

IV - CORNISH PEOPLE.

It is my purpose, in this place, to communicate some few facts relating to the social condition of the inhabitants of Cornwall, which were kindly furnished to me by friends on the spot; adding to the statement thus obtained, such anecdotes and illustrations of popular character as I collected from my own observations in the capacity of a tourist on foot.

If the reader desires to compare at a glance the condition of the Cornish people with the condition of their brethren in other parts of England, one small particle of practical information will enable him to do so at once. In the Government Tables of Mortality for Cornwall there are no returns of death from starvation.

Many causes combine to secure the poor of Cornwall from that last worst consequence of poverty to which the poor in most of the other divisions of England are more or less exposed. The number of inhabitants in the county is stated by the last census at 341,269--the number of square miles that they have to live on, being 1327.[2]--This will be found on proper computation and comparison, to be considerably under the average population of a square mile throughout the rest of England. Thus, the supply of men for all purposes does not appear to be greater than the demand in Cornwall. The remote situation of the county guarantees it against any considerable influx of strangers to compete with the natives for work on their own ground. We met a farmer there, who was so far from being besieged in harvest time by claimants for labour on his land, that he was obliged to go forth to seek them himself at a neighbouring town, and was doubtful whether he should find men enough left him unemployed at the mines and the fisheries, to gather in his crops in good time at two shillings a day and as much "victuals and drink" as they cared to have.

Another cause which has contributed, in some measure, to keep Cornwall free from the burthen of a surplus population of working men must not be overlooked. Emigration has been more largely resorted to in that county, than perhaps in any other in England. Out of the population of the Penzance Union alone, nearly five per cent. left their native land for Australia, or New Zealand, in 1849. The potato-blight was, at that time, assigned as the chief cause of the readiness to emigrate; for it damaged seriously the growth of a vegetable, from the sale of which, at the London markets, the Cornish agriculturalists derived large profits, and on which (with their fish) the Cornish poor depend as a staple article of food.

It is by the mines and fisheries (of both of which I shall speak particularly in another place) that Cornwall is compensated for a soil, too barren in many parts of the county, to be ever well cultivated except at such an expenditure of capital as no mere farmer can afford. From the inexhaustible mineral treasures in the earth, and from the equally inexhaustible shoals of pilchards which annually visit the coast, the working population of Cornwall derive their regular means of support, where agriculture would fail them. At the mines, the regular rate of wages is from forty to fifty shillings a month; but miners have opportunities of making more than this. By what is termed "working on tribute," that is, agreeing to excavate the mineral lodes for a percentage on the value of the metal they raise, some of them have been known to make as much as six and even ten pounds each, in a month. When they are unlucky in their working speculations, or perhaps thrown out of employment altogether by the shutting up of a mine, they still have a fair opportunity of obtaining farm labour, which is paid for (out of harvest time) at the rate of nine shillings a week. But this is a resource of which they are rarely obliged to take advantage. A plot of common ground is included with the cottages that are let to them; and the cultivation of this, helps to keep them and their families, in bad times, until they find an opportunity of resuming work; when they may perhaps make as much in one month, as an agricultural labourer can in twelve.

The fisheries not only employ all the inhabitants of the coast, but, in the pilchard season, many of the farm work-people as well. Ten thousand persons--men, women, and children--derive their regular support from the fisheries; which are so amazingly productive, that the "drift," or deep-sea fishing, in Mount's Bay alone, is calculated to realize, on the average, 30,000*l.* per annum.

To the employment thus secured for the poor in the mines and fisheries is to be added, as an advantage, the cheapness of rent and living in Cornwall. Good cottages are let at from fifty shillings, to between three and four pounds a-year--turf for firing grows in plenty on the vast tracts of common land overspreading the country--all sorts of vegetables are abundant and cheap, with the exception of potatoes, which so decreased in 1849, in consequence of the disease, that the winter stock was imported from France, Belgium, and Holland. The early potatoes, however, grown in May and June, are cultivated in large quantities, and realize on exportation a very high price. Corn generally sells a little above the average. Fish is always within the reach of the poorest people. In a good season, a dozen pilchards are sold for one penny. Happily for themselves, the poor in Cornwall do not partake the senseless prejudice against fish, so obstinately adhered to by the poor in

many other parts of England. A Cornishman's national pride is in his pilchards--he likes to talk of them, and boast about them to strangers; and with reason, for he depends for the main support of life on the tribute of these little fish which the sea yields annually in almost countless shoals.

