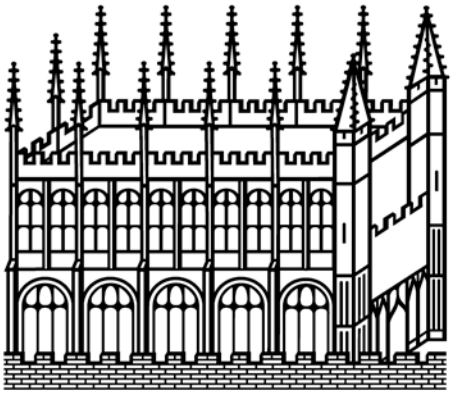

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THE OXFORD POEMS OF MATTHEW ARNOLD

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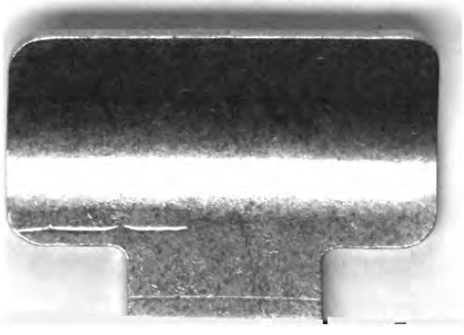
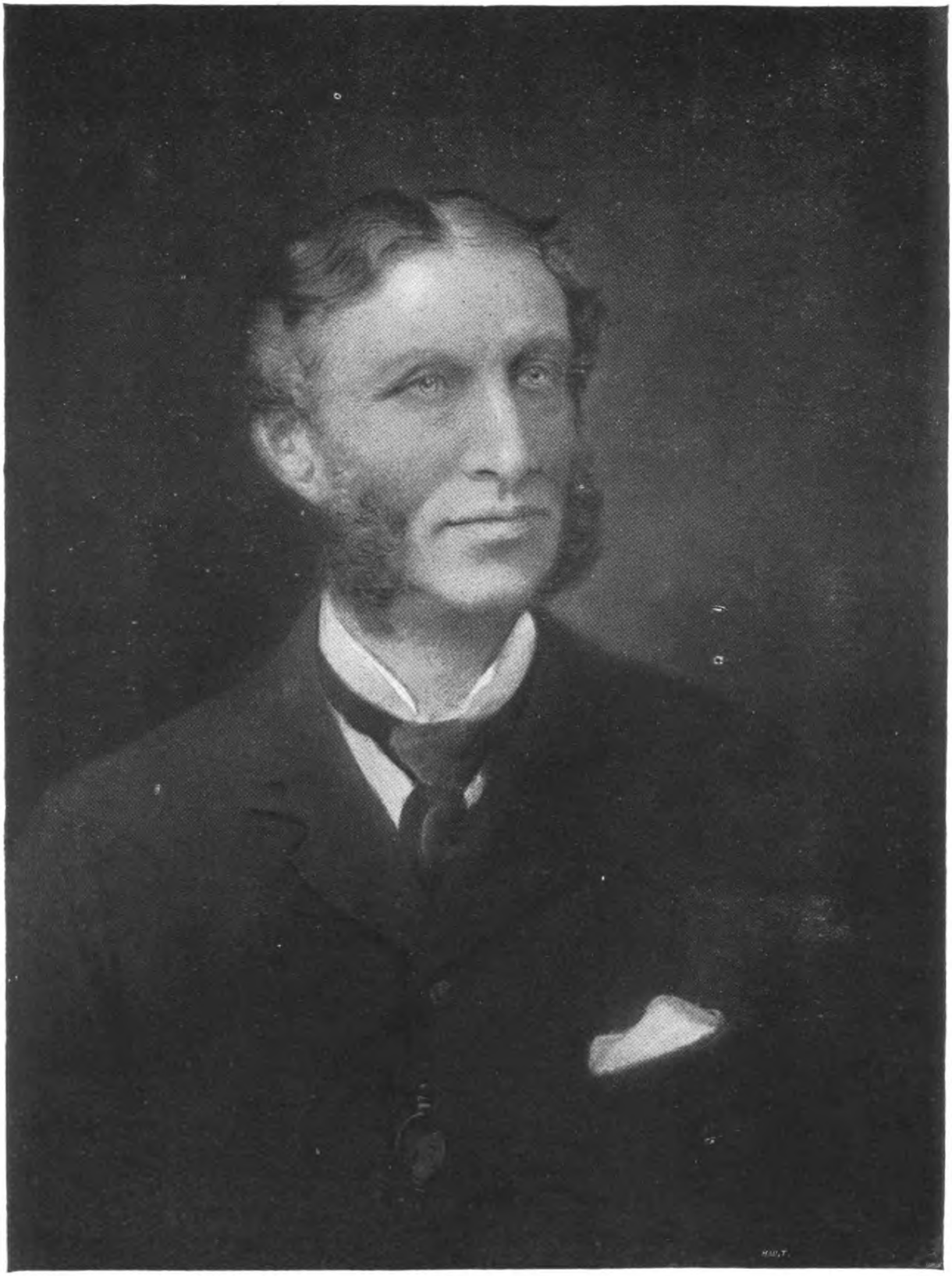




MATTHEW ARNOLD.

From the picture in the Oriel College Common Room, Oxford.

THE OXFORD POEMS

OF

MATTHEW ARNOLD,

"THE SCHOLAR GIPSY"

AND

"THYRSIS,"

WITH

RAMBLES IN THE COUNTRY

AROUND OXFORD to which

the Poems refer

OXFORD:

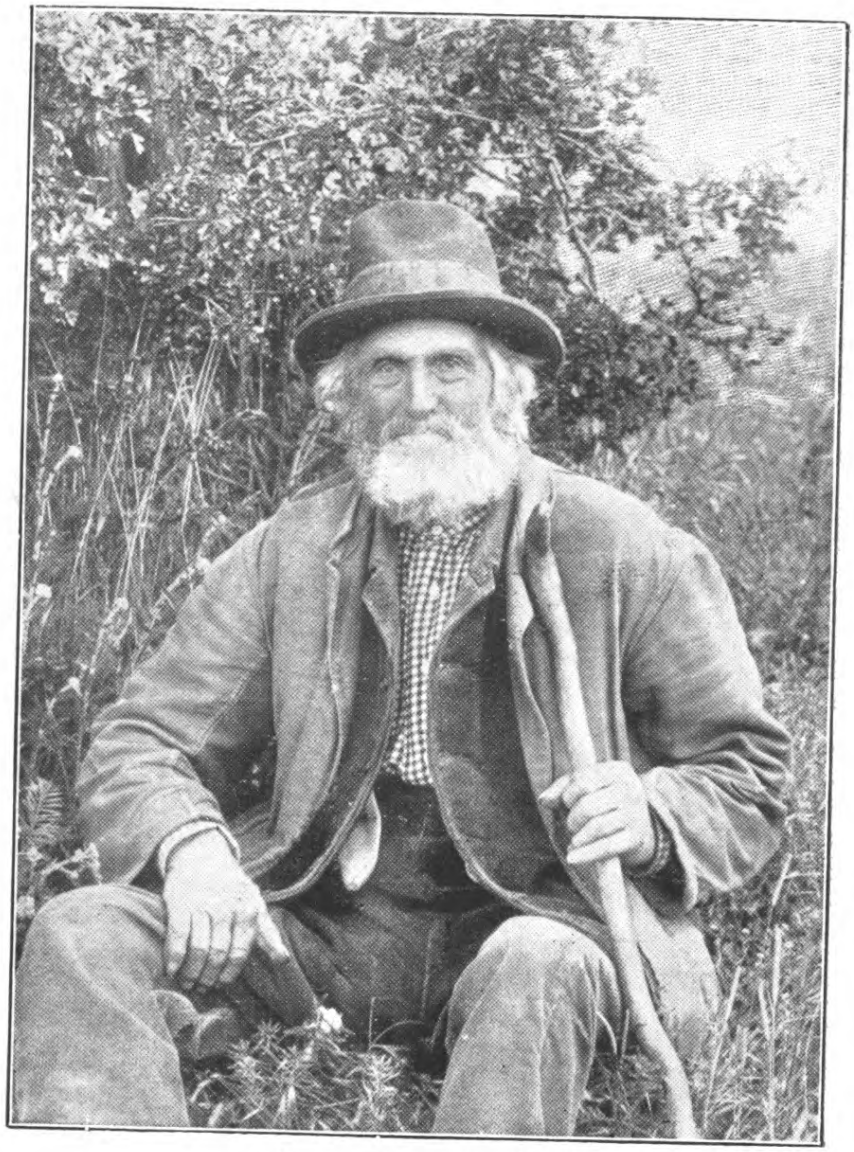
ALDEN & Co., Ltd.

FOREWORD.

Matthew Arnold's Oxford Poems invest with romance a district which, even apart from this added charm, is well worthy of exploration.

To the late Mr. H. W. Taunt, F.R.G.S., belongs the credit of having, with characteristic thoroughness, collected the interesting information and original photographs contained in this volume.

In the present Edition while, owing to exigences of space, certain portions of the work have been abridged, care has been taken to include everything of real importance, both in matter and in illustration. The Publishers are glad of the opportunity thus to preserve much that is curious and of interest which might otherwise have been lost.



'They call you, Shepherd.'

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY.

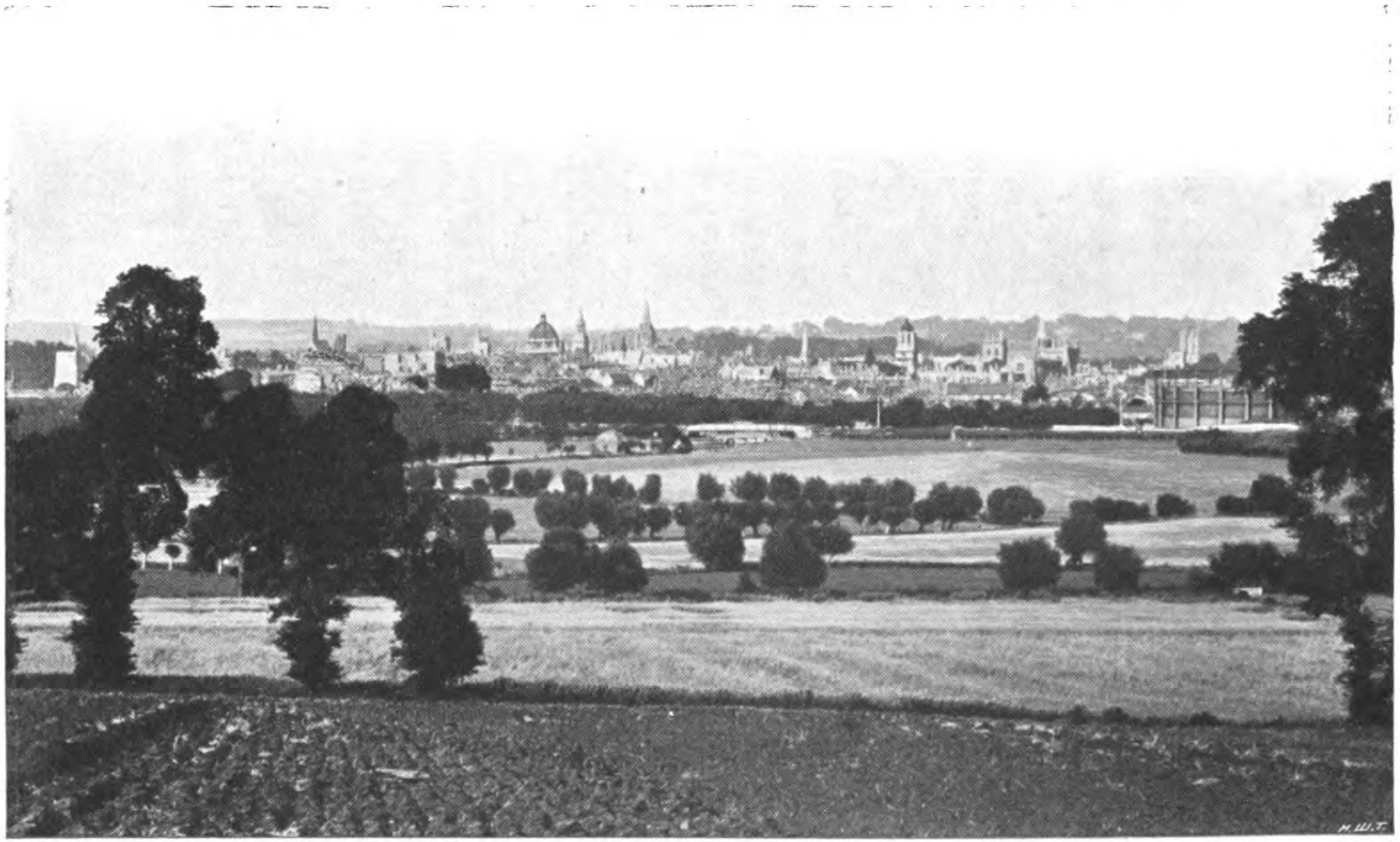
Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd herbage shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green,
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here where the reaper was at work of late—
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon comes back his stores to use—
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,
And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

'And the eye travels down to Oxford's Towers.'



Oxford from the Hinksey Hills.

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY.

"There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there; and at last join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of Scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such imposters as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others; that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned."

