

table who have not had a morsel, and whom you see crumbling down their bread to appease the cravings of hunger. You have laid a famous foundation for any superstructure you may be pleased at your leisure to erect—have drank wine with both fair supporters—and Peebles ale with the Baillie—are in a mood to say witty things, and say them accordingly—and in the gladness of your heart, offer to carve a sinewy old fowl, safely situated two covers off, and who, when taken in hand by the gentleman to whom he of right belongs, will be found to be a tougher job than the dismemberment of Poland.

Contrive it so that you are done, on solemn entrance of the goose. Catch mine host's eye at that critical moment, and you secure the first hot slice, while the apple-sauce seems absolutely to simmer. Do not scruple to say, that you have been waiting for the goose, for by that egregious lie you will get double commons. Public attention, too, being thus directed to the waiter who holds your plate, he must deliver it safe up into your hands, and all attempts to interrupt it in its progress prove abortive. Having thus the start in goose, you come in early for macaroni—tarts and puddings—and as we suppose you to have a steady, not a voracious appetite, why, after cheese, which like hope comes to all, we really see no reason to doubt your having made a very tolerable dinner.

But perhaps you have got yourself so entangled in the drawing-room with a woman with a long train and a bunch of blue feathers, that you cannot chose your position, and are forced to sit down before a ham. An argument arises whether it be Westmoreland, Dumfries-shire, or Westphalia, and every person present expresses a determination to bring the point to the decision of the palate. Instantly avow, with a face of blushing confusion, that you would not attempt to haggle such a ham for worlds—that in early life you were

little accustomed to carving, having lived with a minister of small stipend and low board, who on meat days always cut up the hough himself, so that he had never sent out an even tolerable carver from the manse. If that sort of excuse won't do, down with the middle finger of your right hand, and holding it out piteously, exhibit the effect of temporary cramp or permanent rheumatism. Should neither expedient occur or be plausible, then on with a determined countenance, a bold eye, and a gruff voice, and declare that you took an oath, many years ago, "never to help a ham," which you have religiously kept through good report and bad report, and which it would be, indeed, most culpable weakness in you to break, now that your raven locks are beginning to be silvered with the insidious grey. Then tell the waiter who is like a minister, to take the ham to Mr. Drysdale, or Mr. Dempster, two of the best carvers in existence, for that it does a man's heart good to see the dexterity with which they distribute at the festive board. You thus avoid an evil under which many a better man has sunk, and can turn unshackled to serious eating.

In good truth, much as we admire the noble art of carving, it is the very last we should wish to possess in our own person. To be called on for a song is nothing—you can have your revenge on him who asks it by inflicting the torment in return, and on the whole company by bellowing like a bull in a mountainous region. But the celebrated carver is at the mercy of every stomach. Orders come showering upon him faster than he supply them; the company behave towards him like boys following each other on a slide, at what they call "keeping the pie warm." No sooner are his weapons down, than they are up again; particular cuts are politely, and even flatteringly insinuated. Ladies eat ham who never ate ham before, only that they may admire the delicate transparency; well-known eating characters change