

***DINAH MARIA
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***AN UNSENTIMENTAL
JOURNEY THROUGH
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An Unsentimental Journey through Cornwall

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DAYS FOURTEENTH, FIFTEENTH, AND SIXTEENTH—

L'ENVOI

DAY THE FIRST

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I BELIEVE in holidays. Not in a frantic rushing about from place to place, glancing at everything and observing nothing; flying from town to town, from hotel to hotel, eager to "do" and to see a country, in order that when they get home they may say they have done it, and seen it. Only to say;—as for any real vision of eye, heart, and brain, they might as well go through the world blindfold. It is not the things we see, but the mind we see them with, which makes the real interest of travelling. "Eyes and No Eyes,"—an old-fashioned story about two little children taking a walk; one seeing everything, and enjoying everything, and the other seeing nothing, and thinking the expedition the dullest imaginable. This simple tale, which the present generation has probably never read, contains the essence of all rational travelling.

So when, as the "old hen," (which I am sometimes called, from my habit of going about with a brood of "chickens," my own or other people's) I planned a brief tour with two of them, one just entered upon her teens, the other in her twenties, I premised that it must be a tour after my own heart.

"In the first place, my children, you must obey orders implicitly. I shall collect opinions, and do my best to please everybody; but in travelling one only must decide, the others coincide. It will save them a world of trouble, and their 'conductor' also; who, if competent to be trusted at all, should be trusted absolutely. Secondly, take as little luggage

as possible. No sensible people travel with their point-lace and diamonds. Two 'changes of raiment,' good, useful dresses, prudent boots, shawls, and waterproofs—these I shall insist upon, and nothing more. Nothing for show, as I shall take you to no place where you can show off. We will avoid all huge hotels, all fashionable towns; we will study life in its simplicity, and make ourselves happy in our own humble, feminine way. Not 'roughing it' in any needless or reckless fashion—the 'old hen' is too old for that; yet doing everything with reasonable economy. Above all, rushing into no foolhardy exploits, and taking every precaution to keep well and strong, so as to enjoy the journey from beginning to end, and hinder no one else from enjoying it. There are four things which travellers ought never to lose: their luggage, their temper, their health, and their spirits. I will make you as happy as I possibly can, but you must also make me happy by following my rules: especially the one golden rule, Obey orders."

So preached the "old hen," with a vague fear that her chickens might turn out to be ducklings, which would be a little awkward in the region whither she proposed to take them. For if there is one place more risky than another for adventurous young people with a talent for "perpetuating themselves down prejudices," as Mrs. Malaprop would say, it is that grandest, wildest, most dangerous coast, the coast of Cornwall.

I had always wished to investigate Cornwall. This desire had existed ever since, at five years old, I made acquaintance with Jack the Giantkiller, and afterwards, at fifteen or so, fell in love with my life's one hero, King Arthur.

Between these two illustrious Cornishmen,—equally mythical, practical folk would say—there exists more similarity than at first appears. The aim of both was to uphold right and to redress wrong. Patience, self-denial; tenderness to the weak and helpless, dauntless courage against the wicked and the strong: these, the essential elements of true manliness, characterise both the humble Jack and the kingly Arthur. And the qualities seem to have descended to more modern times. The well-known ballad:—

"And shall they scorn Tre, Pol, and Pen?
And shall Trelawny die?
There's twenty thousand Cornishmen
Will know the reason why,"

has a ring of the same tone, indicating the love of justice, the spirit of fidelity and bravery, as well as of that common sense which is at the root of all useful valour.

I wanted to see if the same spirit lingered yet, as I had heard it did among Cornish folk, which, it was said, were a race by themselves, honest, simple, shrewd, and kind. Also, I wished to see the Cornish land, and especially the Land's End, which I had many a time beheld in fancy, for it was a favourite landscape-dream of my rather imaginative childhood, recurring again and again, till I could almost have painted it from memory. And as year after year every chance of seeing it in its reality seemed to melt away, the desire grew into an actual craving.

