

"For it is condescension, John," continued the little barber; "don't tell me, anybody," said he, looking round, "that I am a fit and proper person to be a-sitting and a-talking so familiar with a man as is every inch a gentleman, as was a born and bred gentleman, and——"

"Mr. Keenedge, my good friend," interposed the poor clerk with rapid utterance, "this is not right; you must not talk so extravagantly. I a gentleman! I condescend! You do not know. I am sure you do not mean it; but you do not know how much pain you give me by talking in such a manner. You do not know what I am."

"Yes, John, I do," replied Mr. Keenedge; "you are a man of a thousand, John; but I won't—there, I hadn't ought to have spoke my feelings; only I thank you, John, for being so friendly and free; there, now I have said it, and my mind is easy."

"Mr. Keenedge," said the poor clerk, after a short silence, in which his countenance seemed agitated with some secret emotions, "I never thought that I should bring myself to speak of my own history. You know, when I first took this room of you——"

"More than ten years ago, John," said the landlord.

"Yes, more than ten years ago: I told you that I was a very poor man, and unfortunate."

"You did, John," the little barber nodded; "yes, and it was easy to see that you was in great trouble. I knew it before you ever spoke. Ah! I haven't forgot the turn you gave me when you came into my little shop below, and asked to be let to shave yourself with one of my razors. 'No,' thinks I, 'not if I knows it, my friend; none of my razors goes into your hands to-day, if I knows it. If you are too poor to pay, I'll shave you for nothink, and welcome,' thinks I, and so I said, John."

"It is all true, Mr. Keenedge; and I thank you heartily now, though I was too proud to thank you then, for your kindness and caution. However, there wasn't the danger you thought of. But this is not what I was about to say. You remember that I let you shave me——"

"And you paid me, too; yes, yes; trust you for that. If it had a-been your last penny——"

"It *was* nearly my last penny, my friend, though I did not say so then. But I was in trouble; and your kind look gave me courage to tell you so, and to say that I wanted a lodging, the poorer and meaner the better, so that I could be alone."

"Yes, John, I remember that too; and that, seeing a card in my window, 'A room to let unfurnished for a single man,' you would like to take it."

"I told you also, Mr. Keenedge," continued the poor clerk, without noticing his friend's response, "that I could not give you any reference as to character; that I was a man almost unknown, and wished to be; that I had just obtained employment, such as it was, which would enable me to pay the rent of the room; but that I should wish to come and go unquestioned, and that no inquiry should ever be made about me by you, if no inquiry were made concerning me by others, which was not likely."

The little barber nodded. He remembered it all. "Then you asked me my name, and I said, 'My name is John.' 'Yes,' you said 'John——,' and you waited for me to fill up the blank. 'John, only John,' I said; 'John, and nothing else.'"

"I recollect it all as if it was yesterday," rejoined the landlord; "and I remember—you won't mind my saying it now, John—that I was queered a bit then. 'There isn't any honest man as need be ashamed of the name he took from his father,' I thought; 'and I don't want to have nothink to do with a man as won't own to his right name.'"

"I know you hesitated, my friend; I knew it then," continued the poor clerk, "for I watched your countenance closely; but your good nature and compassion prevailed, and I carried my point. 'Let it be John, if you will,' you said, and you took me in as your lodger, and since then I have been John—only John—to you and to all the world."

"True, true," the little barber nodded; "and I have never repented trusting to you, John."

"I am thankful for that; how thankful you cannot tell," said the poor clerk humbly. "Well, since then—more than ten years ago—you have shown me kindness on kindness."

"No, no; don't say it, John," said Mr. Keenedge, waving his hand.

"Kindness on kindness; and the greatest of all kindnesses in that you have borne with my whims, and have never sought to know more of me than you have seen."

"There hasn't been no need, John," said the landlord.

"But now," continued the poor clerk, "the time is come when I feel that I ought to return confidence for confidence. Not to-night, for I am not equal to it; but come and see me again to-morrow night, my friend, and I will tell you part of my history."

"Not if it would hurt your mind to tell it, John."

"It will, and it will not. It may relieve me," said the speaker; "and it is due to you."

TORCHLIGHT PROCESSIONS.

THE Mendelssohn Musical Festival of the 4th of May, at the Crystal Palace, was concluded by a torchlight procession. On a more recent occasion, at the opening of a public park and garden at Hull, a similar display took place—on the suggestion, we suppose, of the German residents in that town, for this is a custom which we English have lately imported from Germany. There, torchlight processions are not only offered as tributes to the illustrious dead, but also to the popular living; indeed, they seem the usual winding up of all fêtes, and are especially a passion with German students. Generally, the promenade terminates at some given spot, where the space is sufficiently large for the purpose, and each bearer dashes his torch down in a peculiar manner, to the sound of music, while they all blaze up again in one general bonfire; sometimes they sing a kind of hymn, and modulate

the sounds down lower and lower, until the fire is extinguished. Something of this kind was done at the Crystal Palace; but there they performed some evolutions, no doubt because the line of march was not sufficiently long to give the visitors time enough to see the effect of the light upon surrounding objects.

