne and Mrs. Dewitt followed, and I disconsolately brought up the rear with Mr. King. The coxcomb who had *done* me was my senior at the bar by a few months, and thus had right on his side.

With some degree of confusion and eagerness the whole party took their places, and the business of the day began. The two attendants, of whom I have already made honourable mention, had been reinforced by two others, and if noise and bustle constituted the art of serving, they certainly performed their part to admiration. "Do you *take* soup or fish," reiterated Mrs. Dewitt to every one in succession (a question which by-the-by I always think rather disagreeable, as implying that one is not entitled to both of those preliminaries; and while I was awaiting my turn, I had leisure to look around me. I found myself placed near the languishing Mrs. Dewitt and the merry Mrs. Marsden, but I had also the advantage of being almost opposite Miss Melbourne, whose supporters were the beauty's brother and Serjeant Oldfield. The beau was assiduous in his devoirs, but notwithstanding the superiority of his costume, he found to his mortification that his fair neighbour was more inclined to give her attention to Serjeant Oldfield.

The joys of feasting were now at their zenith. "Pray, allow me to offer you some turkey, Mrs. Oldfield," said Mrs. Dewitt, elevating her voice somewhat above the subdued pitch to which she had hitherto confined it; "you do seem to be making a very poor dinner of it!" "Why, really that mock-turtle of yours," said Mrs. Marsden, "is so very stuffing, one can't relish any thing else after:—Marsden, *he* would make nothing of two good helps of it." Mr. King's tragical voice next attracted my attention: with the most profound gravity he inquired if he might offer Miss Wallace a glass of champagne. By looking beyond the intervening heads I had a full view of the bow which followed. He still held it essential for a well-dressed gentleman to have the chin firmly propped up. This certainly might add to the dignity of his appearance, but it did not facilitate the manœuvre which he was now going through, and the prolonged bend of his whole person contrasted oddly with the slight nod or rather toss which Miss Wallace vouchsafed him. Indeed, I soon perceived that his homage was but ill repaid; the lady even gave some slight signs of disdain across the table to her brother; and a few inquiring glances were actually directed towards me to ascertain if I had any claims to her attention.

Mr. Justice Melbourne being engaged in stating a very interesting *nisi prius* case to Marsden, while Serjeant Oldfield was evidently pleasing Miss Melbourne by a dissertation on rural delights, I made a foolish attempt to hear both; listening attentively to the Judge and the Serjeant. Of course I gathered nothing but detached and incomprehensible scraps of discourse for my pains; and had, therefore, determined on devoting both ears to the Serjeant, when Dewitt exclaimed, "What's that Oldfield—what was your last remark?" "I was only saying," replied the Serjeant, "a few words in favour of a country life, such as this young lady usually leads, when contrasted with the work-a-day world in which we are compelled to toil." "Ah! but you are overstating the case, my good friend," said Dewitt; "I must shew Miss Melbourne the right points of it, or rather perhaps I had better leave it in the hands of some younger advocate,—eh, Wallace? surely you are able to conduct it yourself, and to lay before Miss Melbourne the joys of a lawyer's life, and of a lawyer's lady too; eh, my dear Sarah?" Mrs. D.

answered the appeal with a languid smile, which could not have been very satisfactory to her good-natured husband; but Mrs. Oldfield came in to his support, and to the relief of Mr. Wallace, whose gallantry had been converted into sheepishness by so sudden an appeal. "Indeed, I think," said she, "there can be few situations so comfortable; the gentlemen always out of the way, as they ought to be, in the morning; and then so glad to see one at dinner, and no interfering with the children, except to play with them when they have time! To be sure one does want a little air for them, poor little things, sometimes; but then comes the long vacation, which sets all to rights. Pray, where do you go next autumn, Mr. Marsden?" The words which Mr. Marsden uttered in reply were almost the first which had escaped his lips since he had sat down to table, and indeed I perceived that his fair lady had done him no wrong, when she informed us of his capacity for consuming a large share of good cheer, a talent which is rarely evinced in the *profession*, as, excepting on the happy Saturdays, they dare not cultivate one so inconsistent with mental labour.