The workhouse system in Cornwall is said, by those who are well qualified to form an opinion on the subject, to be generally well administered; the Unions in the eastern part of the county being the least stringent in their regulations, and the most liberal in giving out-of-door relief.

Such, briefly, but I think not incorrectly stated, is the condition of the poor in Cornwall, in relation to their means of subsistence as a class. Looking to the fact that the number of labourers there is not too much for the labour; comparing the rate of wages with rent and the price of provisions; setting the natural advantages of the county fairly against its natural disadvantages, it is impossible not to conclude that the Cornish poor suffer less by their poverty, and enjoy more opportunities of improving their social position, than the majority of their brethren in many other counties of England. The general demeanour and language of the people themselves amply warrant this conclusion. The Cornish are essentially a cheerful, contented race. The views of the working men are remarkably moderate and sensible--I never met with so few grumblers anywhere.

My opportunities of correctly estimating the state of education among the people, were not sufficiently numerous to justify me in offering to the reader more than a mere opinion on the subject. Such few observations as I was able to make, inclined me to think that, in education, the mass of the population was certainly below the average in England, with one exception--that of the classes employed in the mines. All of these men with whom I held any communication, would not have been considered badly-informed persons in a higher condition of life. They possessed much more than a common mechanical knowledge of their own calling, and even showed a very fair share of information on the subject of the history and antiquities of their native county. As usual, the agricultural inhabitants appeared to rank lowest in the scale of education and general intelligence. Among this class, and among the fishermen, the strong superstitious feelings of the ancient days of Cornwall still survive, and promise long to remain, handed down from father to son as heirlooms of tradition, gathered together in a remote period, and venerable in virtue of their antiquity. The notion, for instance, that no wound will fester as long as the instrument by which it was inflicted is kept bright and clean, still prevails extensively among them. But a short time since, a boy in Cornwall was placed under the care of a medical man (who related the anecdote to me) for a wound in the back from a pitchfork;

his relatives--cottagers of respectability--firmly believe that his cure was accelerated by the pains they took to keep the prongs of the pitchfork in a state of the highest polish, night and day, throughout the whole period of his illness, and down to the last hour of his complete restoration to health.

Another and a more remarkable instance of the superstitions prevailing among the least educated classes of the people, was communicated to me by the same informant--a gentleman whose life had been passed in Cornwall, and who was highly and deservedly respected by all those among whom he resided.[3]

A small farmer living in one of the most western districts of the county, died some years back of what was supposed at the time to be "English Cholera." A few weeks after his decease, his wife married again. This circumstance excited some attention in the neighbourhood. It was remembered that the woman had lived on very bad terms with her late husband, that she had on many occasions exhibited strong symptoms of possessing a very vindictive temper, and that during the farmer's lifetime she had openly manifested rather more than a Platonic preference for the man whom she subsequently married. Suspicion was generally excited: people began to doubt whether the first husband had died fairly. At length the proper order was applied for, and his body was disinterred. On examination, enough arsenic to have poisoned three men was found in his stomach. The wife was accused of murdering him, was tried, convicted on the clearest evidence, and hanged. Very shortly after she had suffered capital punishment, horrible stories of a ghost were widely circulated. Certain people declared that they had seen a ghastly resemblance of the murderess, robed in her winding-sheet, with the black mark of the rope round her swollen neck, standing on stormy nights upon her husband's grave, and digging there with a spade in hideous imitation of the actions of the men who had disinterred the corpse for medical examination. This was fearful enough--nobody dared go near the place after nightfall. But soon, another circumstance was talked of, in connexion with the poisoner, which affected the tranquillity of people's minds in the village where she had lived, and where it was believed she had been born, more seriously than even the ghost-story itself.

