

offensive to those who have not learned to defeat the laws of nature. The laws of society are paralyzed when their arm is stretched forth to strike him, because tobacco is all-powerful on the bench; and those who are appointed to carry out their empty orders have more sympathy with the offender than the offended. Who ever heard of smoking in railway carriages being more than "prohibited;" or of that select ground "abaft the funnel" being actually preserved from the encroachments of this nuisance? Who ever had the moral courage to stand up in a party of travellers, and refuse that sanction to be half choked, which is only asked for as a matter of form?

The inveterate smoker is the most selfish of men. He thinks of nothing but his beloved habit at all times, in all companies, and all seasons. Ladies, invalids, and tender infants, are no barrier to his indulgence, and he has the heart of an ogre if not the appetite. He leaves a trail behind him by which he can always be traced, and he will flavour a house, or a public building, as strongly as a broken sewer does. Wherever he sits for a few hours, he is sure to leave his mark by making the atmosphere heavy and poisonous, and filling the furniture with the rank smells of his idolized weed. Windows may be thrown open, and fancy perfumes may be introduced, but all in vain. The room once thoroughly impregnated with tobacco-smoke can never be cleansed. Its very tone will deepen and change in spite of all the resources of the decorator's art, and by degrees it will sink into the melancholy aspect of a liquorice-coloured den.

The conversation of the inveterate smoker is never brilliant, and his company is more exacting than amusing. He will sit in solemn silence, like one of those eastern fanatics whom we term *yogis*, receiving all you like to tell him with a self-satisfied, clouded, impassible face, and giving no speech in return. The social qualities of tobacco are always grossly over-rated, and no company was ever improved by its drowsy influence. Heavy stupor, in such assemblies, takes the place of wit, and a half-drunken slowness of delivery is the counterfeit presentment of wisdom.*

Tobacco smokers can command a large majority in most circles of society, and no one ever asks what substance is lighted and sucked into nothingness, as long as it is called "tobacco," and produces smoke. One man may puff a mild cigar that is costly and unadulterated; another may fill a black pipe with a coarse and nauseous mixture; and though the first may be comparatively inoffensive, while the second is poisonous and suffocating, the same liberty to become a nuisance is accorded to both. Nearly one half of all the tobacco sold, and all the cigars manufactured, is largely adulterated,

and with such noxious ingredients as nitrate of potash, sulphate of magnesia, ammonia, alum, and carbonate of lime! Knowing this—without regarding the warning heart-sickness which nature has set at the very threshold of this habit, how can we question the opinion of those numerous medical authorities who have told us that smoking, much or little, is injurious to bodily health?

It is hopeless for the persecuted minority who never smoke, to attempt to stop this nuisance by argument, appeals to reason, or the aid of the law; and only one course, as a humorous friend suggests, appears to be left open. This is to invent some retaliating odour, twice as offensive as tobacco smoke, and by using it unsparingly in opposition, so drive the disgusted and disgusting enemy out of the field!

ARTHUR AND THE ROUND TABLE.

How shall we treat him? Deferentially; as a true historic personage, the stamp of whose broad features was taken by the soft clay of the age in which he lived, and then hardened into irregular proportions by the slow lapse of time? Or shall he be treated as a splendid myth, a brilliant mirage, the portentous child of mist and sunlight? Most certainly we shall hold Arthur the Briton to be a fact in history; for one cannot bring one's self to believe that his name, which was owned for ages as the very talisman of chivalry, and was long acknowledged by the historian in the calm retirement of his laborious cell, is but an imaginative rumour, a wandering echo from the chord of some visionary bard. We are aware that we are approaching the "debateable ground" of romance, but will endeavour soberly to keep the beaten track of probability, and not indulge ourselves in a *détour* into the shadowy land of fable, through which the old chroniclers, led by Geoffry of Monmouth, or the old minstrels in the following of "Maister Wace," would be our ready guides.

