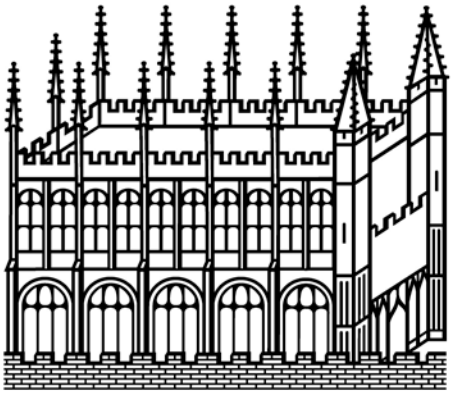

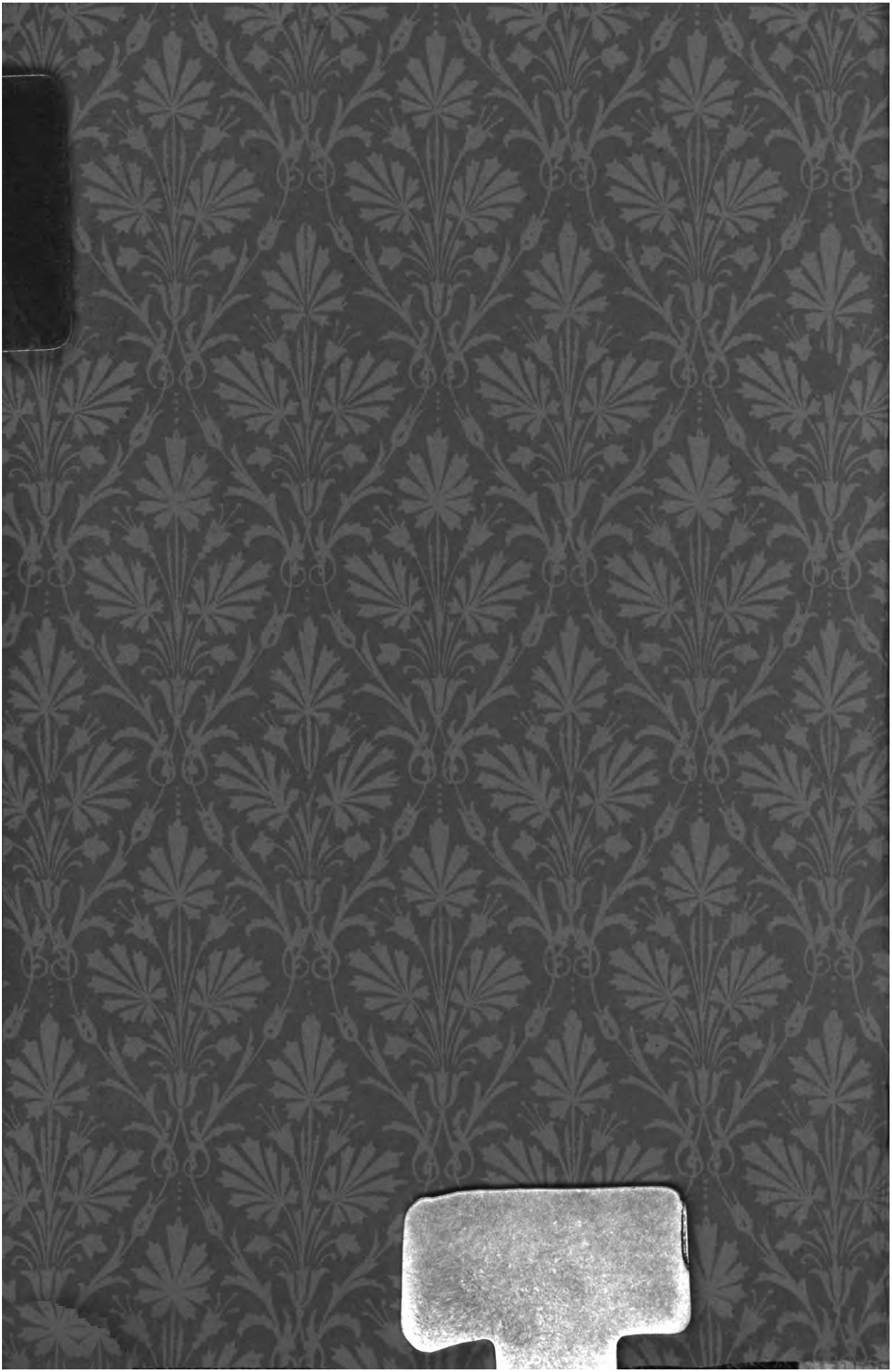

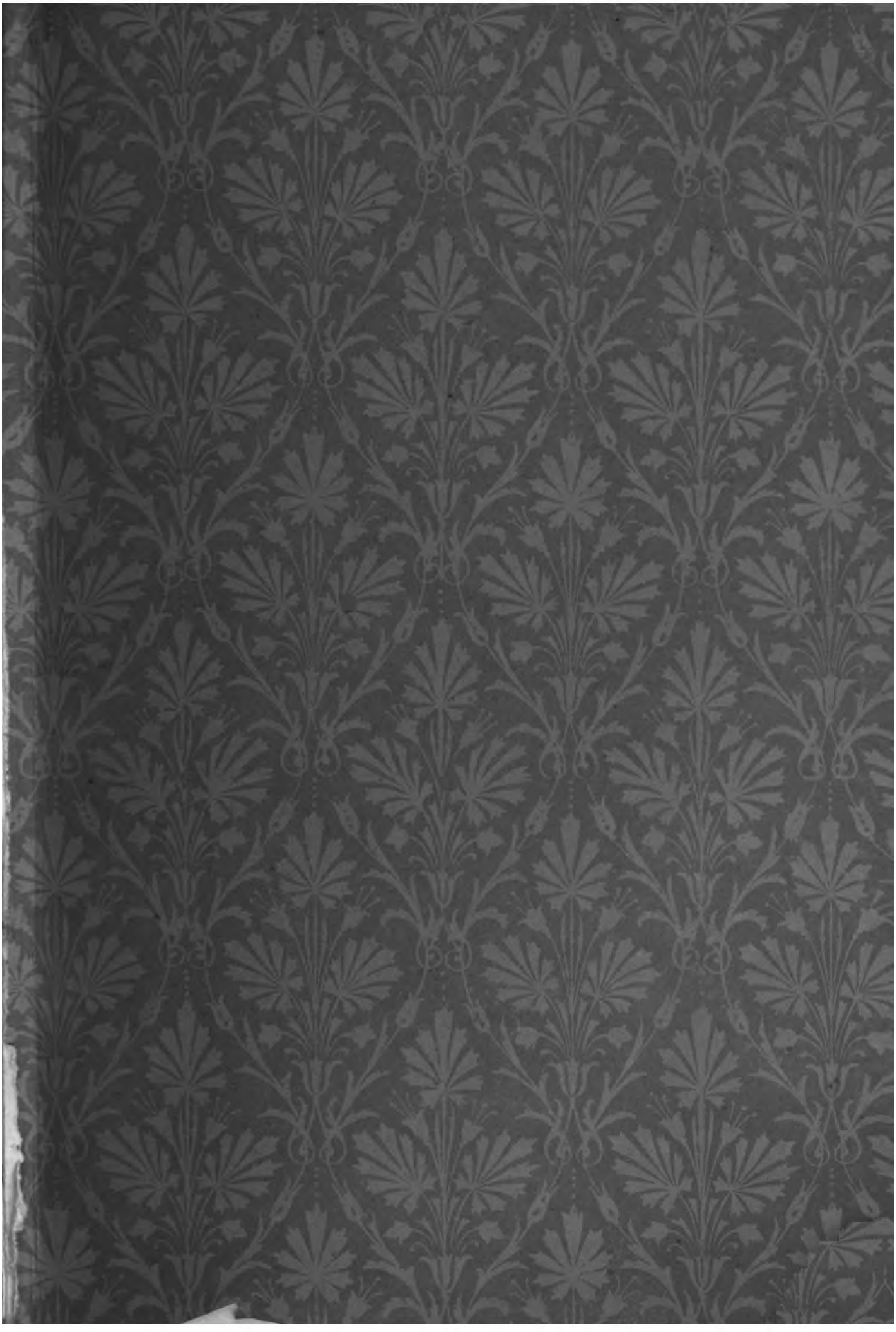

Woodburytype.

MORTIMER COLLINS.

PEN SKETCHES

BY A VANISHED HAND

FROM THE PAPERS

OF THE LATE MORTIMER COLLINS

EDITED BY

TOM TAYLOR

WITH NOTES BY THE EDITOR AND MRS. MORTIMER COLLINS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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TO

ROSE MARY CRAWSHAY

OF

CYFARFTHA CASTLE

IN RECOGNITION OF MANY KINDNESSES

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

BY

FRANCES COLLINS.

CONTENTS.

MORTIMER COLLINS.

BORN 1827. DIED 1876.

"Some thirty miles from Megalopolis,
Miles also from the shrieking griding rail,
On a high road where once the four-horse mail
Flashed gaily past—so placed my cottage is:
Roars merrily now the wind tall limes between,
Which guard my quiet lawn, a triangle scalene.

And you may see me, if you pass this way,
Lean on my gate and look into the road,
And listen to the skylark's joyous ode—
Thoughtful, not oft cigarless. Will you say,
Who wears that velvet coat, a trifle tattered,
That curious cool straw hat which wind and rain have battered?"

YES, we have passed that way, and have entered the gate and received that hand-grasp, which, to quote Mortimer Collins himself, would "crush the paw of a hypocrite." We have walked some miles from the railway station on a broad, white road—the great Bath Road that stretches from London to Bath—have left Maidenhead Thicket a mile or two behind, and have arrived at a point where an old inn stands back from the road with its long line of stables, reminding us of the time when the "four-horse mail flashed gaily past." On the other side a furze-covered, tree-topped hill rises, which gives the

village its name, and presently we discover a gate set amongst the trees, where stands the powerfully-built gentle-hearted man watching to give us a welcome. He has the broad brow denoting strength, over which the brown hair drops in negligent curls; bright grey eyes, a soft silky beard, and a rich musical voice. We pass through the gate into a lovely lawn, flower-decked this bright July day, and surrounded by trees and shrubs which shade it from prying eyes. The pretty cottage is meet in all respects for the purpose it fulfils, the residence of a poet.

> "Sometimes there comes a friendly visitant,
> Brimmed with the life o' the town, rewarding me
> Well for my mutton and my Burgundy;
> And so we laugh together at fraud and cant,
> While everywhere is heard a flutter of wings,
> And winter's chorister, the unwearying redbreast, sings."

And so the news of Town is asked for and discussed over a joyous dinner. For any one tired of the conventionality and friction of London life, a dinner at Knowl Hill with Mortimer Collins and his wife was a thing to be remembered with pleasure through many years. Byron said he hated "the author who is all author;" and assuredly you would never be bored with authorship at Mortimer's table. If you liked to talk books you might do it, and you would be sure to hear some views of men and things literary both interesting and original; but you would also find knowledge of a quaint and curious

character, expressed in a brilliant and original manner, on almost any subject you might choose to start, and without a touch of pedantry.