The subject of the long vacation not only lasted throughout the remainder of the repast, but for some time after its close. The ladies at length gave it up, and Mrs. Marsden said to the fair hostess in subdued tones, "Well, my dear Mrs. Dewitt, I must say that a more elegant dinner I never saw set out. Pray, where did you get those magnificent silver side-dishes? Marsden, he says that I shall never have a bit of plate, more than spoons and forks, till he gets a silk gown, and that will be soon, I do hope." "I really cannot exactly remember about the side-dishes," replied Mrs. Dewitt. "I only recollect that I made it a point with Mr. D. to have every thing in *proper style*." "You had better luck than some of us," said Mrs. Oldfield; "the Serjeant was not a very rich man when I married him, but now I believe no body has better business in the Common Pleas than he has; though we do want it all to be sure, with nine children to provide for!" "But then there's a great deal in good managing," observed Mrs. Marsden, "and you always had such a way with you. Now, how much table-beer do you allow your servants? I never could tolerate any ale in our house, for even if the man has not enough to get drunk, the maid-servants do get so *uppish* there's no bearing them!" Mrs. Oldfield having satisfied her friend as to her arrangements in this matter, Mrs. Marsden proceeded: "Well now, that is liberal, *very* liberal, *too* liberal I think; but they are so difficult to please, and then, if you'd believe them, they have always too much work. There's my housemaid (you know I took her from Mrs. Henry,) she complains, forsooth! To be sure she waits on me; but then there's very little scrubbing up stairs, and what's the drawing-room? nothing, for I always sit in the *parlour*; it keeps the room above clean, and one's nearer the servants. I must tell you a story about that slut Sally—" "Ahem!" murmured Mrs. Dewitt, with a warning gesture, as the conversation of the gentlemen was evidently about to flag. A dead pause ensued: Dewitt was uneasy, but in a few moments a bright idea occurred to him, and turning to Mr. Justice Melbourne, he said, "Apropos, of the old new trials.—" The words had scarcely passed his lips, when Mrs. Marsden, under cover of the fertile topic thus started, prepared to open her batteries upon "that slut Sally;" but Mrs. Dewitt, anxious to start a more refined subject, dexterously cut in before her. "I hope you like my schallis, Mrs. Oldfield," said she: "Madame D—— says it's just come from Paris." "Very pretty, I must say," replied Mrs. O.; "but that's a lady to beware of; indeed I never go near the French milliners." "Oh, I never could employ any other," said Mrs. D.; "I am sure that you patronize them, Miss Melbourne; that gown looks like it." Here Mrs. Marsden interposed, "Why, black velvet is very gen-

teel to be sure; but it's all up with it if you sit much."

Mrs. Dewitt, having now ascertained that Mrs. Oldfield had taken enough wine, gave the usual bow with much *intended* grace, and the ladies withdrew. For the next hour we had plenty of argument, lots of law, a few professional jokes, and some remarks on fees. Mr. Justice Melbourne wondered that they had not fallen with other things: it astonished him to see gentlemen at the bar still getting war prices. He thought they should have been reduced. He felt satisfied that the attention of suitors would soon be aroused on the subject, and that a change must ensue. Mr. Dewitt certainly felt disposed to favour the abolition of half-guinea fees, for the signature of counsel as a mere matter of form to motion papers. Mr. King ventured to object, because young barristers principally subsisted on the proceeds of silent motions. Serjeant Oldfield pared an apple, and Mr. Marsden's mouth was overflowing with orange. Mr. Wallace attempted to bring in the opera, but it was coldly received, and soon withdrawn. Marsden, with more success, started the subject of promotions, public and private; and this lasted until coffee was declared.

On entering the drawing room a little in advance of the other gentlemen, I found Mrs. D. and her fair guests congregated on the hearth-rug. One of Mrs. Marsden's substantial legs was inside the fender, and one of her hands occupied in keeping her garments aloof from the fire. Mrs. Dewitt "swam, swan-like," to her seat; the other ladies took chairs, and I had the felicity of being able to locate myself in the immediate vicinity of the black velvet gown. About half an hour after, the footman burst into the room, pompously announcing "Mrs. Marsden's carriage;" then approaching the lady's ear, he whispered, "your servant says, ma'am, that he can't find never a chariot, ma'am, not nowhere on the stand, ma'am." "Well," exclaimed Mrs. M., feeling that the announcement had been extensively overheard, "I do dislike those coaches; one don't see where one's going, and I am so afraid of an accident—don't you prefer a chariot, Miss Wallace? but I forgot, your mother keeps her own coach *now*." Miss Wallace reddened up to her temples. Observing this, Mrs. Marsden remarked in a semi-whisper to Mrs. Oldfield, while shouldering on her cloak, "I don't see why one should feel ashamed of not riding in one's own coach." The other guests gradually departed with gracious smiles from host and hostess, and just as the Temple bell tolled one, I found myself in the solitude of my own chamber.

LADY POETS.

MRS. HEMANS is still residing in Dublin, occupied in the education of her sons: she will shortly publish a volume of sacred poetry. Hannah Moore is alive, but in a state that would render death a blessing; a Memoir, by a "constant friend," is already prepared. Miss Landon has been staying at Oxford on a visit to her uncle, the head of Worcester College: a new novel from her pen is nearly finished. Miss Mitford sojourns at Three Mile Cross: her tragedies laid by till a more fitting season. Mrs. Howitt, a member of the Society of Friends, who resides at Nottingham, has prepared a series of tragic dramas, with the highest moral tone. Of Mrs. Joanna Bailie the world hears nothing; she resides at Highgate, in comparative solitude, but enjoying daily intercourse with a few chosen friends. Miss Bowles is unhappily not in good health; she lives at Leamsington, in Hampshire. Miss Jewsbury (Mrs. Fletcher) is on the wide sea, with her husband, voyaging to India. Mrs. Norton is deserting the muses for the Court Magazine, and a novel which we believe will shortly appear. Mrs. Opie lately disposed of her house at Norwich, and is now residing in Cornwall.