Many writers of modern days, sorely discomfited by the bewildering mazes in which these questionable authorities have entangled them, have found it the easiest way to decide that such a hero of the marvellous as our Arthur never lived. But this is a pusillanimous way of escaping from a difficulty, unworthy of the courage of modern chivalry. It may be the shortest, but it is not the most sagacious mode, to take refuge in unbelief, merely because the outlines of an object are too large for our standard of measurement. Those who dwell in a mountainous region are aware that atmosphere, in its misty moments, sometimes plays strange freaks with sober realities, magnifying them into giants, distorting them into monsters, and making truth its very toy. Thus also, in arctic regions, ships are sometimes seen, and not phantom ones either, apparently sailing, keel upwards, through the clouds. Captain Scoresby saw his father's vessel thus inverted, when it was some fifty miles distant. A highly refracting state of the atmosphere accounts for the phenomenon. Let us then try to obtain a truthful view of the person of Arthur, although his propor-

* The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
Makes half a sentence at a time enough;
The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,
Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause again.
Such often, like the tube they so admire,
Important triflers! have more smoke than fire.
Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
The sex, whose presence civilizes ours," etc., etc.
Cooper's "Conversation."

tions and attitudes may seem to be the reverse of probable, as seen through the mists of antiquity and the refracting medium of old romance.

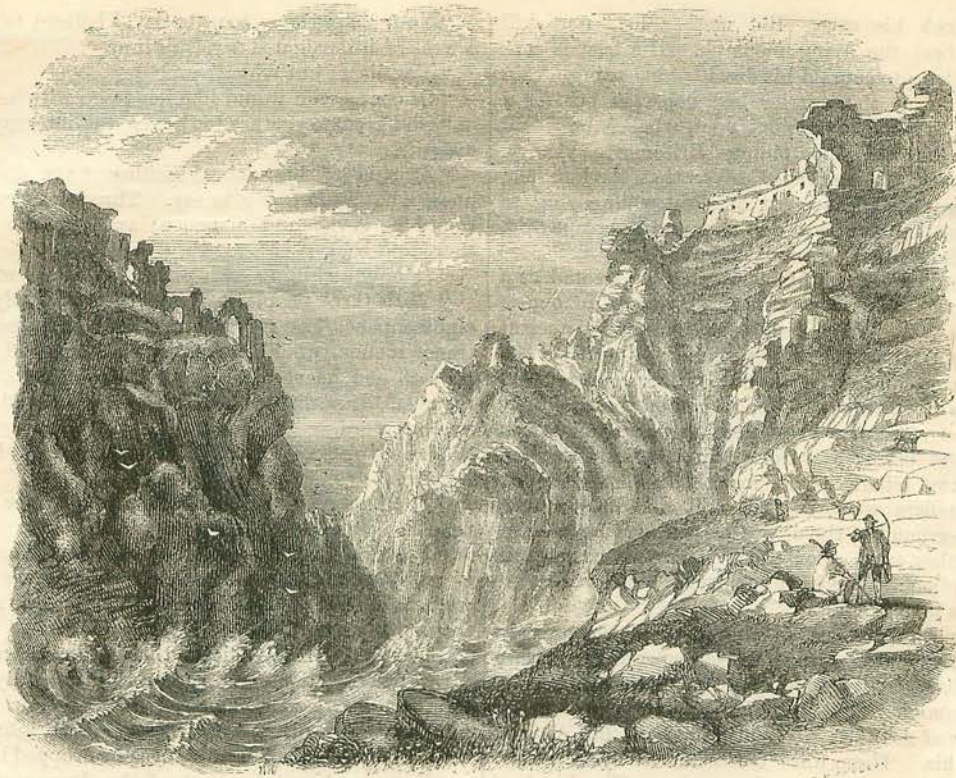
And first let us bestow a cursory glance at the state of our island at the period when Arthur stepped boldly out upon its troubled plains. Branches of the Cimmerian and Celtic races had hitherto composed its population, while occasional visits to its shores appear to have been made by the Phœnicians when engaged in their bold commercial enterprises. Then Rome enrolled Britain in the proud lists of her conquests; her military roads and walls traversed the savage haunts of the painted children of the woods, and the Roman altar displaced the Druid's cromlech. At length the haughty mistress of the world, whose hands were now full of home troubles, had found it needful to loosen the bands of her distant captive; and as the broad pinions of the Roman eagle disappeared from the shores of Britain, her coasts were darkened by the coming shadows of other and wilder foes.