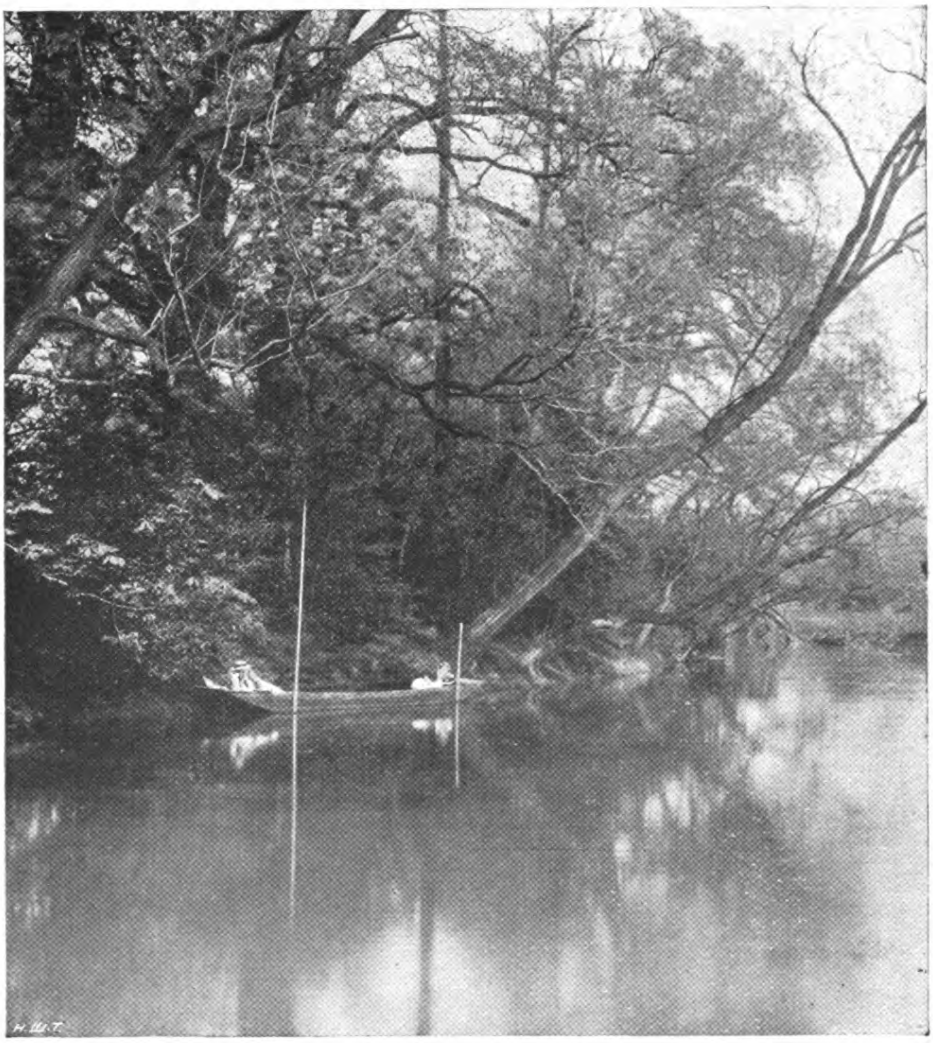
(Glanvil. 1661).

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life enquired;
Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
When fully learn'd, will to the world impart;
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill."

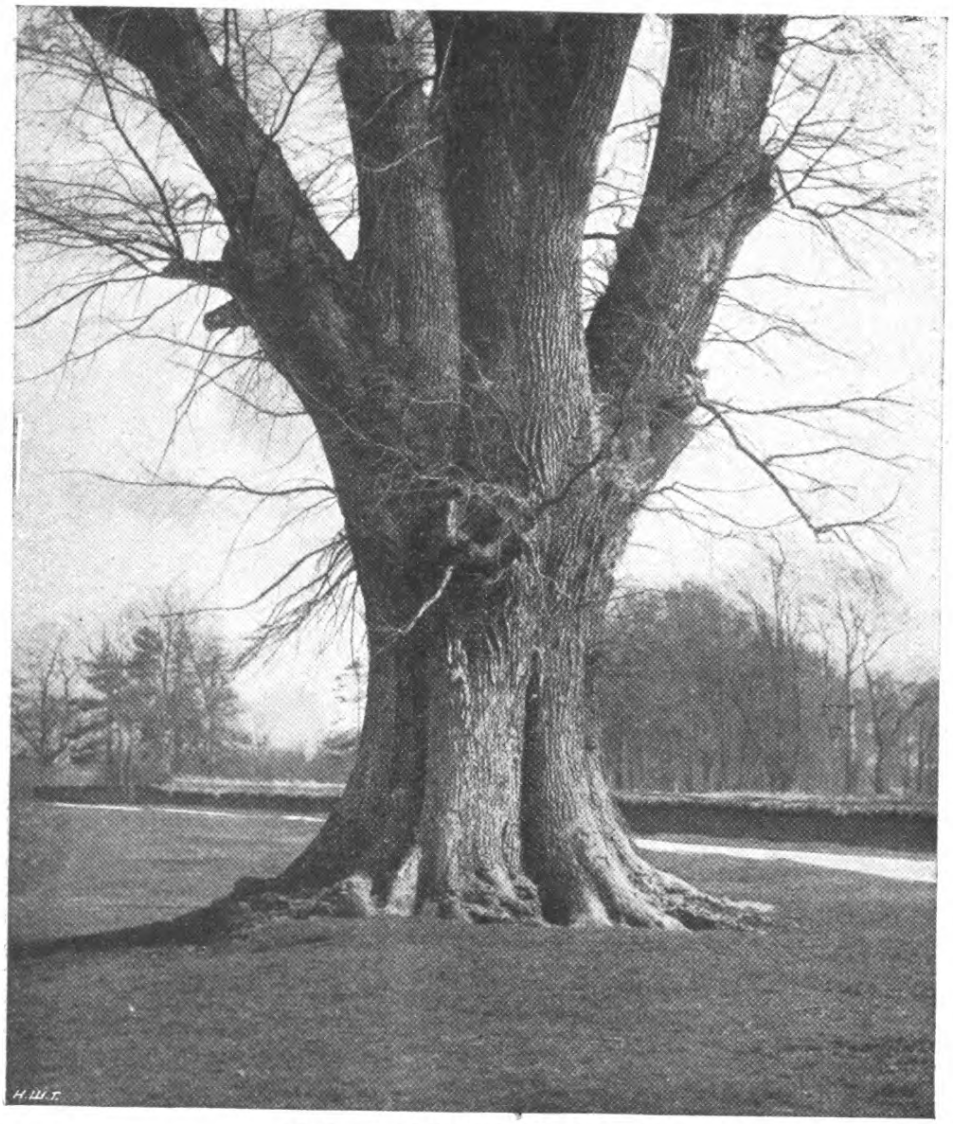
This said, he left them, and return'd no more.—
But rumours hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,
The same the gipsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
Had found him seated at their entering.

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watched the warm, green-muffled Cumnor hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hythe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.



'In my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank'



'The Fyfield Elm in May.'

And then they land, and thou art seen no more!—
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers—the frail-leafed, white anemony,
Dark bluebells drench'd with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering
Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
Have often passed thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumnor hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood—
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of grey,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly—
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

'The abandon'd lasher pass.'

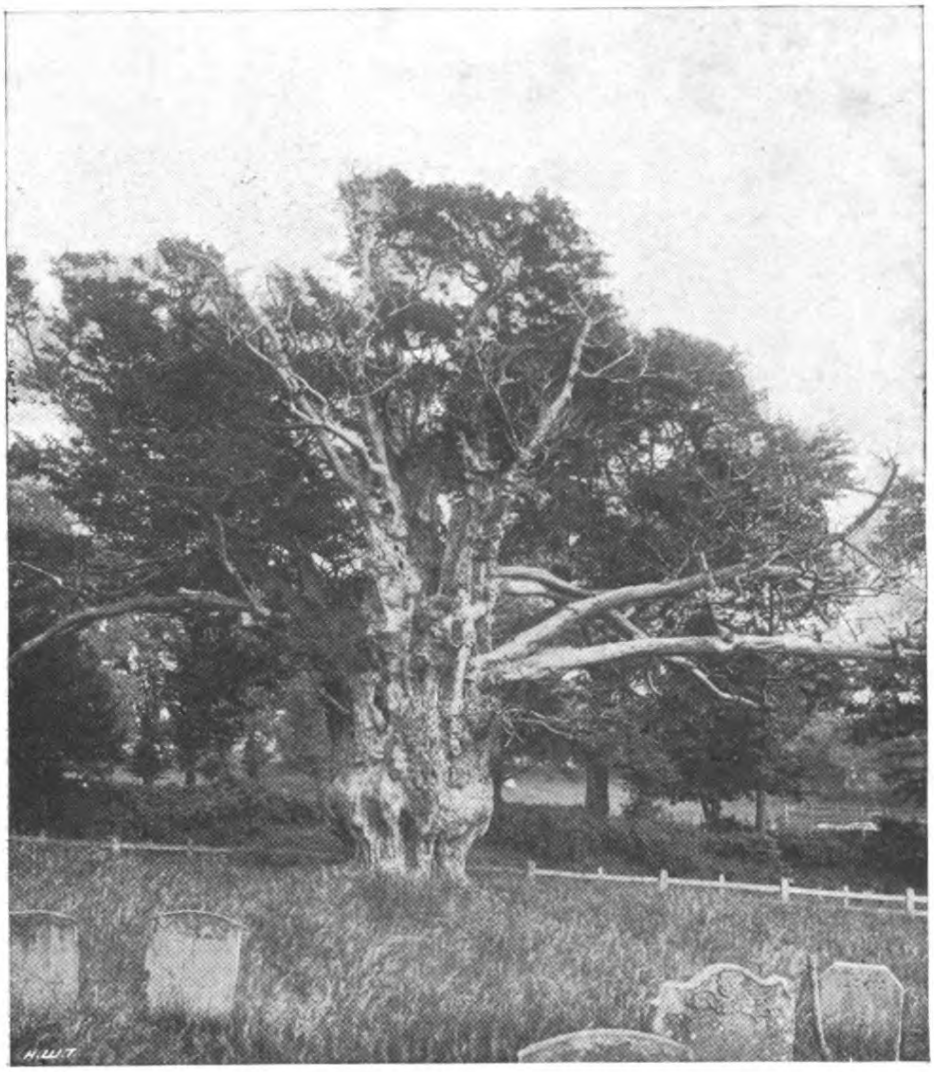
'Tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge.'

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill,
And gain'd the white brow of the Cumnor range;
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snow-flakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

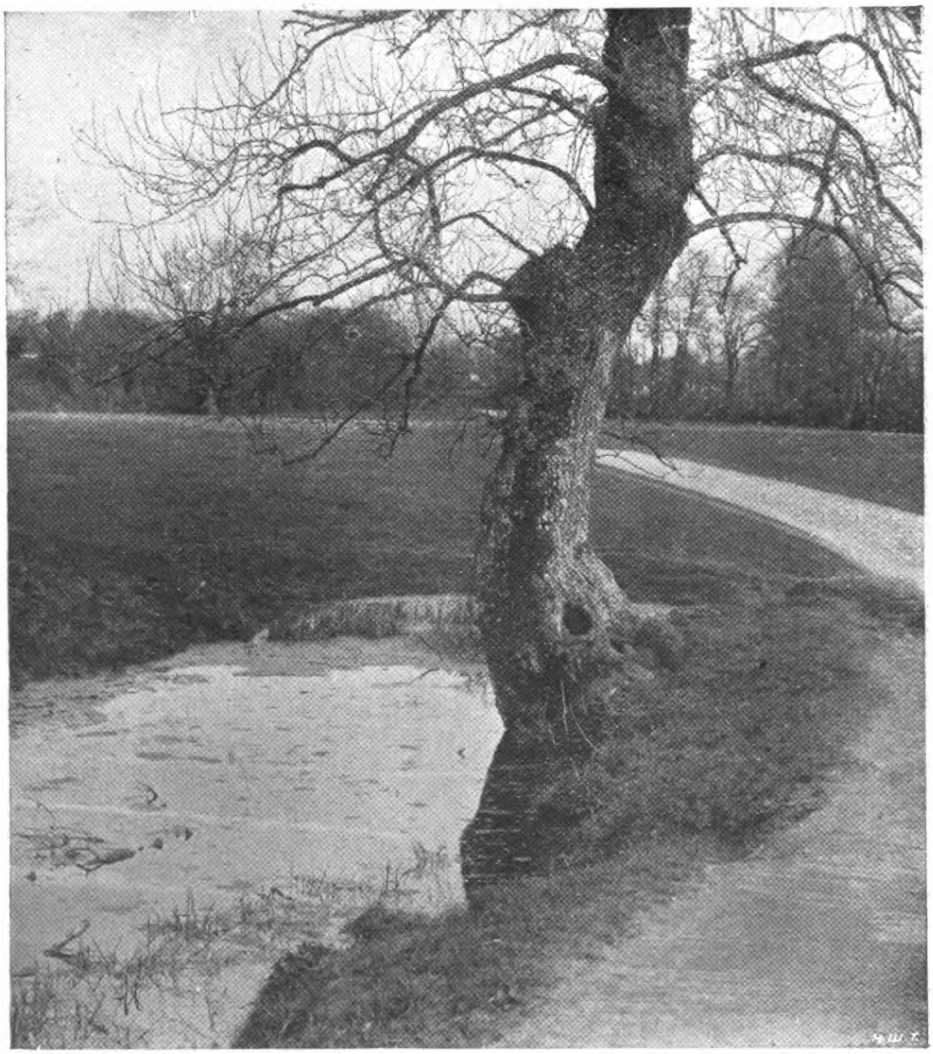
But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers.
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;
Else wert thou long since number'd with the dead!
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst—what we, alas! have not.



'Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.'



Waiting – (for Spring).

