

WILMINGTON

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Holiday

Journal

Literature and Society.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1879.—NO. 5.

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KNEDEL SOUP; A RECOLLECTION.

Our German-English Dictionary says that a Knedel is a dumpling, or sort of pudding. I don't believe it, New Smith and Kneep, especially if the flour be too plentiful, may fairly be called dumplings; but Knedels are generally nothing else but Knedels, though, as will hereafter appear, there be varieties of the genus. Some people, above their business in this world, are such noodles as to prefer vermicelli; I don't blame them,—everyone has not had my advantages in Knedel Soup. Mother's grandmother was Dutch, and, somewhere along the line, an English Quaker came in on one side and a French Huguenot on the other, and the household traditions of the three intermingled to produce some famous dinner,—especially a rare variety of Knedel Soup. Later experience leads me to believe that in this, the Quaker and French got the better of the Dutch.... But it is not a boyish recollection that I am booked for, but one of the many that come to the hard-working commercial traveller.... By the way, people of the same class that profess vermicelli to Knedels, profess to despise commercial travellers for being such. Our business is not the most elevating, to be sure; but boots and snobs exist in all classes. And you will remember that it was an Uncommercial Traveller who sneered and jeered at his too kind American friends to tinkle the fancy and poked the peace of English bagmen.... Several years ago I spend a vacation in Lebanon. For three days I drove a quite lazy little mare—we were well matched—about the country, chancing for enjoyments,—it is a right pleasant way to put in the time,—if you like it,.... I started one morning about six o'clock and drew up at an inn about ten. The landlord was glum and heavy,—rather fat, I thought, for comfort; but he was right jolly with his cronies on the bench just back of the horse-trough. The landlady would have been a help-meat if he had needed any, and the two daughter were as buxom as can be found in the three counties,—of course you know the three I mean.... Beside the house the coyish Swatara twisted its shining way down the Blue hills; zig zagging, as if afraid of a straight run; and the fields in front were white with waving grain, among which the scythes flashed,—mowing machines were too new-fangled for the people. I think, but am not sure, for the wind blew from me, that they were buckwheat fields.... (Let me ask, parenthetically, did you ever eat honey in the comb drawn from the buckwheat up in the Wyoming Valley? California honey, in its glass boxes, is not to be mentioned in the same day with it. First time I get holiday and a free pass I'll go up to see Dr. Bradley at Wilkes-Barre, just to get some more like that

my worthy host of the Phoenix set out for me some sixteen years ago,—Gilchrist. I think, his name was, 'You have a rich valley here, I said to him, as we stood on the porch, in the twilight. 'Sir,' he replied,—and there was dignity and reverence in his tone and manner,—'there is no more beautiful spot on God's footstools!.... At my inn, dinner-time came at noon. You have seen the dining-room of a well-kept German inn; belike you put up at the Bunch of Grapes, at Lancaster, before the Stevens House was built. Well, it was in such a room and at such a table that I sat down. I could hear the Swatara babbling, as the younger daughter said,—'Knedel Soup?' Mother's had been delicious, and my landlady's, in the city—she was a Jersey Quaker,—was excellent, of course, I would take some. The others at the table had been served, and there was a gurgling sound in the room that drowned Swatara's music.... Hetty,—that was the younger one's name—brought me my dish of soup;—about two quarts.... I hold it to be the most gentlemanly sort of my life that I put it all under my jacket, rather than disturb the gratification that the landlady and Gretchen showed on seeing me at work over it. Knedels Soup was their strong hold, and they had made it as a treat for me. Well, the soup was strong too; so were the Knedels, and broad, and yellow, and thick, and oh, so long; I verily believe if you stood up on the chair you still wouldn't have the other end out of the dish. It was the farm-hand variety of Knedel Soup; it lacked the French-Quaker flavor mother's had. It was wholesome; would stick to the ribs; but it was not just the sort of aliment to nourish and develop the exquisite delicate cells that mass into the white and gray substance of the cerebrum. And it was brains that I wanted.

A Boston lawyer, badgering a witness, said sternly:—"I believe, sir, you served a sentence in State Prison?" "Yes," was the unconcerned reply, "I was in the State Prison, and had the misfortune to occupy the cell your brother had had."

An exchange says:—"Kerosene will make tea-kettles shine as bright as new. 'Yes,' remarks another paper, 'Kerosene will do wonders; it will make a whole house shine so that it can be seen for miles, but it is dreadfully destructive to paint.'

"Do you set up for an ang. l. now?" she asked. "Your visits are so few and far between." "No!" he answered; "but an angel sets up for me."

"They fired two shots at him," wrote an Irish reporter. "The first shot killed him, but the second shot was not fatal."

The barber's razor took hold of his beard with a vengeance, when he looked up and said, apologetically, "My dear sir, I came in to get shaved, not to get a tooth pulled."

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