A dialect account of an excursion from Stoke-on-Trent into the Staffordshire Moorlands.

by Eliza Meteyard.

From *Good words*, 1876.

A POTTERY HOLIDAY.

IT is Saturday, and a very bright morning in early September. All the previous day it would have been seen, in one of those large manufactories which produce painters' palettes, saucers, and colour-boxes by the thousand, and caster-rollers, and door knobs and handles by tens of thousands, that something unusual was in prospect. The throwers, moulders, turners, decorators, burnishers, riveters, and packers, as also the clay pressers and preparers, were working overtime, and as speedily as they could. Even the firemen were some hours beforehand and slackened their great fires earlier than usual. The fact was, the morrow was to be a holiday, and just two hundred workers were to spend it amid the moorlands which lie not far away.

The major part of the men and women live near their "bank," as a potwork is locally called, and all are early astir, for the special train they go by starts betimes. A few of the more responsible men have been already to their respective" shops" to see all was safe; but now they join this group or that group of friends and fellow-workers. All are dressed in their best; thus forming a striking contrast to the busy passers-by, of their own class, who, just from breakfast, are hastening to their half-day's labour. Holidays, in this lovely season, are so general among potters as to make it probable that these workers hastening to their "banks" have had theirs, or else that they have one at hand. So the general greetings are cheery and kindly, and good weather is invoked.

These holiday-takers are, with but few exceptions, well dressed; for potters are a highly paid, intelligent, advancing class of artizans, and must not be confounded with the ruder and more ignorant population who work in the pits and furnaces of North Staffordshire and the Black Country.

How jauntily and airily the younger people pass on! The morning is so divine that even in this region of perpetual smoke the air is comparatively clear and balmy. All anticipate a delightful holiday, for most from experience know how glorious both sun and air will be when they reach the valley of the Churnet, and climb the alpine solitudes which lie beyond.

Those who live nearest to their "works" make their way to the Cobridge Station.

Others go from Burslem, and are ready at the station when the train stays there. Here are the two chiefs and sundry friends; the former being men in the prime of life. The one grave and kindly; the other debomiaire and en beau in a velveteen coat; yet not less a consummate man of business in countinghouse, on political platform, or magisterial bench. The chiefs, as they move about, have a kindly word for their people; for those nearest to them, for those crowded in the train, or those fast entering it. Thus gathered together you see a motley, yet well behaved company. A few women carry babies, a few fathers take care of elder children; and almost all these sober, married folks bear with them reticules and baskets.

The younger people, who are in prominent majority, omitting this class of impedimenta, give place on the arm to wavy folds of scarves and shawls. The prospect of sweet sounds is also betokened, for one man carries a violoncello of conspicuous size, another a fiddle, a third a clarionet, and three accordians or concertinas are indicated by as many boxes. Well-dressed men, young and old, carry books and rolls of music; and some of the smartest of the girls, who being in their best are for the day" young ladies," carry their roll of part-songs with the jaunty air of fashionable prima donnas. Every style of dress and decoration is here. White muslins, a la Japanese, and frills, are popular.

There are polonaises and overskirts of every fabric and form. Black silks, light silks, watches, chains, crosses, and lockets are not uncommon. Hats, flowers, and feathers rest on conspicuous crowns and chignons of hair.

There is, as a matter of course, good taste and bad taste. Most of these fashionable or" tip-tops" are young, and earn a good deal of money. They are not yet wise enough to lay a portion of it by, but hope by this proper show of comeliness and dress a la mode, to lure some smart young potter, or other desirable youth, into matrimonial toils.

There are older single women in more sober style, whose visions of matrimony have faded away, and so wisely realise the natural and economic fact, that a day must come when neither man nor woman can work, and that dependence on the charity of others is as unwise as it is sorrowful. These last dress in plain silks, and other simple fabrics, and one takes with her a beautiful pet dog. Then, mingled with the rest are homelier women, who are chiefly dressed like maidservants of the old school, in print or woollen dresses, in serviceable bonnets, and here and there in shawls. These women are generally "treaders," that is, movers of, by a skilful sort of jumping, the lathes of the turners, though in many high-class works these movements are now all effected by steampower. The treaders earn a pound a week, or more, and are in many cases bread-winners for sick husbands or orphan children, and their general cleanliness and homely, honest looks are good to see.

The train is ready to start, and the Babel of tongues, so loud on the platform a moment before, is transferred to the carriages, and the broad vernacular speech of northern Staffordshire reaches the ear.

There has been difficulty in taking in the huge violoncello, and even now it occupies so much good space as to be a nuisance.

So a man in the next compartment bawls out, —" Turn ! Thy big fiddle's knockin' off my 'at."

" An' thy yed too, if Turn dugna look out," laughs a second.

" Fayther ! "shouts a little lad," th' big fiddle's squazin' my toos awful."" I'm sure," simpers a young burnisher, who wears a highly starched dress," such nasty, noisy, ugly things ought to be put i' th' luggage van. My frock '11 be a pratty mess, an' mother standin' ironin' it an yesterday."

" Niver thee mind, Sophy," calls out a gallant young potter," it 'ill squeak meusic out to an on us presently. An' we'n have ' Off to th' Weddirf lost thing."

" Not thy weddin', Joe," replies Sophy, with a gay toss of her pretty head. This retort is followed by a peal of laughter.

" Mester" (so the word master is pronounced in northern Staffordshire; it is" maistcr" in Shropshire), calls out another young girl to the man with the fiddle," scrape us a bit o' meusic. Summet merry. That'll be it."

" We'n have meusic anuf just nai," says another. "Let's talk."

At this point, one of the steady, middleaged women calls out to one of the least educated and cultivated girls, who leans on a carriage window, and looks out, "Sail! Pull" (the u sounded as in the word" hull")" in yer yed, the mester's lookin'," and as all the" bank" are on good behaviour to-day, and wish to please partners Gravity and Velveteen-coat, Sail" pulls" in her head accordingly, and the train proceeds.

Here and there for a short space on the outskirts of the town, various places and persons are recognised.

" Ello ! Mrs. ," cry two or three in a breath," there's that naece o' yorz clanin' some misisiz aise. Wai dunner ur come onto a bonk an' earn money, an' goo ait a 'oludeein' a this'n?"

" Au dunna know. Ur auwiz was a wench for messin'."

Then a young potter joins in. "Fred ! Theer's ar Sunday-skew tacher gooin' dain that ere road. Is he gooin' a 'oludeein' ? "" Not he. He gooz oor that wee a' Saturdays. He's pee'er at a pit."

A little further on an older man joins in.

" Ben ! "he calls," luck thi eer. Dain theer's th' place weer Joonz feight his dog Bounce agen Turn Pritchard's Fan. Ha ! An' a precious feight it wur."

