

TRAVELS OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

CHAPTER XXVII

A proclamation by the Baron-Excessive curiosity of the people to know what fudge was-The people in a general ferment about it- They break open all the granaries in the empire-The affections of the people conciliated-An ode performed in honour of the Baron- His discourse with Fragrantia on the excellence of the music.

Some time after I ordered the following proclamation to be published in the Court Gazette, and in all the other papers of the empire:-

BY THE MOST MIGHTY AND PUISSANT LORD, HIS EXCELLENCY THE LORD BARON MUNCHAUSEN.

Whereas a quantity of fudge has been distributed through all the granaries of the empire for particular uses; and as the natives have ever expressed their aversion to all manner of European eatables, it is hereby strictly forbidden, under pain of the severest penalties, for any of the officers charged with the keeping of the said fudge to give, sell, or suffer to be sold, any part or quantity whatever of the said material, until it be agreeable unto our good will and pleasure.

Dated in our Castle of Gristariska this Triskill of the month of Griskish, in the year Moulikasra- navas-kashna-vildash.

This proclamation excited the most ardent curiosity all over the empire. "Do you know what this fudge is?" said Lady Mooshilgarousti to Lord Darnarlaganl. "Fudge!" said he, "Fudge! no: what fudge?" "I mean," replied her Ladyship, "the enormous quantity of fudge that has been distributed under guards in all the strong places in the empire, and which is strictly forbidden to be sold or given to any of the natives under the severest penalties." "Lord!" replied he, "what in the name of wonder can it be? Forbidden! why it must, but pray do you, Lady Fashashash, do you know what this fudge is? Do you, Lord Trastillaux? or you, Miss Gristilarkask? What! nobody know what this fudge can be?"

It engrossed for several days the chit-chat of the whole empire. Fudge, fudge, fudge, resounded in all companies and in all places, from the rising until the setting of the sun; and even at night, when gentle sleep refreshed the rest of mortals, the ladies of all that country were dreaming of fudge!

"Upon my honour," said Kitty, as she was adjusting her modesty piece before the glass, just after getting out of bed, "there is scarce anything I would not give to know what this fudge can be." "La! my dear," replied Miss Killnariska, "I have been dreaming the whole night of nothing but fudge; I thought my lover kissed my hand, and pressed it to his bosom, while I, frowning, endeavoured to wrest it from him: that he kneeled at my feet. No, never, never will I look at you, cried I, till you tell me what this fudge can be, or get me some of it. Begone! cried I, with all the dignity of offended beauty, majesty, and a tragic queen. Begone! never see me more, or bring me this delicious fudge. He swore, on the honour of a knight, that he would wander o'er the world, encounter every danger, perish in the attempt, or satisfy the angel of his soul."

The chiefs and nobility of the nation, when they met together to drink their kava, spoke of nothing but fudge. Men, women, and children all, all talked of nothing but fudge. 'Twas a fury of curiosity, one general ferment, and universal fever-nothing but fudge could allay it.

But in one respect they all agreed, that government must have had some interested view, in giving such positive orders to preserve it, and keep it from the natives of the country. Petitions were addressed to me from all quarters, from every corporation and body of men in the whole empire. The majority of the people instructed their constituents, and the parliament presented a petition, praying that I would be pleased to take the state of the nation under consideration, and give orders to satisfy the people, or the most dreadful consequences were to be apprehended. To these requests, at the entreaty of my council, I made no reply, or at best but unsatisfactory answers. Curiosity was on the rack; they forgot to lampoon the government, so engaged were they about the fudge. The great assembly of the states could think of nothing else. Instead of enacting laws for the regulation of the people, instead of consulting what should seem most wise, most excellent, they could think, talk, and harangue of nothing but fudge. In vain did the Speaker call to order; the more checks they got the more extravagant and inquisitive they were.

In short, the populace in many places rose in the most outrageous and tumultuous manner, forced open the granaries in all places in one day, and triumphantly distributed the fudge through the whole empire.

Whether on account of the longing, the great curiosity, imagination, or the disposition of the people, I cannot say—but they found it infinitely to their taste; 'twas intoxication of joy, satisfaction, and applause.

Finding how much they liked this fudge, I procured another quantity from England, much greater than the former, and cautiously bestowed it over all the kingdom. Thus were the affections of the people regained; and they, from hence, began to venerate, applaud, and admire my government more than ever. The following ode was performed at the castle, in the most superb style, and universally admired:—

ODE.

Ye bulls and crickets, and Gog, Magog,
And trump'ts high chiming anthrophog,
Come sing blithe choral all in *og*,
Caralog, basilog, fog, and bog!

Great and superb appears thy cap sublime,
Admired and worshipp'd as the rising sun;
Solemn, majestic, wise, like hoary Time,
And fam'd alike for virtue, sense, and fun.

Then swell the noble strain with song,
And elegance divine,
While goddesses around shall throng,
And all the muses nine.

And bulls, and crickets, and Gog, Magog,
And trumpets chiming anthrophog,
Shall sing blithe choral all in *og*,
Caralog, basilog, fog, and bog!

This piece of poetry was much applauded, admired, and *encored* in every public assembly, celebrated as an astonishing effort of genius; and the music, composed by Minheer Gastrashbark

Gkrghhbarwshhk, was thought equal to the sense!—Never was there anything so universally admired, the summit of the most exquisite wit, the keenest praise, the most excellent music.

“Upon my honour, and the faith I owe my love,” said I, “music may be talked of in England, but to possess the very soul of harmony the world should come to the performance of this ode.” Lady FrAGRANTIA was at that moment drumming with her fingers on the edge of her fan, lost in a reverie, thinking she was playing upon— Was it a forte piano?

“No, my dear FrAGRANTIA,” said I, tenderly taking her in my arms while she melted into tears; “never, never, will I play upon any other—!”

Oh! 'twas divine, to see her like a summer's morning, all blushing and full of dew!

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