

with only two attendants, and fled with all speed. Meanwhile the slaughter continued with increased ferocity, even the darkness of night failed to arrest it, and it was resumed on the morrow more furiously than ever; nor did it cease at length because the thirst for vengeance was slaked, but because victims were wanting to appease it. Two thousand French perished in this first outbreak. Even Christian burial was denied them, but pits were afterward dug to receive their despised remains; and tradition still points out a column surmounted by an iron cross, raised by compassionate piety on one of those spots, probably long after the perpetration of the deed of vengeance. Tradition, moreover, relates that the sound of a word, like the *Shibboleth* of the Hebrews, was the cruel test by which the French were distinguished in the massacre; and that, if there were found a suspicious or unknown person, he was compelled, with a sword to his throat, to pronounce the word *ciciri*, and the slightest foreign accent was the signal of his death. Forgetful of their own character, and as if stricken by fate, the gallant warriors of France neither fled, nor united, nor defended themselves; they unsheathed their swords, and presented them to their assailants, imploring, as if in emulation of each other, to be the first to die; of one common soldier only is it recorded, that having concealed himself behind a wainscot, and being dislodged at the sword's point, he resolved not to die unavenged, and springing with a wild cry upon the ranks of his enemies, slew three of them before he himself perished. The insurgents broke into the convents of the Minorites and Preaching Friars, and slaughtered all the monks whom they recognized as French. Even the altars afforded no protection; tears and prayers were alike unheeded; neither old men, women, nor infants, were spared; the ruthless avengers of the ruthless massacre of Agosta swore to root out the seed of the French oppressors throughout the whole of Sicily; and this vow they cruelly fulfilled, slaughtering infants at their mothers' breast, and after them the mothers themselves, nor sparing even pregnant women, but, with a horrible refinement of cruelty, ripping up the bodies of Sicilian women who were with child by French husbands, and dashing against the stones the fruit of the mingled blood of the oppressors and the oppressed. This general massacre of all who spoke the same language, and these heinous acts of cruelty, have caused the Sicilian Vespers to be classed among the most infamous of national crimes. But these fill a vast volume, and in it all nations have inscribed horrors of a similar, and sometimes of a blacker dye; nations often more civilized, and in times less rude, and not only in the assertion of their liberty or against foreign tyrants, but in the delirium of civil or religious partisanship, against fellow-citizens, against brothers, against innocent and helpless beings, whom they destroyed by thousands, sweeping away whole populations. Therefore I do not blush for my country at the remembrance of the vespers, but bewail the dire necessity which drove Sicily to such extremities.

A SHORT CHAPTER ON FROGS.

IN one of Steele's papers in the "Guardian" is the following passage: "I observe the sole reason alleged for the destruction of frogs, is because they are like toads. Yet amidst all the misfortunes of these unfriended creatures, it is some happiness that we have not yet taken a fancy to eat them; for should our countrymen refine upon the French never so little, it is not to be conceived to what unheard-of torments owls, cats, and frogs may be yet reserved."

That frogs constituted the chief diet of Frenchmen was, a few years ago, as popular and beloved an article of belief among British lads, as that one Englishman was equal to three of the said frog-consumers. More extended intercourse has, however, shown us that frogs do not constitute the entire food of our Gallic neighbors, and taught them that *we* do not all wear top-boots, and subsist solely on beef-steaks. As, however, frogs *do* form a dainty dish, I will give what the Yankees term a "few notions concerning them and their fixings."

Happening to be in Germany in 1846, I was desirous of getting some insight into the manners and customs of these inhabitants of the ponds, and, after much observation, arrived at the same conclusion concerning them as the master of one of Her Majesty's ships did respecting the subjects of the Imaun of Muscat. Being compelled to record categorically a reply to the inquiry, "What are the manners and customs of the inhabitants?" he wrote, "Manners they have none, and their customs are very beastly." So of these frogs, say I.

My knowledge of their vicinity was based upon auricular confession. Night after night the most infernal din of croaking bore testimony to the fact that they were unburdening their consciences, and I determined to try if I could not unburden their bodies of their batrachian souls altogether. However, before I detail my proceedings, I have a word to say with reference to their croaking.

Horace bears expressive testimony to the disgust *he* felt at it, when, after a heavy supper to help him on his way to Brundisium, he exclaimed

— "Mali culices, ranæque palustres
Avertunt somnos."

So loud and continuous is their song, especially in the breeding season, that in the former good old times of France, when nobles *were* nobles, and lived in their magnificent chateaus scattered throughout the country, the peasants were employed during the whole night in beating the ponds within ear-shot of the chateaus, with boughs of trees, to prevent the slumbers of the lords and ladies being broken by their paludine neighbors. This croaking is produced by the air being driven from the lungs into the puffed-out cavity of the mouth, or into certain guttural sacculi, which are developed very largely in the males. They can produce this noise under water as well as on land.