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

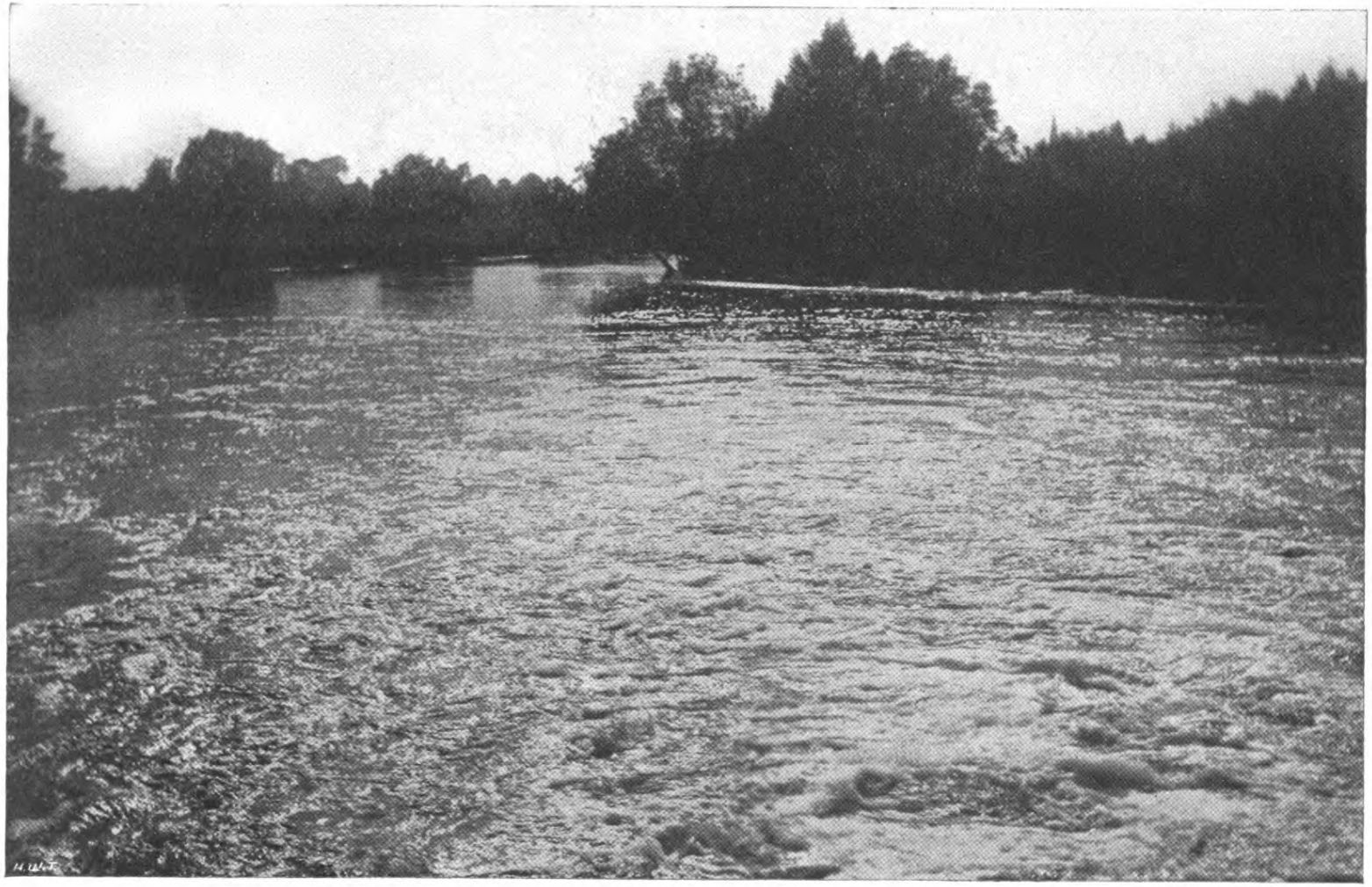
Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it!—but it still delays,
And then we suffer! and amongst us one,
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear;
With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair—
But none has hope like thine!
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

Berkshire Downs from Foxcombe Hill.

'Through the fields and through the woods.'



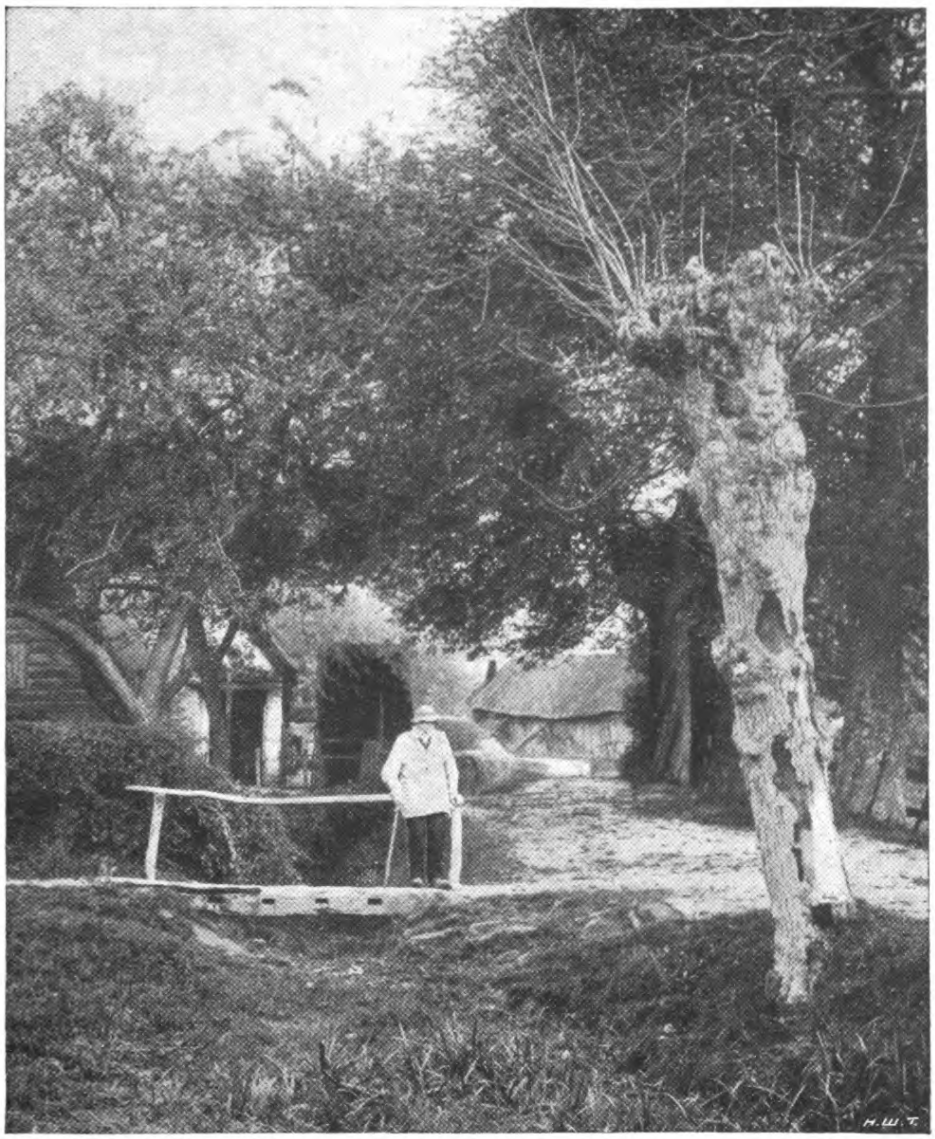
Life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames.'

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was rife—
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægæan isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,



'Grow old at last.'

'On the skirts of Bagley Wood.'

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—
And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail;
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

THYRSIS,

A MONODY, *to commemorate the author's friend,*
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, *who died at Florence, 1861.*

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks—
Are ye too changed, ye hills?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days—
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.

The Old Witches' Elm, North Hinksey.

Oxford from the Abingdon Road.

'That sweet City with her dreaming spires.'

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The signal elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames?—
This winter-eve is warm,
Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers!
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening.

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!—
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head.
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;
He could not wait their passing, he is dead.

Chilswell Farm.

'The Tree.'

Arnold's Tree in Winter.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day—
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-william with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—
For time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead

'Uncrumpling Fern.'

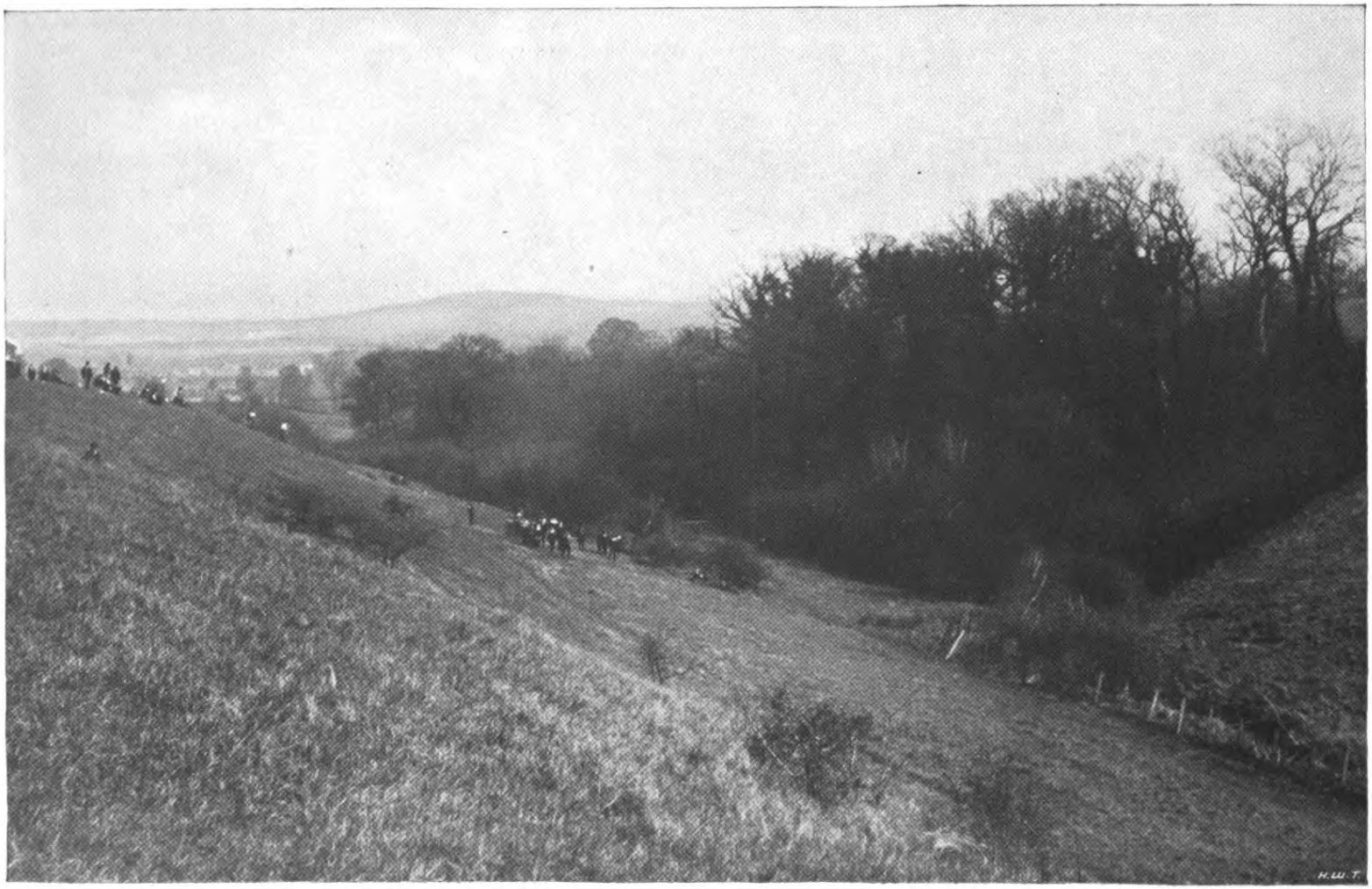
'What white, what purple fritillaries.'

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
Her foot the Cumnor cowslips never stirr'd;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain!

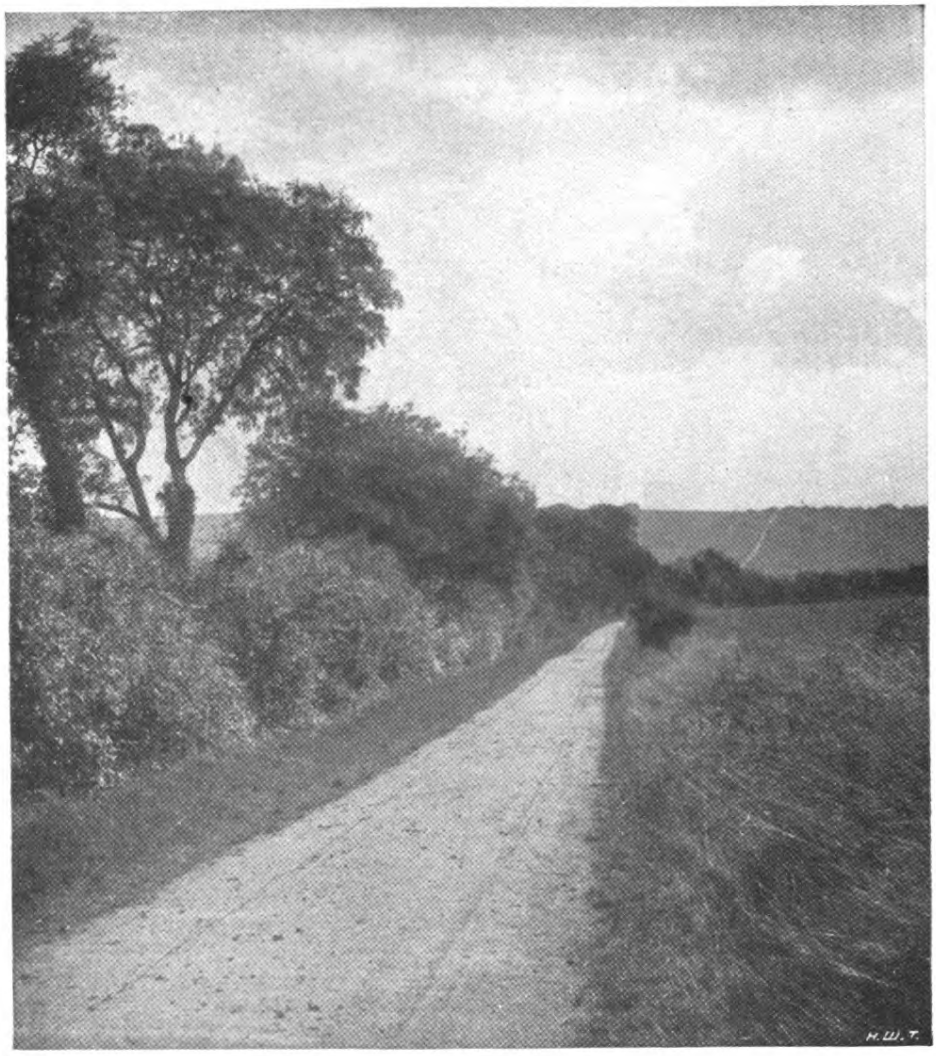
Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Eynsham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?—
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We track'd the shy Thames shore?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass?—
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well!



