

the stocking-knitter, was heard on a summer afternoon, or from the veille of a winter night when the dim crasset hung from the roof and the seaweed burned in the chimney. Then the gathering of the vrac was a fête, and the lads and lasses footed it on the green or on the hard sand, to the chance flageolets of sportive seamen home from the war. This simple gaiety was heartiest at Christmastide, when the yearly reunion of families took place ; and because nearly everybody in Jersey was "couzain" to his neighbour these gatherings were as patriarchal as they were festive.

The new year of seventeen hundred and eighty-one had been ushered in by the last impulse of such festivities. The English cruisers lately in port had vanished up the Channel ; and at Elizabeth Castle, Mont Orgueil, the Blue Barracks and the Hospital, three British regiments had taken up the dull round of duty again ; so that by the fourth day a general lethargy, akin to content, had settled on the whole island.

On the morning of the fifth day a little snow was lying upon the ground, but the sun rose strong and unclouded, the whiteness vanished, and there remained only a pleasant dampness which made sod and sand firm yet springy to the foot. As the day wore on, the air became more amiable still, and a delicate haze settled over the water and over the land, making softer to the eye house and hill and rock and sea.

There was little life in the town of St. Heliers, there were few people upon the beach ; though now and then someone who had been praying beside a grave in the parish churchyard came to the railings and looked out upon the calm sea almost washing its foundations, and over the dark range of rocks which, when the tide was out, showed like a vast gridiron blackened by