But the general talk is of the sentimental, literary, and domestic order. One middleaged dame gives the history of her" mester's" illnesses, and what doctors he has had.

Another enters fully into questions relative to them" childer o' mine, and the djel o' larnin' they're gettin' at th' new Board School. ' Wei, ar little Bob — he's gettin' t' raid like a clerk; an' he's larnin' jog'fry, or summet o' that sort, that's comin' t' know a abait t' other countries, as well as ariz'n.

Yesterdee 'e wur telling me abait Africans, and t'other aitlandish sort o' folks — but I wur weshin' ye see, an' didnar pee much haid to th' lad. I ony hope they wunner crom his yed too full o' book larnin'."'" Naoo," (a pronounced as in air)" indeed!" Ejaculates another matron, "when th' yed's o'er full, hands dunner goo quick, and that's summat, when folks at home are clemmin."

"Ay! Indeed."

Other matrons and spinsters are hard at it too.

" Ony think ! Them Joonziz livin' o'er th' wee, han gotten a bigger shop debt 'en ever, and th' raon '11 sarve 'em wi' noo moore. An rait too, for getten debts, as a thatn's as bad as robbin'."

" Dun yu know ur never gen me back that weshin-jaoo, though 'twere borrit five wick agoo."

"Ay! Just think, ur's gooin t' be married agen — and moor fool ur, says I, for the mon is a sportin' sort o' chap an likes his pot an poipe, an '11 allays be at th' Red Lion, ur may reckon."

" That lad o' urs that went off to Liverpool, a tidy bit a goo, 'as gotten a ship, they say."

" You remember Betsy's lass — dunna yo ?

Ur that weht off to Australy a year agoo last Martinmas ? Well ! Urs married tip-top, an' sent th' folks awhom a biggish bit o' money."

This conversation — partly real, partly imaginary — is given to show the vernacular spoken by the homelier workers, and, true to human nature, the homely subjects in which they take interest. But such is no test of the mental standing and acquirements of the great majority of the young men and girls out on this day's "'oludeein"; for, as partners, Gravity and Velveteen-coat well say," many of our workpeople are better read, better spoken, than average tradesmen and many prominent employers." Of course, here and there, the trained ear catches somewhat of the vernacular tone and expression, but, otherwise, the whole run of ever-varying conversation testifies to much substantial and moral advance. Of course the majority of the girls prefer the fiction of sensation and Rosa-Matildaism to other kinds of literature, and provincial narrowness may rule in the religious and political opinions of the men; but this said, there is proof enough that the more skilled workers of the Potteries are there, as elsewhere, preparing themselves for that rapidly-approaching future, when social unification will be no longer a mere speculation of philosophy, but a tangible and realised fact.

There is a little feminine chatter among high and low which must not be passed over, being a reality. For where were ever women gathered together, in which some turn in the conversation did not bring in the question of" dress ?"

"Matilda," says a homely girl to one much above her, and touching as she speaks the frill of a dainty" costume,"" what did'n ya giv' a yard for this eer thing?"

The young lady twirls her roll of partmusic — for she is a singer — and looks reprovingly at her ruder and simpler shopmate.

"I don't keep my shop-bills, Suke, and when folks are out pleasurin' they should behave themselves."

" Well, a didn'a mean to be rude, 'Tilda, so ya needner put on th' grand. I jist ask'd ya to tell me — 'cause when th' mesters reez my wages at

Martinmas, aw just mean to have summut like it. I had'na had yer learnin' nor yer teachin' i' singin', but I anna rude, as ya well knows."

Presently there comes a question which stops this general talk, and makes many listeners. It is addressed to a pretty, welldressed young woman, of superior mien, who Is a domestic of one of the" mesters," and not on the" bank."

"I say? Es'nur there a lady with the mesters ? ""Yes."

" Where does ur come from ?"

"From London."

"What's ur going to do ? "" Speak to you all."

"What abait ? ""Why! Cooking, and tidiness, and improvements of many kinds."

"Ur makes stories out on ur yed, dunnur ur?"

"I believe so?"

"Ay ! Fayther says he's read mony a one on 'em years ago. I'm thinkin' ur's gettin' an owdish lady now ! Well ! I hope will tell us a story. Cookin' ain't th' thing for 'oludeez i My mother could teach ur that."

"No ! Not such cooking and order as she knows about," replies the pretty maid, who, attending the lady, is thus her defender.

Now the train stays at a pretty station bearing the classic name of Milton. Here a few other holiday-makers, waiting on the platform, and who have chosen a country walk this glorious morning, take their place.

From hence the picturesque moorland country begins to show. High cuttings, rocky gorges opening therefrom, and a wealth of wild flowers, conspicuous among which is the foxglove of various hues and kinds. Rivulets and tiny cascades pour through and down the rocks, and more or less the water is thick and very ruddy-coloured, thus betokening the vast beds of ironstone and red sandstone through which it has made its way. Occasionally come wider openings and more level tracts, amid

which lie thinly scattered cottages and farms, backed by picturesque uplands, and beyond these again a wild and lonely country of rock and moor.

Before noon, the train reaches the Rudyard station, and here, amid the loveliest scenery of the Churnet Valley, the halt comes.

The station opens into a hilly lane, bounded on either side with hedges still gay with wild autumnal roses, and most profusely so with eglantine. The mingled perfume of both is most exquisite, and in the hollows beneath a variety of ferns and alpine flowers lend charming effects of colour, light, and shade. Wherever the holiday-takers see the flowers, they express their delight and admiration, and it has been pleasant to hear the remarks of those possessing some little art-knowledge. Presently, to the right, a rustic gate opens on to a private path, still on the steep incline. On the left is a plantation and a little stream fenced off; and to the right a lawn sloping upwards like the path; and following this, the holiday-makers, in groups and lines, come out on to the gravelled platform of the Rudyard Hotel, a place which, in itself and its environments, has the air of a gentleman's country-house rather than that of a hostelry open to all comers. From this platform is a splendid panoramic view of the moorland town of Leek, of *Harracles*, a country house of Jacobean architecture, and where the ancestors of the illustrious potter, Josiah Wedgwood, passed lives of utility and good repute; while to the right of this, high on an acclivity, there is seen the charming old country church of Horton, where many of these Elizabethan and Jacobean Wedgwoods lie buried, and where many of their race made marriage vows and bore their children to the baptismal font. This churchyard is so silent, and beautified by nature in so many ways, as, in Keats's touching words, "to make one in love with death, in order to be buried in so sweet a spot."

The elder portion of the holiday-makers take their place on seats and forms placed pleasantly about in sun as well as shade, on the broad platform in front of the hotel, or on the sloping lawn to which two or three steps descend. A few youngsters, as well as elderly men, are off to have a game of bowls or else nine-pins, in the shade of a group of trees at the rear of the house. But the major part are mad for a dance, and so the

fiddler, tuning his instrument, scrapes away at the old-fashioned dance-music, so long wedded to the movements of happy feet.