After dinner we go on the lawn, and sit and smoke a cigarette, while our host tells us how the nightingales sing in the lime avenue which runs down one side of his "quiet lawn, a triangle scalene;" how they keep him company in the midnight hours while he is writing an article or a chapter of a novel; and our hostess will tell us of the familiarity of the birds in the garden with her husband; how an old blackbird, who builds there year after year, will allow him to stroke her while on the nest; how a chaffinch has brought up a family in a shrub close by, and has been on particularly friendly terms; how the robins fight for "the Master's" favour; and how the tame jackdaw who struts freely about the place is jealous of all the other feathered favourites. We are introduced to a pair of owls in a large aviary built round a tree; and although these birds of Minerva seem frightened of us, they show no fear of their master, but perch on his shoulder. Amongst the pets the dogs must not be forgotten, but we have a history of them in the chapter devoted to *Dogs* in this book. Then we finish the evening in the "book-room," and the hours fly only too quickly while our host passes from one subject to another. Books are taken down, and gems of thought are pointed out, and sometimes read, and read

with a true feeling of appreciation. This sense of appreciation was a great point in Mortimer Collins's character; he would not only admire with the greatest humility men who were his superiors in intellect, but would point out something good in those who were undoubtedly his inferiors. He was so variously read, and so entered into the spirit of the author he was reading or discussing, that one seemed almost brought into the presence of the man; and thus an evening with Mortimer Collins meant often an evening with Herrick, and Waller, and Prior, and Coleridge, and Charles Lamb, and many another bright spirit.

Often as we have thus sat talking, the grey dawn slowly coming into the room has reminded us that it was long past bed-time.

But, as Mr. R. H. Horne has put on record, "sleep was the only thing you could not get at Mortimer Collins's home." In the early morning the poet would be up feeding his pigeons, and throwing the pease up at the windows where his guests slept, and playing all manner of tricks. One could not be angry with the big boyish fellow, who was so full of life and good humour. He took very little sleep himself, and expected that others could do the same. His mind seemed to be in an ever-active state; and yet no man perhaps better enjoyed idleness. The verb "to laze," which he introduced into the language, and which seems now to have been generally adopted, expresses his capacity for enjoyment. "Let us laze on the lawn for an

hour," we have often heard him say; and he would throw his big form on the cool turf and talk of the Earth-Mother, and cast such a poetical glamour over everything, that we seemed at last to be in fairyland. Yes; he certainly knew how to laze better than most men, and his chapter on laziness in *The Secret of Long Life* is worth reading, as coming from a master of the subject.

But, as he remarked, "the man who can laze is conscious of his power. He knows he can do what he has to do in less time than the ordinary mortal imagines it will take him. He tacitly accepts the margin." It was this power which made Mortimer Collins so remarkable a man. Whether he made the most of his power is doubtful. He certainly made no attempt to reserve it. Both physical and mental strength were extravagantly wasted. He would never take the trouble to alter or polish anything he had written, because, he said, it was less trouble to write something fresh. He seldom made memoranda or notes for his literary work, but carried all in his brain. When he wrote in *Punch* a few weeks before he died—

"The easy strength that makes a joke of toil,"

he realised what he wrote. And yet the curious casuist will say, Why did the man, who could write such a line, die a month after of rupture of the heart from overwork? Because his work was not congenial. He was continually

reminded that he must pander to the public taste; that his work was "too good" for the public; that it would take some years to educate the public up to him; and the payment given for his work was so small as to oblige him to do immense quantities. In fact, no man probably ever wrote more than did Mortimer Collins during the last eight years of his life. About fifty volumes and innumerable contributions to newspapers and magazines attest what he did during those years at Knowl Hill.

Thus it will be seen that the waste of mental strength was partly the result of cruel circumstances. But he also wasted his physical strength: necessarily in being obliged to write far into the night; but unnecessarily in many other ways.

"The easy strength that makes a joke of toil" might also be applied to him physically. He would walk immense distances, as the account in this volume of tramps through various counties will testify. Whereas he seldom seemed to take any account of his mental strength, he boasted of the physical. He would tell us of great feats in walking, and seemed proud of showing what he could do. We were somewhat chary of accepting what he called "just a tramp before dinner." He would swing along at an easy pace, seeming to make no exertion, but we found it difficult to keep up with him.

His powers of digestion seemed equally good, and the fault which critics (dyspeptic perhaps) found with him

for his frequent mention of food must be condoned in a man who obtained as much enjoyment from what is provided for gratifying the taste, as from those things that gratify the other senses. It will be found in looking into his books that he is quite as rapturous, if not more so, over the beauties of a tree or a landscape or a seascape, or anything else in nature; or the goodness of a man or horse or dog or, most of all, a woman; and no author ever delighted more than he did, during the last years of his life, in writing of woman.

Cynical passages concerning women may be found in his earlier writings; but for the last few years he taught that no man can become complete without the love of a good woman. We have not room to quote much of what he says on this subject; yet, it being the one on which, of all others, he was most eloquent, we must give a few of his words:—

"Have you not met the poetic lady, the flower of English life, whose every word is music, whose every look is light, whose every touch is love? This is the perfection of womanhood. Hera the ruler; Artemis the thinker; Aphrodite the lover. This is the sort of wife for a man, the sort of queen for a world. . . . The life of man is utterly empty unless he has God above him and woman with him. . . . The best of us will find that he has something to learn from his wife, that there are subtler faculties in her nature enabling her to guide him in circumstances whereby he is himself perplexed. The man who learns nothing from his wife is a stolid blockhead, who will never learn anything from anybody. . . . Comedies

and novels are laughed at for ending with marriage, but the artist's unconscious instinct is true. To marry aright is to read the riddle of the world."

And again :—

"The play, so to speak, of a graceful and intelligent woman is the most charming thing in the world. She is the consummate flower of creation. The light of her eyes, the movement of her lips, the tone of her voice, are all worth watching; her easy chat has no wisdom in it mayhap, nor any wit, yet it is as fresh as dew and as fragrant as May-bloom. She brings to a manly and poetic mind the same pleasure—but in a higher degree—as that produced by a summer landscape with emerald grass and translucent water, and birds in full song amid the airy branches of the trees. The hot amorist on the one hand, the cool cynic on the other, cannot know this. It is reserved for men in whom a strong sense of beauty is united with perfect intellectual sanity."

Enthusiastic also was he on birds. Here, perhaps, was a new way of treating the subject of the bird and the worm :—

"At this moment starlings and blackbirds and thrushes are tugging away at the worms on my lawn with unusual success. Whether the worms like it or not, the result is feathered music, delighting human ears. Worms are designed to be eaten by birds, and will suffer that treatment through all time, unless Mr. Darwin can induce them to develop into something else. Why should he not? If an ascidian becomes an ape, and an ape a man, there ought to be no difficulty about a worm's becoming a boa-constrictor, and defying the birds. There is a female black-

bird now within my ken feeding four little ones (her second brood of four this year) with indefatigable assiduity."

This was rather an offhand way of speaking of the Darwinian Theory, and it was such sentences as these that caused their writer to make so many enemies. Yet, although there is apparent carelessness in the words, there is also deep thought; and having read them, one is unconsciously set pondering, not only on the theory of evolution, but on the philosophy of Mortimer Collins. Enemies were also made by the oft-quoted lines on the Positivists:

"Life and the universe show spontaneity:
Down with ridiculous notions of Deity!
Churches and creeds are all lost in the mists:
Truth must be sought with the Positivists.

Wise are their teachers beyond all comparison,
Comte, Huxley, Tyndall, Mill, Morley, and Harrison;
Who will adventure to enter the lists
With such a squadron of Positivists?

Social arrangements are awful miscarriages;
Cause of all crime is our system of marriages.
Poets with sonnets and lovers with trysts
Kindle the ire of the Positivists.

Husbands and wives should be all one community,
Exquisite freedom with absolute unity.
Wedding-rings worse are than manacled wrists;
Such is the creed of the Positivists.

There was an ape in the days that were earlier;
Centuries passed, and his hair became curlier;
Centuries more gave a thumb to his wrist—
Then he was MAN,—and a Positivist.

If you are pious (mild form of insanity),
Bow down and worship the mass of humanity.
Other religions are buried in mists,
We're our own gods, say the Positivists."

Many an indignant anonymous letter did the writer of these verses receive on account of them. It is their very ease and carelessness which make them the more cutting. It is as if their author pooh-poohed the whole thing as beneath his consideration; and yet he had carefully considered the teachings of those he called Positivists. The man who is capable of such stinging satire, who can make such dogmatic assertions, who can be so bold and outspoken, is sure to have enemies. On the other hand, the man who has a humble reverence for all that is good and great, who is loving and tender to those about him, who does not think the meanest thing beneath his notice, is sure to have friends. Mortimer Collins was both these; and so it was no wonder that at his death it was remarked in most of the papers, that he had many friends and some bitter enemies.

We have pictured him at Knowl Hill, and spoken of his life there, because it was really his true life, when he was in his element, and when he wrote nearly all his published works.

There are many who, like ourselves, remember him in a different character. In the earlier days the tall figure was a very familiar one in the haunts of journalism. He and James Hannay and a few more congenial spirits were wont to meet in the evening for purposes of talk and conviviality; and they were too apt to take Tom Moore's advice for lengthening our days by cutting short the

nights. These men set the fashion of a sort of Bohemianism different from what had hitherto gone by that name, and Mortimer Collins was styled the King of Bohemia. It was at this time his chief journalistic work was done, and he was one of those brilliant wits who wrote for *The Owl* newspaper. No doubt the life he then led was, to a certain extent, a pleasant one. He was amongst men whom he admired and by whom he was appreciated. They sharpened each other's wit and criticised each other's epigram. They frequented a homely comfortable class of tavern which is now dying out, where good food, served in a plain style, was the custom, and where wits assembled. A young would-be journalist, just fresh from college, sought an introduction to this set of men, and was taken by James Hannay into an old-fashioned coffee-house. As they sat eating, a tall, well-built, handsome man came in and gave his order in a commanding voice—

"Waiter! Steak and oyster sauce."

"Yes, sir."

"And, waiter!"

"Yes, sir."

"Oysters galore!"

This was Mortimer Collins; and the youthful admirer was never tired of telling the tale and imitating the manner in which the order was given.

It curiously contrasts with his after life when, struggling

against debt and piteously asking his publisher to send him a cheque, he said he should like to get a steak occasionally, but would leave oyster sauce for the publishers.

But whatever fascination there may have been in this sort of life, it could not last. It was an artificial existence, and could not suit so natural a man as Mortimer Collins. Pleasant as the man was, we felt that he was not altogether happy, that there was a skeleton in the cupboard which prevented him from thoroughly enjoying life. We, his everyday friends, imagined he was a bachelor, but there were whispers of an uncongenial home. We never cared to inquire too curiously into the matter, but in years after, when we visited Mortimer in his Berkshire cottage, we saw the man in his true element, and we ourselves learnt from him to love that true life rather than the brilliant artificial one which we had previously known.

And it was easy to see what had caused the difference.

When James Hannay and Mortimer Collins disappeared from amongst us in 1868, the former went to Barcelona as H.B.M. Consul, and the latter to his Berkshire cottage with his bride. He had found in his second wife a helpmate in every sense of the word. A woman of no mean ability herself, she had the greatest admiration for her gifted husband, and thoroughly entered into all his views and ideas. She was not only his wife, but his most

intimate companion, the "friend of his soul," and the helper in his work.

She has given to the world a memoir of her husband, in which, while she is endeavouring to show how he had the power of giving happiness to all around him, it is easy to see how large a share she had in making that happiness. No wonder that in his later works he writes so enthusiastically of women. His verses to his wife, many of which yet remain unpublished, are models for love-verse.

"There was *once* a king of Bohemia," as Corporal Trim said, and this we were fond of quoting to our friend when we visited him in Berkshire. Not that he became conventional in any way, but Bohemia proper is not in the country. The brilliant talker, the wandering tavern-frequenter, the careless, reckless man, had settled down into the steady husband and home-lover. Nothing could attract him away from the home and companion he loved so well.

