

looking pile of little cakes from one of his small ovens.

"By good luck there is a pilgrim come who talks some odd tongue nobody can understand, and they want old Philetus to try to make him out."

"No doubt he left you something to do in the meantime."

"Nay, now, good Leo, don't be cross; I shall know my lines of Virgilius Maro twice as well if you sweeten them with one of those delicious honey cakes. Why, it is all about the bees, and how to get a swarm."

"You read me off your bees three times over, sir, and then I'll give you a honey cake."

"Leo, that's too bad! You might as well be old Philetus himself with his bald head and wrinkled brow."

"Come, come, or I shall be asking what you are doing in my kitchen, and calling Rhys to pin a cloth to your tail."

"Now, don't be cross, good Leo."

"I like to live and learn," returned the cook, who had indeed a most intelligent face, though very dark and heated and grimed with charcoal. "There, I see your tablet."

"Yes, the old wretch rubbed it over three times just because I had got a letter or two wrong in the spelling."

"There now, let me look. I can tell what that is, sir. That is M."

"Yes, the first letter of *mella*. If he did not go and blot my ears and efface it all because I had not put two l's!"

Attalus was carrying a frame like a slate, but within it was a tablet of wax. On this he had written at his master's dictation his lines of one of the *Georgics* of Virgil, scratching them into the wax with a style, a sharp-pointed steel instrument, and making all the letters capitals, and such as we call printed letters, with no divisions between the words and no stops, so that the only wonder is how anyone ever read them at all.

"Nay, but let me have a bite to moisten my throat before I begin, good Leo, sweet Leo."

"Ah!" said Leo, granting him a broken crumb, "you are not like your grandfather, sir, a very saint. Do you see that dish?"

"Dry stickjaw barley cakes, fit to choke a man," said Attalus. "For the next beggar, I suppose?"

"Nay, they are for my Lord Bishop's own eating. They are his dainties; I am going to put these honey cakes over them, so that his guests may never find out what are his provisions."

"Rather he than I! I know it; and, moreover, that he has a glass colored red up to the brim that none may suspect him of drinking water, but only wine. What good is there in that?"

"Surely you should know, sir; it is the way

wherewith 'he subdueth the old self and the desires and passions thereof."

"But what is the good if no one is to know of it, nor praise him for it?"

"That would take away all the benefit of his humility. 'Ah! he is a true saint.'"

"I wish he was not! I wish he was not a saint or a bishop, but was content to be a senator still."

"For shame, Attalus! I shall give you no more cake if you speak thus profanely."

"I do not see the harm of it. If he was a senator still, we should not have anything but dull old priests and dirty beggars crouching about; but I should have a fine horse and a suit of armor, and not have all this dismal grammar and poetry to weary out my head."

"You would never wish to be like a wild savage Frank or Burgundian?"

"Would I not! They have beautiful horses, and they gallop, throw the spear and hit the mark, and no one dares to gainsay them. They hunt—I have heard their horns in the forest—and shoot and spear the wild boar and the stag, while we can scarce put the tip of our nose outside the walls."

"But you would never give up the name of Roman to be a wild barbarian, and all your great forefathers—"

"I would. I would be free and get beyond this narrow bound, and have done with Virgil and Quintus Curtius and withered old Philetus, and all of them."

"Ah! and Philetus will return to find you if you do not know your lines. Come, sir; first the bees, and then the honey cake."

Attalus with a groan began the lines in which the old Roman poet Virgil in his *Georgics*—a poem about husbandry—describes the mode of dealing with bees; drawing it out and moaning over it much as a boy of any century would do unless he had a real spirit of learning. It was, however, more to him what a task from the "Deserted Village" would be to an English boy, for Latin was his mother tongue, and, in spite of what he had said, he was proud of being a true-born Roman, though these were very sad times for the Romans in Gaul, or indeed anywhere else.

The place he lived in may be found in the map of France, in the department of the Haute-Marne, by the name of Langres. However, the river Marne is probably the only thing that remains the same as it was in the year A.D. 530, and even that has altered its name from Matrona. Attalus knew the city by the name of Andematunum Lingonum, from the old Gaulish tribe whom the Romans had called Lingones; and the present name is taken from that tribe, most of the French towns having been called after the ancient Gallic clans instead or by the names the Roman conquerors gave them.