Thus summoned, the light-hearted, giddy young things set off with the quadrille and the waltz, and like children out of school are wild with fun and frolic. Messrs. Gravity and Velveteen-coat join presently in these dances, and are as full of fun as the rest.

Ladies and friends also take their part, and so the innocent joy goes on, till the fiddler is tired and there must be a pause. Meanwhile the rich affluence of the September sun sheds its glory over all; the air just rustles the leaves of the surrounding trees, and amid them the birds pipe their sweet trills and melodies.

A sort of luncheon follows of coffee, bread, butter, and buns, set forth in the hotel, in a very large, newly-built room, with lofty windows looking far and wide over the lovely panoramic view just spoken of. "Welcome," cut out in coloured paper, is prettily wreathed on the walls; while on the mantelpiece, and otherwise set about, are various vases and other ornamental pieces of modern Wedgwood ware. For even the landlord is a potter of note at Hanley, as also its mayor, and in his day has worked at modern Etruria.

Luncheon over, there is, generally speaking, another and greater dispersion of the holidayfolks. A few of the simpler matrons and spinsters take their place on the rustic seats for a gossip. Some of the elderly men gossip too, as stretched out on the incline of the lawn, they enjoy their pipes. The younger children play about, and a few of the solo singers and part-singers have a little music.

The latter make trial of their glees and madrigals; partner Gravity, who is an excellent musician, timing them and giving them a lesson when needful. Eight of them sing — men, youths, and girls — and their ditty is old, and thus : — "Oh, dear ! What can the natter be ? Johnny so long at the fair. He promis'd to buy me a bunch of blue ribbon, To tie up my bonny brown hair."

But the key they have taken it in is too screaming and high, so partner Gravity bills the violin-player touch a note, and he leads the singers in the proper key, beating time meanwhile like a skilled maestro.

At the rear of the hotel stretches a breadth of "woodlar" — a mountainous road leading to the moors, skirting it to the left, while sloping to the right, the woodland fringing it for long way, lies Rudyard Lake, so well known to Staffordshire people. It is an artificial piece of water, two miles in length, and covering about four hundred acres of land.

It was formed in 1793, for the purpose of feeding a branch of the Trent and Mersey canal. A wide sluiced embankment, forming a sort of bridge in dry weather, separates in a most picturesque manner the Rudyard end of the lake from the valley of the Churnet, lying far below; the great blocks of masonry forming the embankment, as also the gorge through which the surplus water flows, being picturesquely decorated in clefts, nooks, and on ledges with ferns, lichens, mosses, and alpine plants; while here and there tall grasses and weeds wave to and fro in the light summer air. The right bank of the lake rises in very abrupt acclivity, the sides being deeply wooded; while at the foot, and on the margin of the lake, and running towards Macclesfield, is the railway the holidaymakers left at noon. From this point, the line known as the Churnet Valley, is renowned for its wonderful alpine beauty, and is, in the flush of summer and the fall of autumn, worthy of the tourist's eye and foot.

Sc, indeed, is the whole region of these picturesque, solitary moors. For amid them is something to delight the eye of every wanderer, be he geologist, archaeologist, botanist, antiquarian, or simply an artist with his sketch-book in his wallet.

The water of the lake is, however, too motionless to be in the fullest sense beautiful. It looks dark, deep, and deadly, as though those who had mischance thereon would never see the surface again; and this impression is intensified by the depth and height of the woodland shadows which wind onward with it. But "distance lends enchantment to the view." So distance here lends picturesque effects; and a mile or so

away where stronger lights break in, the result is very fine, and such as would give intense delight to the best of our landscape painters.

One or more of the holiday-makers have brought rod and line, and essay an hour's fishing. Others wander away through the woods above the railway, gathering as they go the alpine or indigenous raspberries, which here. And far away on the Derbyshire and Yorkshire moors grow more or less in great profusion; so much so, that in the moorland towns, as Leek, Ashbourne, and Bakewell, they are brought into the markets for sale. Other of the holiday-makers ramble off to the picturesque town of Leek, to traverse its hilly streets, to look up at the vast factories for the weaving and making of such small silk goods as buttons, cords, silk twistes, and fringes; as well as at many of the quaint, old-fashioned houses, where weavers and buttoners a century ago, ere the day of factories, plied their primitive machines and looms. These houses, some of them still thatched, look, with their quaint long lines of windows, as though a section of the oldest part of Spitalfields or Bethnal Green were transported to these moors. In fact, some of the descendants of the Huguenots came here from Macclesfield, Congleton, and Derby, in the early part of the last century, and settled down as dyers and weavers. But the great point of attraction to those who have come so far, is the view from the churchyard. Nothing finer is to be seen in the United Kingdom. From thence is visible the more southern portion of the Pennine range, the Alps of central England; the wild summits and moors of which, useless save for sheep grazing, are left to solitude, and the perpetual mists which hover over them. Others who keep nearer home pay a visit to the now scanty ruins of Dieulacres Abbey, where for somewhere about three hundred and twenty-five years, civilisation held its own in this region of primeval forest, moor and rock. All but the bases of a few splendid columns have passed away. But built into the walls of the farmhouse and steading adjacent are beautiful bosses of Gothic groining, corbels, circles including trefoils; enough, and more than enough, to indicate the artistic capacity of our race, and also raise a sigh in the breast of the thoughtful, that any sign of beauty should perish, even though only graven out of stone.

While partner Gravity teaches the choir, partner Velveteen-coat is off up the mountain road to the left with the brightest and youngest of the" bank," male and female.

There is laughter, as also merry jests, and no doubt flirtations, for some of the maidens are very comely; and flower-gathering and decorating is universal. So, when the merry wanderers return towards three o'clock, every bonnet, hat, and vest is gay with colour.

Even the Velveteen-coat has more than one button-hole full of flowers; and the deerstalker's hat which accompanies it looks rakish in a wreath of mountain-ash berries.

All but the furthest wanderers have returned by three o'clock, and the glee-singing and solo singing begin in earnest. At four o'clock comes the feast of the day; cold, substantial viands, with good and abundant tea. The great room, as some of the folks say, is "crommed," a large parlour on the opposite side of the hall is "crommed," a room up-stairs is "crommed," while some of the musicians take tea on the capacious landing; among whom, sitting conspicuous, is "tfaf mon wi' th' big fiddle."

There is no heading the table or formal attempt at superiority. Messrs. Gravity and Velveteen-coat take their place each in the midst of the two long tables, and the ladies find a place near at hand. The gentlemen, foremen, and others, settle clown just anywhere, the minister says grace, and the meal begins.

"Will yo do th' pourin' out, missis?"