That his unconventionality did not pass without notice in the Berkshire village was to be expected. Thus he writes after some few years' residence there :—

"Your villager, especially in the south and west of England, decides entirely on the quality of a neighbour by the company he keeps. If a man has not time to exchange morning calls with county people, or if he cannot stand the annoyance of their sadly insipid conversation, they quarrel with him, and will talk scandal about him horribly, and go so far as to say that he poisoned his washerwoman to avoid pay-

ing her bill. Luckily Lord Lieutenants, Deputy Lieutenants, High Sheriffs, and other dignitaries of the sort were made for calling purposes; so gentle reader, if you take a house in a country-place, and don't want to be tabooed as a pariah, hire your dignitary! A good dinner will do it, especially if you bring from town a friend from White's or Brooks's who dwells within the pale of exclusive society, and who will, like Theodore Hook, know a man in the country whom he couldn't possibly know in London. After that you are safe. The county recognises you at the recommendation of a chief magnate, and you will be at once free to all dinner parties, balls, garden-parties, that the minor magnates give. I don't envy you, *mon ami.* Those pleasures pall; I would rather, like Charles Fox, sit with my back to a haystack on a summer afternoon, reading the 'Prometheus Bound' of Æschylus, and watching the blackbirds eat my cherries."

Many of the essays in these volumes were written in the years of his London life; this will account for those occasional life-weary and cynical touches in them which quite disappeared from later works. But the original ideas and brilliant expression are always there. The man was made of good stuff, and adverse circumstances could not wholly deface the goodness.

Edmund Yates wrote of him that he was "so full of hearty wholesome life," and most people agree as to the natural goodness of the man.

Mr. R. H. Horne said he reminded him of "one of the Homeric heroes, who had just put off his armour and was thinking of his oxen at the plough or his golden corn-fields." So, taking his pen as his weapon, he could

write the most cutting satirical verse, and then throw down the pen to go and talk to a favourite robin in the garden. It was the mixture of the grand and the gentle that made him so loveable. Whether his works will live, time will tell; some of his poetry probably will. His admirers are steadily increasing. He wrote so much, that it will take time to disentangle the good from the bad. Most of his novels are wild and improbable, but they are never dull; and there are scraps of verse scattered over them—and prose too—which one may read again and again. When the wheat shall have been sifted from the chaff he will probably find a place in literature.

Had he lived a few years longer, he would, no doubt, have reaped a substantial reward of his labours, for his powers seemed to be only beginning to mature when he died, and he was just coming to the front. That he had not fame was no disappointment to him, except so far as it would have helped him to make a living. A few weeks before his death he wrote the following verses in *Punch*, in answer to a remark of Lord Carnarvon's at the Royal Literary Fund dinner, that "the question arose whether those who wrote much were happy":—

"Why in the world should the question arise?
Is the course that bright-winged Pegasus flies
To be measured by means mechanic?
There's a power and passion that urge to write,
And the energy fills with strong delight,
That moves the natural easy might
Of a genius Titanic.

As the war-horse neighs in the battle-hour,
So the spirit of fire, the wielder of power,
Works on, and in strength rejoices.
Better his visions than fortune or fame;
To spend himself is his glorious aim;
He can wait for Posterity's sure acclaim,
If grudged the multitude's voices.

The fickle taste of the thoughtless town
May wrongly assign the laurel crown:
Why should that spoil life's flavour?
Destiny works on a curious plan,
And is often kind to the charlatan;
But the man who has power is the happy man,
Whoever has Fortune's favour."

There is no doubt that he thoroughly felt what he says in these lines: his power was a source of happiness to him, and had fame come to him he would have welcomed it only as a means of freeing the life of those he loved from care. As it was, he was compelled to cruelly abuse his power, and so he overstrained the heart which he had always taxed so heavily.

He died of rupture of the right auricle of the heart, on the 28th of July 1876, when he had just completed his forty-ninth year.

His character cannot be better summed up than in the kindly words said of him in *Punch* at the time of his death. Some people have objected to the phrase, that "he strove to do his duty honestly and punctually by his employers," as taking from his dignity; but Mortimer Collins himself would have asked no higher praise.

"He was a man who, in an unconventional way, deeply believed in God, and strove to do his duty honestly and punctually by his employers, loving his family and friends; variously accomplished, happy under hard labour, and helpful to all he could help, by word or deed."

LIST OF THE WORKS OF THE LATE MORTIMER COLLINS.[1]

1855. Idyls and Rhymes.
1860. Summer Songs.
1865. Who is the Heir? 3 vols.
1868. Sweet Anne Page. 3 vols.
1869. The Ivory Gate. 2 vols.
1870. The Vivian Romance. 3 vols.
1871. Marquis and Merchant. 3 vols.
1871. The Inn of Strange Meetings, and other Poems.
1871. The Secret of Long Life.
1872. The British Birds: A Communication from the Ghost of Aristophanes.
1872. Princess Clarice. 2 vols.
1872. Two Plunges for a Pearl. 3 vols.
1873. Miranda: A Midsummer Madness. 3 vols.
1873. Squire Silchester's Whim. 3 vols.
1873. Mr. Carington. 3 vols.
1874. Transmigration. 3 vols.
1874. Frances. 3 vols.
1875. Sweet and Twenty. 3 vols.
1875. Blacksmith and Scholar. 3 vols.
1876. A Fight with Fortune. 3 vols.
1877. The Village Comedy. 3 vols. Published posthumously.
1878. You Play me False. 3 vols. Published posthumously.

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[1] Some of them have appeared in the joint names of Mortimer Collins and his wife.

A WALK THROUGH BERKS.

HERNE'S OAK has fallen. It was pleasant to believe, though Mr. Charles Knight thinks otherwise, that under this ancient tree Jack Falstaff hid himself in mortal terror, exclaiming, "Heaven defend me from that Welsh fairy!" The late Prince Consort cherished the fantasy, and looked lovingly on the old Oak under which Shakespeare may have indulged in a day-dream. Nothing is more arbitrary than etymology; so it is not for me to say whether Berkshire really means Bare-Oak-Shire, thus styled either because the oak-bark used by tanners in pre-chemical days came largely from the county, or because its inhabitants have a great fancy for making a "bare oak" the scene of public meetings and the indication of boundaries. Close to the garden-gate of the house in which I write, there stands a bare oak,—the boundary-mark of two adjacent parishes: it is a vast old tree, utterly devoid of leaf and bark, and lifts its ghastly bulk right in the centre of a lane.[1] Certes the Berkshire people have a strong tendency to use the oak as a trysting-tree,

[1] This oak has since fallen.

and a limitary mark. But the beech is the tree of the county, crowning its pleasant hills, and shivering with a wealth of glossy leaves in the winds of early spring.

If I were asked *where* to travel, I should reply, "England." If I were asked *how*, I should say, "Walk." People are miserable in these days if they cannot *do* the Alps, the Pyramids, the Great Wall of China, the Himalayas, and so on. Heaven forefend that I should underrate nature's sublimest works, or the most wondrous relics of historic greatness! But, after all, which of us knows this England of ours thoroughly? On highway and byway there are perpetual novelties for us, if only we keep our eyes open. The temptation is great to plunge into a foreign country, to breathe an untried atmosphere, to mingle with an entirely different race. Yet I do not believe there is half as much pleasure thus to be obtained as by exploring Old England. I have read many books of travel, but know none a tithe as interesting as *Lavengro*. And why? Its author is a man of genius, certainly; so also are the authors of *Eöthen* and *From Cornhill to Cairo*. But Mr. Borrow's subject is *England*. He meets men and women of our own race. He describes the hearty, homely fashions of our own country. Even his gipsies delight us; for they are English gipsies, —the very sort that one sees encamping in these green lanes of Berkshire. What would not a tour in Warwickshire in Shakespeare's days be worth now? Well, a couple of centuries hence our posterity will be far more interested in the England than in the Italy or Egypt of 1863. Ay, and they will be far more interested in the

fireside and roadside life of their forefathers than in the dissertations on caterpillars a thousand miles long in the sun, and on the effect of Australian gold-discoveries, wherewith the sages of the British Association favour us. And so *Lavengro* will be more in demand than a file of *The Times;* and if there be any man with a capacity for travel-writing, he may assure himself immortality by taking England as his theme. There is something at which to blush in the ignorance of England among Englishmen. The Londoner who has been everywhere, who has looked into the crater of Vesuvius and found that there is "nothing in it," has not the least idea of the Blowing Stone or the Berkshire White Horse.

For travel in England, there is certainly no way like walking. The railway sets you down at any point at which you choose to commence; and thereafter you are perfectly independent. Nor, on the whole, is any exercise equal to walking. Rowing does somewhat more for the muscles of the arms, but leaves the legs undeveloped. Of course, some men can walk better than others; easy London habits and heavy dinners do not prepare a man for walking five miles an hour for six hours or so. But if you walk at the rate of only three miles an hour, and if you do not attempt beyond fifteen or twenty miles a day, you may cover a good deal of country. Very soon the condition improves. The lazy Londoner finds that he can breast a steep hill without losing wind, and that he attacks his eggs-and-bacon and home-brewed ale with greater relish than he ever commanded for the best possible dinner at Kühn's or the Albion. But one great

matter in walking is to have comfortable boots. Just before I started for my stroll through Berkshire, I picked up a copy of that excellent journal *The Field*, to see whether my speech at the dinner of the Acclimatisation Society was accurately reported. It was not reported at all; but I found consolation in a letter from a correspondent (may his shadow never be less!), who declared that in London there was a bootmaker who would make boots on the principle of common sense; boots, gentle reader, to fit the feet, not to compress them into elegance. Astounding as it may seem, such a man there is; and his name is Lanagan, of Brownlow Street, Holborn. He measures you both for boot and sock; for even the latter, soft as is its texture, if badly made, injures the foot. I have all my life been a great walker, thinking nothing of thirty or forty miles a day; but I can truly declare that I never knew what it was to walk in comfort till I tried Lanagan's boots. You can stretch your toes in them! They are made on strict anatomical principles, I am told, and doubtless they are; but they are certainly made on the one great principle of common sense, which is, that *the sole of the boot should be the same shape as the sole of the foot.* Let any man sketch the outline of his naked foot on paper, and compare it with the sole of his ordinary boot, and he will at once understand why he has corns—why walking tires him. What would happen to the human hand if it were compressed into a stout leather glove the shape of an isosceles triangle? I hope the time is not remote when every bootmaker will be a disciple of Lanagan's.

A pocket-map is a pedestrian's necessity. I sent to Lovejoy, of Reading (the fair ideal of a country bookseller), and got a map of Berkshire by Walker, published by Longmans. I found it generally accurate, and have since procured maps of other counties by the same topographer; but, curiously enough, Maidenhead Thicket—pretty well known to Cockneys as a favourite meet for the Queen's Hounds—is entirely misplaced. Walker's maps are mounted on canvas; their scale is three miles to the inch; and they go comfortably into the pocket. It would be a great improvement if the heaths and downs and commons were coloured green in these maps. At present the various parks are tinted green; but the wide open country, the undulating chalk-hills, where there are no habitations for miles except shepherds' huts and training-stables, the pleasant beech-woods which fill the Thames valley with beauty, have no distinctive mark. Green, nature's favourite colour, should be given to these, so that the walker may know where his foot is free to tread, where he may wander without leave from even the lord of the manor.

My object was to get beyond railways. I took the train to Pangbourn, that charming resort of anglers, where glorious woods overlook the shining Thames. Passing through the country town, I remembered how,

> At Reading too, when trial was warmest,
> Bunyan, that sturdy nonconformist,
> Whose *Pilgrim's Progress* is the raptest
> Of books, came preaching at the Baptist
> Chapel in the frock of a wagoner.
> Time passes: lo, who draws his flagon here?

Who, in a taproom vowed to Bacchus,
Lovingly reads Horatius Flaccus?
How came that queer fish to arrive at
The level of a cavalry private—
Who shall in magic irresistible
Hereafter clothe the tale of *Christabel*,
And make his *Ancient Mariner's* glistening
Eye compel the world to listening?

