FROM LONDON TO EDINBURGH: A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

"Oh!"

Mr. Fred Norton became aware of that small ejaculation, uttered in a low tone of astonishment and dismay by his sister, Mrs. Elphinstone Challoner, as he accompanied her through the crowd at King's-cross station. She was going off to Scotland, where she was in future to live. She was not going very cheerfully. She was a young widow whose venture in matrimony had not been a very successful one. She had married under auspices that were favourable enough, though many people now said they had all along known Elphinstone Challoner to be a *mauvais sujet*. He was so, unfortunately, whether they had known it or not. He had taken his wife to India, which was, indeed, no grievance—for she was aware that this step was necessary; but he had so neglected her when there that the whole station rose up against him—which showed that things must have been very bad. Poor Mary had never complained. She was so taken by surprise, so bewildered, at first, by the utterly novel experience of being ill-used, that for a long time she thought it must be some mistake on her part, not fault on his. She must have expected too much: probably that was the natural way to treat a wife—husbands of course being very different from fathers and brothers, who had natural prejudices in a girl's favour, whereas a husband was impartial and saw her in a clearer light. This was the first explanation she put upon her unhappiness, which resolved it altogether into something that was her own fault. When she discovered that all husbands were not like Elphin pride came to her aid and sealed her lips. Few people at home knew all or nearly all that had happened during the few years she spent in India; but everything went badly for her, poor girl, in these years. Both father and mother, who were not old people, nor had shown any signs of failing life when she married, died during her absence, and died poor; which was not much to be wondered at, seeing that Mr. Norton, her father, was a man with an official income, and little means of saving money. All that there was was sunk in an annuity for Mrs. Norton, which, contrary to the habits of annuitants, she did not live to profit by. It was after Mary had heard with a despair that no words could express that her home was thus closed to her for ever, and in no circumstances could ever provide her with a refuge, that suddenly, after a longer bout of debauchery than usual, her husband died. It was, perhaps, impossible that she could have mourned for him much, and had there been a mother to fly to, probably a sense of deliverance would have been the strongest feeling in her mind; but there was no mother to fly to, and death—thank heaven!—has an effect which is strangely softening. When poor Elphinstone, as she soon learned to call him, could wound and disgust her no longer, she forgot how often he had done so; and if she was not very sorry for herself as his widow, she was at least more sorry for him than words could say. The tears poured from her eyes when she thought of him—snatched away from all he cared for. What could poor Elphin do in Heaven among the saints and angels? And yet she could not condemn him to the other place. Oh, no—not to the other place! After all, she said to herself, his chief fault had been the want of understanding. He had not meant to do harm. He had been carelessly brought up, and did not know what a girl feels who has been spoilt at home and thought all the world of, till she fell into a husband's hands who had no prejudice in her favour; but he did not mean to be unkind—not so unkind as she had often felt him to be. It was as much her fault for expecting too much as it was his for giving too little. Poor Elphinstone! If she had died, whom nobody cared much for, who might have been a little more at home in the unseen, how much more natural it would have been! Whereas Elphin! It was perhaps not quite safe to follow this line of reasoning, but indeed she could not help it. And she was so sorry for not being sorry enough, and so miserable to think that poor Elphin, wherever he was—with no dogs or horses, no billiards to play, no races to go to—would not be happy; and so sad to think nobody lamented him—that she worked herself into a state of regret and compunction, much deeper than the grief of many widows who had more to grieve for than she. But while she sighed over poor Elphin, it was poor Mary whom most people thought of. Her position was a very painful one all round. She was very badly "left"—the money of one little insurance on his life, which he had with the greatest difficulty been induced to keep up the payments on, was all she had from her husband, and her father and mother were dead. Elphinstone's father and mother, though living, had spent so much on him, and been so entirely worn out by his hopeless expenditure, that they had no bowels of compassion for his widow. She knew what he was when she married him, they said, and as she had made her bed she must lie on it, which, indeed, was not at all true; for Mary had not known what he was. All she had known was that he had been foolish, but that with a good wife——! Alas, the good wife had been as little effectual as that prescription generally is—or any prescription, when the time of hope is past.

