

## AT THE CAFE D'OR.

Well, we've had an excellent dinner, quite like old times; it is about the best food in London, there's no doubt, and the best drink too, if one cares to pay for it. But I never come here now; this is the first time I have been at the Cafe d'Or since a rather memorable evening, -but I'll tell you about it.

You remember Travers in my regiment, and how thick we used to be? He is in the 2nd Battalion now, and we hardly ever see each other. I always think he is the best-looking man I know, and such a good, straightforward fellow, though I daresay not particularly intellectual. Just about a year ago the 2nd Battalion came home from India, and, of course, as soon as I saw Travers, I made him come and have a quiet dinner with us, and be introduced to my wife. I had been married then some six or seven months. Well, we had a very pleasant evening, except that Travers managed to put my back up by saying what I thought rather a silly thing. We had been talking about the old times (my bad bachelor days, the wife called them), when he and I both had rooms in the same house in Bury Street, and as was only natural, we drifted into the much-debated question as to whether ladies can go to places like the Empire and Alhambra if they are properly escorted. My wife asserted that she thought it a great shame that I would never take her, when everybody knew that Lady A B and the Countess of C were always to be seen in the stalls on the first night of a new ballet. I don't know, but I think most newly-married men will agree with me, one doesn't somehow like to go with one's wife to the places one used to haunt as a bachelor; and when one doesn't take one's wife, one feels one ought not to go by oneself. I did bring my wife here to the Cafe d'Or to supper on one occasion. It was very soon after our marriage. We had been sitting out a rather gloomy play at the Haymarket, and I thought it would amuse her. But it wasn't amusing at all, for though, of course, we had a private room, I never felt so shy and uncomfortable in my life. However, on this occasion Travers pretended to agree with his hostess, and even offered to act as her escort to the Alhambra should I remain obdurate. He meant it as a joke, I daresay, but it annoyed me a good deal. I was a little jealous, perhaps, in those newly-married days.

A night or two afterwards—it must have been about half-past eleven—I was sitting in the smoking-room at the Rag, feeling rather bored, and wondering what a married man could do in order to obtain a little amusement, when suddenly Travers looked in at the door, and, seeing me, came up pale with excitement.

"Hullo, old chap, so glad to see you;" then, talking very fast, "can I speak to you a moment? Thought I should find you here"

"Why, what's up?" I asked.

"I'm awfully sorry, old chap," he blurted out, "I am for a fact. Got bad news for you; awful bad news. Look here, old boy, we've been pals for years, and I thought I must come at once and try and find you. I've been dining" (that was obvious) "at the Cafe d'Or, and just now—it's only a few minutes ago—you know where the staircase divides over the entrance? well, we were coming out down one side, when I saw your wife going up the other—she didn't see me, you know—and a man with her, giving her his arm and all that. I say, old boy, don't get excited; I'll stick to you, and see you through this as best I can; I promise you."

I was quite calm, far calmer than he was. "Can you tell me at all what the man was like?" I asked.

"Yes, yes; I shall know him again anywhere. Looks like a military man; oldish I should think; grey whiskers—something like the Duke of Cambridge."

I knew at once who it was. "Come, Travers," I said, quietly, "we will go there instantly. You will come with me, won't you? You said you would see me through this."

He grasped my hand. "Of course I will, old chap. I've got a cab waiting." In a couple of minutes the hansom had landed us at the Cafe d'Or. I hadn't been inside the place for months, not indeed since the night I had myself brought my wife there. We went straight to the office. Bidding Travers keep still, I said in a low voice to Dumas—

"Colonel Anderson is having supper here to-night?"

"I cannot tell you, sare, but I will inquire."

He touched a bell, in a moment Antonio, the head-waiter, came up. "These gentlemen wish to know whether Colonel Anderson is upstairs."

Antonio darted a quick look of intelligence at Dumas, and told us, "No; I have not seen 'im; ze colonel is not here to-night."

"You lying scoundrel!" cried Travers. "I saw him go up stairs with a lady not ten minutes ago."

"Keep quiet, old fellow," I said; "it will be all right." "Look here, Antonio," I spoke very slowly and deliberately, "we know that Colonel Anderson is here having supper with a lady. That lady is my wife. They're, no doubt, in a private room. There is going to be neither fuss nor trouble. See, I am quite calm. My friend here, Captain Travers, is going to accompany me upstairs to that private room. You, Antonio, will come with us, and show us which it is. You see that I mean what I say."

To my surprise, I must confess, no further obstacle was put in our way, but during our progress to the second floor three more waiters in some mysterious way joined the little party. "I wonder if we shall have to break in the door," whispered Travers, now quite subdued, but the perspiration glistening on his forehead under the electric light. One of the waiters pointed to the door of No. 8, and Antonio, trembling all over with fright, went up and knocked. The thick carpet had prevented our footsteps being heard. I heard my wife's voice, "Come in." Immediately I turned the handle, and walked straight into the room, followed by Travers and Antonio, the other waiters looking in through the open door. I was the first to speak.

"My dear," I said, "you know Captain Travers. Colonel Anderson, let me introduce you to my old friend of whom you have so often heard me speak. Travers, this is Colonel Anderson, my wife's father. Antonio, tell one of those waiters to bring us some more glasses and a bottle of the same champagne that Captain Travers has been having for dinner."

It was a bit rough on Travers, perhaps, but I was even with him for offering to take my wife to the Alhambra.

FRIENDLY TESTIMONIALS.—A first lieutenant was about to be promoted to captaincy. He happened to be a heavy drinker, and his captain, aware of this, wrote in the "personal conduct" column:—

"Drinks a lot."

The lieutenant-colonel, who was kindly disposed toward the first lieutenant, wrote:—

"Can stand a lot."

The colonel, with whom rested the ultimate decision, added:—

"Has paid for the lot."

In a week our first lieutenant had his captain's commission.—*Fliegende Blätter.*

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