But recollections of Coleridge and Bunyan—not to mention Archbishop Laud, whose father was a Reading weaver—not to mention the biscuits, the appetising sauce, the lawn-grass seed, for which now the town is famous, —must not detain us. The lasher at Pangbourn is casting innumerable spherules of water into the glowing July sunlight as I descend from the station. *Amari aliquid!* And now for a pleasant stretch of twelve miles or so, with dinner in view at East Ilsley.

Those twelve miles deserve no special record. "Adventures are to the adventurous," according to Mr. Disraeli, who likes the apophthegm so well that he gives it first to Ixion and afterwards to Sidonia. I was not in an adventurous mood, probably, between Pangbourn and East Ilsley, for I encountered no adventures. The way lay through pleasant lanes, *patularum sub tegmine fagorum;* but at last I suddenly came out upon the brow of Compton Down, with roads leading down to Compton as white as milk, and with a wide, breezy, treeless area before and around me. The sudden change was exhilarating. With no incident of importance, I reached East Ilsley, and called hungrily for dinner at the principal hostelry. East Ilsley is unique. Imagine Smithfield

Market on the side of a steep hill, with a church at the summit surrounded by houses enough to hold between seven and eight hundred inhabitants. This little town is the sheep-market of the Berkshire downs. Mutton reigns supreme here. The centre of the place is given up to sheep-pens, the principal street running through them. The landlord of the inn at which I dined was eloquent in his attempt to persuade me to remain till the next day: there was a great market, which would be worth seeing. Much as I admire a good saddle of mutton, the temptation was not strong enough. While at dinner, the patter of many feet fell upon my ear; and looking out, I perceived some five hundred sheep passing the window, under the guidance of a man and a dog. If sheep are silly creatures, which seems to be the case, how singularly sagacious are sheep-dogs! They generally appear a good deal cleverer than their human coadjutors.

East Ilsley does not exist entirely upon mutton. There are training-stables on those wide downs; and my landlord, whom nature had evidently intended for a jockey, required slight provocation to become garrulous about Lord Stamford, and Lord Strathmore, and Joe Dawson, and the like. It must be a pleasant sight to see a string of thoroughbreds taking their morning canter over those grassy slopes; but I suppose anybody who turned out early for the purpose would run a great risk of being taken for a tout. My way to Wantage, where I had decided to sleep, lay through West Ilsley, a village about two miles off—quite a village of villas, strange enough in the loneliest part of Berkshire. There, probably, the

proprietors of training-stables live in clover. Fantastic residences—cottages of gentility—are the order of the day in this little place. Here I made inquiry about a way across the downs to Wantage; and was told that there was such a way certainly, but that no stranger could find it, and that their own people were often benighted when they tried it. Of course, thus advised, I tried it, and found it very easily. The downs are puzzling in the twilight, when it is difficult to judge accurately either distance or direction; and Wantage, like many other towns in the vicinity, lies so hidden in a hollow, that its lights are invisible till you enter it. However, I arrived safely enough at King Alfred's birth-place, crossing on my way Ickleton Street, one of those ancient roads along the brow of the hill which are known in most parts of England as "ridge-ways." Ickleton Street is at least as old as the Roman occupation of England, possibly older; and here was the site of Wayland Smith's forge—that supernatural and invisible maker of horse-shoes whom Sir Walter Scott has immortalised.

Wantage was reached as the saffron of a summer sunset died in the west. Here, they say, Alfred the Great —Alfred the Truth-teller—was born. His white horse is cut upon the hills lying westward, and gives name to the whole district—the Vale of White Horse. Here, in 1849, admirers of the Saxon king held festival in honour of his thousandth birthday, and the illustrious Tupper celebrated it in poetry never to be forgotten—for how can men forget what they do not read? Wantage is a somnolent town, whose inhabitants seem to be extremely

fond of flowers: scandent plants of all kinds, clematis, jasmine, and a dozen others, hang over their portals, and even fill the inn-yards with beauty. The vicarage-garden opened upon the churchyard; and from the glimpse I obtained thereof while waiting for breakfast, I should judge the worthy parson to be peculiarly fond of brilliant flowers and shaven turf. The sleepiness of the town was exemplified by the consternation caused at the Bear Inn when it was announced that I wanted breakfast at seven next morning. I thought myself very fortunate to get it at eight.

The country church and the country inn (I do not couple them irreverently) are the two first points for the traveller through England to notice. The former shows what the people of a town have been in centuries past. In its form, its records of death and of charity, there is silent evidence of the character of those who have worshipped there. The voiceless story of the past is written in its ancient stones. And the latter, the country inn, tells the tale of the present with equal emphasis. The very quality of your first glass of ale is an almost infallible index of prosperity or adversity, of progress or stagnation. In the leading hostelry of some towns, for example, you get a glass of Bass or Allsopp, spoilt by bad cellarage or insufficient draught; while, at a village inn, you are refreshed by a pint of wholesome home-brewed. Depend upon it, the village is in a healthier state than the town.

Nothing that I saw at Wantage peculiarly reminded me of King Alfred. I left the town in its morning *déshabille*, and started for the Blowing-Stone at Kingston

Lisle. This famous piece of antiquity lies to the left of the road, at the foot of a way leading up to the downs; so I contrived to pass it unnoticed, and walked on into the village, almost a mile beyond. However, this caused me no regret; for I encountered a most intelligent and obese old gentleman, full of information and facetiousness, landlord of the only public-house in Kingston Lisle, and, moreover, baker and grocer and blacksmith. His home-brewed ale was excellent; and as I sat in his court-yard, coatless and waistcoatless, with a flagon thereof on an empty cask beside me, I experienced that indescribable delight only to be obtained by rest after active exercise. After a while I went back to the Blowing-Stone. This curiosity is about three feet high, and stands beneath an elm-tree in front of a wayside inn, which appears to have been formed by throwing three cottages into one. The stone—a rough amorphous mass—is full of holes; into one of these, if you blow, a sound is produced which may be heard many miles away. A piece of wood, secured by a padlock, is placed over the hole to prevent mischief; and so little demand had there been for this old-fangled music, that I found the key of the padlock was lost. Fortunately, among the drinkers of ale under the elm-tree that sultry July morning, there were a couple of blacksmiths out of work, who had taken to the curious occupation of selling stationery and buttons; and one of these produced from his pocket implements which very soon sundered the chain. I could never make music on a wind-instrument; like Themistocles, I cannot even play the flute; and I utterly failed to produce any sound from the Blowing-Stone. But the two blacksmiths, and

a couple of wagoners who were staying to bait their horses, produced a decided effect. When strong lungs are brought to bear upon it, the sound of the Blowing-Stone is very like the bellowing of an infuriated bull. According to the author of *Tom Brown's School-days,*

> "The Bleawin-Stwun in days gone by
> Wur King Alfred's bugle-harn,
> And the tharnin-tree you med plainly zee
> As is called King Alfred's tharn."

I cannot help thinking that if some London speculator in concerts were to get the Blowing-Stone up to the Hanover Square Rooms or St. James's Hall, and announce that a distinguished performer would play a solo upon it, he would have a crowded house.

The verse quoted above comes from *The Scouring of the White Horse,* a pleasant little volume, which most people have read. I think Mr. Hughes would have been wise, however, if he had given a straightforward narrative of the county "pastime" of 1857, instead of introducing us to the most utter blockhead in the way of an imaginary London clerk. And there are one or two points here to be noted. The Kingsley school, of which Mr. Hughes is a foremost member, are always lauding country as against city life. The hero of *The Scouring* is an effeminate nincompoop. His friend the farmer is a fine active fellow; and the squire is quite a demigod: "You never saw such a clean-made man. He was, for all the world, like a well-rounded wedge from his shoulders down; and his neck and head put on like a statue. He looked just as if he could have jumped the highest five-barred gate in the vale, and then have carried it off on his shoulders, and run up the hill with it." And this gentleman is

supposed to be forty-five! Now, I have the pleasure of knowing a great many squires and farmers; excellent fellows they are, but, as a general rule, somewhat lumpish and lazy, and by no means agile. The Londoner of equal standing is usually more active and athletic than the rustic. The truth seems to be, that physical development cannot be perfected apart from intellectual development. The life of the more intellectual class of Englishmen—thoroughly hard work for nine months of the year, thoroughly enjoyed holiday for the other three—is, I believe, about the healthiest possible form of life. Living in the country is very delightful, and I am as fond of tranquil woods and sinuous streams as any man; but whoever would know the true meaning of life must sharpen his intellect on other intellects, must breathe the exciting air of the metropolis. Nor will he thereby lose physical health. One of the Kingsleys, whether Charles or Henry I forget, describes a remarkably healthy-looking countryman as astonishing the Londoners by his wholesome appearance. Bah! Some of the finest fellows I know, with the broadest chests and the clearest complexions, are thorough Londoners, only getting away in vacation time to shoot grouse in Scotland or tigers in Africa.[1]

Another matter in which Mr. Hughes scarcely did his best is the lyrical portion of his volume. Nothing could be more valuable than the real indigenous song of any English county. The verses which Berkshire men make

[1] Mortimer Collins found occasion to change his opinion in this matter soon after, for during the last eight years of his life he lived entirely in his Berkshire cottage, and disliked even a few hours in town. —FRANCES COLLINS.

and which Berkshire men sing are certainly worth collection. Some such, unquestionable in their character, Mr. Hughes supplies; as, for example, Job Cork's quaint stanzas, wherein a stranger accosts a shepherd of the White Horse in this fashion :—

"O noble shepherd, can you tell
How long you kept sheep on this hill?"

Mr. Hughes remarks that "there is no merit in these lines beyond quaintness." Here we are at issue with him. There is that recognition of the dignity of labour which characterises all the simpler forms of poetic literature. "O *noble* shepherd!" exclaims Job Cork, some time towards the end of the eighteenth century: Homer, some twenty-seven centuries earlier, characterises Eumæus as δῖος ὑφορβός—the *godlike* swineherd. Great as is the gulf between the Ionian and the Berkshire man, they are in unison on this point. They see a nobility in the shepherd's or the swineherd's occupation which is not generally perceived.[1] Another song, which seems to be the real thing, commences thus :—

"Come, all you shepherds as minds for to be,
You must have a gallant heart,
You must not be down-hearted,
You must a-bear the smart;
You must a-bear the smart, my boys,
Let it hail or rain or snow;
For there is no ale to be had on the Hill
Where the wintry wind doth blow."

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[1] All through his works the author endeavoured to show there was nobility in certain kinds of labour. He had a great contempt for what he called the "middle man," that is, the man who merely buys and sells the produce of others. But in real labour, whether of the head or hand, he maintained there was poetry; and he seemed to find pleasure in the society of workers.—F. C.

There is in this song a very definite picture of the dreariness of a shepherd's life in winter on those White-Horse Hills.

But others of Mr. Hughes's lyrical specimens are dubious. Of course we give him *kudos* for the lay of the hunted pig, with its exquisite couplet :—

> "When, zo zure as pegs is pegs,
> Eight chaps ketched I by the legs."

Tovey's Tap appears to be aboriginal; so also *Gaarge Ridler's Oven*, with its wonderful exordium of—

"Thaay stwuns, thaay stwuns, *thaay stwuns*, THAAY S, T, W, U, N, S."

But what of *Cubit's Garden?* For Berkshire pronunciation identifies the mischievous son of Aphrodite with that excellent Conservative gentleman who has been twice Lord Mayor of London and M.P. for Andover, and whom death has taken while this article is in MS. In this lyric an amorous individual sees "two may-dens" picking flowers in Cupid's garden. Much excited, he walks up to one of them and exclaims :

> "Be you engaged to arra young man,
> Come tell to me, I prays?"