Mary came home—not knowing very well what she was to do. She went to her brother Fred's—her only brother—who was kind—enough——. From the first, indeed, he had been very kind, and so was Adela, his wife, all through. Considering that she had but limited means and a large family, Adela was kind; and did her best not to show that another mouth to be fed—a permanent visitor, who took up the best room, and who could not be shut up in the background—was a burden to her. They were kind—enough, to the end of the time when Mary made up her mind to go to old Aunt Cleghorn, in Scotland. She was the only rich relation the brother and sister had. She was old and self-absorbed and cross. But she wanted a companion, and was able to offer poor Mary a home—a comfortable home, all her advisers said. Mary knew what the comfort was. She remembered the gaunt house up among the hills, where it had been such a prison during her girlhood to spend a week or two. Her heart sank at the thought of it; but she had nothing to plead against it. It would be a home; and nobody would interfere with her there, and it would be a reasonably natural shelter. If she had been a companion to anybody but her aunt the world might have interfered; and poor Fred, who had not enough for himself, would certainly have been blamed for letting his only sister go out. But when it was her aunt everybody and everything was satisfied. Her heart, however, was anything but light as she made her way—with, indeed, very little help from Fred, who was keeping his eye on her luggage—to the line of carriages. She was still in her crape, with the little white line of a widow's cap under her bonnet. She had begun to give up that irksome addition—though it is generally very becoming—to a young woman's dress and expenses; but it had been unanimously concluded that for Mary to appear at Aunt Cleghorn's before the first year was out with anything in the shape of mitigated woe, would not do. So she had been obliged to buy a second set of widow's caps. They were very becoming to Mary. She was the kind of woman, with a clear complexion, bright eyes, and beautiful brown hair to whom any *affublement* is rather attractive than otherwise; and to tell the truth, she had an idea that this was contrary to the idea of mourning: and that, above all, to celebrate poor Elphinstone Challoner's memory by signs of prolonged woe was scarcely appropriate: but Aunt Cleghorn's prejudices had to be considered before all.

But this was no reason why she should give that sudden start and cry "Oh!" in a tone which was suppressed, yet which caught her brother's ear as she went through the crowd. "What is it?" asked Fred. She answered, "Oh, nothing," in a hurried way, and plunged into the carriage which the porter had just put her parcels in. "Come in and sit down with me till it starts," she said to Fred, who complied rather unwillingly, thinking it most unnecessary. "You don't mean to say that you are nervous about travelling alone, after coming back from India by yourself?" "Oh, no," she said, again seriously, but pulled him in. He had taken a first-class ticket for her partly out of his own purse. She had wanted to go third-class in her state of poverty, but he would not hear of that. He sat down at her side with an air of resignation. He had not any last words to say, and, indeed, they had said very little coming along. Mary had been afraid of crying and making a fool of herself—as she would have expressed it—and Fred felt as if he was not filling a very gracious office in sending her away; though no doubt it would be for her good, and in one way was very self-denying on his part—Aunt Cleghorn being the only person who could be looked to for a legacy, and now more than likely to leave all she had to his sister. This was self-denying, if anything was! But he would have liked to have put her in the carriage and gone away to his office, and eluded all further opportunity for last words.

"Have you anything to say to me?" he asked; "for you know it will take me twenty minutes to get to the office, and it's close upon ten o'clock."

"Be late, for once, and do me a good turn," she said. "You are so punctual, nobody will mind if you are late, for once."

"How can I do you a good turn, Mary, by making myself late?"

"We mayn't see each other for a long time again," she said, "And I don't think I have half thanked you, Fred."

"I don't want thanks—there's nothing to thank me for. We've got such a large family, and expenses in London are so great. God knows you shouldn't have gone at all if it hadn't been——"

Those odious last words! He had been staving them off, but they were bound to come out at last.

"Oh, Fred! don't say that! Though I'm glad to hear you say it all the same. It wasn't for that I wished you to wait. Fred—I saw some one on the platform whom I could not bear to meet. That's why I want you to stay with me till the train goes."

"Who was it?"

"Oh! don't ask me. It was—a man I used to know."