Near the church of this village there was a well, celebrated among the peasantry of the district for one remarkable property--every child baptized in its water (with which the church was duly supplied on christening occasions) was secure from ever being hanged. No one doubted that all the babies fortunate enough to be born and baptized in the parish, though they might live to the age of Methuselah, and might during that period commit all the capital crimes recorded in the "Newgate Calendar," were still destined to

keep quite clear of the summary jurisdiction of Jack Ketch--no one doubted this, until the story of the apparition of the murderess began to be spread abroad. Then, awful misgivings arose in the popular mind. A woman who had been born close by the magical well, and who had therefore in all probability been baptized in its water like her neighbours of the parish, had nevertheless been publicly and unquestionably hanged. However, probability was not always truth--everybody determined that the baptismal register of the poisoner should be sought for, and that it should be thus officially ascertained whether she had been christened with the well water, or not. After much trouble, the important document was discovered--not where it was first looked after, but in a neighbouring parish vestry. A mistake had been made about the woman's birthplace--she had not been baptized in the local church, and had therefore not been protected by the marvellous virtue of the local water. Unutterable was the joy and triumph of this discovery throughout the village--the wonderful character of the parish well was wonderfully vindicated--its celebrity immediately spread wider than ever. The peasantry of the neighbouring districts began to send for the renowned water before christenings; and many of them actually continue, to this day, to bring it corked up in bottles to their churches, and to beg particularly that it may be used whenever they present their children to be baptized.

Such instances of superstition as this--and others equally true might be quoted--afford, perhaps, of themselves, the best evidence of the low state of education among the people from whom they are produced. It is, however, only fair to state, that children in Cornwall are now enabled to partake of advantages which were probably not offered to their parents. Good National Schools are in operation everywhere, and are--as far as my own inquiries authorize me to report--well attended by pupils recruited from the ranks of the poorest classes.

Of the social qualities of the Cornish all that can be written may be written conscientiously in terms of the highest praise. Travelling as my companion and I did--in a manner which (whatever it may be now) was, ten years since, perfectly new to the majority of the people--we found constant opportunities of studying the popular character in its every day aspects. We perplexed some, we amused others: here, we were welcomed familiarly by the people, as travelling pedlars with our packs on our backs; there, we were curiously regarded at an awful distance, and respectfully questioned in circumlocutory phrases as to our secret designs in walking through the country. Thus, viewing us sometimes as their equals, sometimes as mysteriously superior to them, the peasantry unconsciously exhibited many of their most characteristic peculiarities without reserve. We looked at the spectacle of their social life from the most searching point of view, for we

looked at it from behind the scenes.

The manners of the Cornish of all ranks, down to the lowest, are remarkably distinguished by courtesy--a courtesy of that kind which is quite independent of artificial breeding, and which proceeds solely from natural motives of kindness and from an innate anxiety to please. Few of the people pass you without a salutation. Civil questions are always answered civilly. No propensity to jeer at strangers is exhibited--on the contrary, great solicitude is displayed to afford them any assistance that they may require; and displayed, moreover, without the slightest appearance of a mercenary motive. Thus, if you stop to ask your way, you are not merely directed for a mile or two on, and then told to ask again; but directed straight to the end of your destination, no matter how far off. Turnings to the right, and turnings to the left, short cuts across moors five miles away, churches that you must keep on this hand, and rocks that you must keep on that, are impressed upon your memory with the most laborious minuteness, and shouted after you over and over again as long as you are within hearing. If the utmost anxiety to give the utmost quantity of good advice could always avail against accident or forgetfulness, no traveller in Cornwall who asks his way as he goes, need ever lose himself.

When people possess the virtue of natural courtesy they are seldom found wanting in other higher virtues that are akin to it. Household affection, ready hospitality, and great gratitude for small rewards of services rendered, are all to be found among the Cornish peasantry. Their fondness for their children is very pleasant to see. A word of inquiry or praise addressed to the mother makes her face glow with delight, and sends her away at once in search of the missing members of her little family, who are ranged before you triumphantly, with smoothed hair and carefully wiped faces, ready to be reviewed in a row. Both father and mother often wish you, at parting, a good wife and a large family (if you are not married already), just as they wish you a pleasant journey and a prosperous return home again.