The lady declares, in the same dialect, that she is not only not engaged, but that she does not intend to be :—

> "Zays I, 'My stars and garters!
> This here 's a pretty go,
> Vor a vine young mayd as never wos
> To sar' all man-kind zo.'
> But the t'other young may-den looked sly at me,
> And vrom her zeat she risn,
> Zays she, 'Let thee and I go our own way,
> And we 'll let she go shis'n.'"

Now, I should like to know whether this capital song comes from the Berkshire intellect at its ordinary bucolic level, or from the same in its developed high-pressure state in the form of Mr. Hughes. On this point there is no information.

Whether there has been a "scouring" since that of 1857 I do not know; but the White Horse certainly needs it, in order to maintain its character. At present, from almost all points of view, it looks a shapeless white blur upon the hill. There is a White Horse in Wiltshire, cut upon the down between Westbury and Bratton, and also attributed to King Alfred, which looked when I last saw it far more equine than the Berkshire one. And this latter is by no means what it was when, years before the "scouring," I used to see it from the outside of a stage-coach, passing it on my way to school. If the Berkshire men are really proud of this record of a time almost grown mythical, they should keep it in better preservation.

From Kingston Lisle I crossed pleasant fields on my way to Faringdon. A quaint agriculturist, of whom I asked a few questions, told me that I should reach the main road at a point where there were two public-houses just opposite each other. "You 'll want a glass to quench your drouth," he remarked; "and when you 've drunk one you won't want another." His statement was true to the letter. In front of one of these hostelries stood a great wagon laden with oil-cake; inside I encountered the wagoner—a most amiable individual, as wagoners always are—and a couple of Berkshire men, who had met by accident, but who had evidently spent their days in

the same neighbourhood. One was a blacksmith; the other, who looked like a small farmer, was going to Faringdon to receive a legacy. The amiable wagoner proposed that we should all ride to Faringdon with him. The afternoon was hot; the road was a mass of white dust, pulverised to the utmost; the temptation was irresistible. We mounted the cattle-feeding hill, being accommodated with some fresh-plucked clover on which to recline. First the nature of our couch suggested conversation; and it was agreed that oxen and sheep fed on such unpleasant-looking nutriment could not possibly supply such beef and mutton as those which draw their sustenance from the bounteous products of the earth. Those sheep which I had just seen scattered over the downs about Wantage, eating the short green grass—those great red oxen that are almost buried in the abundant meadow-grass of North Devon—surely their flesh must be wholesomer than that of creatures that are fed in close stalls upon some patent manufactured food. It is said that one-fifth of the cattle killed for our markets is diseased. What wonder? Shut a human being up in a room, and feed him on Fortnum and Mason's game-lozenges, and see if he won't be diseased.

My companions were conversible fellows. They were full of Berkshire reminiscences. The legatee had been in his youth a great backsword or single-stick player. This is the favourite game of Berks and Somerset, as wrestling is of the Lake counties and of Devon and Cornwall. A very fine sport it is, requiring coolness and presence of mind and agility. Few sights are more interesting than

to see two well-matched backsword players trying to break each other's heads. I fear the practice is falling into desuetude; and it is heartily to be regretted, for these athletic games keep men up to a manly standard. They add healthful excitement to the somewhat monotonous life necessarily led by the English rustic. The country squire and the parson would be doing good by encouraging these contests, whatever form they chance to take. If a county or town be famous for cricket, for backsword, for wrestling, for rowing, let whoever has influence do his utmost for the maintenance of its reputation.

Somehow or other, oil-cake and backsword dismissed, my comrades took to talking theology. I was greatly amused by the amount of information which they exhibited. They seemed to know all about Colenso, and were dead against him. They criticised him in the spirit of the rhymes—

> "There was a sage Bishop, Colenso,
> Who was bothered among the black men so
> That he thought such a pen as his
> Would overset *Genesis*:
> Still, Moses may outlive Colenso."

There is a theory among scientific materialists that the Solar System has lately been sweeping, in its endless progression, through regions of space filled with a highly-stimulating ether,—whence all the novelties, political and social and scientific, which excite the brains of men. Certes, the theologic discourse of my two Berkshire men —blacksmith and farmer—was such as I scarcely thought possible from persons of that class. It cannot be denied that there is intellectual movement at a much lower depth

in English society now than at any former period; and as it would be treason to the dignity of man to believe that intellectual movement could do harm, I hold that this is a good sign for us. Thought moves the world; and the more men that there are to think, the better. And so I rather rejoiced to listen while these two men discussed Colenso and the *Essays and Reviews* on the top of a wagon of oil-cake. I was sorry to get to Faringdon.

I do not know that any one need rejoice to arrive at Faringdon. It is a very characterless little town. I did not stay there long, my goal being Lechlade. Now my peregrinations are to treat of Berkshire, and Lechlade is not in Berkshire, but in Gloucestershire. It is, however, *very nearly* in Berkshire; and it is also very nearly in Oxfordshire and in Wiltshire. A good walker may, starting from Lechlade Church, pass through four counties in a quarter of an hour. At Lechlade I was to meet the Thames again—we had parted company at Pangbourn; at Lechlade I was also to meet the ghost of my former self—an entity which roamed those meadows and rowed upon that river fifteen years before. There is not, I suppose, one material atom in my body that was there when last I entered Lechlade; but I am the same individual notwithstanding.

If I have changed, the town has not. Across the well-known common, to where the delicate spire of the old church points heavenward. Just before I enter the churchyard-gate a recollection strikes me. On this very spot I first opened poor Arthur Clough's *Bothie of Toper-na-Fuosich*, which Macpherson of Oxford had sent me. How

I revelled in those free spondaic hexameters—in that glorious picture of Oxford vacation life in the Highlands! Well I remember the enthusiasm excited in me by this, the most original poem of the age, and that I wrote to Clough (then at Rome) to express my delight. I have kept his reply to this day. There was thorough originality in Clough, and England has suffered loss by his death in his very prime. What sin he had committed I know not, that Mr. F. T. Palgrave should write his life, and should say that he was "signalised and authenticated as a true Man" (capital M) "by the broad seal of Nobleness" (capital N).

Most of us can fix upon a time and place at which the whole current of our future life was determined by a single event. If, after years of changeful adventure,—of London, Paris, Vienna, New York, Melbourne,—you come back to the tranquil country village where that event occurred, the effect upon the mind is very remarkable, but entirely indescribable. It was thus with me at Lechlade. The somnolent little town was unchanged—unchanged as the river Isis, upon which it stands. The very same grocer was selling tea and sugar over the very same counter that Saturday afternoon. The old house, not far from the town, in which I had dwelt, seemed unaltered. There clung to the balcony the same perfumed clematis which had clustered above brown tresses long years ago. I could fancy a slender hand pushing aside those troublesome tendrils, rich with constellated bloom. If I could, in poetic form, reproduce the feelings which came upon me as I thus revisited the half-forgotten past

—as I thus encountered my boyish, enthusiastic, unspoilt, uncynical self—I think it would be worth reading. But I cannot do it. They have refreshed me, those strange sensations; that draught of the magic fountain has somewhat lessened the world-weariness which a man cannot but feel as he nears the end of his eighth lustrum; and as I pass onward I hum the delicious old ballad of Spain :—

"Fonte frida, fonte frida,
Fonte frida, y con amor!" [1]

Lechlade, for aught that appears, may have had no births or deaths or marriages since 1848, when last I looked upon it. Not so, however; for on Sunday morning I was witness of the entry into the Christian Church of two small creatures in long clothes. It was the first Sunday in the month; and the worthy vicar on that day sacrifices the sermon to the christenings. To the Londoner, somewhat tired of sermons preached and printed, a sermonless Sunday seems rather in the nature of a holiday; but the good folk of Lechlade object to the system, and do not come to church so freely on the occasion. I like to see those young Christians publicly received into the Church. The ceremony has its humorous side; all the girls of the congregation giggle; the clergyman is uncomfortable, and looks as if he must infallibly drop the baby; the sponsors, if of the lower order, never know what to say or do. One cannot help thinking of the old

[1] The tone of cynicism and weariness occasionally found in his writings at this date afterwards disappeared, and during the last part of his life he always wrote hopefully and happily.—F. C.

story of the girl saying her Catechism, who, being asked, "What is the outward and visible sign or form in baptism?" answered, "*The baby, sir!*" Yet, with all these drawbacks the scene is impressive; it is delightful to think that the poor little stranger in the world is welcomed by the whole Christian community. How far that community does its duty by him subsequently, is a matter not here to be discussed.

Magnificent were my apartments in the little Lechlade inn: a huge wainscoted first-floor room has been partitioned into two, one being used as bedroom, the other as sitting-room. You could scarcely have finer quarters at a West-End hotel. Probably, in some forgotten era, the little town (it has some twelve or thirteen hundred inhabitants) held assemblies there, and the aristocracy of the neighbourhood danced minuets and cotillons. I wish I could have encountered that venerable entity, the Oldest Inhabitant, just to have inquired whether he remembered such gay doings. There were one or two charming young ladies at church—I could not help seeing their faces, as they gazed with intense interest at the two babies—who would make a Lechlade ball very attractive even now. Fanciful archæologists maintain that Lechlade was once the seat of the College of Physicians, whence it was called originally "Leeches' Lake." There are vague traditions of its once having been a seat of some sort of learning. At present it is very much what Leland described it three centuries ago, "a praty old village."

And now I am well out of Berkshire limits, and about to pass through one of the least interesting parts of Wilt-

shire; for this Sunday evening I am to reach Bristol, one of the dingiest and quaintest of English cities, whereof I have many a pleasant recollection. So I decide to walk to Swindon; and service over, and a pint of excellent ale taken in to strengthen me, I start in the broiling sunshine. Those ten miles were rather trying; but I knew that at Swindon I could dine quietly in a cool refreshment-room overlooking a tiny lake, with a bevy of pretty waitresses in their Sunday dresses eager to serve me. Verily the August heat rendered exquisite beyond description or conception the cool draught of champagne with which I cleared my throat before dining. And how voracious I was thereafter! A fowl was placed before me (not a colossal Cochin, of course): I left just one leg of it, for the sake of appearance. What else I devoured matters little; I had ample time for digestion on the terrace-platform overlooking the lakelet, and a cup of good coffee, and a gossip with some of the pretty young ladies already mentioned. People abuse English railway refreshment-rooms; but I know that at Swindon you can get as good a dinner as at a London hotel. Of course, when a man is in a tremendous hurry, he does not select the right things to eat; but the cool and self-possessed traveller, who does not allow his voracity to make him reckless, will find no fault with such refreshment-rooms as those at Swindon, Derby, Birmingham, Carlisle, and many other first-class stations. The unthinking crowd rush to the counters, and select indigestible wedges of pork-pie, or buns of much antiquity; the old hand sits down, calls a waiter, and gets his basin of mock-turtle or slice of sirloin

in comfort. Half the blunders people make in life are due to being in too great a hurry.

Here is the train; and now for Bristol! I had a most intelligent fellow-traveller, who seemed to have been everywhere, and who was now bound for Bude, on the rough Cornish coast, whose "thundering shores" the Laureate has immortalised. That is a noble wild coast, where they say King Arthur dwelt, and where, on his tomb, was written,

"Hic jacet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rexque futurus."

Accustomed to all forms of the picturesque, my companion agreed with me that no city in the world is more picturesque than Bath. Grey city of crescents and terraces one above another on those green romantic hills, with lazy Avon creeping through the valley, how many are my reminiscences of thee!

"Well I love thee, pleasant city,
Fairest far in all our shires!
Though we think of Gothic Oxford,
Lincoln's lofty spires,
Quaint arcades of dusky Chester,
Olden town by sandy Dee,
Muddy streets of stirring Bristol,—
What are they to thee?"