'A dingle on the loved hill-side.'



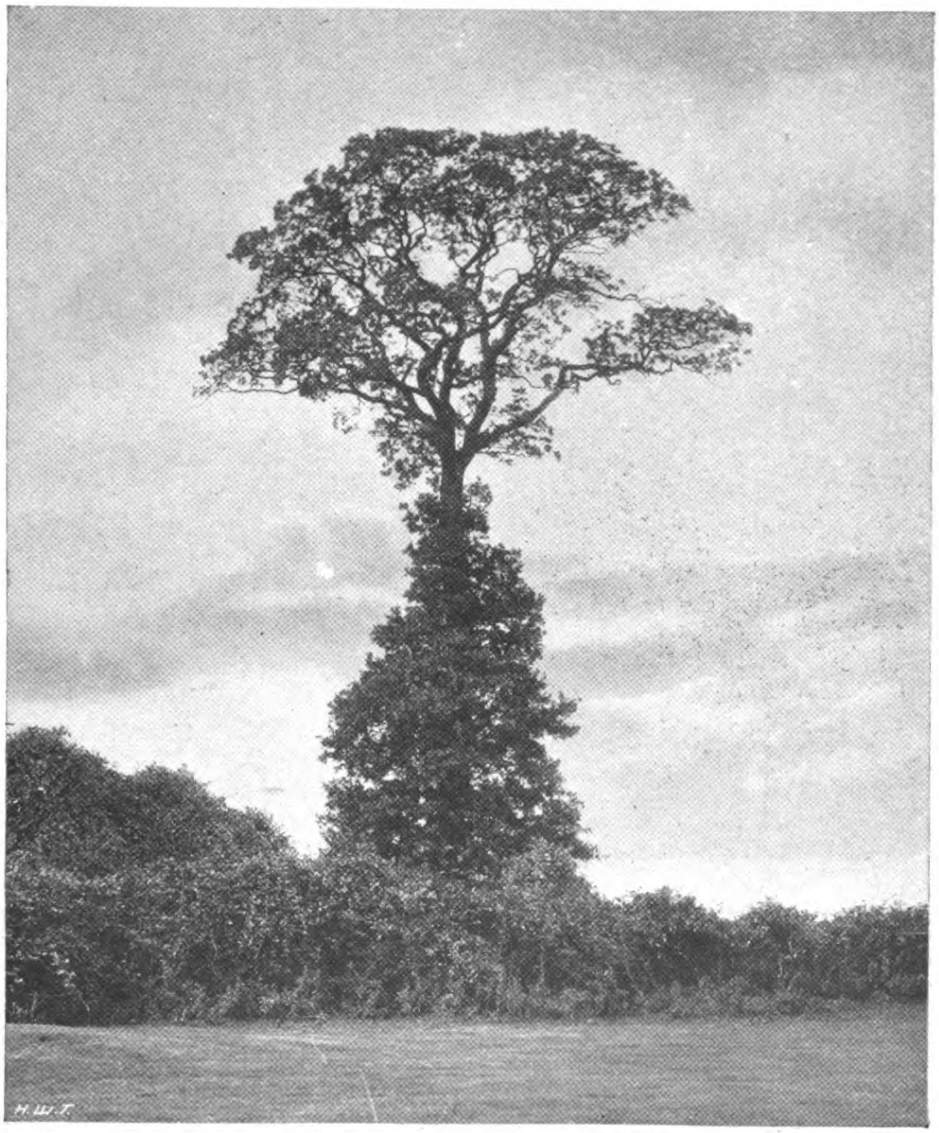
'And long the way appears.'

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with grey;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;—
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth;
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet!—Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field!—'Tis done; and see,
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale),



'Back'd by the Sunset
The Tree.'

'These English fields, this upland dim.'

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him;
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!—
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing;
Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the mild canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemonies in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold—
But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

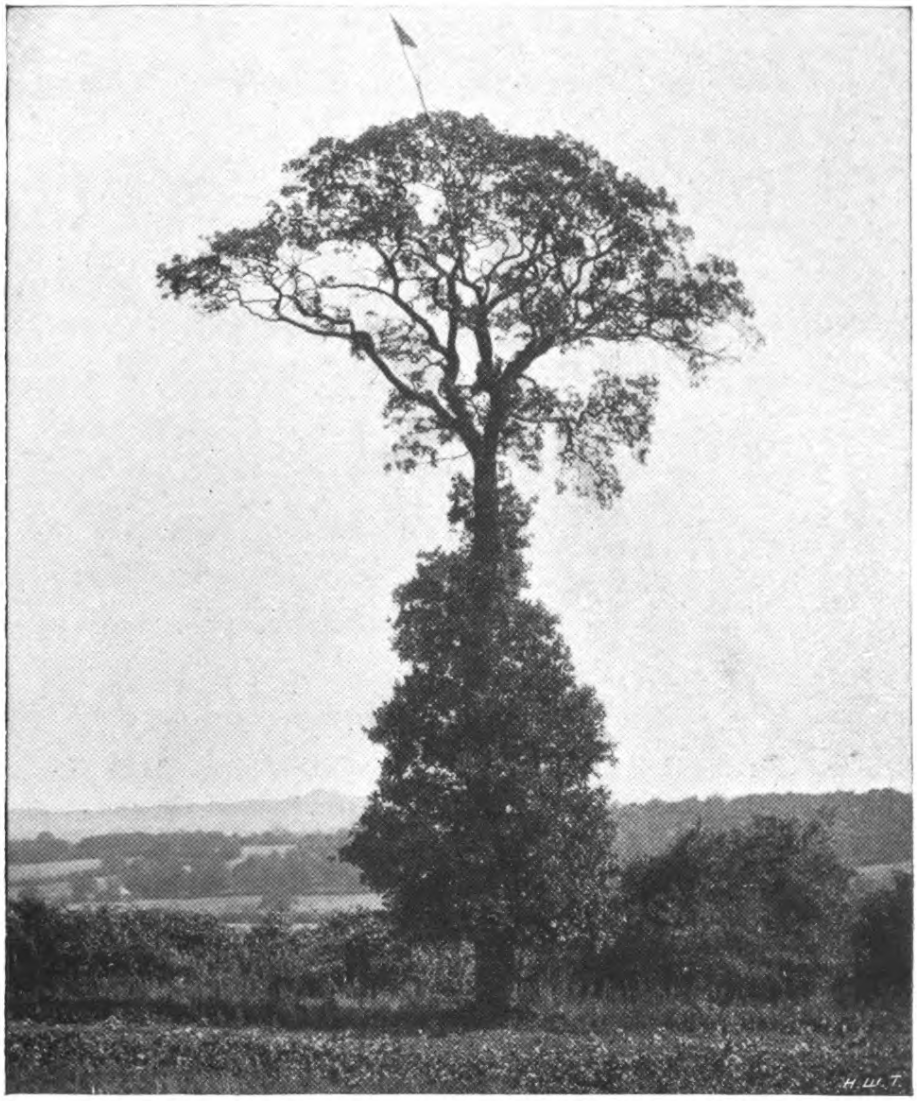
'That lonely tree against the western sky.'

'This rude Cumnor ground, its fir-topped Hurst.'

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound;
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour!
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest,
And this rude Cumnor ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which tas 'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
It fail'd, and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
—Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:
Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.



'Our tree yet crowns the hill.'

Rambles with Matthew Arnold.

"The greatest number of the poets, even those who belong to Oxford, have not written of their Alma Mater; and even the Oxford Professors of Poetry as a whole have added but little to the poesy of Oxford, with the exception of Arnold. He, it is true, makes rich amends for many omissions. He shed a lustre on the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford similar to that which Wordsworth and Tennyson shed on the Poet Laureateship. 'The Scholar Gipsy' and 'Thyrsis' are, and are likely to remain, the two great Oxford Poems, and to all Oxford men the pleasant upland country on the Berks side of the Thames, within the great loop of the River, must ever be associated with Arnold's name."

Two only of Arnold's poems illustrate scenes round Oxford. "The Scholar Gipsy" embodies the story of the after-life of a poor University Student, who, saddened by his want of social success, left his Alma Mater, threw in his lot with a tribe of Romani and lived their free and unfettered life; while "Thyrsis" is his lament for the loss of his dear friend and companion, Arthur Hugh Clough, who died at Florence, 1861. The scenes in both poems are mainly amid the fields, and villages, and hills which border Oxford on the West and South-West, and it is through them that the reader is invited to ramble.

The district is essentially one for walking, the field roads are too rough to drive, and in places even to cycle, although this latter mode and walking combined may get over the

ground quickly in Summer, but walking is in every respect the ideal method of exploration. For convenience definite routes are suggested, which, while easy to follow and of reasonable distance, include every point of beauty and interest.

ROUTE 1. WALK—To South Hinksey, then across the fields to North Hinksey and home by the Ferry, or alternatively along the hollow way to Botley and home by Botley Road.

ROUTE 2. WALK—South Hinksey, Chilswell, The Tree, Boar's Hill and 'The Fox,' back by road, through the fields to Hinksey and by the causeway to New Hinksey, and the Abingdon Road.

ROUTE 3. WALK—Through Hinksey and by road as far as 'The Fox,' then across the fields to Sunningwell, from thence to Bayworth, and through Bagley Wood to Kennington, home by the Towing-path or through Iffley.

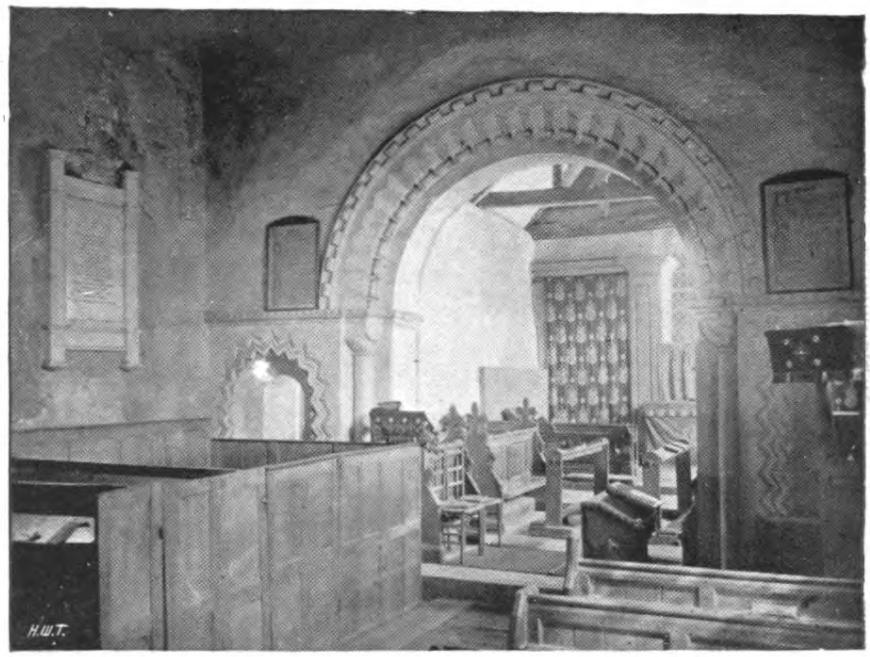
ROUTE 4. WALK—To North Hinksey, up the hills past the Conduit House, past Cumnor Hurst, back by road through Botley, or through the woods to Boar's Hill.

ROUTE 5. WALK—By Road to Cumnor and fields to Bablock Hythe, back through fields to Dean Court, home by Botley Road.

ROUTE 6. DRIVE OR CYCLE—By Road to Cumnor Hill and Chawley, past Cumnor Hurst and Besselsleigh to Fyfield, then back through Wootton, Boar's Hill and home by Abingdon Road.

The Swing Gate, North Hinksey.

On the Green, North Hinksey.



The Chancel Arches, North Hinksey.

Monk's Barn, North Hinksey.

ROUTE 1.

FROM Carfax, the centre of Oxford, there are two distinct ways of reaching the Hinkseys, and the decision must be as to which shall be first visited. We, in this little book, have chosen the Southern way as being the best; so we pass down St. Aldate's, by the grand old front of Christ Church and through the narrow ways beyond, in due course crossing Folly Bridge. Before reaching this, the visitor will have entered the county of Berks, the boundary in olden times being an arm of the River which is now entirely filled up, which crossed under the street just where it is lowest, about a hundred yards north of the Bridge. Folly Bridge dates from early times, and was originally named Grand-pont or South Bridge, most of the present St. Aldate's bearing the suggestive name Grand-poole; it was probably first built by Robert D'Oyley, and even now there are traces of its early arches under the farther part of the present bridge.

From Folly Bridge the road is on a causeway which had, it is said, more than 40 arches beneath it. A number of these existed until within the last few years, before Oxford extended itself to reach New Hinksey; and then the walk to Hinksey began at and traversed Hinksey-step ground, the last field before reaching the new village, now partly a recreation ground.

New Hinksey has few attractions for the visitor. The Church, which is modern, is dedicated to St. John the Evangelist; it is a building of brick with stone dressings.

Beyond the recreation ground turn (right) down Lake Street. At the bottom are the Oxford City Waterworks, which have been considerably extended since they were first built. Pass on to the path which leads to the long Bridge over the City lake; the higher part, over the Railway, is called 'Jacob's Ladder,' and here, mounting the steps, turn round. To the North are the towers and spires of the City, over the Lake; while to the East is the village of New Hinksey, just passed. To the West is the old village, hiding among the trees, and behind it in the distance, up the valley, is Arnold's Tree. The City reservoir was originally made in digging gravel for ballasting the railway lines; it was extended little by little until it grew to its present dimensions.

The path Westward of Jacob's Ladder Bridge lies between ditches and passes over narrow wooden bridges until a sharp turn at the end leads to the little Village of South Hinksey. The village was the birthplace of John Piers, afterwards Archbishop of York.

At the turn of the road is another Cottage or two, and an Inn, with the Cross Keys on its signboard. The older Inn bearing this sign stood on the other side of the road, and was kept by the Sibylla Kerr immortalized by Arnold:—

> And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name.