After waiting patiently for nearly half a century, I said to myself, "I will conquer Fate; I *will* go and see the Land's End."

And it was there that, after making a circuit round the coast, I proposed finally to take my "chickens."

We concocted a plan, definite yet movable, as all travelling plans should be, clear in its dates, its outline, and intentions, but subject to modifications, according to the exigency of the times and circumstances. And with that prudent persistency, without which all travelling is a mere muddle, all discomfort, disappointment, and distaste—for on whatever terms you may be with your travelling companions when you start, you are quite sure either to love them or hate them when you get home—we succeeded in carrying it out.

The 1st of September, 1881, and one of the loveliest of September days, was the day we started from Exeter, where we had agreed to meet and stay the night. There, the previous afternoon, we had whiled away an hour in the dim cathedral, and watched, not without anxiety, the flood of evening sunshine which poured through the great west window, lighting the tombs, old and new, from the Crusader, cross-legged and broken-nosed, to the white marble bas-relief which tells the story of a not less noble Knight of the Cross, Bishop Patteson. Then we wandered round the quaint old town, in such a lovely twilight, such a starry night! But—will it be a fine day to-morrow? We could but live in hope: and hope did not deceive us.

To start on a journey in sunshine feels like beginning life well. Clouds may come—are sure to come: I think no one past earliest youth goes forth into a strange region without a feeling akin to Saint Paul's "not knowing what things may befall me there." But it is always best for each to keep to

himself all the shadows, and give his companions the brightness, especially if they be young companions.

And very bright were the eyes that watched the swift-moving landscape on either side of the railway: the estuary of Exe; Dawlish, with its various colouring of rock and cliff, and its pretty little sea-side houses, where family groups stood photographing themselves on our vision, as the train rushed unceremoniously between the beach and their parlour windows; then Plymouth and Saltash, where the magnificent bridge reminded us of the one over the Tay, which we had once crossed, not long before that Sunday night when, sitting in a quiet sick-room in Edinburgh, we heard the howl outside of the fearful blast which destroyed such a wonderful work of engineering art, and whirled so many human beings into eternity.

But this Saltash bridge, spanning placidly a smiling country, how pretty and safe it looked! There was a general turning to carriage-windows, and then a courteous drawing back, that we, the strangers, should see it, which broke the ice with our fellow-travellers. To whom we soon began to talk, as is our conscientious custom when we see no tangible objection thereto, and gained, now, as many a time before, much pleasant as well as useful information. Every one evinced an eager politeness to show us the country, and an innocent anxiety that we should admire it; which we could honestly do.

I shall long remember, as a dream of sunshiny beauty and peace, this journey between Plymouth and Falmouth, passing Liskeard, Lostwithiel, St. Austell, &c. The green-wooded valleys, the rounded hills, on one of which we were

shown the remains of the old castle of Ristormel, noted among the three castles of Cornwall; all this, familiar to so many, was to us absolutely new, and we enjoyed it and the kindly interest that was taken in pointing it out to us, as happy-minded simple folk do always enjoy the sight of a new country.



ST. MAWE'S CASTLE, FALMOUTH BAY.

Our pleasure seemed to amuse an old gentleman who sat in the corner. He at last addressed us, with an unctuous

west-country accent which suited well his comfortable stoutness. He might have fed all his life upon Dorset butter and Devonshire cream, to one of which counties he certainly belonged. Not, I think, to the one we were now passing through, and admiring so heartily.

"So you're going to travel in Cornwall. Well, take care, they're sharp folk, the Cornish folk. They'll take you in if they can." (Then, he must be a Devon man. It is so easy to sit in judgment upon next-door neighbours.) "I don't mean to say they'll actually cheat you, but they'll take you in, and they'll be careful that you don't take them in—no, not to the extent of a brass farthing."