However, here is Bristol; and a friendly face awaiting me on the platform, and a friendly hand eager to grasp mine. And if my article were about Bristol, I should have a good deal to say; but, under present circumstances, will content myself with asking what amazing genius put the policemen of the city into those astounding hats.

A WALK THROUGH WILTS.

ALTHOUGH there is no county in England devoid of special beauties, there are several whose beauties cannot be discovered without considerable toil. Wiltshire comes into this category. The bold pedestrian who determines to explore it will have to walk many a mile on hard white chalk roads, unshaded by any tree; will have to eat the flesh of that unclean animal, the pig, in its crudest state; will have to drink either abominable beer, or cider more abominable. Why are the wayside inns of this county, with rare exceptions, so miserably supplied? Doubtless there is some valid reason for it, but it passes my philosophy.

August was at its sultriest, when, with a friend and a dog, I found myself one evening in the city of Salisbury, ready for a walk into Wilts. We dined and slept at one of those tranquil ecclesiastical hotels—the White Hart, I think it is called—which one finds only in cathedral towns. The white-throated waiters looked like vergers, and seemed rather amazed by the advent of two straw-hatted pedestrians with the lightest conceivable knapsacks. Even the drowsy susurrus of the coffee-room gas had

something of the musical monotony of Bishop Hamilton's Charges. But commend me to the hotels of a cathedral city for good dinners and comfort. It won't do to put an archdeacon in a damp bed, or poison a rural dean with bad port wine. Though we looked extremely unclerical, we got a good dinner at Salisbury; and I should be an ingrate if I omitted to notice the excellence of the Salisbury eels. Thames hath a reputation for eels, as everybody knows who has ever dined at Hampton Court; but the eels of the Avon at Salisbury are unapproachable.

There is not much to be said of the city of New Sarum, unless one were to describe the cathedral. The spire of this great minster, about as high as that

> "Cross of gold
> That shines over city and river,"

amid the mercantile turmoil of London, is a notable example of the architectural effect producible by simplicity. The roof of the cathedral is an unbroken horizontal line, without any of those meretricious adornments dear to modern architects; and from it springs the tower, crowned with its slender spire, fascinating the gaze by its absolute beauty of proportion. That perfect proportion has its customary effect of lessening one's first impression of magnitude. If a stranger could be set down beside the cathedral, without knowledge of his whereabout, he would ridicule the notion that England's loftiest spire rose above him. But its greatness grows upon the spectator. After a while it dwarfs the sordid city which clusters beneath it. As I left Salisbury, walking towards Old Sarum,—where I hoped to meet the ghost of a Tory, but did not,—the city

faded into smoke, receded into its valley; but the mighty spire rose keen and triumphant into the sacred silence of the air. I do not wonder that the architect of this Wiltshire cathedral sought to produce an effect by lifting his spire into the region of the clouds. Massive majesty is the peculiar characteristic of the undulating downs. The builders of Stonehenge were actuated by a like feeling; they sought to make their hypæthral temple sublime in its vastness, and thence suited to the vast plain which lies around it. Both the Druidic and the Christian architect were influenced by the natural scenery which surrounded them.

Early breakfast is the pedestrian's great difficulty at an hotel. We were fortunate, inasmuch as there was a cheese-fair at Salisbury, open at eight in the morning, when I suppose the first-comers had the best of it. Anyway, breakfast at seven was the order of the day; and we, who did not buy cheese, profited by the occasion. We started on our walk early enough to see the fair opened, the town-crier of the cathedral city ringing his bell with much pomp and sonority. I don't know who buy the South Wilts cheeses, but I should be uncommonly sorry to eat them. The North Wilts, in shape like a Stilton, are very tolerable. But I am *laudator temporis acti* as regards cheese. Where is the double Gloucester of my youth? Gone, like "love's young dream," and my early determination to be leader of the House of Commons.

The sunshine was falling on the calm and thoughtful head of Sidney Herbert's statue in the market-place as we started towards Old Sarum. Of this most ancient town, haunted by memories of Vespasian, of Alfred, of

fierce Sweyn from Denmark, and stern William from Normandy, there remain only the mighty embankments and deep trenches which mark where the castle stood. We were pretty well done up, as regards wind, by the time we had passed both moats and reached the central summit. The ascent from the inner moat to the grass-grown court-yard, in which stood the donjon-keep, is at an angle of about sixty degrees, while the side of the hill is a perfect labyrinth of shrubs and briars. There is an easier way to the top, but of course we failed to discover it. One or two mighty fragments of ancient wall are visible; wall that seems to have been many yards thick, built of rough stones of all sizes, held together by coarse mortar. Its strength is amazing, and so I suspect is its age; but, being no antiquary, I leave this point to be settled by more learned observers. The decay of the city of Old Sarum was caused by an ecclesiastical quarrel in the thirteenth century. Either the bishop and clergy could not agree with the governor of the castle, or else they fell out among themselves; but in any case a new cathedral was built at New Sarum, and the younger city grew rapidly, and received a charter from Henry III. Thenceforward Old Sarum dwindled, till at length it became notorious as the rottenest of all rotten boroughs. But the huge mounds which indicate the limits of its ancient castle will outlast the spire of Salisbury; and if Lord Macaulay's eternal New Zealander should explore Wiltshire, the ruins of Old Sarum will strike him with greater amazement than those of its younger rival.

And now for Stonehenge—a hot walk of some twelve

or fourteen miles. We found ourselves at first on the high-road from Salisbury to Ludgershall and Hungerford —a chalky road, thoroughly characteristic of Wiltshire— hot to the foot and weary to the eye, without a tree or a house for miles. A solitary old man who kept the turnpike gave us to drink a fluid which he said was water; it was execrably nasty. At the fourth milestone we found a bridle-road to the left, into which we dashed eagerly, and were soon rewarded by the welcome sight of a bridge crossing a lucid river full of water-lilies, and leading to a quiet little village called Woodford. Verily this was enjoyable. Sam, my four-footed comrade, rushed into the Avon, bathing and drinking simultaneously. Dog has certainly a good many advantages over man. Not the least is the non-necessity of dressing and undressing— terrible bores; so that he can take a bath without trouble whenever he sees running water. At Woodford we found a wayside public-house, with a stout, garrulous, good-humoured landlord, who, as well as his wife, kindly sat down and gossiped with us as we made quick work of some capital bread and cheese and home-brewed beer. We were quite an event to this out-of-the-way village; the landlord had seen nothing so remarkable since the apparition one afternoon of a "dashing gent," with a gun and a couple of dogs, who was walking from the Land's End to London, and being money-bound had pawned his watch at Salisbury, and who had insisted on sleeping at this little hostelry. I am not surprised, for Woodford is a charming place of rest. The quiet waters of Avon give it a wonderful beauty.

Everybody remembers Thackeray's "Peg of Limavaddy." At this Woodford inn we found Peggy's rival; and my companion, who is both poetic and erotic, amused himself by following in Thackeray's footsteps. I can only afford him a dozen lines, which I print with the wicked wish his wife may see them :—

While the Avon stream
  Rippled in the breezes,
At a window she
  Ironed some chemises;
As the heater flew
  O'er the snowy linen,
Faith, I thought a kiss
  There would be no sin in;
Holding up the steel
  Close enough to smutch me,
She said, "You 'll get it hot
  If you dare to touch me."

I won't say whether his audacity was sufficient to brave the perils of the hot iron, but he raved about the buxom lass until we reached Stonehenge.

Nothing could be more delicious, on a hot summer day, than to loiter along the margin of Avon from Woodford northward. The beauty of the little river is indescribable. It seems to wind coquettishly, at intervals approaching the road, and then flying far into fields like some flirting feminine creature. It is unutterably tranquil and lucid, and you may watch the fish—tiny ones enough—shooting in and out among the water-weeds. Woods descend to the river-side, and amid the dense green leafage quaint old cottages are buried—habitations in which a dreamer might wholly forget the turmoil of the world. Heartily sorry were we to lose Avon's pleasant companionship—to

hear no more its tinkling voice over the pebbles—music most divine. Not very far from Woodford a pleasant avenue and fair green turf enticed us from the road; and, descending a gentle slope, we came in front of one of the most charming and characteristic gentlemen's houses that I remember—Lake House, inhabited, we were told, by a Mr. Duke—a grey-stone mansion, with green lawns and retired pleasaunces, hidden in the cosiest of nooks. I have seen countless places more pretentious, but not one in which a man might live a happier life. Quiet haunts like this have an especial beauty in Wiltshire, from the contrast with the heat and glare of the roads, along which there is very seldom any shade. Somewhat farther, the village church of Wilsford, its roof alive with pigeons from a neighbouring farmstead, was also a pleasant sight.

At length, after passing the outskirts of Amesbury, we came out upon the open downs—and lo, Stonehenge! Like all great sights, this marvellous monument of eld at first seems inferior to one's anticipation. Moreover, we were unlucky in finding a host of excursionists there—holiday folk from the Isle of Wight; odious omnibuses and sordid shandrydans from Salisbury; Goths chipping off fragments of the great stones, to keep in remembrance of their trip. Excursion trains are a great blessing to the people, and far be it from me to say a word against them: but if they bring you a crowd where you desire solitude, you may be forgiven for railing a little. And Stonehenge, to realise its grandeur, should be seen in solitude. I should like to be there alone at sunrise, or in the midst of a great thunderstorm. On the present occasion I was

rather disgusted by a gentleman-like person, who asked me whether I had counted the stones—and regretted to find that I had not, as he had a bet upon their number! Barbarian!

There are all sorts of theories about Stonehenge, we know, and all sorts of legends. There are notions of serpent-worship and of zodiacal symbolism. There are stories of the Druids, of Aurelius Ambrosius, of Hengist and Horsa, and Rowena. Who cares? There it stands upon the wide plain, a mighty primeval temple, on which time and tempest have had little power. The largest vertical stones are about twenty feet high, each pair crossed by an enormous lintel almost as large. What worship was held here, or what assemblages of chiefs and warriors, the world will never know, however theorists may conjecture. Possibly the aboriginal bards of Britain raved in galliambics there, like Mr. Tennyson's Boadicea. The supposition is quite as probable as anything the archæologists suggest. Meanwhile, as Stonehenge is, during the summer, populous with visitors, and is some miles away from a well or a wayside inn, why does the lord of the manor cruelly inhibit all persons from selling refreshments there? A glass of water would have been cheap at a shilling that scorching August day, and we got nothing till we reached Winterbourn Stoke, some four miles farther. The head of the house of Antrobus might surely tolerate vendors of lemonade.

Not at all sorry were we to cross a little streamlet to Winterbourn Stoke, sit down on the porch of a small hostelry, and call loudly for cider. Eugh! The very

memory of that liquid (and it was the same throughout Wilts) sets my teeth on edge. Beer, then? this was worse; so we ordered tea, and therewith something eatable, which arrived in the form of pork chops, but no milk in the tea. The villagers of Winterbourn Stoke are obliged to do without milk, as only one person keeps cows, and he won't sell the lacteal fluid,—an elegant phrase, which I use to avoid tautology. And here I must mention a piece of diabolical wickedness on the part of one of my companions,—not the dog. He is a medical individual, and hath (like most of his clan) a pet theory, to the effect that bacon generates tapeworms or tadpoles, or something of the sort, in the human interior, and that it is the chief cause of skin-disease. On this pleasant theme he eloquently dilated all through Wilts; and as we failed (one occasion alone excepted) to get anything eatable that was not flesh of swine, it naturally made me feel uncomfortable.