Here the road to the left leads to the old Church, the one to the right leading to Chilswell Hill and North Hinksey.

The Church of St. Lawrence has few remarkable features. From the entrance gate it appears as a little edifice with Perpendicular Tower and Nave; and a 17th century Chancel, the

Oxford, from Jacob's Ladder, looking over the City Lake.

New Hinksey, from Jacob's Ladder.

latter of the most debased kind of Architecture. The Tower at its west end has a late door and window; the South Wall of the Nave has early Lancet windows, two single lights and one double one.

The interior of the Church is better than the exterior, the Chancel Arch, one of the smallest in the County, is very massive, with a pointed Arch; the Tower Arch is of the same class but more lofty, and a century or so later. There is a good plain open roof, and the large round Font, standing on a square base, close to the north door, is probably the oldest feature of the Church. In the wall by the Pulpit is a quaint little double Piscina, with three arches over the top, the two basins are quatre-foil; it is so small that it is easy missed.

The stairs to the Pulpit are said to belong to the Rood loft, and the one window in the North Wall of the Nave is a two-light perpendicular with square head.

There are three bells in the Tower, the 1st is about 2 ft. 6 in. diam. by 2 ft. high, weight 5 cwt. Inscription: *Vox Augustini sonet in aure Dei.* Date probably 14th Century. Bell cracked.

2nd Bell, diam. 2 ft. 10 in. by 2 ft. high, weight about 7 cwt. Inscription: *Sancta Margareta ora pro nobis.* Date 14th Century.

3rd Bell, diam. 2 ft. 11 in. by 2 ft. 3 in. high, weight about 8 cwt. Inscription: D.M, R.P, N.R, A. Probably recast in Oxford about 1655. Bell cracked.

The 4th Bell has disappeared.

North of the Church, in the Churchyard, are the remains of a Cross, but no shaft or head.

Years ago a pretty walk, now closed, led up from the road behind South Hinksey Church to "Jenny Bunting's Parlour." This really was the quarry from which stone was dug for the building of All Souls College, and fifty years ago the valley leading up to it was a favourite walk for Oxford people; being a very pretty glen with a tiny stream trickling down the centre, overgrown with reeds and water-plants, and ending in a copse or little wood. There are still a few traces of the Parlour, but all overgrown. The story told was that it had been tenanted years before by a witch, or wise woman, named Jenny Bunting, whose ghost still haunted the place, and took under its protection all true lovers who made their vows there; but drove away any who were false. By some she was said to have been a gipsy separated from her tribe for marrying for love out of it; and after the death of her husband she lived here a solitary life. The legend seems to be nearly forgotten, but was often told when picnic parties made this their rendezvous. Can this be a sequel to the story of the Scholar Gipsy?

From South Hinksey, at the end of the Village, a field-road runs North-West, turning sharply to the right when the streamlet which runs down from Chilswell is met. This road lasts only for a short distance, and then the path begins which leads straight on through the fields. All along these fields there should be a series of charming views of Oxford's towers and spires, but nearly every one now shows the intrusive gasometers thrusting themselves into the front of the picture. The farm on the left above, on the rising ground, is Hinksey Hill Farm, and from here nearly all the older celebrated pictures of Oxford have been taken, but to-day they are not so

Jenny Bunting's Parlour.

The old Witches' Elm.

Ruskin Road-makers at work, North Hinksey, 1874.

beautiful as in former days, although there are more 'Towers and Spires.'

This walk across the fields continues until it reaches North Hinksey, a distance of nearly a mile, and eventually the path reaches the last stile, over which is North Hinksey Green, and the site of the historic Ruskin Road.

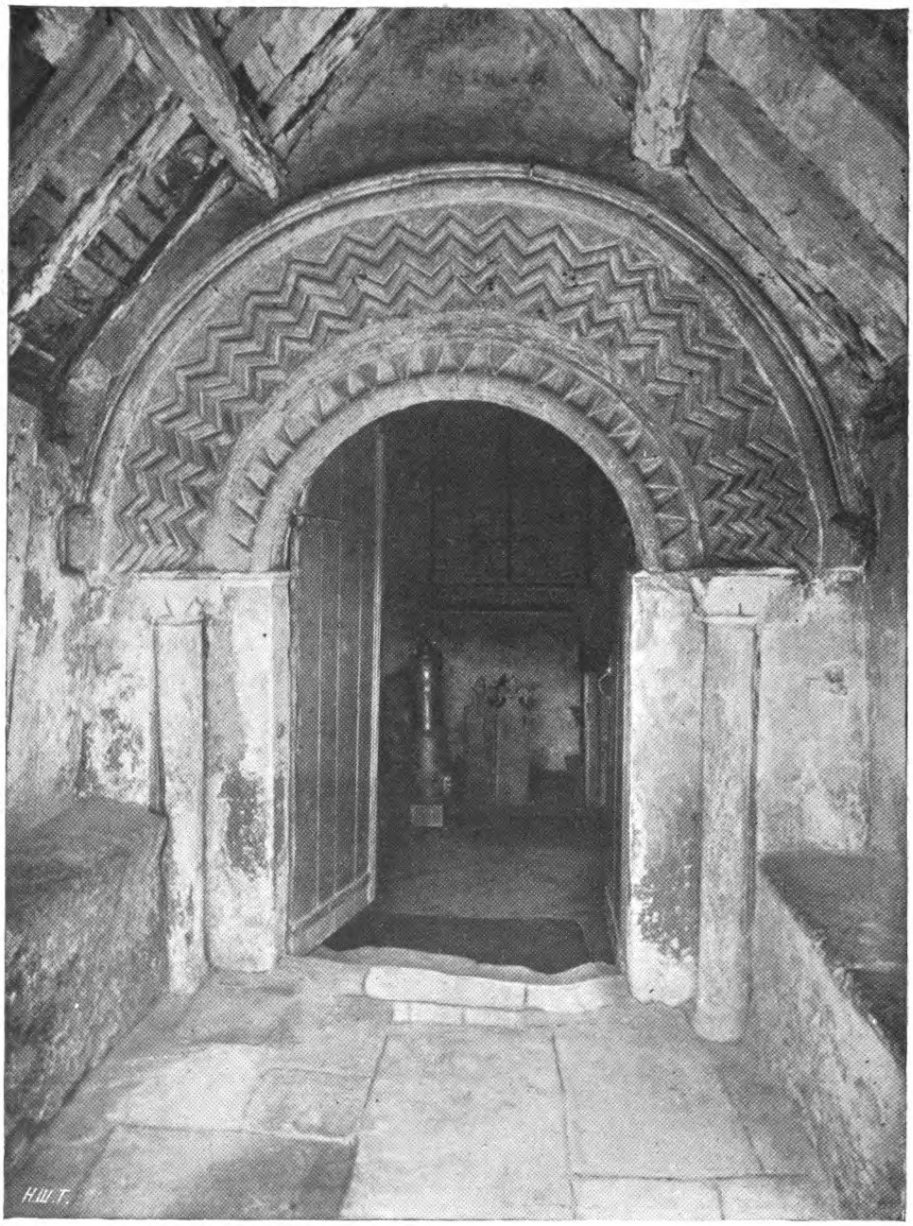
Here was the scene of the "Hinksey Diggings," as it was irreverently termed, of Ruskin's pupils and followers, who, taking their cue from their mentor, philosopher, and friend, that one of the right things to do was the making and beautifying of the roads of villages, gathered here in 1874, under the direction of the artist's gardener, and with picks and spades, planks and wheelbarrows, dug, moiled, toiled, levelled and straightened, doing their best to add to the utility and picturesqueness of this pretty spot; to the great amusement of many of their fellow students and friends, who used to visit the place and look on. While the hobby lasted, those who took it up were very enthusiastic; but the enthusiasm soon expended itself, the work was given up, and the road through the Green soon became grass-covered and rutty again; nature once more resumed her sway. The surveyor sent by the owner is said to have reported "The young men have done no mischief to speak of"; and so it ended.

Near this spot were formerly the remains of a ruined mansion reputed to be haunted, and an ancient tree traditionally called the Witches' Elm, both of which have now disappeared. Passing "The Fishes" Inn we reach the Church of St. Lawrence.

It is not often that the two Churches in twin Villages are dedicated to the same Saint, as this and the one at South Hinksey are. St. Lawrence's at North Hinksey stands on a little grassy knoll at the north-western end of the village. It is a charmingly picturesque edifice, containing Chancel, Nave in two sections, and western Tower; while standing out in front is the 14th Century Cross. The Chancel is said to have been re-built or much altered by the family of the Fynmores, whose tombs are on its walls, about the beginning of the 17th Century, or earlier. Close beneath the small 14th Century window seen behind the Cross is a small Leper window (blocked up) of a very early date; its mouldings are of early Norman character; there are few, if any, so early in English Churches, and this one has been sometimes regarded as a stray window from the east part of the Chancel. Then notice the small and lower part of the Nave, which is peculiar; but this may have been caused by the construction in early days of a centre shingled Tower, between the Nave and a former Apse, or Chancel, as in other Norman Churches in the neighbourhood, which, having given way, was removed, and the Nave lengthened in this rough-and-ready way instead of rebuilding the Tower. The three-light triangular-headed window has its fellow at Cumnor; the Nave walls are Norman, but the Tower is 14th Century; a blocked Norman door can be traced on the North side of the Nave, and a small Priest's door in the North Chancel wall, also blocked. The projection there contained the rood-loft stairs, of which a step or two remain.

Beneath the rough-looking Porch is a fine Norman Doorway, having dripstone heads outside, of early character and

North Hinksey Church from the Road.



S. door of North Hinksey Church.

very quaint, then five rows of zig-zag ornament, inside them a row of beak heads, and then an inner roll-moulding; the cushion caps and shafts by the side are nearly plain, but there are remnants of the red colouring with which they were covered. Notice how the Churchyard has risen since it was made, all the way into the Church is down; this was not so when the Church was built, but is often seen in early Churches.

The interior of the Nave is plain, the Chancel Arch is a restoration, and the architect has designed some curious birds, with outstretched wings and beaks, to replace what were no doubt the original beak-heads; of the two small side Arches only one is said to be original, and this even is doubtful; still they are more in keeping with Norman work than the centre one. This style of Chancel Arch is not uncommon in Sussex. The large square pews have been removed.

In the South wall by the Pulpit are two aumbries, open; while behind the Pulpit is a double Piscina, or Credence-table and Piscina; the round top of the moulding of the upper Arch is ornamented with early ball-flowers, the bottom Arch is quite plain. It is just possible to make them out. There is a stone standing near the Tower Arch which may be the socket-stone of a Cross. There are two or three tombs, one of which having the inscription beginning: "Reader, look at thy feet, honest and loyal men are sleeping under them," is to William Finmore (fellow of St. John's), "who in the yeare of our Lord 1646, when Loyalty and the Church fainted, lay down and died. Go, Reader, and prepare to follow." Another is the tomb of Thomas Willis, who died in the Royal cause at the siege of Oxford, August, 1643.

At the farm near the Church is one of the ancient Monk's Barns of Abingdon Abbey, picturesquely thatched in the old style; with thatched cow-cribs in the yard below, while on the hill above are a couple of new houses, built in red and white, very comfortable to live in possibly, but incongruous in their charming rural surroundings.

There are three ways back to Oxford: tired folk will go back to "The Fishes" Inn and cross the Ferry and proceed along the ancient causeway until Botley Road is reached, or a way further round is to take the path through the Churchyard, past the School and through the Glebe Fields, which is very pleasant in Summer, and leads to Botley. Some quarter of a mile on, just before reaching Botley, in the hollow-way will be found the remnants of a fair-sized house, now divided into cottages, close to which is the base of a cross by the side of the road. Enter the farm gate by the cross, and turn short round to the cottage; in the upper room is a fine ornamental ceiling, with pendant grapes ornament, as well as a fireplace with a moulded mantelpiece and remains of pargetting above; most probably of Henry VII. period. The cottagers will not refuse your request to see them, but acknowledgment should be made for the trouble given. Botley Village has not much of note; its old Mill below the first bridge is picturesque on the side away from the bridge, and there is a very old record of it. From here the Botley Road extends to Oxford.

A further return route lies between the two already mentioned and is approached across the stone bridge immediately opposite the Church.

Site of old Mansion.

Near North Hinksey.

A Village Street.

Cottage at Hinksey.

The late Col. E. W. Harcourt, of Nuneham, began to lay out some of his property at North Hinksey as a building estate, and to make it easily accessible he made this road and carried it over the streams by two or three bridges. It is still available for pedestrians and leads into the Botley Road not far from the Railway Stations.

ROUTE 2.

South Hinksey, Chilswell, Arnold's Tree, Boar's Hill and 'The Fox,' back by road. Follow Route 1 as far as South Hinksey, but at the western end of the village, instead of taking the turn which leads to North Hinksey, follow the little stream which is here met with and walk up the Valley by the field-road path. This is rather rough at starting, but grows a little smoother as the hill is breasted, and at the top along the greensward is pleasant and easy walking. Looking back from this point the visitor will notice a fine distant view across the Thames Valley to the hills on the East side of the City, further on there is a pretty vista down the 'Happy Valley' past the wood. Here, on the hill, is a favourite rendezvous on Good Friday (a day on which it is more generally fine than wet round Oxford) and this seems to be a remnant of a long-standing custom of centuries ago, when a Calvary was said to have been set up there. The valley and wood is said to resemble that at Waterloo, but on a smaller scale.

At the end of the greensward the path descends to the little streamlet, but straight on in the distance Arnold's Tree crowns the brow of the Hill. The path winds along the

Valley by the stream, and soon reaches Chilswell Farm, the well being said by some to be marked by the old Pollard Elm, which has seen its best days, by the fence of the farmyard; but other data places it eastward from the farm.

Hearne the antiquarian, from an old chronicle, has left this: "In the year of our Lord 821, there was a terrible battle between Egbert the King of the West Saxons and Ceolwulf King of the Mercians, between Abingdon and Oxford, at a place called Cherrunhul, Egbert being the victor. There is no place answering to this except Chilswell Farm, at the west end of a great field commonly called Hinksey field on the west side of Foxcombe Hill, which from some remains of military works thereabouts and from the name I take to be the place noted in the fragment. At this place, which was formerly part of Bagley Wood, was once a small Abbey, as I learn, built by one of the nobles of Cissa King of the *South* Saxons, but afterwards translated to Seukesham." The Abbey has now entirely disappeared.