In the male frog there are fissures at the corners of the mouth for admitting the external protrusion

of the vocal sacculi. These sacculi they invariably protrude in their struggles to escape when held by the hind legs. Under these circumstances they are also capable of uttering a peculiar shrill cry of distress, differing completely from their ordinary croak.

Having obtained a land net, I cautiously approached the pond, which I knew must abound with them, from the concerts nightly held there, and without allowing the shadow to fall on the water, or making the slightest noise; yet the moment I showed myself, every individual who happened to be above water jumped off his perch, and was out of sight in an instant. I tried every means to catch them, but in vain. At last I borrowed from some boys a long tube of wood, with a small hole smoothly and equally bored through the centre, which they used to shoot small birds about the hedges. Armed with some arrows made of sharp tin nails, tipped with cotton wool, I ensconced myself in a bush, and waited quietly for my prey. In a few moments, the frogs, one by one, began to poke their noses out of the water. I selected the finest, and by dint of a good shot, I succeeded in fixing an arrow in his head. In the course of the afternoon I bagged several of the patriarchs of the pond, some of them as large as the largest English toad. Upon being struck with the arrow, they nearly all protruded their sacculi from each side of the mouth, in the manner above narrated.

These frogs are not often used for the table in Germany, but in France they are considered a luxury, as any *bon vivant* ordering a dish of them at the "Trois Frères" at Paris may, by the long price, speedily ascertain. Not wishing to try such an expensive experiment in gastronomy, I went to the large market in the Faubourg St. Germain, and inquired for frogs. I was referred to a stately-looking dame at a fish-stall, who produced a box nearly full of them, huddling and crawling about, and occasionally croaking as though aware of the fate to which they were destined. The price fixed was two a penny, and having ordered a dish to be prepared, the Dame de la Halle dived her hand in among them, and having secured her victim by the hind legs, she severed him in twain with a sharp knife, the legs, minus skin, still struggling, were placed on a dish; and the head, with the fore-legs affixed, retained life and motion, and performed such motions that the operation became painful to look at. These legs were afterward cooked at the restaurateur's, being served up fried in bread crumbs, as larks are in England: and most excellent eating they were, tasting more like the delicate flesh of the rabbit than any thing else I can think of.

I afterward tried a dish of the common English frog, but their flesh is not so white nor so tender as that of their French brothers.

The old fish-wife of whom I bought these frogs, informed me that she had a man regularly in her employ to catch them. He went out every evening at dusk to the ponds, in the neighborhood of Paris, with a lantern and a long stick, to the end of

which was attached a piece of red cloth. The frogs were attracted by the light to the place where the fisherman stood. He then lightly dropped his cloth on the surface of the water; the frogs imagining that some dainty morsel was placed before them, eagerly snapped at it, and their teeth becoming entangled, they became an easy prey, destined for to-morrow's market, and the tender mercies of the fish-woman.

I subsequently brought over several dozen of these frogs alive to England, some of them are still, I believe, living in the Ward's botanical cases of those to whom I presented them, the rest were turned out in a pond, where I fear they have been devoured by the gourmand English ducks, the rightful occupants of the pond.

The edible frog (*rana esculenta*) is brought from the country, in quantities of from thirty to forty thousand at a time, to Vienna, and sold to great dealers, who have conservatories for them, which are large holes four or five feet deep, dug in the ground, the mouth covered with a board, and in severe weather with straw. In these conservatories, even during a hard frost, the frogs never become quite torpid, they get together in heaps one upon another instinctively, and thereby prevent the evaporation of their humidity, for no water is ever put to them.

In Vienna, in 1793, there were only three dealers, who supplied the market with frogs ready skinned and prepared for the cook.

There is another species of frog common on the Continent, which is turned to a useful account as a barometer. It is the *rana arborea*, of which many specimens are to be seen in the Zoological Gardens. It has the property, like the chameleon, of adapting its color to the substance on which it may be placed: it especially inhabits trees, and when among the foliage, is of a brilliant green; when on the ground, or on the branches of trees, the color is brown. They are thus used as prognosticators. Two or three are placed in a tall glass jar, with three or four inches of water at the bottom, and a small ladder reaching to the top of the jar. On the approach of dry weather the frogs mount the ladder to the very top, but when rain may be expected, they not only make a peculiar singing noise, but descend into the water. Small frogs are a trilling bait for pike and perch, and this reminds me of an incident which I saw. A fine perch was found floating dead, on the top of the water in a pond, in one of the gardens at Oxford; upon examination, it was found to be very thin, and apparently starved to death, some devotee to the gentle art had been the unconscious cause of the sad fate of this poor fish, for a hook was found firmly fixed in his upper jaw, the shock of which projected so far beyond his mouth, that his efforts to obtain food must have been useless, the hook always projecting forward, kept him at a tantalizing distance from the desired morsel. The fish has been dried, and is now preserved with the hook fixed in his mouth.