The old lady who supplied us with tea and pork at Winterbourn Stoke was a very nice old lady indeed. Seeing us, after our meal, in apparent want of amusement, she produced the photograph of her son, a young gentleman of about twelve, together with some of his literary productions, in the form of copy-books and ciphering-books. They were the delight of *her* heart; why shouldn't we be delighted also? We were. The unfortunate boy appeared to be in a part of arithmetic called *tare and tret*, and there were definitions and directions about deducting tare first, and then tret, and then settle, and finally cloff—which it seems is a privilege pertaining to citizens of London—

enough altogether to perplex any ordinary intellect. We mightily pleased our hostess by assuring her that such difficult processes were quite beyond our powers. She will have a higher opinion of her boy's genius henceforward.

Would that I could describe the feelings with which our lonely walk across the downs that evening impressed me! We loitered awhile where trench and bank mark the limits of Danebury Castle, and then pressed on towards Wiley, where we were told there was a comfortable inn. It was a calm summer night. Our path lay between the gigantic undulations of the chalk hills. Those beautiful curves must have evoked the idea of Hertha as a Titanic goddess. They have a feminine voluptuous softness. Gradually the colour faded from the sky, of which we could only see a fragment, overarching the valley through which we wound. The solitude was awful, delightful: no human being was to be found for miles. We were in the sublime presence of the night. It seemed as if amid that strange silence, and under that strange sky, a supernatural revelation might be expected. I do not wonder that lonely dwellers in wild solitudes are superstitious—are possessed with phantasies,

> "Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
> And aery tongues that syllable men's names
> On sands and shores and desert wildernesses."

Change the subject. Let me celebrate the Bell Inn at Wiley. There we get cold mutton and Guinness's stout; there for breakfast next day we were actually fortunate enough to feed on trout fresh caught in the river Wiley.

'Twas an oasis in the Wiltshire desert. Anybody who likes trout-fishing can't do better than run down to The Bell (there is a railway station close by), and try his skill upon that water. I counted dozens of fine fish where the river crosses the road,—splendid fellows, quite ready to bite at a tempting fly. The river is slow, shallow, and weedy, its water perfectly clear. We met it again afterwards, and there is no stream (Thames excepted, and perhaps the Cumbrian Eden) for which I have a stronger affection. Any angler who acts on my suggestion is at liberty to send me a basket of trout.

We were rather sorry to leave Wiley—but the famous Wiltshire White Horse was before us. So after expressing our intense satisfaction at the excellence of the fare and the smallness of the bill, and after taking a farewell look at the delicious trout-haunted stream, we started for a scorching walk through Codford St. Peter and Codford St. Mary, towards Warminster. Beyond these two villages, and somewhere near Ashton House,—where dwelt the founder of the famous firm whose head so pluckily fights Mr. Gladstone on income-tax questions,—we turned down a lane to the left, and again encountered the delightful Wiley. There it turns a dark and dripping mill-wheel; there also it makes green and cool the little village of Boyton, the most Elysian nook we found in all our wanderings. The paths of that village are freshened by the ever-rippling stream. Quaint old-fangled cottages, surrounded by gardens and orchards, cluster around the church and rectory. As the living is in the gift of Magdalen College, Oxford, it is probably a good one; anyway

the parsonage is charming, with turf that even this scorching summer has not spoilt; and roses enough to supply any quantity of altars. I would rather be rector of Boyton than Dean of Sarum—or even Bishop of that same.

I have now to record the worst meal we ate in Wiltshire. It was at a place which the map calls Cortington, and the inhabitants Corton. The only thing eatable was what the landlord's daughter—who afterwards went away and played vilely on a jingling piano—called a "vore-arm of pork." It was the worst porcine entertainment I ever endured: and the beer was horrible. I can only repeat my astonishment that the village inns of Wiltshire are so much behind those of other counties. We were so hungry, that even the "vore-arm" suffered diminution. A mile or two farther we halted at a green hamlet called Titherington, with an antique barn-like church, and no public-house. That terrible "vore-arm" had made us sorely athirst; so while I lay under some noble elms, my comrade sought for liquid, and at length found an old lady who dealt in ginger-beer. I had not tasted ginger-beer for about a quarter of a century; and thirsty as I was, its extreme nastiness astonished me. However, we drank a lot of it, and started again.

And here let me consecrate a paragraph to a good Samaritan. That Corton "vore-arm" had not been obliterated from our memories by the Titherington ginger-beer; and we were sitting ruefully under some patulous trees, longing for something to quench our thirst. Suddenly there rode along a gentleman in a white hat, bestriding a white horse. On his left knee rested a noble

stone jar. He pulled up when he saw us, and inquired if we should like some cider, and whether we could conveniently drink from a jar. Our replies were enthusiastically affirmative; and we each drank two long delicious draughts of the finest cider I have tasted since I left Devonshire. The folk at Sutton Veney told us our benefactor's name was Long. Long may he live! say I, and may his supply of first-rate cider never fail! If the good wishes of thirsty travellers are worth anything, Mr Long will be amply rewarded for his wayside courtesy.

Between Sutton Veney and Warminster we had no adventures. At the latter town a fair was in progress; and I invested all my loose coppers in sweet-stuff, for the benefit of a group of youngsters. Wanting to write a letter, I turned into the Bath Arms, a capital inn of ancient repute, and got there the only tankard of really good bitter ale that I tasted in Wiltshire. Every new excursion of mine tends to verify the aphorism already enunciated—that the comparative civilisation of a town may be judged by the quality of its bitter ale. Four miles more brought us to Westbury, where we encountered an amusing difficulty. The chief inn of this little town is the Lopes Arms, and thither we made our way; but pedestrianising caused us to look anything but respectable; and the authorities of this eminently aristocratic hotel were doubtful about admitting us. I had some thought of calling on Sir Massey Lopes, member for the borough, who happened to be in the town at the time, for assistance in this perplexity, he and I being old acquaintances. It would have been rather fine to extinguish

the dubious landlord by bringing down upon him the worthy baronet, who is despot in that Wiltshire town. But it was late—ten o'clock, or a little after: Sir Massey might have a dinner-party; so we trusted to our own resources, and got very comfortable quarters at the Crown. The hostess was a widow; and her two eldest daughters—about fourteen and twelve I imagine—delighted me by their anxiety to be useful and obliging.

Now, in this town of Westbury I went to school about twenty years ago, and had never visited it since. It was very amusing. My scholastic career had been adventurous. One old gentleman recognised me instantly as having robbed his orchard with provoking pertinacity. I was a dabbler in chemistry in my boyhood: the druggist of whom I had purchased materials for making gases insisted on regaling me with brandy and soda. The tailor of my boyish days was dead. The bookseller—whom I had once employed to print a magazine!—couldn't believe in my identity. Even in those early times I was stung by the literary œstrus, and can to this day remember my intense delight at seeing my first magazine-essay in print. I had easy access to all the poets' corners of newspapers in the neighbourhood; but now behold me in *Fraser*, with an Ingoldsby kind of ballad called *Sir Willoughby Ware*, for which I received a cheque for three guineas. The idea that verse could be turned into money was to me utterly new. Another Westbury tradesman, for whom I had especial liking, was a hybrid between a bookseller and a confectioner. His gooseberry-tarts were perfect. Him the Great Destroyer had taken from among his

fellows; but his widow remained to console me. And then I had so many things to hear of my old school-fellows. One had succeeded to a baronetcy, and another was station-clerk at Didcot. One had made an enormous fortune in Australia; and another had committed forgery, and found his way to Portland. It reminded one of Praed's lines :—

> "Where are my friends! I am alone;
> No playmate shares my beaker:
> Some lie beneath the churchyard stone,
> And some—before the Speaker."

The home-brewed ale of Westbury deserves commendation; it is strong, and has a wholesome flavour. The borough has some political reminiscences. Blackstone of *The Commentaries* was its member for a couple of years; and now a Lord Chancellor has taken his title from it. Sir Manasseh Lopes, who had the ill-luck to be fined and imprisoned for bribery at Grampound, was its member from 1820 to 1829, and was succeeded by no less a personage than Sir Robert Peel. In 1847 I was spectator of the great contest between James Wilson of *The Economist* and Matthew James Higgins, better known as Jacob Omnium, or Paterfamilias, or the assailant of Eton, or the advertiser of Anonyma. Mr. Higgins was then a Conservative, and had the Lopes interest on his side; but Wilson beat him by twenty-one, according to Captain Dod: I thought the majority was smaller. Both Wilson and his opponent were to some extent representative men. The founder of *The Economist* was unrivalled in the literature of commerce and produce. He was a sound thinker and a clear writer. In Mr. Bagehot's brief memoir of him occurs a most characteristic anecdote. In

1839 he was travelling by rail, and writing as he travelled. A gentleman, unknown to him, a distinguished member of the Anti-Corn-Law League, asked him what he was about. "I am writing on the Corn-Laws," said Wilson; "something in answer to the rubbish they have been talking at Manchester." The leaguer was astounded; but Wilson soon showed him that the Manchester men were blundering absurdly in arraying class against class on the question. His object was to prove that agriculture would be benefited by the repeal; and his calm and judicious mode of stating the question did more towards its settlement than all the rhetoric of the League's less logical orators.

It was curious that Wilson should have defeated at Westbury a typical man of quite another order. Mr. Higgins might be described as a barrister-journalist. His strength is his style, and he probably cares little what brief he holds. He is equally at home in attacking the public schools, in prejudging a court-martial, in describing that heroine of the *demi-monde* whose pretty ponies and Poole paletot he introduced to the public. We should miss him, doubtless; in fact, since the Crawley court-martial we *do* miss him from *The Times;* but even Tories will probably admit that it would have been a misfortune if, by success at Westbury, he had kept James Wilson out of Parliament. The one man was fit for the House; let the other haunt the lobbies.[1]

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[1] I cannot help protesting against this estimation of Mr. Matthew Higgins, who was a man of keen and sound sympathies, and the very opposite of a barrister-journalist, to whom his brief is all in all.—Tom Taylor.

And now for Longleat. The road from Westbury, through the villages of Chapmanslade and Corsley, has no remarkable points. Corsley is said to have been the scene of that famous incident in Sir Walter Raleigh's life, when his too affectionate servitor, seeing him emit clouds of smoke from his mouth, and smelling the unknown odour of tobacco, imagined that his master had in some preternatural fashion caught fire, and emptied over his head a quart tankard of strong ale. We saw on the road-side the charred timber of some cottages which a week or two previously had been struck by lightning, and burnt to the ground. One woman was killed. No death seems so like the visible work of God as death by lightning. There is a splendid passage in Browning's *Pippa Passes*, where two guilty lovers are conversing; and Ottima says:

> "Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
> Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
> And ever and anon some bright white shaft
> Burnt through the pine-tree roof, here burnt and there,
> As if God's messenger through the close wood screen
> Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
> Feeling for guilty thee and me."

This gives precisely the effect on the mind produced by vivid forked lightning. The sight of it brings a man closer to the Divinity. I am not maliciously disposed; but I really *should* like to see how Bishop Colenso would behave in the midst of a tremendous thunderstorm. I suppose he would say that, according to the theory of probability, the chances are several millions to one against a bishop being struck by lightning.

And now, after some few miles of a sultry road, we are in a region of great trees. Longleat, the palace of the Marquis! For the sake of "auld lang syne," the aforementioned Westbury bookseller—his name occurs frequently in *Paradise Lost*, in the sixth book of which it attains great distinction—had munificently presented me with a treatise entitled *Historical Associations of Longleat House*. There wasn't much in it. I learnt from it that Lord Macaulay thought it "the most magnificent country-house in England," which I don't; but that Macaulay should is not remarkable, for Longleat is rather like Macaulay. It is massive, superb, ornate. There is not a touch of beauty or sublimity or picturesqueness in its architecture—nothing which indicates genius—no poetry, but an ample amount of prosaic splendour and luxury. It is in the same ratio to Warwick Castle as Macaulay to Coleridge; but a fine place, delightfully situate, with a noble park around it, wherein the deer were numerous and in capital condition. We lay on the turf under great trees, in front of the many-windowed and more-pinnacled mansion, while

> "In copse and fern
> Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail."

