

"The money-changers were embarrassed, and began to turn very red, when a bystander, who saw the awkward aspect of affairs, offered himself as umpire. 'I will reckon it for you,' he said, and taking the son-of-a-bitch calculation agreed with ours. The superintendent of the bank made us a profound bow. 'Sirs, ladies,' said he, 'your mathematics are better than mine.'"

"Oh, not at all," we returned, with an equally profound bow. "But who ever heard of a calculator always exempt from error? People like you may well be mistaken once in a while, whereas poor simple folk like us make blunders ten thousand times. Now, however, we have fortunately concurred in our reckoning, thanks to the pains you have taken."

"These phrases were rigorously required under the circumstances by Chinese politeness. Whenever any person in China is compromised by any awkward incident, those present always carefully refrain from any observation which may make him blush, or, as the Chinese phrase it, take away his face."

"After our conciliatory address had restored self-possession to all present, everybody drew round the piece of paper on which we had figured, and after a conversation on the merits of the Arabic numerals, the cashier handed us the full amount of sapeks, and we parted good friends."

From our brief glance at the successive modes of travel and transport—the human "bearer," the pack animal, the carrier's cart, the Conestoga wagon (predecessor of the "prairie schooner"), the Concord coach, and so on to the locomotive and palace car—we have now to pass to the matter of accommodation at halting places."

All of these, of whatever grade, up to the full development of the model American hotel, beyond question find their origin in the Eastern caravan serais. These primitive inns, coeval almost with the use of the natural shelter of groves and forests or transported tents, were plain buildings surrounding a court-yard, and supplying only shelter, water, and a safe enclosure for animals."

Among the Mohammedans and Hindoos it was a meritorious and semi-religious act to establish these shelters for wayfarers, and they were often endowed by wealthy devotees."

On the high-roads of caravan travel they were found, in the deserts even, as well as in the towns, but travellers relied on them for nothing beyond rest and shelter, carrying with them their own provisions, attendants, and cooking utensils, and finding their own fuel. To this day, in many parts of Spain and Spanish America, the *posada* retains in large degree the rude simplicity of the original caravan-*serai*."

In the process of time came the idea of supply-provisions at these places; it saved trouble and cost of carriage to the merchants, and provisions were furnished. Then attendance, cooking service, sleeping appliances, fuel, and lights came to be asked for, and the traveller was relieved, step by step, of much of the trouble and annoyance of caring for himself. He needed space and facilities for storing his merchandise or displaying it for sale, and these were afforded him."

Thus by regular gradations the first rude taverns—mere sleeping quarters under roof—advanced in character and functions until we find them, as in China again, closely approximating in various ways the modern hostelry. In that country, according to Polo and his traveller successors, they long ago offered many of the conveniences of our later Western civilization. M. Huc tells us that they had advanced so far as to be divided into class houses, the "Corn-dealers' Rest" refusing to receive a horse-trader, and the commercial traveller having his exclusive quarters, where he was welcomed "on horse or camel his affairs transacted with infallible success," and Even in the nomenclature of his inns and their belongings the *Kital* antedated, in Oriental style, the grandiloquence of the modern Parisian. Before the "Café de Mille Colonnnes," the "Trois Freres," or the "Maison Dorée" were dreamed of, he had his "Hotel of the Three Perfections," the "Tavern of Eternal Equity" (an establishment unknown to our day), and the "House of Repose for Transitory Guests."

Still more amusingly high sounding were the titles of the *Kital's* hotel functionaries. For the *maitre à hôtel* and the *chef de cuisine*, with his *ordon bleu*, of the Frenchman, there is the "Inspector of the Chest," the "Comptroller of the Table," and the "Director of the Kitchen," with his subordinates, the "Governor of the Pot," and the "Superintendent of the Soup Kettle."