Asks a matronly, cleanly "treader," who earns a guinea a week, and by this means supports an invalid husband. The lady addressed declines, so the matron sets to to her task with hearty good-will. Her seat being just in front of a capacious urn full of tea, she sweeps, with a bend of her arm, a score of cups and saucers towards her, and begins "th' sugarin'" and "th' milkin'," and then turning down the tap of the urn, gives to each cup full measure and more, for the saucers are full too. Then she gives the lady beside her the very fullest and sweetest cup.

"Theer ! Just yo be a tastin' it. It's swaet enough, I reckon." The lady says she does not take sugar, and requests a cup without.

The matron is lost in wonderment. "Not take sugar ! "she exclaims, and drawing a little off, so as to give greater expression to her wonder," Wai th' ought. Sugar's a nourishin' thing, they say." Her wonder thus ventilated, she presents the unsugared tea with hearty good-nature, and then she concentrates her interest on another object.

On the opposite side of the table, a little way up the room, sits" John," in front of a huge piece of roast beef, to carve which it has fallen to his share. He is a stout, good looking man, whom it is as pleasant to see at his lathe in his" shop," for he is a skilled and much-prized workman, as here, wielding a mighty knife and fork. His name, as just said, is "John," and the homely, kindly matron is his "treader."

"John," she calls," give th' lady a pake o' baif. Not too fat, or too raw. They moight'n a' roasted it a bit more nor that."

John sedulously complies, and then the matron is careful that salt, mustard, pickles, and bread and butter are duly presented.

She herself partakes heartily of "baif and pickles," yet looks well to the cup-filling, as also to the lady.

"Yo're makin' a poorish tea," she says, with evident concern, and measuring another's power of food-consumption by her own.

" Wun yo have a paice o' veal — it looks tonder, an' a paice o' 'am with it." Speaking thus, and before the lady can make reply, she has called out to some one a little way down the table," Turn, give this eer lady a paice o' 'am, not too fat, an' mind yo cut it delicate."

Such is the call upon the matron's urn as to soon need the addition of two or three capacious teapots. Conspicuous among which is a brown glazed one, of good form, the lid being surmounted by a little old woman, wrapped in a cloak. Of this the original was modelled by the great Wedgwood himself just over a hundred years ago.

"What does such a teapot cost in this country?" The lady asks.

"Oh ! They're made at lot's o' bonks.

Well, maybe I'd give fourpence."

Why, in London such a one costs half a-crown."

"Ay ! They charges a djel theer, I dussay, for everything. I've heerd that afore."

Meanwhile tea-pouring, carving, and conversation go briskly on. The general buzz and intermingled scraps of talk are highly amusing as they meet the ear. "A bit moor 'am." "No moor fat." "I dunner loike them theer pittles." "Give me that last bit. Colliflower, I mean, and no juice. Too much grocer's oil in it for me." "Missis," to the waitress," some moor bread an' butter." "A cup moor tea, please." "This J ere tea dunner do for me — it's too weak."

"Ai smart yo look, Mary." "Shall I," in a very soft tone," hav' th' pleasure of walkin' 'ome wi' yo?" "I sea, look at ur, ur's tlirtin'. It's well ur mother dunner sea ur — theer'd be a toidy mess at worn." "Ay, I know ur was auwiz a flirt." "Jist look at ur.

Another new dress sin' Wissuntide," and so on. These colloquies in the vernacular being largely mixed with those much more refined in tone, and grave or merry in purpose, as the case may be.

At length the meal is ended, and the waitresses who "have been on the watch incontinently seize the "baif an 'am," for the volunteers from Etruria have arrived and want their tea. So the minister says "grace" and silence is proclaimed. Then partner Gravity rises and speaks earnest words to the people as to the capable work they have done through the past year; and as to the happy spirit which reigns in their own special manufactory between employers and employed. He tells them what fame their goods have in the market for taste, novelty, and quality of workmanship, how their trade is in consequence extending, and how presently their works will be enlarged by new buildings erected on a site lately purchased, and as yet covered by an iron foundry. The firm thus commercially prosperous, for goodwill and mutual duty unite all together, progress and improvement must still go on.

The workers must be self-helpful, true to themselves individually. The young men, and young women too, must make good use through the evenings of the schools and institute open to them; and by such means not only elevate the tone of their moral life, but the character of their labour, so as to meet any demand made upon it by their employers. To this partner Velveteen-coat follows in a lighter and more excursive vein.

He says how pleasant is this social gathering and pause from ceaseless labour. He explains how much social good arises from this sympathetic commingling of class with class.

He refers with pride to the prizes the young men and lads have won in the local Art Exhibition, and to their obviously growing taste for mental culture. Mr. Velveteen-coat having said thus much, and much else which is merry besides, he introduces the lady as a very old friend of the working classes of this country. He is also good enough to read an address she has written and brought with her. This is soon found to be more specially addressed to the women, young and old; and refers to the great necessity which exists for individual improvement in the simple, yet important, arts of domestic life. The foremen and overlookers then have their say.

The banker, the minister, and one or two other friends add a few words, and then a vote of thanks sum up the whole.

The great room is vacated, and out on the wide-gravelled platform and lawn a performance of vocal and instrumental music follows. There is a quiet bar in the hall of the Rudyard Arms, and soon there are a few parting glasses among friends. Cider and sherry are popular with the young; and prudent modicums of brandy and water with the elder. This is the only drinking; a mere "loving cup" passed round.

The railway whistle is heard; the sun is dropping low, the moon begins to show herself in the skyward distance of the moors; and, good time being kept, the holiday is over.

ELIZA METEYARD.

PAGE IMAGES:

which I cannot conscientiously recommend to any middle-aged bachelor. Besides marrying his wife, he married her whole family. There was no other way out of the difficulty, and neither of them was inclined to be content with happiness, leaving duty unfulfilled. So he took the largest house in St. Andrew's, and brought to it Janetta and Helen, till David Dalziel could claim them; likewise his own two orphan boys, until they went to Oxford; for he meant to send them there, and bring them up in every way like his own sons.

Meantime, it was a rather heterogeneous family, but the two heads of it bore their burden with great equanimity, nay, cheerfulness; saying sometimes, with a smile which had the faintest shadow of pathos in it, "that they liked to have young life about them."

And by degrees they grew younger themselves; less of the old bachelor and old maid, and more of the happy middle-aged couple to whom heaven gave in their decline a St. Martin's summer almost as sweet as spring. They were both too wise to poison the present by regretting the past—a past, which if not wholly, was partly, at least, owing to that strange fatality which governs so many lives, only some have the will to conquer it, others not. And there are two sides to everything: Robert Roy, who alone knew how hard his own life had been, sometimes felt a stern joy in thinking no one had shared it.