We explained, smiling, that we had not the slightest intention of taking anybody in, that we liked justice, and blamed no man, Cornishman or otherwise, for trying to do the best he could for himself, so that it was not to the injury of other people.

"Well, well, perhaps you're right. But they are sharp, for all that, especially in the towns."

We replied that we meant to escape towns, whenever possible, and encamp in some quiet places, quite out of the world.

Our friend opened his eyes, evidently thinking this a most singular taste.

"Well, if you really want a quiet place, I can tell you of one, almost as quiet as your grave. I ought to know, for I lived there sixteen years." (At any rate, it seemed to have agreed with him.) "Gerrans is its name—a fishing village. You get there from Falmouth by boat. The fare is"—(I regret to say my memory is not so accurate as his in the matter of

pennies), "and mind you don't pay one farthing more. Then you have to drive across country; the distance is—and the fare per mile—" (Alas! again I have totally forgotten.) "They'll be sure to ask you double the money, but never you mind! refuse to pay it, and they'll give in. You must always hold your own against extortion in Cornwall."

I thanked him, with a slightly troubled mind. But I have always noticed that in travelling "with such measure as ye mete it shall be meted to you again," and that those who come to a country expecting to be cheated generally are cheated. Having still a lingering belief in human nature, and especially in Cornish nature, I determined to set down the old gentleman's well-meant advice for what it was worth, no more, and cease to perplex myself about it. For which resolve I have since been exceedingly thankful.

He gave us, however, much supplementary advice which was rather useful, and parted from us in the friendliest fashion, with that air of bland complaisance natural to those who assume the character of adviser in general.

"Mind you go to Gerrans. They'll not take you in more than they do everywhere else, and you'll find it a healthy place, and a quiet place—as quiet, I say, as your grave. It will make you feel exactly as if you were dead and buried."

That not being the prominent object of our tour in Cornwall, we thanked him again, but as soon as he left the carriage determined among ourselves to take no further steps about visiting Gerrans.



VIEW OF FLUSHING FROM THE GREEN BANK HOTEL,
FALMOUTH.

However, in spite of the urgency of another fellow-traveller—it is always good to hear everybody's advice, and follow your own—we carried our love of quietness so far that we eschewed the magnificent new Falmouth Hotel, with its *table d'hôte*, lawn tennis ground, sea baths and promenade, for the old-fashioned Green Bank, which though it had no green banks, boasted, we had been told, a pleasant little sea view and bay view, and was a resting-place full of comfort and homely peace.

Which we found true, and would have liked to stay longer in its pleasant shelter, which almost conquered our horror of hotels; but we had now fairly weighed anchor and must sail on.

"You ought to go at once to the Lizard," said the friend who met us, and did everything for us at Falmouth—and the

remembrance of whom, and of all that happened in our brief stay, will make the very name of the place sound sweet in our ears for ever. "The Lizard is the real point for sightseers, almost better than the Land's End. Let us see if we can hear of lodgings."

She made inquiries, and within half an hour we did hear of some most satisfactory ones. "The very thing! We will telegraph at once—answer paid," said this good genius of practicality, as sitting in her carriage she herself wrote the telegram and despatched it. Telegrams to the Lizard! We were not then at the Ultima Thule of civilisation.

"Still," she said, "you had better provide yourself with some food, such as groceries and hams. You can't always get what you want at the Lizard."

So, having the very dimmest idea what the Lizard was—whether a town, a village, or a bare rock—when we had secured the desired lodgings ("quite ideal lodgings," remarked our guardian angel), I proceeded to lay in a store of provisions, doing it as carefully as if fitting out a ship for the North Pole—and afterwards found out it was a work of supererogation entirely.

The next thing to secure was an "ideal" carriage, horse, and man, which our good genius also succeeded in providing. And now, our minds being at rest, we were able to write home a fixed address for a week, and assure our expectant and anxious friends that all was going well with us.