Of Cornish hospitality we experienced many proofs, one of which may be related as a sample. Arriving late at a village, in the far west of the county, we found some difficulty in arousing the people of the inn. While we were waiting at the door, we heard a man who lived in a cottage near at hand, and of whom we had asked our way on the road, inquiring of some female member of his family, whether she could make up a spare bed. We had met this man proceeding in our direction, and had so far outstripped him in walking, that we had been waiting outside the inn about a quarter of an hour before he got home. When the woman answered his question in the negative, he directed her to put clean sheets on his own bed, and then came

out to tell us that if we failed to obtain admission at the public-house, a lodging for the night was ready for us under his own roof. We found on inquiry, afterwards, that he had looked out of window, after getting home, while we were still disturbing the village by a continuous series of assaults on the inn door; had recognised us in the moonlight; and had thereupon not only offered us his bed, but had got out of it himself to do so. When we finally succeeded in gaining admittance to the inn, he declined an invitation to sup with us, and wishing us a good night's rest, returned to his home. I should mention, at the same time, that another bed was offered to us at the vicarage, by the clergyman of the parish; and that after this gentleman had himself seen that we were properly accommodated by our landlady, he left us with an invitation to breakfast with him the next morning. Thus is hospitality practised in Cornwall--a county where, it must be remembered, a stranger is doubly a stranger, in relation to provincial sympathies; where the national feeling is almost entirely merged in the local feeling; where a man speaks of himself as Cornish in much the same spirit as a Welshman speaks of himself as Welsh.

In like manner, another instance drawn from my own experience, will best display the anxiety which we found generally testified by the Cornish poor to make the best and most grateful return in their power for anything which they considered as a favour kindly bestowed. Such little anecdotes as I here relate in illustration of popular character, cannot, I think, be considered trifling; for it is by trifles, after all, that we gain our truest appreciation of the marking signs of good or evil in the dispositions of our fellow-beings; just as in the beating of a single artery under the touch, we discover an indication of the strength or weakness of the whole vital frame.

On the granite cliffs at the Land's End I met with an old man, seventy-two years of age, of whom I asked some questions relative to the extraordinary rocks scattered about this part of the coast. He immediately opened his whole budget of local anecdotes, telling them in a quavering high-treble voice, which was barely audible above the dash of the breakers beneath, and the fierce whistling of the wind among the rocks around us. However, the old fellow went on talking incessantly, hobbling along before me, up and down steep paths and along the very brink of a fearful precipice, with as much coolness as if his sight was as clear and his step as firm as in his youth. When he had shown me all that he could show, and had thoroughly exhausted himself with talking, I gave him a shilling at parting. He appeared to be perfectly astonished by a remuneration which the reader will doubtless consider the reverse of excessive; thanked me at the top of his voice; and then led me, in a great hurry, and with many mysterious nods and gestures, to a hollow in the grass, where he had spread on a clean pocket-

handkerchief a little stock-in-trade of his own, consisting of barnacles, bits of rock and ore, and specimens of dried seaweed. Pointing to these, he told me to take anything I liked, as a present in return for what I had given him. He would not hear of my buying anything; he was not, he said, a regular guide, and I had paid him more already than such an old man was worth--what I took out of his handkerchief I must take as a present only. I saw by his manner that he would be really mortified if I contested the matter with him, so as a present I received one of his pieces of rock--I had no right to deny him the pleasure of doing a kind action, because there happened to be a few more shillings in my pocket than in his.

Nothing can be much better adapted to show how simple and unsophisticated the Cornish character still remains in many respects, than Cornish notions of organizing a public festival, and Cornish enjoyment of that festival when it is organized. We had already seen how they managed a public boat-race at Looe, and we saw again how they conducted the preparations for the same popular festival, on a larger scale, at the coast town of Fowey.