Beyond Chilswell Farm the path rises, and across a large field Arnold's Tree again comes into view. Arnold thus describes the scene:—

> "Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth farm,
> Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns,
> The signal elm that looks on Ilsley Downs,
> The vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames."
>
> . . . . . "See
> Backed by the sunset which doth glorify
> The orange and pale violet evening sky,
> Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! The Tree!"

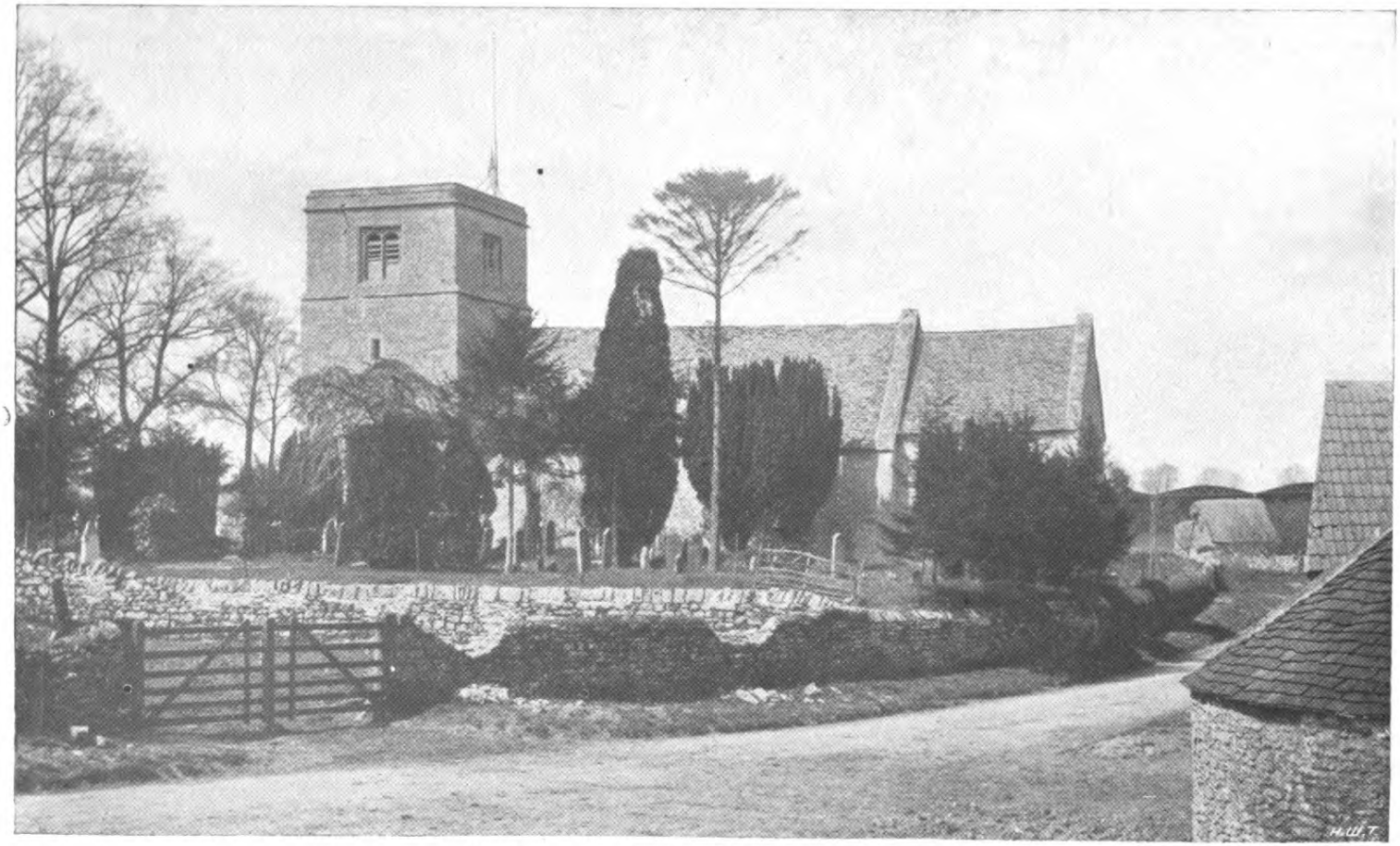
The 'track' leads straight up the big field over ridge and furrow, the latter somewhat moist at times. As the hill is breasted 'the Tree' is partly hidden, but at the top, those who wish to approach it can easily do so by making a short detour to the left before passing out of the meadow.

Arnold's Tree is an Oak and not an Elm, but it has always been trimmed in the fashion which Elms often are, and at a short distance few could tell the difference. It is generally termed 'The Umbrella Tree,' and is seen from many parts of the Cowley Road, Headington Hill, and the higher ground on the East side of Oxford. Once noticed it will not be easily forgotten. There are charming views from its vicinity both to the east and north over the Thames Valley, while westward lies the Vale of White Horse, and beyond the valley of the Berkshire Hills with Ilsley Downs stretch many a mile along the horizon.

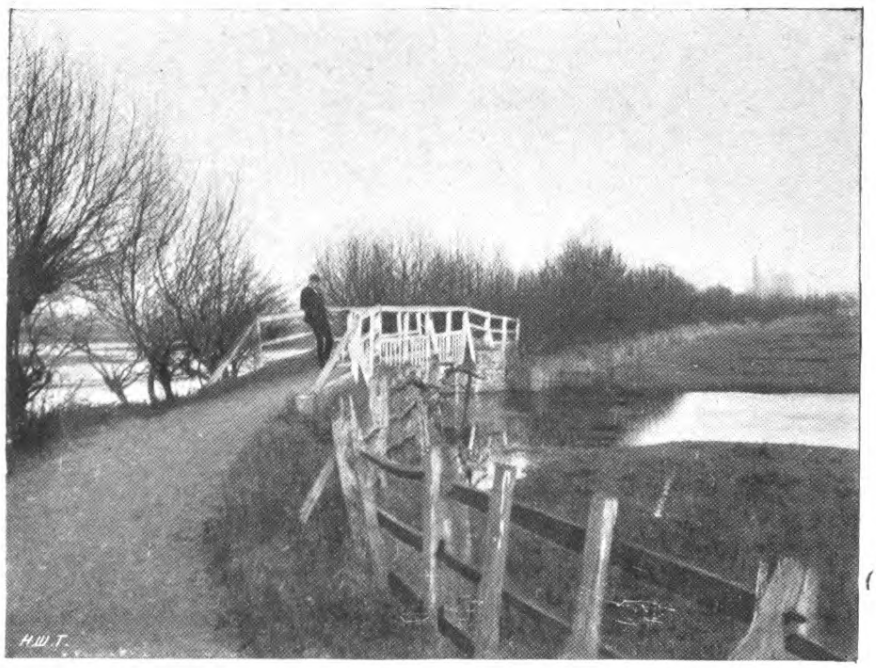
On Wootton Heath or 'Boar's Hill Heath," as it is now termed, to the South of 'the Tree,' a number of modern villas, with a large mansion, have sprung up of late years, where in Arnold's time not a sign of life would be seen. Eventually, perhaps, its destiny will be to stand on some lawn adjacent to a Villa residence, whence in years to come, its legend forgotten, it will be removed because it casts some shadow over the house which has usurped its vicinity.

This hill, with its capping of iron sand, is one of the outliers springing up above the Thames Valley, and a short distance along the side of the path beyond 'The Tree' is a shallow Quarry from which iron sand has been dug. It is owing to this capping that the hill has retained its height, the

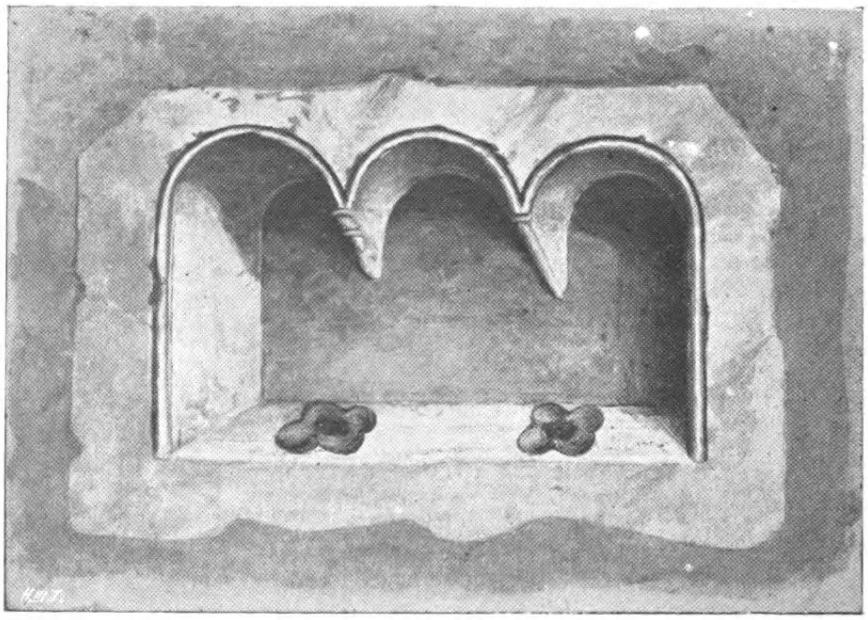
sand having resisted the denudation by watery agency which is everywhere traceable over all the district, and to which we owe the many pretty valleys we are traversing, which open to the Thames. The path onwards after a short distance drops down into one of these denundations, which is sometimes called 'The Devil's Dyke,' and then up again as sharply as it went down. It soon reaches the road from Picket's Heath farm, and here are *three* routes which can be taken. The road south goes to join the Boar's Hill road to Oxford, the other way it goes by Picket's Heath farm, then through Hen Wood, and by the field way to North Hinksey (reversing ROUTE 4)—a very pretty ramble with a whole series of bird's-eye views of Oxford: but the path we have followed turns at an angle to the right, to the old village of Boar's Hill. This, a conglomeration of old and newer cottages, has but little interest, but when the letter box is reached, about half way down the village, to the left, over the stile, a path through the edge of the spinney and along the oak palings leads across to the Foxcombe Hill road, close above the Fox Tavern. Down the valley on a clear day the view is extended, the eye travels over the trees and fields and woodlands which make up the Vale of White Horse, to the long range of the Berkshire Hills closing in the horizon, until at the extreme distance the White Horse Hill and the clump called Faringdon Folly can be made out. There are few vistas more charming than this anywhere near Oxford, and in the rich colouring of a summer evening it gives the very rendering of a peaceful English landscape, or, when autumn is spreading its gold over the fields, a glorious glimpse of prosperity.



St. Lawrence's Church, South Hinksey.



The Path to South Hinksey.



Piscina, South Hinksey Church.

Close by the end of the path on the side of the road, stands the 'Fox' Tavern, a place for teas and pleasure parties from Oxford and Abingdon, which has been in existence from the 17th Century.

On the opposite side of the road at the 'Fox' is a picturesque brick yard, and down in the Valley before the cross roads are reached are the Abingdon Water Works. From the 'Fox' towards Oxford the road still rises and from a point a little further on there is a regular service of Motor-buses into the City. Here the damp and depression often found by residents in the Thames Valley can be easily and profitably lost, and houses are springing up where a few years ago not a sign of one could be seen.

This is still more the case farther on, where on both sides of the road, by the old Brick Kilns, quite a village has grown up. When Bagley Wood is reached this ends, the old forest still stretching to the road in places, while half a mile farther on is the old handing post at the turn of the main road to Abingdon and Oxford, into which our road runs. Another quarter of a mile down the hill, the field path to South Hinksey and Jacob's Ladder turns out over the stile to the left; from here is one of the distant views of Oxford, but a mass of the middle distance within the last fifty years has been filled up with the new houses and streets of the Grandpont and New Hinksey districts. The road continues down the hill, over the railway, then through the hamlet of Cold Harbour which is just one mile from the City.

ROUTE. 3.

Sunningwell, Bayworth, Kennington, Iffley. If walking, Route 1 can be followed to South Hinksey Church, then either the road or the path athwart the field can be taken, crossing the little spring and up the hill, and through the one field to the stile on the Abingdon Road. A fine view of Oxford is seen from this point, but it is not equal in beauty to what it was years ago, before the modern houses were erected.

An alternate route from Oxford to this point, convenient to those driving or cycling, is to keep to the Abingdon Road past Cold Harbour (whether the name of a farm on the old Roman trackway is not certain.) There is little doubt this road follows the track of the Roman Portway, which, entering Oxford from the north by the Banbury Road, crossed the Town and then the Ox-ford at or near where Folly Bridge now stands, which gave the City its name. The road crosses Hinksey stream after the turn, close to the Railway bridge, then mounts the hill, and soon arrives at the stile from which is the view of the City. Both routes now join the road, continuing up the hill past new residences, which are extending themselves along this road, and at the end of another four hundred yards the old handing-post is reached. Here the main road turns to the left through Bagley Wood; take the one straight on.

Over the gate on the right hand will be seen the end of the valley in which is Jenny Bunting's parlour, with the Chilswell and Hinksey hills beyond; a farm road a little farther on leads to Chilswell, but the prettiest way to this is the field walk, Route 2. The road is still bordered by Bagley

In the Arnold Country.

The Porch, Sunningwell Church.

Wood until the old Brick Kilns are reached. Beyond are fields again, to the left the road to Bayworth and Sunningwell turns off, while beyond the golf course to the right Arnold's Tree is seen on the rising ground on the other side of the depression and the wood.