"What man, Mary?"

"Never mind—to see him just now would be horrid to me. He once warned me—Do stay till the train goes off, Fred."

"I will get into hot water, Mary, with my chief."

"Oh, no—oh, no! You who are so punctual—not for this once. It will be such a kindness." She sank back into her seat with a sudden glance over his shoulder, and another little suppressed "Oh!"

Fred began to have a glimmering perception of the case. He had not seen anybody; but he began to guess, and instead of Mary's alarm a sudden hope sprang up in his breast. What an excellent solution that would be! Far better than Aunt Cleghorn. He pretended to give in entirely to Mary's request, talking a little, quite with animation; and finally jumped out of the carriage, just upon the stroke of ten, with deep designs in his soul, but smiles and kindness on his face. "Good-bye, dear; a good voyage, and I hope we'll meet soon again. My love to Aunt Cleghorn," he cried. "Good-bye, Mary; good-bye!"

It was not any design of Fred's. It was merely that good luck which has, after all, so great a share in the affairs of men; but Fred, as he tumbled out of the carriage, fell plump upon a man who was about to enter another close by.

"Is it you, Norton?" the stranger said, in a low and somewhat anxious tone. "You are not going? You are seeing somebody away!"

He gave a glance at the carriage Fred had left, which looked as if he, too, had made his observations. He had his foot on the step of the next compartment, and a railway official was running along quickly, shutting, with a succession of sharp reports like pistol-shots, the unfastened doors. There was but a moment before the train was under weigh.

"Yes, my sister," Fred said.

"Your sister!" He heard the words faintly through the sound of the whistle which noted the departure, and looking back saw a little tableau of two faces, each shut up in a different compartment—Gordon starting up, with his head out of the window, his face one big question; and next to him, sunk back in her corner, Mary, looking very pale, waving her handkerchief faintly as the long line got into motion and glided away. Fred Norton walked away briskly, chuckling to himself. His spirits rose in the most astonishing way. "To be sure!" he said to himself. "That would be the very thing! He'll change next station!" It kept his countenance bright all the way to the office, where he paid his fine for being late as if it were the best joke in the world.

Mr. Norton's prevision did not exactly come true. The inhabitant of the next compartment did get out when the train stopped for a minute at a little roadside station and made himself visible to his neighbour next door; but he had to spring in again very quickly, or he would have been left behind. As for Mary, she did not venture to show her face at the window, even when the train was in full motion. As it happened, to make things worse, she was alone; the porter, touched by her widow's dress, having benevolently sought out for her an empty carriage, and the guard, moved by the same sentiment, having hindered the entrance of some belated passengers. Mary's thoughts had received so strong an impulse in another direction that she never even thought of Aunt Cleghorn, nor did her future duties in that gaunt house among the hills enter her mind as she swept through the smiling morning country with its villages and little stations. It was the height of early summer—June; nobody caring yet to leave town, which was perhaps the reason why on that much-travelled line, she had an entire carriage to herself. Cosmo Gordon! How she recollected her last interview with him. Nay, she remembered something more than that, something which nobody but herself knew, and which she could have killed herself for remembering now at this most unsuitable moment—which was that her choice had wavered between poor Elphinstone and the man who was now so close to her in the next compartment. She could not have said what it was that had turned the balance (alas!) in Elphin Challoner's favour. It was not his own merits: it was some freak of fancy, some one of those caprices which so strangely mould our lives. At that time she had seemed so free to choose—it had been almost a laughing balance of preference, undecided to one or the other. Oh, how lightly a girl will deal with her life, holding it in her hand; and what issues of life and death are fixed by the blowing of a straw, the whisper of an unthought-of word! And then there was that last meeting—a chance meeting just like this; almost the same as this! He had come into a railway carriage in the evening when there was little light, and had only perceived that the other occupant was herself when it was in motion. How life repeats itself! and the same situation recurs as if the one were but a study for the other? She had been very sorry for him then, when she saw how much he was moved by the meeting—when he perceived her; and then he had implored her, declaring that it was in all disinterestedness, since now he could tell for nothing, one way or other—to think well—to be very sure it was for her happiness, before she took the final step. She had not been angry even at the time. She had believed in his honest wooing, his desire for her happiness—and, ah!—how right he had been. Mary shed a few tears—half for Elphin, half for herself, but dried them feverishly, with an ever-increasing wonder what would happen? She was terrified lest he should come—lest he should talk to her; lest the old subjects should come up again between them. And yet——