In the first place, the dormant public enthusiasm was stimulated by music at an uncomfortably early hour in the morning. Two horn players and a clarionet player; a fat musician who blew through a very small fife and kept time with his head; and a withered little man who beat furiously on a mighty drum--drew up in martial array, one behind the other, before the principal inn. Two boys, staring about them in a stolidly important manner, and carrying flags which bore a suspicious resemblance to India pocket handkerchiefs sewn together, formed in front of the musicians. Two corpulent, solemn, elderly gentlemen in black (belonging, apparently, to the churchwarden-type of the human species), formed in their turn on each side of the boys--and then the procession started; walking briskly up and down, and in and out, and round and round the same streets, over and over again; the musicians playing on all their instruments at once (drum included), without a moment's intermission on the part of any one of them. Nothing could exceed the gravity and silence of the popular concourse which followed this grotesque procession. The solemn composure on the countenances of the two corpulent civil officers who went before it, was reflected on the features of the smallest boy who followed humbly behind. Profound musical amateurs in attendance at a classical quartet concert, could have exhibited no graver or more breathless attention than that displayed by the inhabitants of Fowey, as they marched at the heels of the peripatetic town band.

But, while the music was proceeding, another adjunct to the dignity of the

festival was in course of preparation, which appealed more strongly to popular sympathy even than the band and procession. A quantity of young trees--miserable little saplings cut short in their early infancy--were brought into the town, curiously sharpened at the stems. Holes were rapidly drilled in the ground, here, there, and everywhere, for their reception, at corners of house walls. While men outside set them up, women in a high state of excitement appeared at first-floor windows with long pieces of string, which they fastened to the branches to steady the trees at the top, hauling them about this way and that most unmercifully during the operation, and then vanishing to tie the loose ends of the lines to bars of grates and legs of tables. Mazes of long tight strings ran all across our room at the inn; broken twigs and drooping leaves peered in sadly at us through the three windows that lighted it. We were driven about from corner to corner out of the way of this rigging by an imperious old woman, who fastened and fettered the wretched trees with as fierce an air as if they were criminals whom she was handcuffing, and who at last fairly told us that she thought we had better leave the room, and see how beautiful things looked from the outside. On obeying this intimation, we found that the trees had absorbed the whole public attention to themselves. The band marched by, playing furiously; but the boys deserted it. The people from the country, hastening into the town, hot and eager, paused, reckless of the music, reckless of the flags, reckless of the procession, to look forth upon the streets "with verdure clad." The popularity of the Sons of Apollo was a thing of the past already! Nothing can well be imagined more miserably ugly than the appearance of the trees, standing strung into unnatural positions, and looking half dead already; but they evidently inspired the liveliest public satisfaction. Women returned to the windows to give a last perfecting tug to their branches; men patted approvingly with spades the loose earth round their stems. Spectators, one by one, took a near view and a distant view, and then walked gently by and took an occasional view, and lastly gathered together in little groups and took a general view. As connoisseurs look at their pictures, as mothers look at their children, as lovers look at their mistresses--so did the people of Fowey assemble with one accord and look at their trees.

After all, however, I shall perhaps best illustrate the simplicity of character displayed by the Cornish country-people, if I leave the less amusing preparations for inaugurating the Fowey boat-race untold, and describe some of the peculiarities of behaviour and remark which the appearance of my companion and myself called forth in all parts of Cornwall. The mere sight of two strangers walking with such appendages as knapsacks strapped on their shoulders, seemed of itself to provoke the most unbounded wonder. We were stared at with almost incredible pertinacity and good humour. People hard at work, left off to look at us; while groups congregated at

cottage doors, walked into the middle of the road when they saw us approach, looked at us in front from that commanding point of view until we passed them, and then wheeled round with one accord and gazed at us behind as long as we were within sight. Little children ran in-doors to bring out large children, as we drew near. Farmers, overtaking us on horseback, pulled in, and passed at a walk, to examine us at their ease. With the exception of bedridden people and people in prison, I believe that the whole population of Cornwall looked at us all over--back view and front view--from head to foot!

This staring was nowhere accompanied, either on the part of young or old, by a jeering word or an impertinent look. We evidently astonished the people, but we never tempted them to forget their natural good-nature, forbearance, and self-restraint. On our side, the attentive scrutiny to which we were subjected, was at first not a little perplexing. It was difficult not to doubt occasionally whether some unpleasantly remarkable change had not suddenly taken place in our personal appearance--whether we might not have turned green or blue on our travels, or have got noses as long as the preposterous nose of the traveller through Strasburgh, in the tale of Slawkenbergius. It was not until we had been some days in the county that we began to discover, by some such indications as the following, that we owed the public attention to our knapsacks, and not to ourselves.