Then, after a twilight wander round the quaint old town—so like a foreign town—and other keen enjoyments, which, as belonging to the sanctity of private life I here perforce

omit, we laid us down to sleep, and slept in peace, having really achieved much; considering it was only the first day of our journey.

DAY THE SECOND

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Is there anything more delightful than to start on a smiling morning in a comfortable carriage, with all one's *impedimenta* (happily not much!) safely stowed away under one's eyes, with a good horse, over which one's feelings of humanity need not be always agonising, and a man to drive, whom one can trust to have as much sense as the brute, especially in the matter of "refreshment." Our letters that morning had brought us a comico-tragic story of a family we knew, who, migrating with a lot of children and luggage, and requiring to catch a train thirteen miles off, had engaged a driver who "refreshed himself" so successfully at every public-house on the way, that he took five hours to accomplish the journey, and finally had to be left at the road-side, and the luggage transferred to another vehicle, which of course lost the train. We congratulated ourselves that no such disaster was likely to happen to us.

"Yes; I've been a teetotaller all my life," said our driver, a bright-looking, intelligent young fellow, whom, as he became rather a prominent adjunct to our life and decidedly to our comfort, I shall individualise by calling him Charles. "I had good need to avoid drinking. My father drank through a small property. No fear of me, ma'am."

So at once between him and us, or him and "we," according to the Cornish habit of transposing pronouns, was established a feeling of fraternity, which, during the six days that we had to do with him, deepened into real regard. Never failing when wanted, never presuming when not wanted, straightforward, independent, yet full of that respectful kindness which servants can always show and masters should always appreciate, giving us a chivalrous care, which, being "unprotected females," was to us extremely valuable, I here record that much of the pleasure of our tour was owing to this honest Cornishman, who served us, his horse, and his master—he was one of the employés of a livery-stable keeper—with equal fidelity.

Certainly, numerous as were the parties he had driven—"I go to the Lizard about three times a week," he said)—Charles could seldom have driven a merrier trio than that which leisurely mounted the upland road from Falmouth, leading to the village of Constantine.

"Just turn and look behind you, ladies" (we had begged to be shown everything and told everything); "isn't that a pretty view?"

It certainly was. From the high ground we could see Falmouth with its sheltered bay and glittering sea beyond. Landward were the villages of Mabe and Constantine, with their great quarries of granite, and in the distance lay wide sweeps of undulating land, barren and treeless, but still beautiful—not with the rich pastoral beauty of our own Kent, yet having a charm of its own. And the air, so fresh and pure, yet soft and balmy, it felt to tender lungs like the difference between milk and cream. To breathe became a