But first the peace of the land had been sorely troubled by incursions from the Celtic tribes of Picts and Scots, who came swarming over the wall of Antoninus from amidst the Scottish hills, as soon as they heard the retiring footsteps of the imperial legions. The Britons, enervated by four centuries of Roman servitude, were incapable of self-defence. They bitterly regretted the departure of their iron-handed lords; and after having in vain appealed to Rome for assistance, in a moving epistle entitled, "The Groans of the Britons," they concluded to send a deputation into Germany to invoke the aid of the Saxons. In the dark pine forests, and amidst the perpetual disturbances of the Germanic Continent, a remarkable people had been educating, which was destined to produce an abiding effect upon the civil institutions and social structure of our island. Rude as were the Anglo-Saxons, when they sallied forth from their forest homes and landed on the British coasts, they nevertheless brought with them the germs of those great ideas which afterwards expanded into political and judicial institutions of so high an order of practical excellence. These great thoughts did not grow up from some classic root that had wandered over from Greece, nor did they spring from seed drilled into the earth by the iron tread of Rome. They were the native growth of a new and vigorous soil; and though their expansion was at first checked by the briars of surrounding barbarism, they at length attained a degree of stability which Greece and Rome never knew. Yes; it is the Anglo-Saxon race which has done the work of the world; but this is because a purer form of Christianity than has elsewhere prevailed, has given to that race a lofty mission to fulfil. Would that it had been more faithful to its trust!

The Saxon invasion—for, having once seen our "best of islands," as old Geoffrey of Monmouth rightly styles it, the strangers were not at all disposed to go home again—the Saxon invasion necessarily entailed upon England a long period of desolating wars. But if we withdraw our eye from the painful process of conquest, and fix it upon the result, we shall see that an amended state of social

and political existence was the consequence. The Saxons had occasionally visited the British shores on their predatory excursions, for the *last two hundred years*; but they had never sat down to rest—never looked upon the land as a fitting building-site for future empire. Towards the close of the fifth century, however, Cerdic headed an invasion which, after a lengthened struggle, ended in the founding of the West Saxon kingdom.

And now we first meet with the romantic name of our British hero. Cerdic the Saxon, about the year 520, was pushing his conquests westward, and had laid siege to Badon, near Bath, where the retiring Britons had made a stand. These, in their extremity, had appealed to "Arthur, Prince of the Silures," to aid them against the common foe. Now Arthur, say the old chroniclers, had inherited from his father Uther the office of Pendragon, a dignity paramount in power and station to all the other petty kings. The minstrels add, that the birth of Arthur had been concealed, but that Merlin, the great magician, who knew his royal lineage, had produced the famous sword "Excalibar," amidst the circle of rival candidates to the throne, and had decreed that whatever hand could wrench the mystic weapon from the block of stone, into which he had firmly fixed it, should be the one to wield the sceptre as well as to hold the sword. Of course, the hand of the young Arthur was the one fated to loosen Excalibar from its stony setting. For the truth of this picturesque story we offer no vouchers, for none are to be had. Sober history says that there was a great fight before the walls of Badon, and that Badon was relieved. Cerdic, checked in mid career, consequently retires before the British forces. But he is not rooted out of the land, he is only arrested in his conquering course; for we find that he is able to bequeath Wessex as an heirloom to his posterity. As Arthur never succeeds in dislodging the foe, he could not have been the hero girded with resistless might and dowered with far-sweeping dominion over sea and land, such as Geoffrey and his followers have loved to represent him. Indeed, the Welsh bards have generally spoken of him in terms of moderate admiration; and Llywarch the Aged, who had been guest at his table and friend in council, speaks of him with the deference due to his superior endowments, but not as a warrior gifted with supernatural powers. This gives a greater air of truthfulness to his story. A long struggle ensued upon the relief of Badon, not only against the discomfited Saxons, but also against the Picts and Scots from the north. Arthur was not always successful, but the general result was in his favour. Geoffrey of Monmouth declares that he not only subdued Scotland, but that he added to his rule Ireland, the Orkneys, some parts of Gaul and Norway, and even that strange outlying gem of the northern seas, the fiery and frozen Iceland. But we must not allow our imagination to take such far flights as these. Suppose we confine ourselves to our British islands and to their sister Brittany, allowing Arthur to make an occasional summer excursion with his bold "Knights of the Round Table," in search of stirring adventure upon wider fields of chivalry.