When seen for the first time, the effect is peculiarly solemn, particularly when accompanied with a full military band. This many of our tourists must have felt, as they have an opportunity of witnessing a most imposing display at Frankfort, in the month of August, on the anniversary of the birth of the Emperor of Austria. The soldiers' black steeds, bright helmets, and long white cloaks there, add very much to the effect; but the most beautiful part of it few see, for most are generally contented with watching the procession pass slowly under their windows.

On the soldiers' return to their barracks, which are situated at Stockhausen on the opposite bank of the Maine, they all throw their torches into the river, the instant they reach the centre of the bridge; and as they drop down, two and two, the long white cloaks which are in advance look still more solemn, illuminated by the uncertain light behind. This, a little cynical French artist, who had to flee from Paris in 1848, openly declared in a large party, mostly composed of Germans, to be the only sight that had interested him in Germany.

The Frankfurters still boast of one famous midnight promenade in the depth of winter, which took place about four years ago; the sledges extended from the middle of the town to the forest, or, as we should say, "the wood," for the trees by no means merit the grand rank in which they hold them. The distance is rather more than two English miles. The snow had been lying on the ground for many weeks; the sledges were either new, or else newly decorated for the occasion; most of the horses were adorned with feathers; and when the vast fortunes of the bankers and merchants there are taken into consideration, it may be well imagined what the effect must have been.

The inhabitants of the free towns of Frankfort and Hamburg always seem to be vying with the royal cities in splendour and show. Our own much-talked-of royal procession on the course at Ascot is more than rivalled at the little court of Hanover, even on any military occasion; indeed, it seems a perfect marvel how it is all supported; for carriages and four, red and gold liveries, silk stockings, and outriders, are as plentiful as blackberries in September. Frederick the Great, in the first book he ever published, made a capital *exposé* of the love of show at the German courts, more particularly intended for Saxe-Weimar, which, in his day, made royal displays on wonderfully small means.

Torchlight processions are more in favour in university towns, where they serve as a sort of excitement to the students. Every opportunity is seized upon for getting them up; the successes of friends, or their death, are both equally made subservient for a sort of fête. There was an example of the latter kind about two years back, which must have struck those who witnessed it as peculiarly sad.

A young man of very high attainments, but of humble parentage, was attacked with consumption, which carried him off, after intense suffering, as it had done with his father, a brother, and a sister. His fellow students, wishing to show their affection for him, and admiration of his talents, determined upon giving him an honourable burial. Accordingly, he was borne to the cemetery, a distance of more than a mile, by four students, at nine o'clock on a cold bleak evening in January, preceded and followed by a host of others, each carrying a torch, while a band played, and the church bells rang a sort of funeral peal; and the poor lone mother sat in her desolate home, weeping for the lost one, who was her last support. Prudent folks whispered that the money so lavishly spent to get up a show, and amuse the thoughtless survivors, might have been better bestowed upon the childless widow; but we can't make all the world think as we do. Besides, our charity balls, it is sad to say, are very nearly akin to such processions: many would not give their money to the charity if they were not lured to do so by the prospect of pleasure to themselves. Besides, we don't know but many of the students may have given their mite: there is many a good deed done privately, of which the gossips know nothing.

But students' freaks are generally looked upon with a very lenient eye, even by those who have been inconvenienced by them.

If a lady were sitting quietly in her carriage before a shop door in London, waiting for a friend, and the doors of her carriage were simultaneously opened, and a long train of young men were to walk through it, each raising his cap to the lady with the greatest gravity as he passed, the people in the street would instantly interfere, a policeman would be sent for, and there would be a row; but this once actually occurred at Gottingen! The lady having had time to recover from her surprise at the ever-continuing visits, at last burst into a hearty laugh, which soon became general; the doors were then closed again, and they all disappeared somewhere behind the carriage.

It appears strange to English ears to hear constantly of "students" and "college educations" among the sons of what we consider "the people," but they are very common in Germany. Students' lodgings may be had in university towns for a mere song. Some of them, it must be confessed, are dreary-looking enough; but there the students toil on indefatigably, often with credit to themselves, but frequently at a greater cost than their friends at home are well able to meet, or at all bargained for.

Apart from their love for and consumption of beer, they are no poor patrons of coffee. The end of most of their walks is some romantic spot where it can be obtained, and they need certainly not give up the palm to the French for the knowledge of the art of making good coffee. It cannot, however, be called a national taste, for we are told by one of the popular writers of the day, that it was quite unknown to the people before the time of their darling, Frederick the Great, his haughty predecessors having always reserved the right of drink-

ing it entirely to the royal family, or those immediately in attendance on them.