Still, for a long time, there lay at the bottom of that strong gentle heart of his, a kind of remorseful tenderness, which showed itself in heaping his wife with every luxury that his wealth could bring; better than all, in surrounding her with that unceasing care which love alone teaches, never allowing the wind to blow on her too roughly, his "poor lamb," as he sometimes called her, who had suffered so much.

They are sure, humanly speaking, to "live very happy to the end of their days." And I almost fancy sometimes, if I were to go to St. Andrews, as I hope to do many a time, for I am as fond of the Aged City as they are, that I should see those two, made one at last, after all those cruel divided years, wandering together along the sunshiny sands, or standing to watch the gay golfing parties; nay, I am not sure that Robert Roy would not be visible sometimes, in his red coat, club in hand, crossing the Links, a victim to the universal insanity of St. Andrews, yet enjoying himself, as golfers always seem to do, with the enjoyment of a very boy.

She is not a girl, far from it; but there will be a girlish sweetness in her faded face till its last smile. And to see her sitting beside her husband on the green slopes of the pretty garden, knitting perhaps, while he reads his eternal newspapers, is a perfect picture. They do not talk very much, indeed they were neither of them ever great talkers. But each knows the other is close at hand, ready for any needful word, and always ready with that silent sympathy which is so mysterious a thing, the rarest thing to find in all human lives. These have found it and are satisfied. And day by day truer grows the truth of that sentence, which Mrs. Roy once discovered in her husband's pocket-book, cut out of a newspaper—she read and replaced it without a word, but with something between a smile and a tear—"*Young loves are passionate, old loves are faithful; but the tenderest thing in all this world is a love revived.*"

THE END.

A POTTERY HOLIDAY.

IT is Saturday, and a very bright morning in early September. All the previous day it would have been seen, in one of those large manufactories which produce painters' palettes, saucers, and colour-boxes by the thousand, and caster-rollers, and door knobs and handles by tens of thousands, that something unusual was in prospect. The throwers, moulders, turners, decorators, burnishers, riveters, and packers, as also the clay pressers and preparers, were working overtime, and as speedily as they could. Even the firemen were some hours beforehand and slackened their great fires earlier than usual. The fact was, the morrow was to be a holiday, and just two hundred workers were to spend it amid the moorlands which lie not far away.

The major part of the men and women live near their "bank," as a potwork is locally called, and all are early astir, for the special train they go by starts betimes. A few of the more responsible men have been already to their respective "shops" to see all was safe; but now they join this group or that group of friends and fellow-workers. All are dressed in their best; thus forming a

striking contrast to the busy passers-by, of their own class, who, just from breakfast, are hastening to their half-day's labour. Holidays, in this lovely season, are so general among potters as to make it probable that these workers hastening to their "banks" have had theirs, or else that they have one at hand. So the general greetings are cheery and kindly, and good weather is invoked.

These holiday-takers are, with but few exceptions, well dressed; for potters are a highly paid, intelligent, advancing class of artizans, and must not be confounded with the ruder and more ignorant population who work in the pits and furnaces of North Staffordshire and the Black Country.

How jauntily and airily the younger people pass on! The morning is so divine that even in this region of perpetual smoke the air is comparatively clear and balmy. All anticipate a delightful holiday, for most from experience know how glorious both sun and air will be when they reach the valley of the Churnet, and climb the alpine solitudes which lie beyond.

Those who live nearest to their "works" make their way to the Cobridge Station. Others go from Burslem, and are ready at the station when the train stays there. Here are the two chiefs and sundry friends; the former being men in the prime of life. The one grave and kindly; the other *débonnaire* and *en beau* in a velveteen coat; yet not less a consummate man of business in counting-house, on political platform, or magisterial bench. The chiefs, as they move about, have a kindly word for their people; for those nearest to them, for those crowded in the train, or those fast entering it. Thus gathered together you see a motley, yet well-behaved company. A few women carry babies, a few fathers take care of elder children; and almost all these sober, married folks bear with them reticules and baskets. The younger people, who are in prominent majority, omitting this class of impedimenta, give place on the arm to wavy folds of scarves and shawls. The prospect of sweet sounds is also betokened, for one man carries a violoncello of conspicuous size, another a fiddle, a third a clarionet, and three accordians or concertinas are indicated by as many boxes. Well-dressed men, young and old, carry books and rolls of music; and some of the smartest of the girls, who being in their best are for the day "young ladies," carry their roll of part-songs with the jaunty air of fashionable prima donnas. Every style of dress and decoration is here. White muslins, *à la Japanese*, and frills, are popular. There are polonaises and overskirts of every fabric and form. Black silks, light silks, watches, chains, crosses, and lockets are not uncommon. Hats, flowers, and feathers rest on conspicuous crowns and chignons of hair. There is, as a matter of course, good taste and bad taste. Most of these fashionable or "tip-tops" are young, and earn a good deal of money. They are not yet wise enough to lay a portion of it by, but hope by this proper show of comeliness and dress *à la mode*, to lure some smart young potter, or other desirable youth, into matrimonial toils. There are older single women in more sober style, whose visions of matrimony have faded away, and so wisely realise the natural and economic fact, that a day must come when neither man nor woman can work, and that dependence on the charity of others is as unwise as it is sorrowful. These last dress in plain silks, and other simple fabrics, and one takes with her a beautiful pet dog. Then, mingled with the rest are homelier women, who are chiefly dressed like maidservants of the old school, in print or woollen dresses, in serviceable bonnets, and here and there in shawls. These women are generally "treaders," that is, movers of, by a skilful sort of jumping, the lathes of the turners, though in many high-class works these movements are now all effected by steam-power. The treaders earn a pound a week, or more, and are in many cases bread-winners for sick husbands or orphan children, and their general cleanliness and homely, honest looks are good to see.

The train is ready to start, and the Babel of tongues, so loud on the platform a moment before, is transferred to the carriages, and the broad vernacular speech of northern Staffordshire reaches the ear.

There has been difficulty in taking in the huge violoncello, and even now it occupies so much good space as to be a nuisance. So a man in the next compartment bawls out,—

"Tum! thy big fiddle's knockin' off my 'at."

"An' thy yed too, if Tum dugna look out," laughs a second.

"Fayther!" shouts a little lad, "th' big fiddle's squazin' my toos awful."

"I'm sure," simpers a young burnisher, who wears a highly starched dress, "such nasty, noisy, ugly things ought to be put i' th' luggage van. My frock 'll be a pratty mess, an' mother standin' ironin' it an yesterday."

"Niver thee mind, Sophy," calls out a gallant young potter, "it 'ill squeak meusic

out to an on us presently. An' we'n have 'Off to th' Weddin' fost thing."

"Not *thy* weddin', Joe," replies Sophy, with a gay toss of her pretty head. This retort is followed by a peal of laughter.

"Mester" (so the word master is pronounced in northern Staffordshire; it is "maister" in Shropshire), calls out another young girl to the man with the fiddle, "scrape us a bit o' meusic. Summet merry. That'll be it."

