

a wine-glassful of the infusion of quassia, into a small decanterful of water. Stand this on the table, and sip it every now and then all day long.

*Zinc.*—I believe that this is a much more valuable remedy in cases of nervousness and brain exhaustion than many imagine. The oxide of zinc is usually given in doses commencing with one grain, and gradually increasing up to ten. This should be made into a pill, with a tonic and aperient extract, and given three times a day after meals. It may be continued for a month or six weeks.

*Extract of Malt.*—Thousands who cannot take cod-liver oil without causing dyspepsia and loathing of food may take this delightful tonic. The dose is

from a dessert-spoonful to a table-spoonful three times a day. It may be mixed with water.

There are dozens of other tonic remedies which may be taken with advantage in cases of debility of the brain, but those which I have mentioned are the best.

Beware of narcotics and stimulants; they invariably make matters worse.

I need hardly add, in conclusion, that attention to the diet is of the greatest consequence, and that the morning tub, with a dash of sea-salt in it, and plenty of wholesome exercise in the open air, must not be forgotten by the individual who suffers from brain weariness.

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## WAIFE, JUNIOR.

BY EDWIN GOADBY.



**T**OIL-WORN and city-worn, I set forth in the grey of a May morning to take a fifty miles' journey by rail, and then plunge, map in hand, into an unknown and a romantic district. As I neared the end of my railway ride, and reached more elevated ground, a light powdery mist hung about the hills and swept down into the

valley in streaks, resembling a summer avalanche in the Alps seen from a distance. Unconsciously, I seemed to listen for the sound that never came.

After breakfast at a country inn, I dipped down into a pretty valley, framed about with hills, mist-covered, across a brawling stream, and up a winding lane, banked with primroses and wild yellow pansies, to a windy, grass-covered ridge. Beyond this, at its feet, was another valley, longer, deeper, and bastioned with bolder hills. In crossing the ridge, I met long strings of race-horses, ridden by boys, returning from their pipe-openers on a distant moor. No other living beings seemed stirring. The mist came powdering down the hills, and once more a great framed picture seemed to be lying on the earth, across which I walked with a sensation of being in a magic world I can distinctly remember even now. A fly may feel as I did when it walks across a masterpiece at the Academy.

I was in "The Dale," and soon reached a clump of trees and a village. A house embedded in yew, trained on the walls, out of which doors and windows were cut, at least three feet deep, did not assist in destroying the curious eerie sensation of picture-walking. Turning over a roughly-flagged path by a wheelwright's shop, with the inevitable red-daubed and newly-mended cart-wheel outside, an old man, who

looked at me as if he had been expecting me, though he was a perfect stranger, said, "Theer's the gainest way up t' dale—o'er stone yonder." Tripping over the stone, I found myself in some small fields tilting downwards to the dale-bottom, and altogether curiously like a pattern built out with stone walls. From a distance, the small enclosed fields must have looked like shuffleboard divisions. There was a pretty far-off peep under the mist of the lower dale, and the hills, occasionally shadowing themselves through their veils, seemed of stupendous height. The fields ended in a flight of stone steps, leading down to a yellow-gravelled road.

As I descended the steps, I saw before me a tall, roughly-dressed, shrewd-featured, elderly man, carrying a thick leather bag of tools over his shoulder, and talking or half-whispering to himself. "Old Waife!" I said to myself, thinking, in a flash, of Bulwer's original and clever sketch in "What will He Do with It?" A first impression of this kind is so curious that it remains, and so I call the wanderer with whom I was thus thrown into contact, "Waife, Junior." He never told me, and I never asked him, his real name.

Hearing footsteps, he stopped, turned, wiped the perspiration from his forehead with a red cotton handkerchief, and waited for me, as if he had arranged to meet me at the very spot here in the lane, with only a chimney or two of the village left in sight.

We agreed that "it was warm" walking, and we walked side by side as if our meeting really had been prearranged. Better friends, in a shorter time, were never made. I was going "up t' dale," and so was he, a matter of several miles, so we chatted together, joked, and philosophised, as all tramps do after their kind. He was the smartest man at conversation I ever met under such conditions, and as we trudged along, the fantastic sense of walking across a colossal picture gradually vanished.

Waife told me his story in fragments. He was a

Lancashire lad, and had been fond of drink and gay company. Whether he had saved money and wanted to travel, or merely wished to begin a new life, I cannot remember, and perhaps he put the matter vaguely. But he went to the United States, and spent several years there, wandering about and doing short spells of work.

"You carry your tools with you, I see."

"And uncommon heavy they are," was his reply, as he took the crooked stick from off his shoulder, and put the bag into my hand. The tool-bag must have weighed fifty pounds at the least. He was a horse-shoe nail-maker, and I give these particulars here because he did not reveal his other character to me until he had exhausted these business details.