At Peterborough the train stopped, and she could hear the door of the next compartment fly open. Then a pause—she supposed it was some one else getting out—and her heart beat high with wonder. Did he really mean not to make himself known—to go on by her side all day, yet keep as far apart as if there were hundreds of miles between them? That was scarcely a friend's part. She had been afraid of seeing him, and yet—— Then suddenly her heart gave a great leap and stood still. He was at the window, with a grave face, tuned to sympathy with her mourning and her paleness. Could he get her anything? Had she everything she wanted? Oh, no—thanks. Oh, yes—yes, thanks. She was strenuous to decline all offers—anything that could be done. Fred had supplied her with everything—books, newspapers. And then with a bow he was gone. After this Mary felt quite composed. It always upset her seeing any one for the first time; but when that was over then she was able to meet them afterwards with composure. He was not in the least changed. How should he be, seeing it was only about four years since she saw him last—four years very memorable in her life, but of little importance to other people, who had been going on quietly in the usual tenour of their lives, and to whom nothing particular had happened. How strange to think that there were many people to whom nothing particular had happened, while everything that can happen to a woman had been going on for her! She had been married; she had gone to India—to Purgatory, through the Inferno! Where had she not been? And nothing had happened to the others! How strange it was; oh! how strange! She tried to read, but had to close her book, and think over this wonderful thing again. All that had happened to her—and to the others nothing! It was more strange than words could say. It sent her thoughts back over that wonderful, terrible short lifetime—four years! Life had revealed itself to her, sombre—turning its dark side to her astonished gaze—with experiences in it that many a woman, she supposed, lived to be seventy without knowing; and Mary was but twenty-eight. And then there was death, as well as life—her father, her mother, *him*—everybody to whom one could look; and she stranded, like a wreck upon a dreary coast, with nothing—nothing but Aunt Cleghorn between her and destitution! What a strange thing, what a wonderful thing, that there should be people living quietly at home while all this was going on, to whom nothing had happened! A few quiet tears sprang to Mary's eyes. She dried them quickly, and smiled a little at the thought of how it was. She a poor, very poor woman in widow's weeds; and Cosmo Gordon in the next compartment, with a flower in his coat, just the same as ever. She wondered to herself, with forlorn fun, whether it was the same flower!

Thus everything went on to York. She read a little, insisting with herself to to do it—not to think, which Mary had learnt by experience to be a very unsatisfactory way of spending her time. At York all the people streamed out of the train, hurrying to the refreshment-room—and Gordon again appeared at the window. There was time here for lunch. Might he take her to eat something? Mary thanked him, and explained that she had some sandwiches, and did not mean to get out. Could he bring her anything: wine, soda-water, whatever there might be?—No; nothing. Mary had all that she could desire. He went away with another bow. He was very civil—very kind—not thrusting himself upon her—ready to do whatever she might want. That was the real behaviour of a friend. He must see that it was painful to her, so that he did not press his society. He came back, however, just as the train was getting ready to start, with a basket of strawberries in his hands, and asked if he might get into her carriage. Of course she could not refuse. She put away her book with a half-reluctance. They were both very grave: they ate the strawberries together as seriously as if it had been a religious office. And then by degrees they began to talk. She told him where she was going, and he gave her a sudden strange, interrogative look.

"To Mrs. Cleghorn's! for a long visit?" he said.

"For a very long visit—perhaps to stay altogether."

"Do you think you will like it?" he said.

"That's hardly the question. You know, perhaps, that things have changed very much. I am not much wanted, anywhere, now. If Aunt Cleghorn likes to have me it will be a very good thing—for us both."