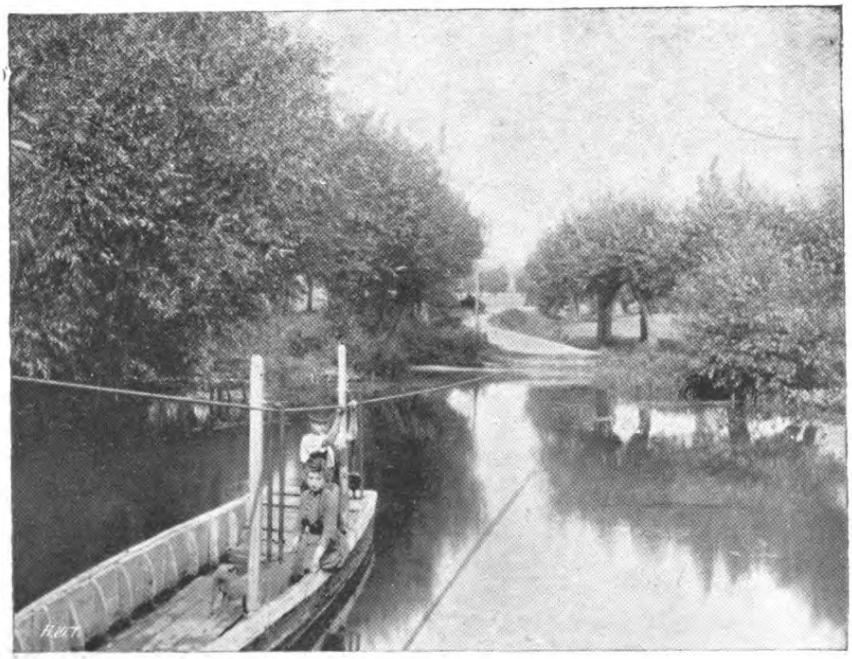
The pathway to Sunningwell opens opposite the 'Fox,' just above the brickyard, and leads over the hill. Beyond the brickyard take the straight onward path (the left-hand one goes to Bayworth), then, down the hill, the square tower of Sunningwell Church will be seen among the trees, and the little village is soon reached. There are some pretty cottages by the pond, and a larger house or two; but the most interesting feature of all is the graceful Church with its heptagonal porch at the west end, the finest view of which is by the blacksmith's shop.

Sunningwell seems to be first mentioned as Sunnigwellan in the Abingdon Abbey Chronicle, in the Charter of King Kenwulf, of 811, and again in his Charter of 821, when it is called Suniggawelle; in both the name is the same as it now bears. With several other places it was given by Kenwulf at this early date to Abingdon Abbey, and continued in their possession until the dissolution of the Abbey in 1538; a period of some seven centuries in all. But it is little mentioned in the Chronicles. It was remote from the town and buried in the quietness of the country; only when Edward III, in 1327, gave special protection to Abingdon Abbey, after the riots, in which much damage was done, Sunningwell was included in the places mentioned. Sunningwell derives its name from the well (or pond) opposite the Church, formed by the springs of

the little river Stert, which rises at Bayworth a short distance up the Valley. In olden times it was the custom on a certain day of the year for a Church procession to be held, when a Gospel was read and the wells and springs were blessed; this continued at Sunningwell as late as 1688, one of the latest places of which we have any record. The Church has Nave, Chancel, and South Transept, the base of the Tower on the north side forming the other Transept. The walls are partly E.E., the Chancel and East Window are early Decorated, the Transepts, the Tower and Nave, with the other windows, Perpendicular. The Porch is a unique gem of Elizabethan work, with Gothic door and windows, but having a series of Ionic columns at each angle. It is generally said to be octagonal, but this is not the case; it has only seven sides, and probably is the only heptagonal Porch in England. It has lately been stayed with beams fastened together on the inside, and with iron bands on the exterior, to save it from giving way, as it threatened to do. It is attributed to Bishop Jewel (1522-1571), who was Curate here, but whether after he was Bishop of Salisbury is not known with certainty.

The interior of the Church is interesting. The Nave has an open roof with heavy supported cross beams, the Chancel Arch is plain, but among other charms are the beautiful and well-preserved poppy heads which grace each seat. In the Chancel is a Piscina with a Credence close by, and the two are connected by a little side Arch in the parting. The fine Communion table, with massive carved legs, was given by Bishop Jewel. In the Chancel is the grave of Samuel Fell, Dean of Christ Church, who is said to have died of grief on

The 'Fox,' Foxcombe Hill. (Page 41).



A Thames Ferry.

The Causeway to North Hinksey.

hearing of the execution of Charles I., Feb. 2, 1649. There is also a monument to Hannibal Baskerville, Lord of the Manor of Bayworth, 1688. The Tower is battlemented, with pinnacles at each corner, and appears to stand clear of the Church, but the lower part of it forms the North Transept or Chapel.

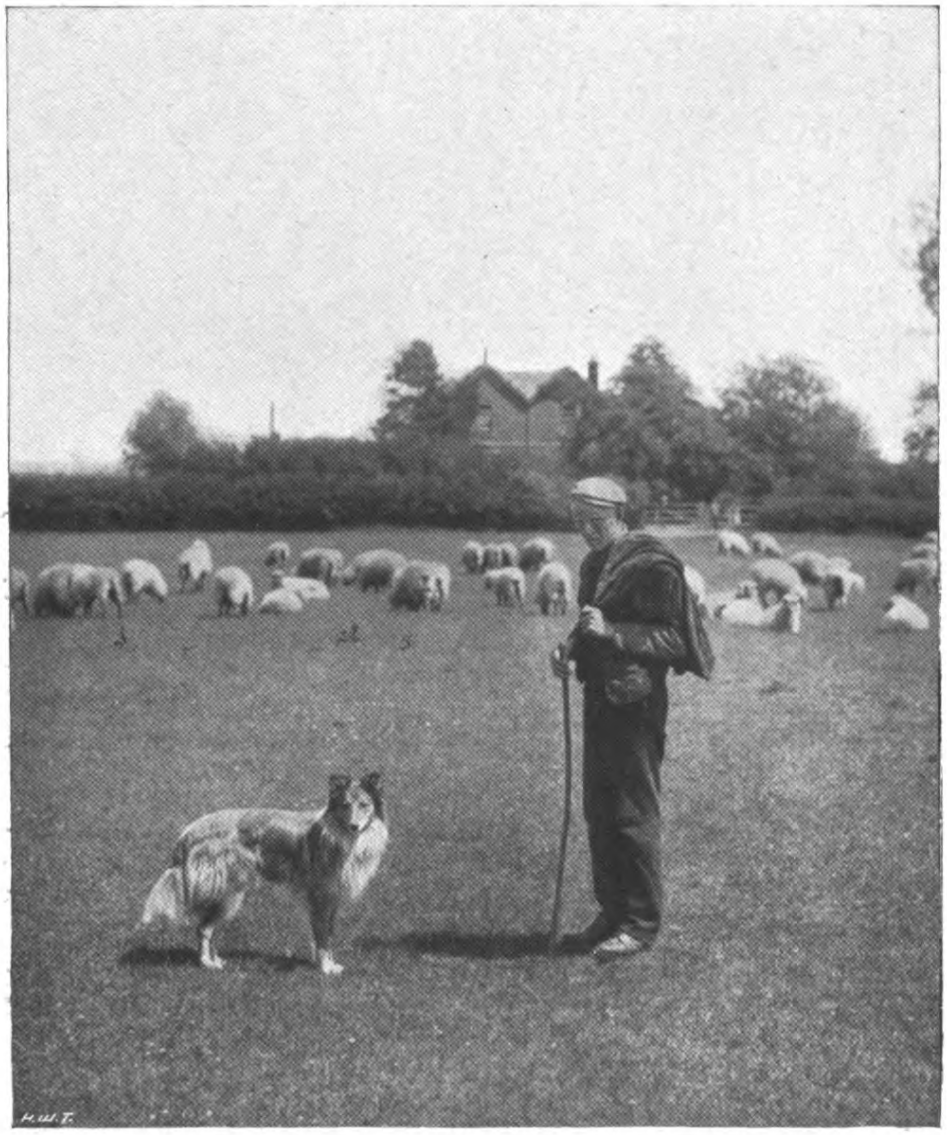
From Sunningwell take the road eastward which leads to Bayworth and Oxford. A pretty half-timbered house stands on the right when leaving the village; its weather-vane has on one side an open hand, at the other end of the rod being a small plume of Feathers. It is a pleasant tree-shaded road to Bayworth, by its side runs the rippling Stert, here very small. This stream is supposed to have its rise in the miraculous spring, and after leaving Sunningwell it makes its way to Abingdon, and there passes beneath the 'Stert Street,' and under St. Nicholas' Church, through a long series of arches into the Thames.

At Bayworth leave the road, and crossing the stile take the path across the fields to Bagley Wood, by the pretty group of cottages at the turn. A few yards brings us to the site of some large building or buildings, the mounds only of which remain; this tradition accepts as the original site of the Abbey of Abingdon. It covers a large rectangular space, and round it was possibly a moat, which would be fed from the spring. Tradition says that the name of Abingdon was derived from Abba or Aben, a noble Briton who, escaping from the massacre of Hengest at Stonehenge, concealed himself in the wood here, living upon herbs and roots. But having no water, as the result of his prayers a spring, which still runs, miraculously

burst forth from the ground, when many people, hearing of his sanctity, came to him for counsel and became his followers. A Chapel was built, and in memory of him the place was called Abendune or hill of Aben. Here was begun the building of the Abbey, but the legend, perhaps too frequent to be accepted, runs that the buildings put up one day fell down the next, and that Heane, the founder, being perplexed, sought advice from a hermit who lived at 'Borshill,' near by, who told him the place was not pleasing to God, but that in a vision he had been shown that the Abbey was to stand at the other end of the little stream that rose there, where it was lost in the big river. This led Heane to the site afterwards occupied by the abbey at Abingdon; where, when the buildings were begun, they grew so fast as to lead to the idea of their being raised by miracle.

The walk continues across the meadows, leaving the farm to the right and crossing the little spinney, the Abingdon road is reached, just beyond the third milestone from Oxford. When through the spinney cross the main road and take the side road through the wood, which leads to Kennington. This road is very pleasant in summer time, particularly in the evenings when the nightingales are singing, and Bagley wood has been noted for its nightingales for many a long year. The hamlet of Little London is next reached, with new houses, and then the old village of Kennington, mentioned as early as 956, when Edwig gave it to his faithful Priest Byrthelm.

The Church, built in 1828, is modern Norman, and without interest; the one before it fell down. A few remains of an ancient Church or Chapel are contained in the rockery of the



'Here with the Shepherds and the silly sheep'

'Roses that down the Alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices.'

large farm-house, whose Jacobean archway can be seen from the road. They are of the Decorated period, probably the work of some Abbot of Abingdon whose taste in architecture was above the common run. In the same house is also a room with a good Tudor ceiling, the beams having an ornament in plaster-work of pomegranates, the badge of Catherine of Aragon. The road through the village leads to Oxford, but at the 'Tandem' leave it and cross the railway bridge which goes over the G.W.R. to the river close by Rose Island; well known for its little Inn, a pleasant rendezvous for picnics. The reach here is a favourite sailing ground. At the top of the reach the Thame branch of the G.W.R. crosses the river, and two or three fields above is Iffley Lock. But these fields have their mede of interest, for they are the home of the Fritillaries, one of the flowers noted by Arnold.

"I know what white, what purple fritillaries,
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Eynsham, down by Sandford yields."

A few years ago they grew in thousands here; so thick were they that their numbers formed beds of bright colour in the meadows, but since wild flowers became fashionable, they have been ruthlessly torn up, even before the buds are fairly opened, by men who make a market of their beauty in the Oxford streets.

From Iffley Lock there are two ways into Oxford, by the towing path past the scene of the May races on the river, or over the Lock and Mill-bridge into the village, and thence by road to Magdalen Bridge. Motor-buses run from Iffley into the City.

ROUTE 4.

To North Hinksey, past the Church on the right, and the Conduit House on the left; up the hills to Cumnor Hurst and Chawley, and home by Botley, or through the woods to join No. 2 Route at Boar's Hill.

Proceeding past the G.W.R. Station, take the turn to the left after the second bridge ("Ferry Hinksey Road"). A short distance further a turn to the right over a small bridge leads directly to North Hinksey Church (described in Route 1). By the side of the Churchyard a road winds up to the hill through a prettily wooded park recently presented to the City of Oxford. By the top house there is a way which leads to the Conduit House, formed by Otho Nicholson, in 1610, to supply Oxford with pure water. This building covers the collecting tank into which the water flowed from the hills above, from whence it was conveyed in pipes to the Carfax structure in Oxford, and then distributed to the various Colleges and private houses; following therein the wisdom shown by the monks of Osney hundreds of years previously, which Abbey this spring supplied with water.

The road up the hill ends at the old stonepit, the probable source of the stones in Hinksey causeway, and from the top one of the most charming of all views of the University City is seen.

'Lovely at all times she lies.'

sings Arnold; but it requires the afternoon light with a fairly clear atmosphere to view this lovely scene to the best advantage.

By the near trees the City is divided into three parts, the centre picture containing the older City with its towers and spires, beautifully grouped against the background of hills, which seen from this height rise sufficiently to overtop even St. Mary's spire.

In the second picture Shotover Hill rises prominently over the part of the City to the right which is formed by the new town on the Cowley side of Magdalen Bridge.

The third picture to the left of the grouping of trees on the hill, is formed by North Oxford, a mass of brick-built houses with lower hills behind. Trees are everywhere, on the hill, in the valley, intermingled with the houses and overtopping them; and the greenery helps to relieve the garish colour of the brick houses.

The path continues to mount the hill, which here is 200 feet above the river, but the Hurst hill beyond is again 140 feet above where we are standing, reaching at its summit the height of 520 feet. From every point in the ascent the views of Oxford are worth attention, and one of the most charming of them all is from close below the summit of Cumnor Hurst itself. It is these charming peeps of Oxford that make this walk so attractive.

When the field in front of the Hurst Hill is reached the way divides, going to left and right, the first again dividing, the field road by the hedge going to Chilswell farm; but the prettier walk is the path through part of Hen Wood, across the field. Those going to the Hurst will take the right hand turn. Hen Wood is supposed to derive its name from Heane the founder of Abingdon Abbey.

The road through Hen Wood leads to Boar's Hill; it is, like all wooded roads, very broken and rough, but yet charming; the birds are singing in the trees, and in the summer the fir trees form a contrast to the nut bushes and beeches, the bracken ferns here in their season are glorious, and remind one of the New Forest with their 'uncrumpling' fronds.