He had got pretty well tired of America, and had come home again in a Glasgow boat. He was tramping his way into Lancashire, doing a little business on his way at towns and villages near horse-training establishments, about which he seemed to have a good knowledge. He told me of one place where he had been working, at which eleven men were employed in nail-making and shoeing race-horses. "I just put a day in," he said. Waggish and melancholy by turns, Waife, as I must call him, interested me immensely with his flying comments on things about us and bits of his own life. He was clearly an original character, whose experiences it would take a long time to exhaust.

It was Waife's peculiar use of one word that led to the discovery that he was a poet. He was evidently shy on the point, and he would not have told me anything if I had not pressed him. "And then I sit and *muse*" was the sentence constantly occurring as he dwelt upon his past life and its ups and downs. It seemed to me so natural that a man should muse who had spread his experiences of so large an area of the earth's surface by footing it where footing was possible, that my attention was not specially fastened on the word at first. His face was so honest, I was sure he did not spare himself in these moralisings. After a time I became conscious that he was using the word "muse" as a test to ascertain my own bent of mind. Might I not be a poet or an artist? At length a more than usual dreamy look in his face as he drew out the word with an American accent made me ask him what he meant. The transformation was electrical.

"Muse? Court the muse! I'm a bit of a poet, you know. I was hammering out a line or two when you came at the top of the steps."

"A poet! Well, I should like to hear some of your verses. What were you making just now?"

"Don't quite know. I rhyme as I walk, and sometimes it's mere jingle. Sort of bells on harness, I guess."

"But, surely you'll let me hear something of yours?"

Putting his hand into a pocket inside his coat, he pulled out some bits of soft-textured paper, obviously American, wrapped up in brown paper. Drawing his

head back perkily he inquired, "What d'ye think o' this?—"

"The cruel sea divideth me  
From all my kith and kin,  
But all the waves that wash its caves  
Cannot efface my sin.

"I tried to drown my conscience down  
In the dark days gone by—  
When wise men think, the fool must drink,  
And so a waif am I!

"But every man may form a plan,  
And work it bravely out,  
And leave the dead, and look ahead,  
And that's what I'm about!

"They liked that in America," he said, with ventriloquial inflexions; "especially the last bit—a touch of common-sense after the sentiment."

I wanted him to read me some of the other pieces. He feared they might not suit me.

"Mere drinking songs, but," he added, "I'm a teetotaler now."

The paradox required explanation.

"It's just here. I used to drink hard. The songs I make now are for the wise drinkers, and they're few."

He refused to allow me to judge for myself, and it would have been ungracious of me to press him further.

"Had he written much poetry when in America?"

"Much? Tons of it. I trudged from place to place, through State after State, and wherever there was a newspaper-office handy I just dropped a poem in the box for 'The Poet's Corner.' Excellent institution, the Poet's Corner! Wish there were more of them in England. It's just that corner kept me alive! For I went from town to town to drop my poems into the box, and they made my wanderings sweet and lively. A chap who can't *muse* as he goes is the worst of vagabonds. I was pretty considerably cracked, everybody said, but the cracks let in daylight instead of letting out sense, you see!"

"What has become of your poems?"

"Not in my pocket. You saw all I've saved. I once had a big roll of clippings, and I was as proud of them as a jay-bird of its tail. Used to read them out for my own amusement and other folks' edification. A Yankee 'sport' out West put 'em into his pocket when I was asleep one night, and just vamoosed. Nearly broke my heart, that bit o' business did. All my musings gone at a bang! Maybe he thought there were bank-notes in 'em, as I called the bundle *my capital*."

These references made my companion very melancholy. My sympathy evidently pleased him, and who could have refused it to him? I suggested that if he remembered the titles of his pieces and the names of the papers, and had notes of his journeys, he might get copies.

"The verses were my notes," he replied, with a sigh.

Abruptly changing the unpleasant theme with a merry twinkle in his blue-grey eyes, he asked—

"Do you have a 'Poet's Corner'?"

"No," I said. "Wandering bards are not common in England."

"See that woman standing at the door of the cottage yonder? She reminds me of one o' my bits."

And he began to recite, with a gaiety of tone agreeably contrasting with his former melancholy :—

"I love my small cottage—  
It stands by the street;  
If its outside is humble,  
Its inside is neat.

We tramped away together for miles, and if I could have gone with him to the end of his journey I would have gladly done so. But I had to leave the dale where it narrowed almost to a pass, to cross a range of hills and to reach the railway twelve miles off that night, whereas his stopping-place was amongst the hills eighteen miles from my objective. I shared with him the contents of my haversack, and we went into a



MR. WAIFE.

"I love my sweet Jinnie—  
She's buxom and fair,  
And sings like a birdie  
To welcome me there !

"I mind not the hardship,  
The trouble of life,  
For we keep up the courtship  
Although she's my wife."

"Was he married?"

"Oh, dear, no! but a poet has to be everything."

The old woman, who must have heard some of the lines, beamed upon us both, and Waife was as happy as lark in mid-heaven. I envied him.

rustic inn, much against his inclination. He would only have lemonade. Some rough dalesmen were drinking their beer on a seat by themselves. We found an old-fashioned, high-backed settle, and here we sat for a long time in pleasant chat of the most friendly kind.