At most of the public gardens where concerts are given, coffee is now the only refreshment; there are, however, others, over the entrance to which "Bier-Keller" is printed in large letters, literally "Beer-cellar;" but the building from which it is supplied is not unfrequently a Swiss cottage, or something equally romantic, and tables are ranged for the customers on terraces one above the other, where the vine is flourishing in all its beauty.

The members of the different colleges mostly keep to their particular "beer-cellars," which they have generally supported from generation to generation; and after the lectures they may be seen streaming into them, talking and laughing, certainly with more vivacity than is generally attributed to their national character. Should the owners of these places change their locality or give up business, a demonstration is immediately got up—perhaps a farewell dinner, or a tilting match. A stranger who had not been previously informed, would imagine that something very extraordinary was going to take place, on seeing some eight or ten mounted cavaliers, with coloured scarfs and flying banners, followed by all the public carriages which they have been able to seize for the occasion. Into these from one to four scramble, the whole being brought up with a great team, drawn by as many horses as can be begged or borrowed, in part of which some rather indifferent musicians are seated, the remaining space being filled with barrels of beer. Thus the "cellar" is patronized to the very last moment. Sometimes the return is effected quietly, sometimes by torchlight.

In a country where horses do scarcely any of the field labour, (as in Heidelberg, for instance,) they are not easily procured, and the most sorry looking animals head these gallant processions, and discompose their riders' equanimity to a fearful extent. There the poor oxen are cruelly used, only two being generally employed to drag masses of stone from a quarry, situated on one of the highest hills; the roads, however, are beautiful, and must excite the admiration even of the English, who have good reason to be proud of their public causeways. To add to the misery of the poor animals, they are actually fastened down by the horns to the shafts of the cart.

But they don't ill-use all their animals in the like manner, for in the north, horses are fattened up for food. In the daily papers, which are more than half filled with advertisements, and supplied at the charge of sixpence per month, a fine, fat, frisky-looking horse frequently heads an announcement to "sausage makers," that on such a day the same will be killed, when they are requested to make timely application. These sausages, and others made from pigs' liver, form a never failing resource to thrifty housewives who find themselves suddenly in want of an extra dish; let those eat them who can; where beef and mutton may be had as good even as in England, there is choice for all.

Torchlight processions, as we have previously said, seem to be most in favour in university towns; for there they may be made to serve two

purposes—either to do honour to a favourite, or to spite his rival. If a professor be chosen for either of the colleges, who has in any way made himself obnoxious, a demonstration is immediately got up in honour of the most favoured one, frequently to his very great surprise and annoyance. The ladies of the family dilate with great bitterness upon the expense and inconvenience which these fluttering visits entail upon the household, such as blackened ceilings, soiled curtains, and a score of other minor domestic grievances, too long to relate here, but hard to be borne by those who have no part in the pageant.

There are more heavy expenses than these. When the procession arrives at the residence of the popular individual, he has to appear at an open window or balcony, to bow to those below. A few are then admitted, who are treated to choice wines and other dainties, and while the address is being read, the torch-bearers below keep dashing the sooty things against the ground, or the house, as the case may be, for they have to return in the same order in which they came. One lecturer had no less than four such processions in his honour in a very short space of time, out of pure disinterested goodwill. The damage, therefore, done to his property was naturally not very trifling; for his house was situated in a very narrow street, and the high garden wall which fronted it, and was on most occasions of a tolerably pure white, formed a too ready means for keeping up the brightness of the torches. Those who looked at them at the Crystal Palace were at a comfortable distance; let them beware how they ever get nearer.

ROBERT STEPHENSON.

At the period when the Americans were fighting their way to become a great independent cotton-growing nation—just after the completion of remarkable mechanical inventions at home for the preparation of the downy material, the spinning-jenny, water-frame, and mule-jenny, with the improved steam engine—just before horse posts, loitering at every village inn to gossip with "mine host" or the ostler, began to be superseded on the highroads by mail coaches for the conveyance of letters, travelling some six miles an hour—about the time that Sunday-school instruction dawned in its blessedness upon the land—and the very year that Herschel doubted the known bounds of the solar universe—George Stephenson was born. We string these facts together, because he lived to achieve no mean victory over space and time by quickening locomotion; alter postal arrangements completely; render tens of thousands of juveniles belonging to the impoverished classes happy excursionists on their school holiday, passing from dingy towns to the clear streams, green fields, and sylvan scenes of the country; and because the great work of his life, the First Grand Experimental Railway, was originally conceived with no other object in view than that of facilitating the transport of cotton from the quays of Liverpool to the factories of Manchester.