Gordon kept his eyes fixed upon the basket of strawberries, which now presented a much-diminished aspect, and made no remark. It was curious to see him there saying nothing, though he must have understood very well. His respect for her and her deep mourning was great: the sight of her face framed in with that little line of white seemed to strike him whenever he looked at her with a sort of awe. It was strange to see him look at her with his lips opened as if to speak—then remain silent! Only a look—such a look as if he, too, were thinking what she had been thinking—how much four years had meant to him—how little to the others. He diverged into ordinary conversation, talking of the journey, of the glimpses they got of towns and villages as they darted past. "It is curious," he said, at last. "I don't know if you remember—the last time I met you was in a railway carriage, as now."

"Yes," she said; "I remember."

"It was by accident—as this was. It is strange when things happen so, twice over. It is against ordinary analogies. I could scarcely believe my eyes when I saw you this morning."

"You are going to Edinburgh," she said, to give a little turn to the talk.

"Yes, to Edinburgh—and further north. It was a shorter journey when we met before. I remember it all as clearly as if it had been yesterday."

"So do I."

"Ah! and I do wrong to remind you. I perhaps said things—which I hope you have forgotten—which I hope you will forget—not knowing ——"

"I know," she said, gravely, "you intended nothing but what was for my good; but do not speak of it. I bear you no ill-will for that."

"We are just coming to Durham," he cried, hurriedly. "Look out for it—it is very picturesque. The cathedral standing high over the town—one of the most venerable places. I should not like you to miss the view."

"It is very fine," said Mary. How little they were thinking of Durham as they looked out with intent, serious faces, as if there was nothing so important in the world. He gave a little topographical lecture on it, explaining the group of buildings, and how the town lay; and she listened, making a serious study of Durham, upon its cliff, with the smoke and mist about it. Most people have picture galleries of their own, in which some curious little pictures of strange significance are suspended. Mary put up that sketch of the Northern cathedral upon her walls, where it hung as if it had been a Turner. Though why it was so important and so living, nobody could have told—neither she nor he—between whom it somehow came into being. He put it up also in a niche—and retained it among his treasures for ever and ever—I cannot tell why.

At Berwick he got out again and brought her a cup of tea, which she did not refuse. He persuaded her to walk along the little platform there a little to breathe the air, and look down upon the Tweed. That made another picture. And he told her a great deal about Berwick. Either he was exceedingly learned as to these border towns, or else he invented conversation and details to the most extraordinary extent. And she listened with the most serious attention. It was not like Othello's story—very different; for his was all of his own exploits and dangers—and this was carefully designed to avoid all mention of formal history. I suppose Mary would have liked better to hear what Gordon had been doing these four years, and even whether, though the subject was very dangerous, he had ever thought upon her or inquired after her; and I am sure that Gordon would far rather have had from Mary a little history, so far as she would tell it, of what had passed during that silent period, that unknown lifetime that lay between them. But they neither could speak of these things which they wished to tell and hear. When they got back again into the carriage, where Gordon followed quite naturally as if it had been his, they went on very gravely with their geographical talk, and discussed the Tweed and all the poetry about it and its associations, and Scott, and I do not know all what; and then looked out together also with great gravity at the coves and little fishing villages of Berwickshire, and then at North Berwick Law rising against the silvery sky, and the smoke which was Edinburgh, with Arthur's Seat, and the other hills wrapped in their cloak of summer haze.

"Here we are at our journey's end, alas!" said Mr. Gordon, getting up for her her books, and straps, and travelling bags.

"It has gone on very pleasantly," she said; "it has been a beautiful day."

"And it is going to be a beautiful evening. But you will be tired—otherwise these Scotch summer nights are wonderful. It is a shame to be indoors. But you will be tired"——

"A little," she said.

"Ah! I feared so;" and then there was a pause again. It was as if he had meant to suggest something which she had crushed in the bud.

"And you are going to the Falconers for the night. I go on to-morrow morning, too!"

"Perhaps I may stay longer than the night, if I find I am very much tired."

"Ah!" he said, again—and then the train stood still, and Mary was confronted by friends who had come to meet her, and a carriage to take her to their home. Gordon had to drop aside before this party, which swept her up. He disappeared, she could not tell how—

And this was all it came to—a considerable addition to her private collection of pictures, and the hesitating, baffled sound of that "Ah!" which sounded in her ears like a strain of music cut off just as it began. She found herself by some perversity which she scarcely understood too tired to start next morning, and so they did not meet, for that time at least.

