

for me that I possessed one friend there who if not exactly a friend *at court* as we say, was in truth a much more useful person to me, as, having once been young and inexperienced himself, he knew the ropes well and handled them thoroughly to his own satisfaction and with an eye to my comfort and safety.

In the matter of cheap dives, for instance, he was invaluable. Left to myself I either drifted to the most expensive place, for a meal short perhaps of Delmonicos, or else to a shabby and altogether-to-be-repudiated den, where the meat would be rags as well as the pudding. But under his guidance we invariably turned up in some clean, bright, cheap and wholesome "oyster bar" or coffee room round the corner or up a lane, and were as happy as kings over our *lager bier*.

One day De Kock came to me (he is a grand-nephew or something, I believe, of the great Frenchman) and said, with his knowing air,

"You will please put on your best coat, your tall hat and a pair of gloves, for we are going to *dine* to-night."

"Have we not dined once to-day!"

"Pish! Pshaw! You have had a soup, a mutton-chop, a triangle of pie, a lager beer, but you have not dined. You are not starving, and yet you have, from my present point of view, eaten nothing the whole of this day. *Mon cher*, it is necessary that you should dine for once in your life. *Allons!* We go to Giuseppe, Giuseppe Martinetti with the pale wife and the pea-green parrot—*allons, allons!*" To Martinetti's accordingly we went. I don't know what the dinner cost. It was dearer, certainly, than it would have been in London, but it was quite as good. We sat at a table formed for holding four at an open window, which, filled with exotics, overlooked Union Square, lighted by hundreds of incandescent lamps. The room contained about twenty of these small tables, and was, I suppose, very much like other rooms of its kind to *habitues* of such places, but it was all new to me, and I stared and wondered accordingly. The waiters seemed to be all foreigners, De Kock addressing them in a mythical but magical language of his own. The tables were all full, and the people at them were mostly foreigners as well.

"The Leicester Square of New York," remarked De Kock, as he helped me to the delicious Chianti wine out of a basket-covered bottle into a dainty glass. The soup was excellent, I remember. So was the macaroni, served in the best Italian