SITE AND RUINS OF KING ARTHUR'S CASTLE, IN CORNWALL.

the science of precedence were met in the same ingenious manner. Stow says that King Arthur kept his round table at "diverse places," but especially at Carlion, Winchester, and Camelot in Somersetshire. But for ages after he fell to dust, its memory was preserved by a phrase used in chivalry; for the proclaiming of a tournament was henceforth termed "holding a round table." In a field near Eamont Bridge, about a mile and a half from Penrith, and consequently not far removed from Arthur's own "merrie Carleile," there is to be seen a circular area, surrounded by a mound and fosse, which still bears the name of "King Arthur's Round Table."

From a bold headland on the northern coast of Cornwall a very remarkable rocky promontory runs bravely out into the surging sea. It is bound on to the mainland by a low and narrow band of bridge-like rock. Lines of very old masonry, with here a loop-hole and there a crumbling doorway, are firmly cemented into the living rock all down the face of the headland, and up the side and brow of the projecting crag. They say that a drawbridge in the olden time sprung across from the one to the other. The walls are in some places so massive as to allow a passage to run along through their thickness; and sternly must their strength have been tested by centuries of driving storms. And this is called "King Arthur's Castle"—his traditional birthplace, and his Cornish home. The rocks and the little patches of matted turf are so slippery and so steep, that he must have a steady eye and a firm step who would venture down upon

the natural bridge and up aloft upon the bold castellated rock. The sea-fowl are swooping round his forehead, and screaming shrill defiance into his ear. The booming wind seems bent upon plunging him into the green swell of the sea far below, which is veined like marble by lines of retreating foam-belts, or broken into sudden shivers by the wild reflux of some master wave. His eyes are now blinded by a shower of foam, which is capriciously flung into his face like a blast of driving smoke. A fragment is loosened by his foot, and bounds sharply from rock to rock until it plunges madly into the gulf, which welcomes it with a passing burst of foamy gladness. But the sound of the deep organ-toned winds, and of the hoarse wild chant of the waves as they "clap their hands" in their strength, who shall venture to describe it in puny words? We must resolve it all into the majestic power of the Creator, and take refuge in the words of Scripture: "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea;" and "It is he who bringeth the wind out of his treasures."

It was at Camlan, not far from his own wave-washed Tintagel, that Arthur received his death-wound in conflict with his rebel nephew Mordred, in the year 542. Being mortally wounded, and almost all his knights slain in the fight, he was conveyed in a vessel from the Cornish shore as far as the River Uzella, in Somersetshire. His sister, abbess of the convent at Glastonbury, eagerly

undertook his cure. But neither love nor skill could heal the dying monarch. His friends contrived long to conceal his death, propagating a vain rumour that the warrior had departed but for a season to some mysterious spot, whence he would return to lead the pining Britons to victory. Mathew of Westminster says, that Arthur had purposely withdrawn out of sight while dying, to prevent the triumph of his foes, and to escape from the officious grief of his friends.

The discovery of his tomb may be treated as a matter of historic certainty. Henry II, in one of his visits to Wales, had been told by an ancient bard of Arthur's place and manner of burial. The king consequently conferred with the abbot and monks of Glastonbury; he intimated that the body had been laid at a great depth beneath the sod, in order to preserve it from Saxon molestation, and that two pillars would mark the identical spot. Two pillars were, in fact, still standing in the burial-ground of the abbey, and in digging betwixt these they came upon a leaden cross, bearing this inscription: "Hic jacet sepultus inclitus rex Arturius in insula Avalonia."