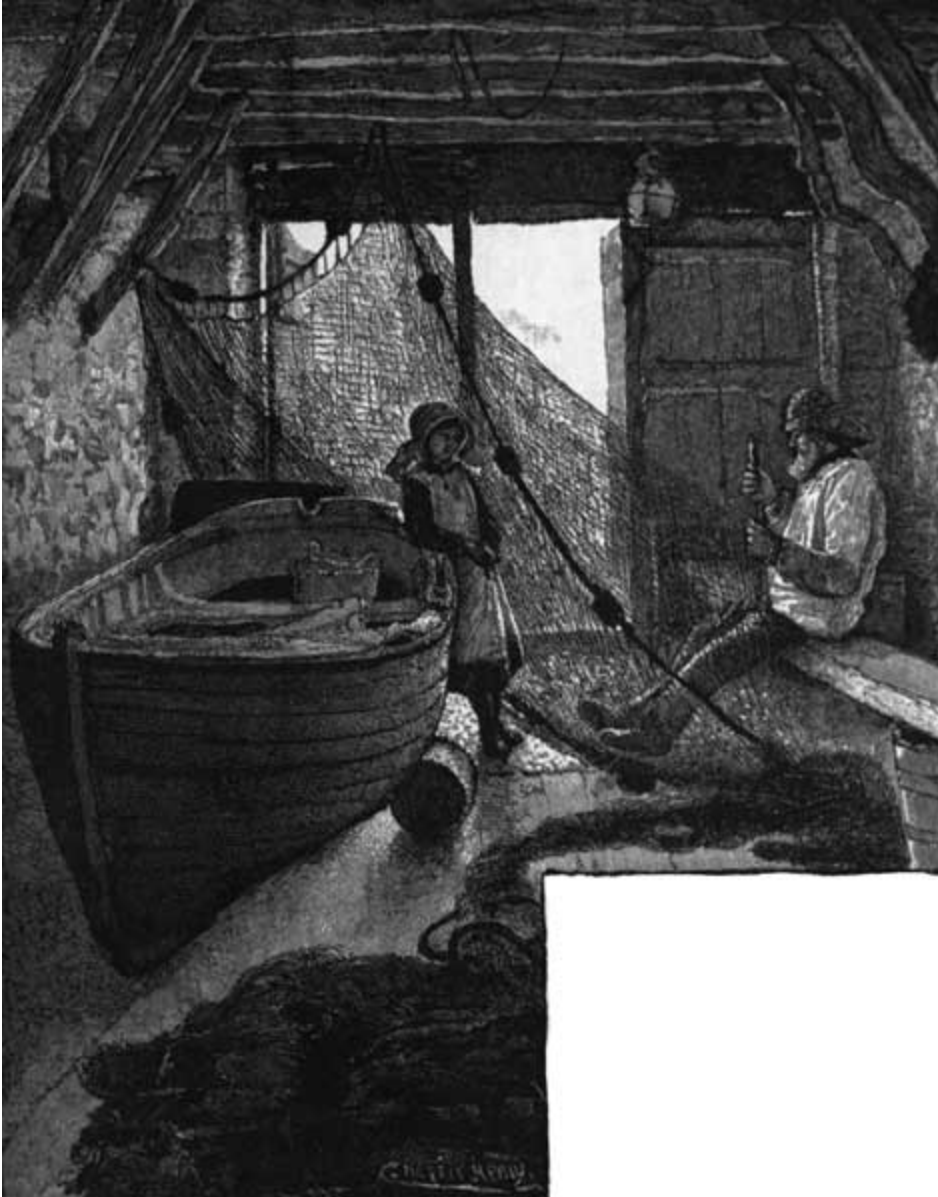
pleasure instead of a pain. I could quite understand how the semi-tropical plants that we had seen in a lovely garden below, grew and flourished, how the hydrangeas became huge bushes, and the eucalyptus an actual forest tree.

But this was in the sheltered valley, and we had gained the hill-top, emerging out of one of those deep-cut lanes peculiar to Devon and Cornwall, and so pretty in themselves, a perfect garden of wild flowers and ferns, except that they completely shut out the view. This did not much afflict the practical minds of my two juniors. Half an hour before they had set up a shout—

"Stop the carriage! *Do* stop the carriage! Just look there! Did you ever see such big blackberries? and what a quantity! Let us get out; we'll gather them for to-morrow's pudding."

Undoubtedly a dinner earned is the sweetest of all dinners. I remember once thinking that our cowslip tea (I should not like to drink it now) was better than our grandmother's best Bohea or something out of her lovely old tea-caddy. So the carriage, lightened of all but myself, crawled leisurely up and waited on the hill-top for the busy blackberry-gatherers.

While our horse stood cropping an extempore meal, I and his driver began to talk about him and other cognate topics, including the permanent one of the great advantage to both body and soul in being freed all one's life long from the necessity of getting "something to drink" stronger than water.



A FISHERMAN'S CELLAR NEAR THE LIZARD.

"Yes," he said, "I find I can do as much upon tea or coffee as other men upon beer. I'm just as strong and as active, and can stand weather quite as well. It's a pretty hard life, winter and summer, driving all day, coming in soaked, sometimes in the middle of the night, having to turn in for an hour or two, and then turn out again. And you must look after your horse, of course, before you think of yourself. Still,