The only thing was that he knew her Aunt Cleghorn's house, where she was going, almost as well as she knew it herself.

THE WELSH EISTEDDFOD.

The Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales was inaugurated at Bangor on Tuesday. Viscount Cranbrook, who presided, warmly eulogised the Welsh for the great interest they manifested in education, as demonstrated by the establishment by the people of three colleges. Archdeacon Farrar also delivered an address advocating the use of the Welsh language:—A great authority on education, Roger Ascham, said, "A bird flies not high with one wing, so neither does a man with one language;" and the great Emperor, Charles V., said, "The more languages a man speaks the more is he a man." If Wales retained her native language and Welsh children were brought up speaking Welsh and English, instead of Welsh only, it would be a distinct advantage to them.

Three choirs competed for the chief prize of 50*l*.—The Sheffield St. Cecilia, the Bangor Alinda, and the Birkenhead Cambrian. The test pieces were—"In Tears of Grief" (Bach), "Shout for Joy" (Parry), and "The River floweth strong, my love" (Rogers). After a close competition the Birkenhead choir won. In the evening a concert was given, Archdeacon Farrar presiding.

The Bishop of Bangor presided over the meeting of the Eisteddfod on Wednesday. He said he was determined to show his sympathy with Welshmen by an active participation in every movement having for its object the elevation and improvement of his fellow-countrymen. The Eisteddfod was such a movement, and therefore he gave it his active support.

The Queen of Roumania was present at Thursday's meeting of the National Eisteddfod of Wales at Bangor. There was an immense audience, and her Majesty was presented by the mayor and corporation with an address of welcome. She lunched with the Bishop of Bangor at the palace.

The Queen of Roumania was again present at Friday's closing meeting of the National Eisteddfod of Wales, when she was presented with bouquets by Miss Verney and Miss Lewis, of Gartherwen. Her Majesty, who was received by Sir John Puleston, president for the day, crowned the successful bard, and returned by special train to Llandudno. The weather was magnificent. Miss Hunter, daughter of the High Sheriff of Anglesey, presented the Queen with a silver leek, the national Welsh emblem.

SHAKSPERE BY CANDLELIGHT.

At the Royal Schauspielhaus, Berlin, on Wednesday night, the electric light went out during the concluding act of *The Tempest*, and the performance had to be finished by candlelight, gas not being obtainable.

THE HOME.

"The month, 'tis now September," and though the air is balmy, light summer dresses will soon have to be cast on one side for warmer materials. Serges and grey and fawn tweeds and homespun are especially suitable for autumn wear, and are being made perfectly plain, with well-fitting, tailor-made bodices. It is to be hoped that the fashion of long skirts will discontinue for outdoor winter wear.

Bodices are still made long-waisted; and the newest sleeves are made moderately full and high on the shoulder, but fitting perfectly tight to the wrist. In many cases they are buttoned. This fashion is not likely to meet with much favour by those who study comfort.

Capes with velvet yokes and Medici collars are again making their appearance. Dress collars, instead of being worn high all round, are now turned back at the corners to show the neck. This is welcome news for many who, having short necks, cannot indulge in the high stiff collar.

Alpaca is also fashionable. As this material is pretty, inexpensive, and serviceable, it is likely to be much in request.

This autumn season's hats and bonnets are very neat and becoming. They are of various shapes, setting closely to the head. Birds now take the place of flowers; and ostrich feathers, both large and small, are also being much worn. Do not cast away the straw sailor's hat that has become faded or sunburnt, but enamel it a navy blue for winter wear. When trimmed with a band of ribbon it will look like new, and be a considerable saving where economy is needed. And in what household is thrift not desirable?