"We'n have meusic anuf just nai," says another. "Let's talk."

At this point, one of the steady, middle-aged women calls out to one of the least educated and cultivated girls, who leans on a carriage window, and looks out, "Sall! pull" (the u sounded as in the word "hull") "in yer yed, the mester's lookin'," and as all the "bank" are on good behaviour to-day, and wish to please partners Gravity and Velveteen-coat, Sall "pulls" in her head accordingly, and the train proceeds.

Here and there for a short space on the outskirts of the town, various places and persons are recognised.

"Ello! Mrs. ——," cry two or three in a breath, "there's that naece o' yorz clanin' some misisiz aise. Wai dunner ur come onto a bonk an' earn money, an' goo ait a 'oludeein' a this'n?"

"Au dunna know. Ur auwiz was a wench for messin'."

Then a young potter joins in. "Fred! theer's ar Sunday-skew tacher gooin' dain that ere road. Is he gooin' a 'oludeein'?"

"Not he. He gooz oor that wee a' Saturdays. He's pee'er at a pit."

A little further on an older man joins in. "Ben!" he calls, "luck thi eer. Dain theer's th' place weer Joonz feight his dog Bounce agen Tum Pritchard's Fan. Ha! an' a precious feight it wur."

But the general talk is of the sentimental, literary, and domestic order. One middle-aged dame gives the history of her "mester's" illnesses, and what doctors he has had. Another enters fully into questions relative to them "childer o' mine, and the djel o' larnin' they're gettin' at th' new Board School. 'Wei, ar little Bob—he's gettin' t' raid like a clerk; an' he's larnin' jog'fry, or summet o' that sort, that's comin' t' know a abait t' other countries, as well as ariz'n. Yesterdee 'e wur telling me abait Africans, and t'other aitlandish sort o' folks—but I wur weshin' ye see, an' didnar pee much haid to th' lad. I ony hope they wunner crom his yed too full o' book larnin'.'"

"Naoo," (a pronounced as in air) "indeed!" ejaculates another matron, "when th' yed's o'er full, hands dunner goo quick, and that's summat, when folks at home are clemmin."

"Ay! indeed."

Other matrons and spinsters are hard at it too.

"Ony think! them Joonziz livin' o'er th' wee, han gotten a bigger shop debt 'en ever, and th' mon 'll sarve 'em wi' noo moore. An rait too, for getten debts, as a thatn's as bad as robbin'."

"Dun yu know ur never gen me back that weshin-jaoo, though 'twere borrit five wick agoo."

"Ay! just think, ur's gooin t' be married agen—and moor fool ur, says I, for the mon is a sportin' sort o' chap an likes his pot an poipe, an 'll allays be at th' Red Lion, ur may reckon."

"That lad o' urs that went off to Liverpool, a tidy bit a goo, 'as gotten a ship, they say."

"You remember Betsy's lass—dunna yo? ur that weht off to Australy a year agoo last Martinmas? Well! urs married tip-top, an' sent th' folks awhom a biggish bit o' money."

This conversation—partly real, partly imaginary—is given to show the vernacular spoken by the homelier workers, and, true to human nature, the homely subjects in which they take interest. But such is no test of the mental standing and acquirements of the great majority of the young men and girls out on this day's "'oludeein;" for, as partners, Gravity and Velveteen-coat well say, "many of our workpeople are better read, better spoken, than average tradesmen and many prominent employers." Of course, here and there, the trained ear catches somewhat of the vernacular tone and expression, but, otherwise, the whole run of ever-varying conversation testifies to much substantial and moral advance. Of course the majority of the girls prefer the fiction of sensation and Rosa-Matildaism to other kinds of literature, and provincial narrowness may rule in the religious and political opinions of the men; but this said, there is proof enough that the more skilled workers of the Potteries are there, as elsewhere, preparing themselves for that rapidly-approaching future, when social unification will be no longer a mere speculation of philosophy, but a tangible and realised fact.

There is a little feminine chatter among high and low which must not be passed

over, being a reality. For where were ever women gathered together, in which some turn in the conversation did not bring in the question of "dress?"

"Matilda," says a homely girl to one much above her, and touching as she speaks the frill of a dainty "costume," "what did'n ya giv' a yard for this eer thing?"

The young lady twirls her roll of part-music—for she is a singer—and looks reprovingly at her ruder and simpler shop-mate.

"I don't keep my shop-bills, Suke, and when folks are out pleasurin' they should behave themselves."

"Well, a didn'a mean to be rude, 'Tilda, so ya needner put on th' grand. I jist ask'd ya to tell me—'cause when th' mesters reez my wages at Martinmas, aw just mean to have summut like it. I had'na had yer learnin' nor yer teachin' i' singin', but I anna rude, as ya well knows."

Presently there comes a question which stops this general talk, and makes many listeners. It is addressed to a pretty, well-dressed young woman, of superior mien, who is a domestic of one of the "mesters," and not on the "bank."

"I say? es'nur there a lady with the mesters?"

"Yes."

"Where does ur come from?"

"From London."

"What's ur going to do?"

"Speak to you all."

"What abait?"

"Why! cooking, and tidiness, and improvements of many kinds."

"Ur makes stories out on ur yed, dunnur ur?"

"I believe so?"

"Ay! fayther says he's read mony a one on 'em years ago. I'm thinkin' ur's gettin' an owdish lady now! Well! I hope will tell us a story. Cookin' ain't th' thing for 'oludeez! *My* mother could teach ur *that*."

"No! not such cooking and order as she knows about," replies the pretty maid, who, attending the lady, is thus her defender.

Now the train stays at a pretty station bearing the classic name of Milton. Here a few other holiday-makers, waiting on the platform, and who have chosen a country walk this glorious morning, take their place. From hence the picturesque moorland country begins to show. High cuttings, rocky gorges opening therefrom, and a wealth of wild flowers, conspicuous among which is the foxglove of various hues and kinds. Rivulets and tiny cascades pour through and down the rocks, and more or less the water is thick and very ruddy-coloured, thus betokening the vast beds of ironstone and red sandstone through which it has made its way. Occasionally come wider openings and more level tracts, amid which lie thinly-scattered cottages and farms, backed by picturesque uplands, and beyond these again a wild and lonely country of rock and moor. Before noon, the train reaches the Rudyard station, and here, amid the loveliest scenery of the Churnet Valley, the halt comes.