But the Chinese in his hotel improvements, as in other things, reached a certain point, and stood still, while his Western brother, commencing long after, has overtaken and passed him; as in traveling facilities, so in hotel comforts. Starting from the caravan-*serai*, the European has brought his guest house up to a high standard of comfort and luxury. But he, too, in one respect, has reached a stage beyond which he apparently finds it hard to pass. And in that one respect even the Celestial was before him. Both continued the fashion after the caravan-*serai* begun to furnish something more than sleeping room, of charging specifically for each item furnished, a fashion still, in the main, kept up in Western Europe, and from which we get out "European style." Under this "style," at first at least, and we believe in very many houses in Europe yet, a daily account was presented, reciting piecemeal what the guest has had,—bed, fire, light, food, and so on; and this originally with the honest idea of affording the guest, while his memory was still fresh, opportunity to correct any error or overcharge."

It has been left for the American, with his ideas of simplifying matters and saving trouble to raise the hotel to its last degree of development, to furnish it with all the comforts and luxuries of life, and to cover the whole with one straightforward charge of so much per day."

While many, even among ourselves, prefer the "European style," the "American style" has its advantages, and is a step in advance, in many respects rendering it unnecessary for the traveler who is able and willing to pay to bother himself with specially calling for or providing in advance this or that trifle which he is accustomed to find ready to his hand. But with the option now so generally afforded by both styles, the European or American, paying in detail for what he actually has, or paying "by the lump" for all the comforts and luxuries offered him by our perfected hotel system, it is hard to imagine what may be the next improvement in the way of accommodations at halting places."

Possibly he may find it in a combination of the means of transport and the "House of Repose." If not in the steam-driven, thoroughly manageable balloon, with its basket constructed to serve as a residence when he comes down from the clouds, he may find it in the "Commercial Travelers' Patent Private Palace Car with Kitchen, French Cook, Sleeping and Sample-Office Attachments."

That something very like this has been already tried, we are advised as we write, but so far not successfully. Yet who shall say that a year or two hence it will not be a success?

BORDEAUX.

BY HENRY JAMES.

All this while I was getting on to Bordeaux, where I permitted myself to spend three days. I am afraid I have next to nothing to show for them, and that there would be little profit in lingering on this episode, which is the less to be justified as I had in former years examined Bordeaux attentively enough. It contains a very good hotel—an hotel not good enough, however, to keep you there for its own sake. For the rest, Bordeaux is a big, rich, handsome, imposing commercial town, with long rows of fine old eighteenth-century houses overlooking the yellow Garonne. I have spoken of the quays of Nantes as fine, but those of Bordeaux have a wider sweep and a still more architectural air. The appearance of such a port as this makes the Anglo-Saxon tourist blush for the sordid waterfronts of Liverpool and New York, which, with their larger activity, have so much more reason to be stately. Bordeaux gives a great impression of prosperous industries and suggests delightful ideas, images of prune boxes and bottled claret. As the focus of distribution of the best wine in the world, it is indeed a sacred city—dedicated to the worship of Bacchus in the most discreet form. The country all about it is covered with precious vineyards, sources of fortune to their owners and of satisfaction to distant consumers; and as you look over to the hills beyond the Garonne you see them, in the autumn sunshine, fretted with the rusty richness of this or that immortal *clos*. But the principal picture, within the town, is that of the vast curving quays, bordered with houses that look like the *hotels* of farmers-general of the last century, and of the wide, tawny river, crowded with shipping and spanned by the largest of bridges. Some of the types on the water side are of the sort that arrest a sketched—figures of stalwart, brown faced Basques, such as I had seen of old in great numbers at Biarritz, with their loose circular caps, their white sandals, their air of walking for a wager. Never was a tougher, a hardier, race. They are not mariners nor watermen, but, putting questions of temper aside, they are the best possible dock porters. "Il s'y fait un commerce terrible," a *douanier* said to me, as he looked up and down the interminable docks; and such a place has indeed much to say of the wealth, the capacity for production, of France—the bright, cheerful, smokeless industry of the wonderful country which produces above all the agreeable things of life, and turns even its defeats and revolutions into good. The whole town has an air of almost depressing opulence, an appearance which culminates in the great place which surrounds the Grand Théâtre—an establishment in the grandest style encircled with columns, arcades, lamps, gilded cafés. One feels it to be a monument to the virtue of the well selected bottle. If I had not forbidden myself to linger, I should venture to insist on this, and, at the risk of being thought fantastic, trace an analogy between good claret and the best qualities of the French mind; pretend that there is a taste of sound Bordeaux in all the happiest manifestations of that fine organ, and that, correspondingly, there is a touch of French reason, French completeness, in a glass of Pontet Caucet. The danger of such an excursion would lie mainly in its being so open to the reader to take the ground from under my feet by saying that good claret does not exist. To this I should have no reply whatever. I should be unable to tell him where to find it. I certainly did not find it at Bordeaux, where I drank a most vulgar fluid; and it is of course notorious that a large part of mankind is occupied in vainly looking for it. There was a great pretense of putting it forward at the Exhibition which was going on at Bordeaux, at the time of my visit—an "exposition philomathique," lodged in a collection of big, temporary buildings in the Allées d'Orléans, and regarded by the Bordelais for the moment as the most brilliant feature of their city. Here were pyramids of bottles, mountains of bottles, to say nothing of cases and cabinets of bottles. The contemplation of these shining embankments was of course not very convincing; and indeed the whole arrangement struck me as a high impertinence. Good wine is not an optical pleasure, it is an inward emotion; and if there was a chamber of degustation on the premises I failed to discover it. It was not in the search for it, indeed, that I spent half an hour in this bewildering bazaar. Like all "expositions," it seemed to me to be full of ugly things, and gave one a portentous idea of the quantity of rubbish that man carries with him on his course through the ages. Such an amount of luggage for a journey after all so short! There were no individual objects; there was nothing but dozens and hundreds, all machine made and expressionless, in spite of the repeated grimace, the conscious smartness, of "the last new thing," that was stamped on all of them. The fatal facility of the French *article* becomes at last as irritating as the refrain of a popular song."

WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY.

When the British householder is on pleasure bent, and the family is away at the seaside, on the lakes, or among the mountains, there is always a voice raised on behalf of "the harmless necessary cat." This year, like scores preceding it, has been no exception to the rule, and we have seen the usual comments about the inhumane way in which the poor animal is left to starve in the shut up house. Now for my own part I do not believe that any great number of people act in this way towards their domestic pets, and are no more likely to leave pussy unprotected for than the favourite canary or the parrot. The majority of ladies and gentlemen are not inhumane, and, for the most part, the sentimental outcry is entirely uncalled for, except as a means of furnishing a topic for silly people to discuss and write letters about. If, however, this was all the harm which happened, the subject might be dismissed without comment, but it is apt to divert housewives' attention from much more real of less sentimental dangers, which absence from home may give rise to. There is always, as we know, some difficulty in making satisfactory arrangement for the safe keeping of a house when the family is away, and, as a rule, it is easier to say what it is best not to do rather than what it is best to do. If providing for the cat were our only anxiety, I think it could be soon allayed; but it is the fact of "the cat being away" and not of that domestic animal being left behind, which is the main obstacle to the housewife's peace of mind when her presence can no longer control the establishment. The proverb I am afraid is only too well founded, and to a greater or lesser degree we may depend upon it "the mice will play" when freed from the supervising eye. The thing, therefore, is to insure as far as possible that this "play" does not degenerate into foolish romping, and thence, by an easy gradation, into crime. Undoubtedly "evil is wrought by want of thought as much as want of heart;" and the mistress who thoughtlessly leaves the house in charge of servants on whom she cannot thoroughly rely, either from past experience or from their age and reliable characters, is very blamable. Necessarily much must depend on the number of domestics as to whom the responsibility of keeping things straight should be entrusted; but certain it is that it should never be to a young person. It is dull work at the best, taking care of a shut up house when the streets and squares resemble the outlying suburbs of a city of the dead; and it is not wonderful that female servants should seek to dispel the pervading gloom by prolonged conversations with the few people, tradesmen, and others, whom business may bring to the house. I say business advisedly, because scarcely anyone can call except on this plea, and on the truth or falsity of this said plea depends very often the security of our homes. There is no reason so favourable for the criminal classes to lay their plans for the winter campaign of housebreaking, as that when the house is left in the charge of servants. It is then that they can make their observations of the land with the greatest facility. Thieves who have had to contend all their lives with detectives must of necessity have picked up some of the craft of those active and intelligent officials, which craft, grafted on to their own cunning and unscrupulous daring, gives a rather alarming result. The consequence is, that there is nothing easier than for the professed "cracksmen," or some one of his gang, to introduce himself just as a detective could into an establishment where young, perhaps good looking and inexperienced, servants are left, if not actually in charge, at least with plenty of idle time on their hands. Upon some plea or other this gentleman finds out the plan of the house, the habits of the inmates, together with their number and sex, the precise position where valuables are kept, and indeed the whole top and tail of the household. These facts are carefully noted and laid by for future use, for without them to act upon very few burglaries are attempted. The police will tell us that nine robberies out of ten owe their origin to the carelessness (not necessarily the criminality, be it understood, but the careless thoughtlessness) of the maid servants. Female vanity is often the point first attacked, as the most vulnerable and likely to lead soonest to the desired result. A red coat or a blue coat is supposed to be ir-