Dark red cashmere and black velveteen, blended in the following manner, make a very effective and stylish autumn costume. Serge and velveteen of the same colours are also very becoming. Have a well-gored foundation skirt, and face it up a few inches all round with the red material. The skirt of red is made perfectly plain in front, the back fulness being pleated into the waistband, and the edge trimmed with narrows of black velvet. The bodice is arranged with a fitted front and back, to be cut out in lining; then the neck part is covered with a pointed yoke of black velveteen, on which the full plastron of the red cashmere is gathered: this having its fulness drawn down to the pointed centre, just a little below the waist. The collar band is also of black, and the yoke buttons down the front, the remainder being invisibly fastened with hooks under the fulness. The edge of the bodice is finished off with a row of velvet slightly pointed back and front. The sleeves should be of black velveteen, reaching to the wrist and arranged with small pleats over the top of the arm to set it high and full. Black straw hat trimmed with feathers and velvet will go well with this dress

Nothing is more comfortable or more generally useful, says Gadabout, in *The Queen*, than a woollen gown. The new patterns and new fabrics for the coming season are all ready, but do not point to any special novel departure of any kind. Checks and stripes will both be worn, the checks large, the stripes irregular, and neutral tints have it all their own way. I do not see many reds, and heliotrope is represented by a dull but serviceable petunia. Black appears in most of the patterns, blended with blues, browns and white. Brown is in the majority, and there are some reddish tints of this colour which promise to be fashionable, especially mixed with mouse green. Navy blue is always to the fore, but the metallic blues are newer, and some of the blues that are easily mistaken for greens have come in again—the peacock tones, for example, which boast of much beauty of colour. Some of the novelties are the checks and stripes with an astrachan effect introduced black and fleecy.

To dry herbs for winter use:—Cut a large basketful of the best-looking curled parsley, pick out all faded or dirty leaves and dry the remainder carefully before a clear fire. At first the leaves will become quite limp, and they must be turned before the fire to expose all parts equally to the heat, until the leaves are dry and brittle, without losing their green colour; for if they are allowed to get brown they are spoiled. When dry, rub them to powder between the hands; sift the powder through a coarse sieve, and bottle it for use; it will retain both the colour and flavour of green parsley. Never dry it in the sun, or it will lose much of its flavour. Thyme, marjoram, sage and savory may be all dried in the same way as parsley. Mint does not dry so well as the other herbs; it loses its bright colour, becomes brown, and also alters in flavour, but it will be found most useful for flavouring soups, and for this purpose the leaves are best dried and bottled whole.

A large and tasty dish of onion porridge costing the small sum of 5d.:—Take ¾lb. of ground rice, 1lb. of onions, one quart of boiling water, a little pepper, and a teaspoon of salt. Mix the rice into a paste with cold water, then gradually add the boiling water, while you keep stirring: the onions should be chopped up very fine and added; then gently boil for half an hour, stirring occasionally to keep it from burning. A small piece of butter added will be found an improvement.

Lemon cakes:—Rub together in a dry state ¾lb. of self-raising flour, 2oz. of butter or dripping; then add ½lb. of pounded sugar, the juice and rind of one lemon and two eggs; mix well together with a wine glassful of water and make into small cakes: bake in tins (well-buttered) for about half an hour.

There is an excellent mode of preparing a tasty and appetising dish with remnants of cold meat:—Boil for about two hours some large Spanish onions. When nearly tender drain them and take out the centre, filling in the space with meat prepared in the following manner: Mince the cold meat with a rasher of bacon and one or two tomatoes, seasoning all well with pepper and salt. When the onions have been stuffed with this place a small piece of butter on each onion and bake in the oven until of a light golden colour. Then pour a little thick brown gravy, which can be made from the bones of the joint, over the onions, and serve very hot. A kidney placed in the onion instead of minced meat, baked in the same way, makes a most savoury supper dish.

To make barley water:—Have ready a pint and a half of boiling water in a clean saucepan, then mix one tablespoonful of prepared barley smoothly with a little cold water, and add it to the boiling water in the saucepan, stirring for a few minutes. Pour it into a jug, adding sugar to taste, and the juice of one or two lemons.

Apple tea:—Peel, core, and cut up 1½lb. of apples in quarters; boil in one quart of water for half an hour, strain the liquor into a jug, squeeze in the juice of one lemon, and sweeten to taste

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