

By Appointment

A SAUCE that makes "Plain food" delicious

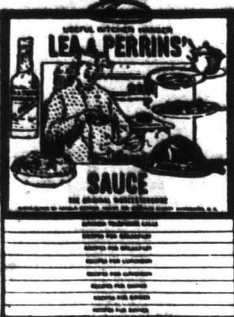


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Lea & Perrins

Sauce

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lunch." I looked round, and found a pair of dark blue eyes fixed on my face. What tragedy did I see in them? I do not know, but the look haunted me for days.

"My father hopes you will join us at luncheon," and the master of Glenbracken cordially seconded his younger brother's invitation. "They were a handsome pair, somewhere about seventeen and sixteen and already no mean exponents of the entrancing game."

"So glad to see you," said Lord Glenbracken heartily when I joined the party. "Sandwiches are a poor way of beginning the New Year even if they are made by Mrs. Murdoch. Here have some of this pie."

I was immediately accepted as a friend and with the hospitality so peculiar to Scotland, good things were showered upon me from all sides. It was a merry meal and the talk was all of the match.

"Jimmy cudna kep his stanes i' the hoose, an' Jock Thamsen cudna get his ower the hog."

"Aye, but the meenister was gieing the Pitlochry lads jist the awfulest licking that ever they had i' their lives."

I looked round and noticed for the first time that the Presbyterian divine was in our midst, talking, laughing, and chaffing with the best. A round, rosy-faced kindly little man.

The match was of annual occurrence and took place on the first of January, weather permitting. The same teams played against each other as far as possible, and the right to play descended from father to son.

The old man who had been so perturbed by my ignorance of curling etiquette had been a famous player in his day, and has always contested the match against the castle team. The honor of the house was now upheld by his four grandsons, the before mentioned Sandy being one. A splendid quartette. Typical specimens of the finest Scottish manhood. "Tam," the wild red-haired individual, was a descendant of the great Rob Roy, and his family had always held the privilege of filling up the castle rink when need was, and the present Lord Glenbracken had only two sons.

The meal was merry, but it was short, for the lunchers were sportsmen, and daylight must not be wasted. Again the stones slid back from end to end, backwards and forwards, while the spectators followed each stroke with unabated interest. At last the sun sank in an orange yellow sky, shading into golden crimson, and tinting all the snow covered hills with a passing glow; but still the indefatigable players curled on, till suddenly the great bell at the castle boomed out the end of the match. There was a pause while a cluster of skips and umpires added scores and performed other arithmetical gymnastics. Then someone handed a paper to Lady Glenbracken, who was standing behind a table laden with parcels and prizes. She smiled and in a clear rich voice, announced, "Glenbracken has won the match by two points."

There was much applause, and much talk and laughter, followed by the distribution of the prizes. Speeches and thanks ensued, and then the hands were crossed and a huge circle formed on the Loch. And upwards into the star-lit sky floated the time honored strains of "Auld Lang Syne," and the hills seemed to take up the chorus, and pass it on one to the other.

Cheering and singing, singing and cheering, the party broke up, and almost unconsciously I stood watching Lord and Lady Glenbracken walk away arm in arm, with their two big sons frolicking round them, and all eagerly discussing the match. Then someone nudged me in the back and a voice said in my ear.

"Glenbracken's gotten the match, but Sandy beat the castle by five. Aye, Sandy's gaeing tae be a gran' curler."

I looked round, and saw Sandy's grandfather with his four smiling grandsons round him. Then they too strode away in the starlight.

War

After many years my footsteps turn to Glenbracken, and I pause on the rising ground, and look down on the loch. It is New Year's Day, but there is no curling match. There is no snow on the hills, and no ice on the loch. Nothing breaks the strange stillness, and the sky is dark and lowering. An old man stood at the edge of the loch, and as I approached I

recognized Sandy's grandfather, though he was aged and bent almost beyond recognition.

"No curling to-day," I remarked wishing to be friendly.

"Na," he answered.

"I suppose it's for want of ice," I went on tactless.

"Na," he replied without emotion, "the curlers is maist a' dead."

A silence ensued, and then, with a sudden inspiration I said:

"Do you remember that grand stone of Lord Glenbracken's some years ago?"

He turned and looked at me.

Then he thawed. But what a tale of sorrow and disaster he had to tell. The Master of Glenbracken was the first to fall, leaving a widow in a three day's bride. His brother and the remembrance of those dark blue eyes came to me across the years—had won a V.C. for rescuing four of his men under a galling fire. He seemed to bear a charmed life, for he was ever the foremost in the fray, and had won honor and promotion all through the campaign. Then when he went back for the third time, there had been a skirmish and he had been wounded. The Germans advanced to take him prisoner, but he shot at them with his revolver, till he came to his last remaining shot, then rather than be taken a prisoner he had fired into his own heart.



The typical Scotch herd.

"Aye, shot hisself afore the eyes o' the party wha' was gaeing to his rescue, with Sandy at their head, an' a' they cud dae was tae bring back the body and bury it in an auld French kirk yard. So yon's whaur your laddie lies." The old man spoke without emotion of any kind. The shock had killed Lord Glenbracken.

And the "meenister" had been the first to enlist as a private, but he had fallen fighting bravely at Loos, while red-haired Jam had laid down his life among the Serbian mountains.

"And your grandsons?" I asked. Still without emotion he replied: "Jim was killed at yon place they ca' Golly Polly and Tam died o' fever in Africa, and Will was drowned i' the sea battle."

"And Sandy?" I asked.

He looked at me for a moment: "Sandy's hame," he hesitated, then added, "A bit shell's taen off baith airms jist aboon the elbow, an'—he'll niver curl again." And the old man turned away to conceal the tears he was too proud to own.

Obedient

Judge—"And in the future see that you keep out of bad company!"

Prisoner—"Thank you, your honor; you won't see me here again!"