Camden gives us an engraving of the cross in his "Britannia." Sixteen feet beneath the surface was discovered a coffin, containing bones of more than common size. Giraldus says that the bones of one of Arthur's wives also lay near, but distinct from his. There were tresses of her yellow hair, apparently in perfect preservation. The hand of an attendant monk eagerly seized the soft and silken relic, but it instantly fell to dust between his fingers. The bones were removed from their deep rest, and deposited in a splendid shrine before the high altar of Glastonbury Church. Robert of Gloucester describes this sumptuous tomb. Once again was the repose of the dead disturbed to gratify royal curiosity. The shrine was opened in the year 1276, to afford Edward I and his queen a view of the relics of our British hero; and once more were they reverently restored to the tomb's keeping, wrapped in gorgeous vestments—a strange mockery of poor mortality.

The splendid abbey of Glastonbury is now a mouldering but beautiful ruin, and probably never again will it be asked by king or queen, monk or bard, Where lie the bones of Arthur the Briton?

THE HOME SAVINGS BANK.

"How much I should like to go!" exclaimed Mrs. Mowbray, as she glanced at an advertisement in the first sheet of the "Times," whilst her husband lingered at the breakfast table perusing the graver portion of the journal.

"What is it, my dear?" he inquired, surprised by her animated tone into looking up from the report of a debate on the budget.

"It is the announcement of Signor Aldiberonto's 'Marvels and Mystery; or, Two Hours of Modern Magic,'" she replied, "and it is but half-a-crown each, entrance—his last night but two—we certainly ought to go."

"Your sister comes to us to-day, I believe, to stay a week?" interrogated Mr. Mowbray.

"Yes, dear; but why?"

"Of course you would like her to go with us—"

"Oh! Henry, you are too generous," interrupted his wife.

"Stop, stop," he rejoined smiling, "you do not know what I am going to say. Three half-crowns would be seven and sixpence; and the cab fare there and back—?"

"Is only a shilling each way," replied his wife.

"With three people it would then probably be eighteenpence," he resumed, "which, with the entrance money, would make ten shillings and sixpence;" and he stopped short in his speech, and resumed his parliamentary debate, without adding another word.

Mrs. Mowbray looked at him earnestly for a minute.

"Shall we go, my dear?" she asked, as she rose from her chair.

"No, wifey, not to-night;" and, although he said it gently, she knew he meant it, and, like a sensible woman, did not repeat the request, but left the room to commence her daily household duties.

Before going to his office in the city that morning, Mr. Mowbray stepped into his own little study behind the dining-room, shut the door, and, drawing his purse from his pocket, took thence a bright half-sovereign and a sixpence. These he dropped into a small canvas bag taken out of the drawer of his writing-table, and carefully replacing it, and locking the drawer, he put his bunch of keys into his pocket, and with a familiar smile walked out of the room.

What could it mean?

Miss Benson came early, and she and her sister had a very agreeable walk before dinner in the pretty neighbourhood of their suburban cottage; then the dinner hour found Mr. Mowbray with them again, so cheerful and entertaining that the whole evening passed away without his wife once thinking of the "modern magic" she had so longed to go to.

A few days after this, Mr. Mowbray proposed to his wife that they should pay a visit to her father and mother, who lived about two miles distant.

"I should like it exceedingly," she answered; "you are always thoughtful and kind, dear Henry; Susan can fetch a cab to the door by the time I am dressed."

"I propose that we should walk there, Jenny, it is such a fine afternoon."

"It is hardly worth while, Henry; the fare is only a shilling, and the same back at night."

"We can come home in the omnibus, wifey."

"And so save sixpence," she rejoined, somewhat sarcastically.

"Even so," he replied with his firm gentleness; "go and put on your bonnet, Jenny; the walk across the park will do us more good than riding in a close smoky cab."

Mrs. Mowbray obeyed, and as she passed upstairs to prepare for their walk, her husband entered his little study. Again the purse and canvas bag were both drawn forth, and two silver coins passed from one into the other.

Several times during the next few weeks there