At the bend of the road, beyond Picket's Heath farm, turn to the left (the road straight on leads to Wootton); in a short distance the village of Boar's Hill is reached where the path from Chilswell crosses; this, or the path across to the 'Fox,' or the road across Boar's Hill Heath, can be taken as the way back to Oxford. At Picket's Heath farm we reach the highest ground in all these 'Rambles'; here the hill is 535 feet above the sea, actually 15 feet above Cumnor Hurst.

If the other way is taken, Cumnor Hurst is across the field; an irregular path leads up to the clump through the furze. The Hurst itself has several Fir trees and one Elm, with its summit enclosed in a wire fence. At one time there were nine Firs, but two have blown down. There are very extensive views all round; to the east is a distant view of Oxford, framed in the higher ground of the hills on either side, as already noticed. To the south is the wood and hill forming Hen Wood, with the valley beyond stretching along for many miles until closed by the line of the Berkshire Hills. To the west the village of Cumnor peeps out amid the trees, half hidden in their luxuriance; the tower of the Church can just be made out and that is all. Then beyond is the Thames valley with 'the three lone weirs' and the higher ground behind it.

The field road this way leads to Chawley, and with a bend or two past the cottages the Cumnor-Oxford road is reached. This can be traversed down the long curving hill returning, the distance to Oxford being about 2½ miles; or the journey can be extended to Cumnor, as in Route No. 5.

ROUTE 5.

WALK to Cumnor, then by the fields to Bablock Hythe, and back home through fields to Dean Court. Motor-bus services run to the foot of Cumnor Hill, and less frequently, to Cumnor village.

Take the road to Botley, and follow it round until the parting of the ways half a mile beyond, then follow the road up the hill (the lower road leads to Eynsham). When about half-way up the hill, pause and look over the valley. To the right it is closed in by Beacon Hill just above Eynsham Bridge, and from here the camp thrown up on the hill itself is plainly visible. It is uncertain where the battle which was fought by Cealwyn and Cuthwulf against the British tribes about 571 took place, but this was doubtless one of the "strongest garrisons" taken from them. Here also is the place to note the curious geological feature of the valley below which in all probability was the early course of the Thames, when it was a larger river than now; or when the land of England was sunk, so that a tidal sea made its way between the hill on which we are standing and the Wytham Hills beyond. By what means or when the river altered from this to its present course is not

known; but the curious features remain and are interesting. The valley is very lovely; we shall traverse it on the way back.

The hill rises until Chawley is reached, on the right is Cumnor Hurst (see route 4), dug into considerably by the brick-fields, which are extensive. At the turn the right-hand road leads to Cumnor, and when the village is reached the first object of interest is the Church, which presents itself as a Decorated Chancel and North Aisle, with a Perpendicular Clerestory to the Nave, but a Trans. Norman or very Early English Tower at the west end. It stands on a rising mound above the road, and its details are perhaps better made out by a walk round it before going inside. The path leads by the North Aisle, which has two-light Decorated windows, and passing round Eastward the Chancel walls are probably E.E.; a Lancet window will be noted on the north side near the Nave, with a Priests' door near but blocked up.

The East Window is Decorated and has three lights, with hood-mould, and there are two other Decorated windows inserted in the South wall of the Chancel. The South Chapel or Transept is also Decorated, and in its West wall is a window with triangular head, corresponding to that at North Hinksey. In the Nave close by on the outside are the remains of a Decorated Corbel-table with masks, above being the Perpendicular Clerestory. The West door of the Tower is round headed, yet has side shafts and stiff-leaved carving on its caps; the window above has a pointed arch. The Tower is of three stories, with later battlements and corner buttresses.

The interior is very interesting, it has an early arch to the Chancel, supported on two fine Corbels with E. E. foliage, the Nave arcade being of three arches, one pier round, the others octagonal, while the Tower Arch is a large and fine example of late Transitional, with E. E. mouldings, but fluted Norman caps to the shafts; the winding stair to the Tower is worth notice. The roof is plain, supported on corbels, while in the Chancel are some good stalls with fine Poppy Heads; two in particular are worth close examination, one having the emblem of the Crucifixion and another a figure in Armour on a dragon, St. Michael or St. George. There is also a fine Elizabethan monument to Anthony Foster, his wife and children, which does not give him the sad character that Sir Walter Scott does in "Kenilworth," but speaks of him as a worthy and clever man.

The Pulpit and reading pew are of Oak. Close by, in the South Chapel, is an old chained Bible, dated 1611, now preserved in a glass case; there is also in the East wall of this chapel a fine Decorated Piscina, and two bracket heads for lights, while filling the south end are two fine sepulchral recesses with Decorated canopies, and stone tombs, said to have been those of Abbots of Abingdon.

By the Chancel is the monument to Sir Wm. Hunter, the Historian of India, and at the West end of the North Aisle is a statue of Queen Elizabeth, rescued and restored by the late Rev. S. N. Y. Griffith, for some years Vicar of Cumnor. This statue used to stand in the *pleasantrie* at Medley, when the house was kept as a Manor, but the statue afterwards found its way to Wytham, where it was neglected until placed here.

The old Vicar also collected the dates, &c. of the Church which will be found at the end of the Aisle, with one or two scenes in connection with the Place.

Cumnor (the brow of Cumen) was given to the Abbey of Abingdon at a very early date. It formed part of the immense estate granted by Ceadwalla, and confirmed by more than one later monarch; eventually it formed the Abbot's own demesne or private estate, and was used as his country seat until the dissolution; when it passed to George Owen, the King's physician. Practically its history is in the earlier chapter, with Hinksey.

Close by the Church on the west was Cumnor Place, the site of which is still marked by a mound. The romantic story of Amy Robsart and the Earl of Leicester, told by Sir Walter Scott in "Kenilworth," has sent many a visitor to this spot. But Sir Walter's story, although deeply interesting, must not be taken for the real history of the accident, and the narrative is entirely wrong in point of date and in many details. Our picture of the Place gives an idea of its appearance. It was built, in the form of a quadrangle of about seventy feet in length by fifty in breadth, of Gothic work of the 14th Century; and had a private Chapel contained within its walls. The principal entrance was under an archway on the north side, of it, and the long gallery so often mentioned extended the whole length of that side of the building. At the west end of the gallery was the flight of stone steps down which the unfortunate Amy fell.

There are two or three views of the building extant, this one of Whittock's, dating 1819, being perhaps the best, but

they all practically agree. The remains were eventually taken down and the stones removed to Wytham, where they were used by Lord Abingdon to re-build the Church about 1811.

Down the village, beyond the Pond, was the old Inn mentioned in "Kenilworth," 'The Bonny Black Bear,' pulled down 1847. It stood nearer the Church than the present tavern, which has been rebuilt.

The road which runs by the Inn leads on to Eaton and Bablock Hythe, the latter one of the spots mentioned by Arnold in his "Scholar-Gipsy," but to those who "Ramble" there is a much prettier way to the old Ferry. Go back a short distance to the turn and take the other road which goes on down the hill to Eynsham, then at the tree, a short distance on, take the turn to the left, and follow the road until it turns again into a lane at the end; pass down the lane to the Long Leys as it is called, which is the bridle way to the Ferry, Before reaching the Leys, at a corner is a charming view of the valley, with Eynsham Hall amid the trees on the further rise, and the Thames meandering through the fields below the higher ground on which we stand.

This lane is rough, but just rideable to a cyclist; after wet weather the Leys are only just passable, even to a pedestrian, although a harder path extends down the centre. In summer the way is a pleasant one, the springing turf on either side is very dainty to the feet, and at the bottom along the spinney there is such a variety of wild flowers as is scarcely ever found together. When the bottom of the Leys is reached, in the corner shaded by the trees is the 'Physic well,' a pretty spot, the history of which is uncertain. Right through the

spinney the path runs; once through the bottom gate, we are in the Hythe Lane, and quickly at Bablock Hythe Ferry and the 'Stripling Thames.' The name 'Hythe' would seem to indicate the existence of this Ferry-wharf as far back as Saxon times. It would certainly seem to have been a river crossing for many a long year, and now it is the last of the old Ferries on the main river. The big Ferry boat is still used for crossing, and takes wagons and horses or carts, as well as foot passengers; it is guided by a chain stretched from bank to bank, on which the ferryman pulls to get it across the stream. The Thames here runs between low banks and rich meadows, in places shaded by aspen trees, and although the place is no more than five miles from Oxford through Cumnor by road, it is no less than a dozen miles from the same City as the stream runs. The river flowers noticed by Arnold may all be found in the water meadows here, together with the great white Water Lilies, which he does not mention.

Back to Cumnor again, past the Church and up the road by which we came into it from Oxford; between the last two houses of the village is a stile with a path, this is the field track to Dean Court. There are quiet beauties to notice on the down-hill path, the well-wooded Wytham hills on the other side of the valley forming the background of the picture. The path leads down into the bottom, running first along the side of a copse; then through part of, and by the side of another; along a field and then by another spinney, but ever trending to the bottom of the hill. It is here the 'Cumnor Cowslips' grow, dotting the fields all over with their bright yellow blossoms, while up along the hill by our side are the

telegraph posts, which show the course of the main road we traversed earlier on our way to Cumnor.

The path through these pleasant fields comes to an end at a little bridge which leads on to the Eynsham road at the farm and hamlet, where the milestone records that two miles will take us back to Oxford again.

The name 'Dean Court' is quaint, and seems to be 'a valley manor.' La Dene' is mentioned in *c.* 1550, with Cumnor, Wytham, &c., as part of the personal property of the Abbot of the great Abbey which owned all this district; and the Abbot, no doubt, was as great a personage as the King himself, in the eyes of all the dependents and hinds who tilled the fields. Now the Monastery has passed away, and with it both the Abbot and the Monks, the hinds and the serving-men; the property has seen many a change and many an owner, but the glorious valley fields remain, and form one of the most pleasant walks in the district.

ROUTE 6.

Drive (or cycle) by road via Cumnor Hill and Besselsleigh to the site of the Fyfield Elm, back through Wootton, Boar's Hill and Hinksey Road.

This is our longest route, the distance to Fyfield being about 9 miles, and back some 10 miles. The way is by the Botley Road and Cumnor Hill as in Route 5, but when the turn to Cumnor is reached keep straight along the Faringdon Road. Look back across to Cumnor Hurst between the 3rd

and 4th milestones, the hill here stands up and shows its scarred face where the brick earth has been dug away; beyond it is Wootton, and Foxcombe Hill.

There is nothing noticeable for some distance; the turn to Besselsleigh brings us to the 'Greyhound,' and then shortly the Church is seen behind the quiet Churchyard amid its surrounding trees. It is a picturesque little Perpendicular edifice, with chancel and nave all under one roof, a little bell-cot at the west end with two bells, and it has three two-light Perpendicular windows in the side walls. There is no Chancel arch, but the Chancel is divided from the Nave by a wooden screen of the time of James I. The East and West windows are early Decorated, each of three lights without tracery, but the East window has an elegant inner arch of cinquefoil form; and like the Hinksey Churches it is dedicated to St. Lawrence. The property was held by the Besils, one of whom, Sir Peter Besils, in 1424, bequeathed lands for the maintenance of the bridges and causeway at Abingdon, and up to 1516 the manor belonged to this family, who had held it from Saxon times. It afterwards passed by marriage to the Fettiplaces, a well-known Oxfordshire family, and from them by purchase to the Lenthalls, one of whom was Speaker to the Long Parliament. This family still holds the manor. The house lies back in the park, but has not many attractions.

Keep straight on when the roads diverge; the left one leads to Wantage. Our road soon passes through a pretty wood and then the little village of Tubney with its very few cottages is passed, and the little new Church by the side of the road. From here another mile leads to the spot, at the junc-

tion of the Abingdon Road where the 'Tubney Tree' as the Tubney people called it, or the 'Fyfield Elm' as claimed by Fyfield villagers formerly stood. Years ago it was a grand elm, with massive limbs stretching up on every side, when Arnold wrote of it :—

> "Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
> To dance around the Fyfield Elm in May."

but the storms of winter began to play havoc with it, and a limb or two were torn off, so the great boughs were all cut away to save it from further destruction. Its grand bole remained for some time as a reminder of its former glory but even this has now been removed.

The village is only a short distance on, and the Church is worth a visit. On the night of Oct. 26th, 1893 it was found to be on fire, and in a very short time was utterly destroyed. St. John's College the owners of the living, have restored it. The Chancel is Decorated, the rest of the Church Perpendicular. The North Chapel contains the monument of Sir John Golafre (1442), an alabaster figure in armour lying on an open Altar tomb, ornamented with shields, with a skeleton in a shroud below. The old Manor House, close to the Church dates from the 14th Century ; it has a good porch and two Decorated doorways, the inner door has ball-flower moulding.

Return by the same road as far as Besselsleigh, and at the corner just beyond the 'Greyhound,' take the side road to the right, which leads to the Cumnor-Abingdon Road. Cross this road by the pond at this junction and turn up to Wootton Church, passing the old Manor farm on the way. The little Church dedicated to St. Peter is a small quaint edifice with

Perpendicular Nave and Chancel only, both poor, and a little wooden bell-cote at the western end of the Nave. The Nave walls batter out considerably on the interior, and the Chancel arch is out of shape; some tasteful painted glass, a late memorial, fills the East window, there is a Piscina in the Chancel; the windows are very plain, and the rope from the one bell drops down at the west end of the Church. There are the remains of a low side window in the Chancel wall.

The road winds up the village to the top of the hill, and joins the road which comes from Hen Wood by Picket's Heath farm; here turn to the right, and then join Route 5, or if preferred another road turns out on the right just above Wootton Church, which leads through Boar's Hill village, and joins the same road at the top of that place.

Both these ways eventually lead into the Foxcombe Hill Road, past the new villas and into the Abingdon Road, which runs into Oxford over Folly Bridge.

* * *

Our very pleasant task is ended, and we hope our efforts to describe and furnish the Key to Arnold's Oxford poems will add to the pleasure of many of our readers. To those who love Arnold we would say in his own words,

'Roam on. The light we sought is shining still,
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill side.'