As a mark of confidence in me, he opened his tool-bag and took therefrom a red-covered book, such as minutes of meetings are usually kept in, putting it into my hands, saying, "Look at that."

I did; and narrowly he examined my face as I read. It was a collection of his recent poems, written

on board ship and on his tramp. The handwriting was stiff and shaky, as of a man who wielded a hammer. Rough flourishes abounded. The forty or fifty pieces were of various kinds—grave, gay, and autobiographical. Some of them were mere jingles, one or two were good, and here and there I came across pieces I had seen in American papers.

Yes, they had been printed there—ten years ago. He had copied them from memory. One I had seen in a paper called *The Morning Star*.

"Then they'd taken it from another paper. They're some of 'em awful thieves in this way in the States."

I spent nearly an hour over that book, until the wives of the men opposite had fetched them home to dinner and we were alone—even the old housewife in charge leaving us to ourselves, probably thinking us a "fond" pair of vagabonds.

I copied two poems in pencil on such paper as I had with me, and here they are, as well as I can produce them from a piece of rain-sodden paper:—

"ON THE TRAMP.

"On the tramp, with my bag on my back,  
I'm free as a lord or a king;  
I am ready to work when I can,  
And when I can't work I can sing!

"The green lanes, and the fields, and the hills  
Are ever my dearest delight—  
Counting stars, as a nun counts her beads,  
I drop off to slumber at night!

"I am up with the morn, and a-foot  
While town-folks are sleeping in bed.  
Gentle birds sing their grace to my meals—  
I've never yet wanted for bread!

"The bustle and noise of the city  
My thoughts and my feelings confuse;  
And I'm never so happy a man  
As when I can tramp it—and muse!"

There is a ring in these verses that makes them express Waife's real self, I feel sure, and the last word, the one that first caught my eye in looking over the page, needs no explanation. The other poem I copied is in a somewhat different vein, and some readers may like it better:—

"ONLY A NAIL.

"A nail is a little thing,  
See it where you will.  
I made it, and beaten its head,  
But I love it still.

"For it holds the horse's shoe,  
Binds the poor man's cart,  
And knits the ships that sail the seas  
Old and new lands part.

"The jewels that women prize  
Are found in the mire;  
And our best resolves, like the nails,  
Are born of the fire.

"They're beaten, and wrought, and shaped,  
Whilst they're all aglow;  
And men that work hardest, we find,  
Have more nails to show.

"Young love may indulge its dreams,  
And fancy may roam;  
But constancy binds like the nail,  
And builds up the home

"When a life or a thing gives way,  
And it seems to fail,

One wants a will, and the other—  
Why, only a nail!

"So do not despise the nail,  
Or its little part,  
For it is useful everywhere—  
It's a work of art!"

The return of the old lady, who could not understand us a bit, terminated our musing and my copying. Our walk together was nearly at an end. I was very sorry, for Waife was a humorous fellow, and I had to take a yellow track that led away under the mist over what were to me unknown hills and cogitate by myself.

He was a herb-doctor, he told me, and he was going to live with a man whom he had once cured of a serious malady.

"Whenever you care to come home my house is yours," was the message he had received in answer to one of his rhymed letters. He was going home now, he said, a day's march at a time. "I've saved my tools. I wish I'd been as careful over my musings."

We reached a picturesque little bridge over a stream. There was a primrose bank hard by, under a time-honoured guide-post. Here we had our last chat. I have passed the spot since, and a flood of tender memories of Waife rushed over me. This sketch is the result. I must copy another little poem. I transcribe it from an envelope, to which it was transferred from the book on the finger-post. I wish I could sketch the old nailer's face as he saw I really treasured his verses, entitled:—

"A THOUGHT.

"Present thoughts are sweetest—  
So men say;  
They, like birds, the fleetest  
Fly away!

"Next year, back they're winging,  
Dark or gay.  
Happy he who, singing,  
Bids them stay!"

Stay, at any rate, I could not. The mist on the hills was changing to dark cloud, and threatened rain. The old man was touched at parting. I thanked him warmly for his company and his poetry, and told him where he could find me whenever he wanted a friend. As he took his departure to the right he waved his hand, saying, "Mind you think over that Poet's Corner." The corner is in my heart—a delicious memory of this rambling bard.

Descending for a time, I soon began to rise up the hills I had to cross. Turning round constantly, I could see the old man mounding also along a walled road rising between the hills, and waving his hand to me as we each neared the mist that was to hide us from each other. In a few minutes I was in the middle of a fierce thunderstorm, and flashes of fire leaped from the clouds above the lofty road my friend was treading. Poor Waife! What had become of him? I have never heard anything of him since, and I fear his musings are over. If he be still alive—and it is now nine years ago, as my notes show—I hope he will forgive me for making public his confidences and his rhymes.