The station opens into a hilly lane, bounded on either side with hedges still gay with wild autumnal roses, and most profusely so with eglantine. The mingled perfume of both is most exquisite, and in the hollows beneath a variety of ferns and alpine flowers lend charming effects of colour, light, and shade. Wherever the holiday-takers see the flowers, they express their delight and admiration, and it has been pleasant to hear the remarks of those possessing some little art-knowledge. Presently, to the right, a rustic gate opens on to a private path, still on the steep incline. On the left is a plantation and a little stream fenced off; and to the right a lawn sloping upwards like the path; and following this, the holiday-makers, in groups and lines, come out on to the gravelled platform of the Rudyard Hotel, a place which, in itself and its environments, has the air of a gentleman's country-house rather than that of a hostelry open to all comers. From this platform is a splendid panoramic view of the moorland town of Leek, of Harracles, a country house of Jacobean architecture, and where the ancestors of the illustrious potter, Josiah Wedgwood, passed lives of utility and good repute; while to the right of this, high on an acclivity, there is seen the charming old country church of Horton, where many of these Elizabethan and Jacobean Wedgwoods lie buried, and where many of their race made marriage vows and bore their children to the baptismal font. This churchyard is so silent, and beautified by nature in so many ways, as, in Keats's touching words, "to make one in love with death, in order to be buried in so sweet a spot."

The elder portion of the holiday-makers take their place on seats and forms placed pleasantly about in sun as well as shade, on the broad platform in front of the hotel, or on the sloping lawn to which two or three steps descend. A few youngsters, as well as elderly men, are off to have a game of bowls

or else nine-pins, in the shade of a group of trees at the rear of the house. But the major part are mad for a dance, and so the fiddler, tuning his instrument, scrapes away at the old-fashioned dance-music, so long wedded to the movements of happy feet. Thus summoned, the light-hearted, giddy young things set off with the quadrille and the waltz, and like children out of school are wild with fun and frolic. Messrs. Gravity and Velveteen-coat join presently in these dances, and are as full of fun as the rest. Ladies and friends also take their part, and so the innocent joy goes on, till the fiddler is tired and there must be a pause. Meanwhile the rich affluence of the September sun sheds its glory over all; the air just rustles the leaves of the surrounding trees, and amid them the birds pipe their sweet trills and melodies.

A sort of luncheon follows of coffee, bread, butter, and buns, set forth in the hotel, in a very large, newly-built room, with lofty windows looking far and wide over the lovely panoramic view just spoken of. "Welcome," cut out in coloured paper, is prettily wreathed on the walls; while on the mantelpiece, and otherwise set about, are various vases and other ornamental pieces of modern Wedgwood ware. For even the landlord is a potter of note at Hanley, as also its mayor, and in his day has worked at modern Etruria. Luncheon over, there is, generally speaking, another and greater dispersion of the holiday-folks. A few of the simpler matrons and spinsters take their place on the rustic seats for a gossip. Some of the elderly men gossip too, as stretched out on the incline of the lawn, they enjoy their pipes. The younger children play about, and a few of the solo-singers and part-singers have a little music. The latter make trial of their glees and madrigals; partner Gravity, who is an excellent musician, timing them and giving them a lesson when needful. Eight of them sing —men, youths, and girls—and their ditty is old, and thus :—

> "Oh, dear! what can the matter be?
> Johnny so long at the fair.
> * * * * * * *
> He promis'd to buy me a bunch of blue ribbon
> To tie up my bonny brown hair."

But the key they have taken it in is too screaming and high, so partner Gravity bids the violin-player touch a note, and he leads the singers in the proper key, beating time meanwhile like a skilled *maestro*.

At the rear of the hotel stretches a breadth of woodlar[illegible] a mountainous road leading to the moors, skirting it to the left, while sloping to the right, the woodland fringing it for long way, lies Rudyard Lake, so well known to Staffordshire people. It is an artificial piece of water, two miles in length, and covering about four hundred acres of land. It was formed in 1793, for the purpose of feeding a branch of the Trent and Mersey canal. A wide sluiced embankment, forming a sort of bridge in dry weather, separates in a most picturesque manner the Rudyard end of the lake from the valley of the Churnet, lying far below; the great blocks of masonry forming the embankment, as also the gorge through which the surplus water flows, being picturesquely decorated in clefts, nooks, and on ledges with ferns, lichens, mosses, and alpine plants; while here and there tall grasses and weeds wave to and fro in the light summer air. The right bank of the lake rises in very abrupt acclivity, the sides being deeply wooded; while at the foot, and on the margin of the lake, and running towards Macclesfield, is the railway the holiday-makers left at noon. From this point, the line known as the Churnet Valley, is renowned for its wonderful alpine beauty, and is, in the flush of summer and the fall of autumn, worthy of the tourist's eye and foot. So, indeed, is the whole region of these picturesque, solitary moors. For amid them is something to delight the eye of every wanderer, be he geologist, archæologist, botanist, antiquarian, or simply an artist with his sketch-book in his wallet.

The water of the lake is, however, too motionless to be in the fullest sense beautiful. It looks dark, deep, and deadly, as though those who had mischance thereon would never see the surface again; and this impression is intensified by the depth and height of the woodland shadows which wind onward with it. But "distance lends enchantment to the view." So distance here lends picturesque effects; and a mile or so away where stronger lights break in, the result is very fine, and such as would give intense delight to the best of our landscape painters.

One or more of the holiday-makers have brought rod and line, and essay an hour's fishing. Others wander away through the woods above the railway, gathering as they go the alpine or indigenous raspberries, which here and far away on the Derbyshire and Yorkshire moors grow more or less in great profusion; so much so, that in the moorland towns, as Leek, Ashbourne, and Bakewell, they are brought into the markets

for sale. Other of the holiday-makers ramble off to the picturesque town of Leek, to traverse its hilly streets, to look up at the vast factories for the weaving and making of such small silk goods as buttons, cords, silk twistes, and fringes; as well as at many of the quaint, old-fashioned houses, where weavers and buttoners a century ago, ere the day of factories, plied their primitive machines and looms. These houses, some of them still thatched, look, with their quaint long lines of windows, as though a section of the oldest part of Spitalfields or Bethnal Green were transported to these moors. In fact, some of the descendants of the Huguenots came here from Macclesfield, Congleton, and Derby, in the early part of the last century, and settled down as dyers and weavers. But the great point of attraction to those who have come so far, is the view from the churchyard. Nothing finer is to be seen in the United Kingdom. From thence is visible the more southern portion of the Pennine range, the Alps of central England; the wild summits and moors of which, useless save for sheep grazing, are left to solitude, and the perpetual mists which hover over them.

Others who keep nearer home pay a visit to the now scanty ruins of Dieulacres Abbey, where for somewhere about three hundred and twenty-five years, civilisation held its own in this region of primeval forest, moor and rock. All but the bases of a few splendid columns have passed away. But built into the walls of the farmhouse and steading adjacent are beautiful bosses of Gothic groining, corbels, circles including trefoils; enough, and more than enough, to indicate the artistic capacity of our race, and also raise a sigh in the breast of the thoughtful, that any sign of beauty should perish, even though only graven out of stone.