But fishes, which, like perch, are provided with sharp prickles, occasionally cause the death of

those creatures that feed upon them. A king-fisher was brought to me in the summer of 1848, by a boy who had found it dead on the banks of the river Cherwell, near Oxford, no shot, or other marks of injury were found on it, the feathers being perfectly smooth, dry, and unstained; what then was the cause of death?—upon a careful examination, I found the end of a small fish's tail protruding from one of the corners of its mouth, I endeavored to drag it out, but in vain, it was firmly fixed. By dissection, I found, that the fish in question was one of the tribe of small fish which abound in shallow water, and are called in Oxford, the bull's head, or miller's thumb. It has a strong prickle, nearly a quarter of an inch long, with very sharp and firm end, projecting on each side of its gills. The fish had, in its struggles, protruded its prickles, which, sticking in his enemy's œsophagus, had effectually stopped up the entrance, pressing on the wind-pipe, and thus caused its death.

MY NOVEL; OR, VARIETIES IN ENGLISH LIFE.*

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning Harley appeared at breakfast. He was in gay spirits, and conversed more freely with Violante than he had yet done. He seemed to amuse himself by attacking all she said, and provoking her to argument. Violante was naturally a very earnest person; whether grave or gay, she spoke with her heart on her lips, and her soul in her eyes. She did not yet comprehend the light vein of Harley's irony; so she grew piqued and chafed; and she was so lovely in anger; it so brightened her beauty and animated her words, that no wonder Harley thus maliciously teased her. But what, perhaps, she liked still less than the teasing—though she could not tell why—was the kind of familiarity that Harley assumed with her—a familiarity as if he had known her all her life—that of a good-humored elder brother, or bachelor uncle. To Helen, on the contrary, when he did not address her apart, his manner was more respectful. He did not call *her* by her Christian name, as he did Violante, but “Miss Digby,” and softened his tone and inclined his head when he spoke to her. Nor did he presume to jest at the very few and brief sentences he drew from Helen; but rather listened to them with deference, and invariably honored them with approval. After breakfast he asked Violante to play or sing; and when she frankly owned how little she had cultivated those accomplishments, he persuaded Helen to sit down to the piano, and stood by her side while she did so, turning over the leaves of her music-book with the ready devotion of an admiring amateur. Helen always played well, but less well than usual that day, for her generous nature felt abashed. It was as if she was showing off to mortify Violante. But Violante, on the other hand, was so passionately fond of music that she had no feeling left for the sense of her own inferiority. Yet

* Continued from the April Number.

she sighed when Helen rose, and Harley thanked her for the delight she had given him.

The day was fine. Lady Lansmere proposed to walk in the garden. While the ladies went up-stairs for their shawls and bonnets, Harley lighted his cigar, and stepped from the window upon the lawn. Lady Lansmere joined him before the girls came out.

“Harley,” said she, taking his arm, “what a charming companion you have introduced to us! I never met with any that both pleased and delighted me like this dear Violante. Most girls who possess some power of conversation, and who have dared to think for themselves, are so pedantic, or so masculine; but *she* is always so simple, and always still the girl. Ah, Harley!”

“Why that sigh, my dear mother?”

“I was thinking how exactly she would have suited you—how proud I should have been of such a daughter-in-law—and how happy you would have been with such a wife.”

Harley started. “Tut,” said he, peevishly, “she is a mere child; you forget my years.”

“Why,” said Lady Lansmere, surprised, “Helen is quite as young as Violante.”

“In dates—yes. But Helen's character is so staid; what it is now it will be ever; and Helen, from gratitude, respect, or pity, condescends to accept the ruins of my heart; while this bright Italian has the soul of a Juliet, and would expect in a husband all the passion of a Romeo. Nay, mother, hush. Do you forget that I am engaged—and of my own free will and choice? Poor dear Helen! Apropos, have you spoken to my father, as you undertook to do?”

“Not yet. I must seize the right moment. You know that my lord requires management.”

“My dear mother, that female notion of managing us, men, costs you, ladies, a great waste of time, and occasions us a great deal of sorrow. Men are easily managed by plain truth. *We* are brought up to respect it, strange as it may seem to you!”

Lady Lansmere smiled with the air of superior wisdom, and the experience of an accomplished wife. “Leave it to me, Harley; and rely on my lord's consent.”

Harley knew that Lady Lansmere always succeeded in obtaining her way with his father; and he felt that the Earl might naturally be disappointed in such an alliance, and, without due propitiation, evince that disappointment in his manner to Helen. Harley was bound to save her from all chance of such humiliation. He did not wish her to think that she was not welcomed into his family; therefore he said, “I resign myself to your promise and your diplomacy. Meanwhile, as you love me, be kind to my betrothed.”

“Am I not so?”

“Hem. Are you as kind as if she were the great heiress you believe Violante to be?”

“Is it,” answered Lady Lansmere, evading the question—“is it because one is an heiress and the other is not that you make so marked a difference in your manner to the two; treating