We enter a small public-house by the roadside to get a draught of beer. In the kitchen, we behold the landlord and a tall man who is a customer. Both stare as a matter of course; the tall man especially, after taking one look at our knapsacks, fixes his eyes firmly on us and sits bolt upright on the bench without saying a word--he is evidently prepared for the worst we can do. We get into conversation with the landlord, a jovial, talkative fellow, who desires greatly to know what we are, if we have no objection. We ask him, what he thinks we are?--"Well," says the landlord, pointing to my friend's knapsack, which has a square ruler strapped to it, for architectural drawing--"well, I think you are both of you mappers--mappers who come here to make new roads--you may be coming to make a railroad, I dare say--we've had mappers in the country before this--I know a mapper myself--here's both your good healths!" We drink the landlord's good health in return, and disclaim the honour of being "mappers;" we walk through the country (we tell him) for pleasure alone, and take any roads we can get, without wanting to make new ones. The landlord would like to know, if that is the case, why we carry those weights at our backs?--Because we want to take our luggage about with us. Couldn't we pay to ride?--Yes, we could. And yet we like walking better?--Yes we do. This last answer utterly confounds the tall customer, who has been hitherto listening intently to the dialogue. It is

evidently too much for his credulity--he pays his reckoning, and walks out in a hurry without uttering a word. The landlord appears to be convinced, but it is only in appearance. We leave him standing at his door, keeping his eye on us as long as we are in sight, still evidently persuaded that we are "mappers," but "mappers" of a bad order whose presence is fraught with some unknown peril to the security of the Queen's highway.

We get on into another district. Here, public opinion is not flattering. Some of the groups, gathered together in the road to observe us, begin to speculate on our characters before we are quite out of hearing. Then, this sort of dialogue, spoken in serious, subdued tones, just reaches us: Question--What can they be? Answer--"Trodgers!"

This is particularly humiliating, because it happens to be true. We certainly do trudge, and are therefore properly, though rather unceremoniously, called trudgers, or "trodgers." But we sink to a lower depth yet, a little further on. We are viewed as objects for pity. It is a fine evening; we stop and lean against a bank by the roadside to look at the sunset. An old woman comes tottering by on high pattens, very comfortably and nicely clad. She sees our knapsacks, and instantly stops in front of us, and begins to moan lamentably. Not understanding at first what this means, we ask respectfully if she feels at all ill? "Ah, poor fellows! poor fellows!" she sighs in answer, "obliged to carry all your baggage on your own backs!--very hard! poor lads! very hard, indeed!" And the good old soul goes away groaning over our evil plight, and mumbling something which sounds very like an assurance that she has got no money to give us.

In another part of the county we rise again gloriously in worldly consideration. We pass a cottage; a woman looks out after us, over the low garden wall, and rather hesitatingly calls us back. I approach her first, and am thus saluted: "If you please, sir, what have you got to sell?" Again, an old man meets us on the road, stops, cheerfully taps our knapsacks with his stick, and says: "Aha! you're tradesmen, eh? things to sell? I say, have you got any tea" (pronounced tay); "I'll buy some tay!" Further on, we approach a group of miners breaking ore. As we pass by, we hear one asking amazedly, "What have they got to sell in those things on their backs?" and another answering, in the prompt tones of a guesser who is convinced that he guesses right, "Guinea-pigs!"

It is unfortunately impossible to convey to the reader an adequate idea, by mere description, of the extraordinary gravity of manner, the looks of surprise and the tones of conviction which accompanied these various popular conjectures as to our calling and station in life, and which added

immeasurably at the time to their comic effect. Curiously enough, whenever they took the form of questions, any jesting in returning an answer never seemed either to be appreciated or understood by the country people. Serious replies shared much the same fate as jokes. Everybody asked whether we could pay for riding, and nobody believed that we preferred walking, if we could. So we soon gave up the idea of affording any information at all; and walked through the country comfortably as mappers, trodgers, tradesmen, guinea-pig-mongers, and poor back-burdened vagabond lads, altogether, or one at a time, just as the peasantry pleased.