While partner Gravity teaches the choir, partner Velveteen-coat is off up the mountain-road to the left with the brightest and youngest of the "bank," male and female. There is laughter, as also merry jests, and no doubt flirtations, for some of the maidens are very comely; and flower-gathering and decorating is universal. So, when the merry wanderers return towards three o'clock, every bonnet, hat, and vest is gay with colour. Even the Velveteen-coat has more than one button-hole full of flowers; and the deer-stalker's hat which accompanies it looks rakish in a wreath of mountain-ash berries.

All but the furthest wanderers have returned by three o'clock, and the glee-singing and solo singing begin in earnest. At four o'clock comes the feast of the day; cold, substantial viands, with good and abundant tea. The great room, as some of the folks say, is "crommed," a large parlour on the opposite side of the hall is "crommed," a room up-stairs is "crommed," while some of the musicians take tea on the capacious landing; among whom, sitting conspicuous, is "th' mon wi' th' big fiddle."

There is no heading the table or formal attempt at superiority. Messrs. Gravity and Velveteen-coat take their place each in the midst of the two long tables, and the ladies find a place near at hand. The gentlemen, foremen, and others, settle down just anywhere, the minister says grace, and the meal begins.

"Will yo do th' pourin' out, missis?" asks a matronly, cleanly "treader," who earns a guinea a week, and by this means supports an invalid husband. The lady addressed declines, so the matron sets to to her task with hearty good-will. Her seat being just in front of a capacious urn full of tea, she sweeps, with a bend of her arm, a score of cups and saucers towards her, and begins "th' sugarin'" and "th' milkin'," and then turning down the tap of the urn, gives to each cup full measure and more, for the saucers are full too. Then she gives the lady beside her the very fullest and sweetest cup.

"Theer! just yo be a tastin' it. It's swaet enough, I reckon." The lady says she does not take sugar, and requests a cup without.

The matron is lost in wonderment. "Not take sugar!" she exclaims, and drawing a little off, so as to give greater expression to her wonder, "Wai th' ought. Sugar's a nourishin' thing, they say." Her wonder thus ventilated, she presents the unsugared tea with hearty good-nature, and then she concentrates her interest on another object.

On the opposite side of the table, a little way up the room, sits "John," in front of a huge piece of roast beef, to carve which it has fallen to his share. He is a stout, good-looking man, whom it is as pleasant to see at his lathe in his "shop," for he is a skilled and much-prized workman, as here, wielding a mighty knife and fork. His name, as just said, is "John," and the homely, kindly matron is his "treader."

"John," she calls, "give th' lady a paice o' baif. Not too fat, or too raw. They moight'n a' roasted it a bit more nor that."

John sedulously complies, and then the matron is careful that salt, mustard, pickles, and bread and butter are duly presented.

She herself partakes heartily of "baif and pickles," yet looks well to the cup-filling, as also to the lady.

"Yo're makin' a poorish tea," she says, with evident concern, and measuring another's power of food-consumption by her own. "Wun yo have a paice o' veal—it looks tonder, an' a paice o' 'am with it." Speaking thus, and before the lady can make reply, she has called out to some one a little way down the table, "Tum, give this eer lady a paice o' 'am, not too fat, an' mind yo cut it delicate."

Such is the call upon the matron's urn as to soon need the addition of two or three capacious teapots. Conspicuous among which is a brown glazed one, of good form, the lid being surmounted by a little old woman, wrapped in a cloak. Of this the original was modelled by the great Wedgwood himself just over a hundred years ago.

"What does such a teapot cost in this country?" the lady asks.

"Oh! they're made at lot's o' bonks. Well, maybe I'd give fourpence."

"Why, in London such a one costs half-a-crown."

"Ay! they charges a djel theer, I dussay, for everything. I've heerd that afore."

Meanwhile tea-pouring, carving, and conversation go briskly on. The general buzz and intermingled scraps of talk are highly amusing as they meet the ear. "A bit moor 'am." "No moor fat." "I dunner loike them theer pittles." "Give me that last bit. Colliflower, I mean, and no juice. Too much grocer's oil in it for me." "Missis," to the waitress, "some moor bread an' butter." "A cup moor tea, please." "This 'ere tea dunner do for me—it's too weak." "Ai smart yo look, Mary." "Shall I," in a very soft tone, "hav' th' pleasure of walkin' 'ome wi' yo?" "I sea, look at ur, ur's flirtin'. It's well ur mother dunner sea ur—theer'd be a toidy mess at wom." "Ay, I know ur was auwiz a flirt." "Jist look at ur. Another new dress sin' Wissuntide," and so on. These colloquies in the vernacular being largely mixed with those much more refined in tone, and grave or merry in purpose, as the case may be.

At length the meal is ended, and the waitresses who have been on the watch incontinently seize the "baif an 'am," for the volunteers from Etruria have arrived and want their tea. So the minister says "grace" and silence is proclaimed. Then partner Gravity rises and speaks earnest words to the people as to the capable work they have done through the past year; and as to the happy spirit which reigns in their own special manufactory between employers and employed. He tells them what fame their goods have in the market for taste, novelty, and quality of workmanship, how their trade is in consequence extending, and how presently their works will be enlarged by new buildings erected on a site lately purchased, and as yet covered by an iron foundry. The firm thus commercially prosperous, for goodwill and mutual duty unite all together, progress and improvement must still go on. The workers must be self-helpful, true to themselves individually. The young men, and young women too, must make good use through the evenings of the schools and institute open to them; and by such means not only elevate the tone of their moral life, but the character of their labour, so as to meet any demand made upon it by their employers. To this partner Velveteen-coat follows in a lighter and more excursive vein. He says how pleasant is this social gathering and pause from ceaseless labour. He explains how much social good arises from this sympathetic commingling of class with class. He refers with pride to the prizes the young men and lads have won in the local Art Exhibition, and to their obviously growing taste for mental culture. Mr. Velveteen-coat having said thus much, and much else which is merry besides, he introduces the lady as a very old friend of the working classes of this country. He is also good enough to read an address she has written and brought with her. This is soon found to be more specially addressed to the women, young and old; and refers to the great necessity which exists for individual improvement in the simple, yet important, arts of domestic life. The foremen and overlookers then have their say. The banker, the minister, and one or two other friends add a few words, and then a vote of thanks sum up the whole.

The great room is vacated, and out on the wide-gravelled platform and lawn a performance of vocal and instrumental music follows. There is a quiet bar in the hall of the Rudyard Arms, and soon there are a few parting glasses among friends. Cider and sherry are popular with the young; and prudent modicums of brandy and water with the elder. This is the only drinking; a mere "loving cup" passed round.

The railway whistle is heard; the sun is dropping low, the moon begins to show herself in the skyward distance of the moors; and, good time being kept, the holiday is over.

ELIZA METEYARD.