

BUYING A STRAW HAT AT ST. MALO.

In one of his letters, Max O'Rell, the well-known correspondent relates the following incident:—

The French he says, never or very seldom, allow themselves to be completely absorbed by business. They always set apart a certain portion of time to the amenities of life. They are as serious you like at work, but in a moment they will exhibit any amount of good humour at play, and again will resume harness as quickly as it was thrown off. If you go into a shop at dinner time I speak now of the small provincial towns - you may run the risk of receiving very little attention or even none at all. I remember once it was at St Malo, in the summer—I entered a hatter's shop at one o'clock in the afternoon. A well dressed, ladylike girl came out of the back parlor and inquired what I wanted.

"I want a straw hat mademoiselle," I said.

"Oh! that's very awkward just now."

"Is it?"

"Well, you see," she said, "my brother is at dinner;" and after a pause of a few seconds she added, "Would you mind calling again in an hour's time?"

"Not at all," I replied; "I shall be delighted to do so."

I was not only amused, but struck with admiration for the independence of that worthy hatter. After a few year's residence in England a little scene of that description was a great treat.

An hour later I called again. The young girl made her second appearance.

"My brother waited for you quite ten minutes," she said to me; "he has gone to the cafe with a friend now."

"I am sorry for that," I said; "when can I see him?"

"If you will step across to the cafe, I am sure he will be happy to come back and attend to you."

I thanked the young lady, went to the cafe and introduced myself to the hatter, who was enjoying a cup of coffee and having a game

of dominoes with a friend. He asked me to allow him to finish the game, which, of course, I was only too glad to do, and we returned to the shop together.

RACKET IN A HATTER'S STORE.

"Kathleen," writing in the Leeds Mercury, tells of a lady in Sydney, who found a horse-hoe, and threw it gracefully over her shoulder in accordance with ancient custom. It went through a hatters's window and hit a customer who was trying on a new hat. This gentleman, under the impression that one of the shopmen had played the trick, promptly struck him and sent him through a large sheet of plate-glass. A general melee ensued, and the place was in a commotion immediately, although no one appeared to know exactly what it was all about. It would be interesting to know who paid for the shop window, the lady or the customer, or whether, as usual, the poor tradesman had to pay.

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