I have not communicated to the reader all the conjectures formed about us, for the simple reason that many of them, when they ran to any length, were by no means so intelligible as could be desired. It will readily be imagined, that in a county which had a language of its own (something similar to the Welsh) down to the time of Edward VI., if not later--in a county where this language continued to be spoken among the humbler classes until nearly the end of the seventeenth century, and where it still gives their names to men, places, and implements--some remnants of it must attach themselves to the dialect of English now spoken by the lower orders. This is enough of itself to render Cornish talk not very easy to be understood by ordinary strangers; but the difficulty of comprehending it is still further increased by the manner in which the people speak. They pronounce rapidly and indistinctly, often running separate syllables into one another through a sentence, until the whole sounds like one long fragmentary word. To the student in philology a series of conversations with the Cornish poor would, I imagine, afford ample matter for observation of the most interesting kind. Some of their expressions have a character that is quite patriarchal. Young men, for instance, are addressed by their elders as, "my son"--everything eatable, either for man or beast, is commonly denominated, "meat."

It may be expected, before I close this hasty sketch of the Cornish people, that I should touch on the dark side of the picture--unfinished though it is--which I have endeavoured to draw. But I have nothing to communicate on the subject of offences in Cornwall, beyond a few words about "wrecking" and smuggling.

Opinions have been divided among well-informed persons, as to the truth or falsehood of those statements of travellers and historians, which impute the habitual commission of outrages and robberies on sufferers by shipwreck to the Cornish of former generations. Without entering into this question of the past, which can only be treated as a matter for discussion, I am happy, in proceeding at once to the present, to be able to state, as a matter of fact, that "wrecking" is a crime unknown in the Cornwall of our day. So far from

maltreating shipwrecked persons, the inhabitants of the sea-shore risk their lives to save them. I make this assertion, on the authority of a gentleman whose life has been passed in the West of Cornwall; whose avocations take him much among the poor of all ranks and characters; and who has himself seen wrecked sailors rescued from death by the courage and humanity of the population of the coast.

In reference to smuggling, many years have passed without one of those fatal encounters between smugglers and revenue officers which, in other days, gave a dark and fearful character to the contraband trade in Cornwall. So well is the coast watched, that no smuggling of any consequence can now take place. It is only the oldest Cornish men who can give you any account, from personal experience, of adventures in "running a cargo;" and those that I heard described were by no means of the romantic or interesting order.

Beyond this, I have nothing further to relate regarding criminal matters. It may not unreasonably be doubted whether a subject so serious and so extensive as the Statistics of Crime, is not out of the scope of a book like the present, whose only object is to tell a simple fireside story which may amuse an idle, or solace a mournful hour. Moreover, remembering the assistance and the kindness that my companion and I met with throughout Cornwall--and those only who have travelled on foot can appreciate how much the enjoyment of exploring a country may be heightened or decreased, according to the welcome given to the stranger by the inhabitants--remembering, too, that we walked late at night, through districts inhabited only by the roughest and poorest classes, entirely unmolested; and that we trusted much on many occasions to the honesty of the people, and never found cause to repent our trust--I cannot but feel that it would be an ungracious act to ransack newspapers and Reports to furnish materials for recording in detail, the vices of a population whom I have only personally known by their virtues. Let you and I, reader, leave off with the same pleasant impressions of the Cornish people--you, whose only object is to hear, and I whose only object is to tell, the story of a holiday walk. There is enough to be found in them that is good, amply to justify a little inattention to whatever we may discover that is bad.

FOOTNOTES:

[2] It may be necessary to remind the reader that this statement respecting the population of Cornwall was written in the year 1850. I have no means at my disposal of ascertaining what the increase in numbers may have been during the last ten years.--(March, 1861.)

[3] The gentleman here referred to--whose kind assistance while I was writing these pages I can never forget--was Mr. Richard Moyle, long resident as a medical man at Penzance. Since my first visit to Cornwall, death has removed Mr. Moyle from the scene of his labours, to the lasting and sincere regret of all who knew him.--(March, 1861.)