sistible, and there is no doubt that admission is sometimes gained at the area gate under cover of this attractive attire. It is well, if under these circumstances, the evil goes no farther than petty pilfering, or the gormandising of legs of mutton at the householder's expense. Stories are told of evening entertainments given during the master and mistress's absence in the country, and when wardrobes, etc., are ransacked to furnish the finery befitting such festivals; and of course it would be among the guests on such occasions that we might not unnaturally expect to find the observing and enterprising associate of the burglar, if not the actual gentleman himself. I have not drawn this picture as one that may be very frequently presented, but it is one of many which it is known has been worked out in the playfulness of the mouse's disposition when stimulated to extra hilarity by the absence of the cat. That our best cups and saucers, best dinner sets, knives and forks, etc., should be used to furnish forth the table appointments during any festivities given is bad enough, to say nothing of our apparel being worn and our rooms and beds occupied *ad libitum*; but such things do occur, and should be guarded against by means of lock and key. Still, these are trifles compared with the possibilities for future mischief and loss which keeping open house by the servants while we are away afford."

Again, it not unusually happens that some repairs, cleaning, whitewashing, painting, etc., may have to be executed during the dull season; and this offers another opportunity for the investigation of the premises, and should be prevented by cautions given to those we leave behind to take care of our property. In fact, there is no limit to the mischief which may ensue if we do not ourselves observe proper precautions. The only real comfort for the housewife who is obliged to leave her servants at home when she goes away is to obtain the guardianship of some lady, friend or otherwise, who can come and stay in the house. I not long ago observed in your columns the suggestion that this would afford an easy, suitable (if temporary) occupation for impecunious ladies, and I do not remember to have heard of a more practical idea. It serves a double purpose, and would efficiently secure many a household from trouble, anxiety and loss."

Where such a plan cannot be carried out, there is nothing for it but to put the most trustworthy of our domestics in charge, and then, by locking up the rooms, cupboards, etc., that are not required, secure our belongings upon the principle of "safe bind safe find." Should the family take the servants with them to the seaside or elsewhere, the case is immensely simplified. The locking up process has then only to be extended to every part of the house save the kitchen, and one bedroom to be occupied by a policeman and his wife, or one of the married commissionaires, who can be hired with perfect reliance from the headquarters of the corps. In preparing for the return of the family under these latter circumstances, it becomes almost imperative that the lady of the house or her responsible delegate should return a few days before everybody else to superintend the un-locking, airing, and cleaning of the rooms, etc. Only in these and similar ways can we render the playfulness of the mice at this time of year perfectly harmless."

WHITE SERGEANT.

AMONG the several residences in Concord, Mass., noted as the homes of literature, should be mentioned the little shed on a sand-bar of Walden Pond, which David Henry Thoreau built as a protest against the follies and complex wants of society. This house contained one room ten feet wide by fifteen long, a closet, a window, two trap-doors and a brick chimney at one end. Its timbers were grown on the spot, the boards for its covering were procured from the deserted shanty of a railway laborer, and the whole cost of the structure did not exceed thirty dollars. In this house, through the most inclement season of the year—from July to May—the philosopher lived at an expense of eight dollars and seventy-six cents, a striking reproof of modern folly and extravagance. The house on the Virginia road where Thoreau was born is still standing, and the house where he died is now the residence of the Alcotts."

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