We read the history of the Thynnes in the *brochure* of the Westbury *librarius*, finding nothing therein of special interest except the brief biography of Thomas Thynne, better known as "Tom of Ten Thousand." Tom was an adherent of the luckless Duke of Monmouth. He married a charming young widow, daughter of the Duke of Northumberland. She was just fifteen at the time, having

caught her first husband at the mature age of twelve. She never lived with Tom Thynne, being in love with Count Königsmark, who, with three followers, assassinated poor Tom in St. James's Street. Nice place for an assassination! As for the wicked child-widow, she married not the Swede, but the Duke of Somerset. And it gives one a pleasant idea of justice in the seventeenth century, that whereas the assassins whom Königsmark employed were hanged, he himself was acquitted.

The next of the Thynnes is remembered for having given a home to Bishop Ken, the author of the *Morning* and *Evening Hymns*, when that prelate was deprived because he would not take the oath of allegiance to William of Orange. The episcopal poet lived at Longleat about twenty years. The compiler of this rather thin account of the Thynne family rises at one point to the perfection of absurdity. He says that the grandfather of the present Marquis of Bath "earned for himself the reputation of being *not only a nobleman but a Christian*," etc. Isn't this charming? Fancy a Marquis "earning the reputation of being a nobleman!" One would think there was some difficulty in his avoiding that reputation. And as to the other part of the business, the writer seems to infer that whether you are a Christian or not, it is well to have a reputation for Christianity. However, this will I say for the Marquises of Bath, they make no churlish attempt to debar the people from the enjoyment of their beautiful demesne. The house is thrown open twice a week—the park always; and who-

ever will may enjoy a boating excursion on the charming lakelet Shire Water.

Past the limits of Longleat, and we had entered Somersetshire. Frome, where we took the rail, is an unusually good specimen of a small country town. It looks prosperous and comfortable. Built at the meeting of two or three steep hills, it has a pleasant picturesqueness about it, which is enhanced by the unquestionably good architectural style of many of the new houses. I don't know whether this triumph of æsthetic over parsimony is due to the high-church vicar. Hungry as hunters were we on arriving at Frome; but our cash had run so short that it became requisite to calculate carefully whether we could both eat lunch and take the rail to Bristol! The result luckily was favourable; so we polished off nearly the whole of the cold meat to be found at the George Hotel. My comrade, who delights in *omne quod exit in ess*, from princesses downwards, would never forgive me if I omitted mention of the coquettish waitress of this hostelry. She chaffed us as gaily and readily as Miss Hardcastle did Marlow in *She Stoops to Conquer*. By the way, what a capital edition of *Goldsmith* Dr. Waller of Dublin has lately brought out! I like to see one poet editing another; and it's only fair that poor Oliver, who left Trinity College in disgrace, should find an editor in one of Trinity's most illustrious sons.

Farewell to Wilts, for the present at any rate. The meagre supplies at the wayside inns make it an unsatisfactory county for the pedestrian. I did not forget its

"vore-arms" of pork, its hard beer and harder cider, until they were obliterated from my memory by a gigantic lobster-salad of my own making, containing half the lobsters to be found in Bristol, with a forest of lettuce, and about a kilderkin of oil and vinegar; and eaten by a pleasant party on the lawn of Rose Cottage while the yellow moon was rising over the distant Severn Sea.

TOWNS ON THE THAMES.

On a certain summer afternoon there came to the writer of this paper—at that time staying at a well-known bachelor hostelry in Covent Garden—a friend, who may be called Thaliarchus. Tempting was the matter of his embassy. "A party of us youths," said he, "are going to row from Maidenhead to Henley; we shall sleep to-night at Cookham; we will drop you there this evening, leave you to do a day's work in a purer atmosphere than this, and bring you back to-morrow." The idea was irresistible. Soon was a carpet-bag filled with books which had to be reviewed. Soon was a Great-Western train carrying a pleasant party from Paddington towards Maidenhead. Soon were Windsor's immortal towers left behind, and the royal river reached, and a four-oar secured. Exquisitely calm and still was the summer evening; exquisite were the summer odours afloat in the serene air. The young gentlemen pulled to Cookham at a great pace, only now and then grumbling at a literary man's being so absurd as to weigh sixteen stone, books not included. Arrived at Cookham, we found

a quaint old inn, whose sign has vanished from memory. Beds were obtained with some difficulty; tea, with bacon and eggs, "whose fame is a proverb," according to Mr. Sidonia, was ordered; and then away we all went to bathe beneath the flashing weir, immortalised by Mr. Leech in one of his fishing-sketches. Next morning, after another dip and a prodigious breakfast, Thaliarchus and his friends left me to my literature. What quiet, after the everlasting roar of London! Sitting on a rude bench in the garden behind the village-inn, I read and wrote all that summer day. The worthy landlord cooled my bottled ale in the pump-trough; and when it was poured into the goblet, the thirsty wasps came and refreshed themselves. Doubtless Thaliarchus and his comrades were happy, though perspiring; but mine was ampler felicity. Never did I review any books so favourably. Who could be severe upon an author in such weather, when the very wasps flocked amiably to share the critic's glass? Were they themselves critics, in some former existence?

Londoners love the Thames, and well they may. It is not everybody who, like my young friend Thaliarchus, can find happiness in rowing forty miles at a stretch; nor does the position of the stout gentleman who sits all day in a punt, and catches a few very small fish, awaken the envy of the general public. But the river has a charm for those who care little for fishing or for rowing. Pleasant it is to see the Cockneys swarm out on their summer holidays,—to Kew, or Hampton Court, or Richmond,—crowding the steamers and the South-Western

railway carriages. The man who does not sympathise with his fellows when they thus make festival does not deserve thorough enjoyment, and is probably incapable of it. How I pity the heavy swell who, on some high occasion, finds the solitude of his first-class carriage invaded by a crowd of joyous third-class passengers! Porters and guards strive to stop them; they might as well attempt to stem the current of the Thames. In they rush, a merry company; and the women make themselves at home, with some slight giggling, on the knees of the men; and our swell curls his Sardinian moustache with deep disgust, and buries his aristocratic nose in a square of white silk, odorous of frangipanni. They are very vulgar, doubtless, Mr. Fitzfoodle; but they have found out the secret of enjoyment; they have appetites that you would envy, and have never yet discovered that life is a bore. I confess I like to look at them.

Shelley once made a boat-voyage from London to Oxford, sleeping anywhere but at country-inns. One night he made his poetic couch in the churchyard of Lechlade, a pleasant village on the borders of four counties, and celebrated the occurrence in five divinely mystical stanzas. Let me quote the last:—

"Thus solemnised and softened, death is mild
And terrorless as this serenest night:
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child
Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep."

To be upon the water was the immortal poet's delight; many of his most exquisite poems were pencilled by

moonlight, as he floated on some lucid lake of Italy; and through his beloved element he passed into eternity, and solved the sweet yet awful secrets of death. So, by the margin or on the current of any stream, we cannot but remember Shelley—the purest, most loving, most maligned of men—the most musical and passionate of poets. The *Revolt of Islam* was written when he lived at Great Marlow,—"written in his boat, as it floated under the beech-groves of Bisham." Yet this poetical dreamer of twenty-five did not lose himself in his divine reveries. Marlow, during his residence there, was inhabited by an extremely poor population, suffering severely from disease. Shelley devoted himself to the study of medicine, in order to help them; and he had a severe attack of ophthalmia while engaged in this beneficent task.

Henley-upon-Thames is perhaps the first town above the capital at which ordinary Londoners make occasional holiday. The famous regatta brings thither, once every summer, all the rowing men of Thames and Isis and Cam. Then its quaint old streets—it is said to be the oldest town in Oxon—are crowded with the stalwart youth of the Universities and the metropolitan rowing-clubs; then its ancient hostelries, mostly dull and deserted save upon market-days, are utterly unable to supply bed and board for all who need them; then freely flows the bitter ale, and multitudinous boats dance on the waters of Remenham Reach, and the rank and fashion of a dozen counties throng to do honour to the flashing oars. What is pleasanter than a regatta, whether on sea or river? It is difficult to decide which is preferable. There is some-

thing wilder and more daring in the rapid career of a clipper yacht—a *Secret* or an *Arrow*—flying fast before the wind, like some gigantic bird. But the rowing-match is more a struggle between man and man—a trial of strength and endurance. The difference is something like that between chess and whist. Beaten in a sailing-match, you may fairly blame the destinies, as may the defeated whist-player; there are a thousand chances and accidents for which the most skilful yachtsman cannot provide. But the beaten crew in a rowing-match are seldom beaten by accident; and when an accident does happen, its results are not always what might be expected. Thus, years ago, when Oxford and Cambridge contended at Henley, one of the Cambridge crew was at the last moment taken ill. Oxford, strangely illiberal, declined to accept a substitute. Cambridge started with a crew of seven, *and won the race.* Again, in last year's race at Putney, the "stroke" of the Oxford boat strained his wrist so severely that he was obliged to pull with one hand only. Yet Oxford won.

As we leave Henley, voyaging downwards, we pass Medmenham Abbey, where an order of modern Franciscans, founded by Lord le Despencer, held high revel about a century ago. Their motto was *Fay ce que voudras.* Of their doings we dare say nothing in this decorous age. Few Londoners visit Marlow, which is hardly worth visiting; and Cookham, where, as I have said, my friend Thaliarchus induced me to spend a day, is the first point below Henley patronised by Cockney anglers or boating-men. The stretch of river from Cook-

ham to Maidenhead is perfectly delicious. Row it on an August evening, when the twilight is enchanted; when a saffron stain dies slowly in the west; when the fragrance of innumerable flowers comes from the gardens sloping to the stream. I am reminded of that exquisite trochaic lyric by James Payn of Trinity :—

"Dropping down the river . . .
'Midst the summer evens,
Whilst the winds are heavy
With the blossom-odours,
Whilst the birds are singing
In their sleepless nests.

Musical the rippling
Of the tardy current,
Musical the murmur
Of the wind-swept trees,
Musical the cadence
Of the friendly voices
Laden with the sweetness
Of the songs of old."

Concerning Cam wrote our pleasant Trinitarian poet; but what is Cam to Thames? Thames wants a poet.[1] The man who could put into lyric verse his impressions on a summer-evening pull from Maidenhead to Cookham would thereby become immortal. Of Cookham I have already said all that need be said. It is a village famous neither for antiquity nor for society; but it is close to the most charming part of the river—and what more is to be

[1] He has himself been called the *Laureate of the Thames*, and probably deserves the title. *The World*, in writing of his death, says :—"Many a season of sunlit glow or wintry gloom will the stream of Thames see, many a time will the woods on its shore wear their summer green and autumn gold, before they hear the notes of a singer so musical and so devoted as Mortimer Collins."—F. C.

desired? As we pass downwards, we gaze with delight upon the glorious woods of Cliefden, a splendid mansion built by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the "chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon" of Dryden. Has anybody read the versatile Duke's *Essay on Poetry*? It was an unpoetic age, that of Charles II., yet thus commenced his Grace :—

> "Of things in which Mankind does most excel,
> Nature's chief Master-piece is Writing well;
> And of all Sorts of Writing, none there are
> That can the least with *Poetry* compare."

Buckingham was "fast" enough, there is no question; but he was a man of great natural powers. It is something in his favour that, amid the perpetual flashes of wit, full of both subtlety and ribaldry, which dazzled the merry monarch and his court, he could write this line :—

> "But FALSTAFF seems inimitable yet."

Remembering how dull to appreciate Shakespeare were some of our most famous writers at various periods, it is only fair to give *kudos* to George Villiers for his evident delight in the greatest of English poets. Certes, the patrician wits of the Carolian era were not wholly satisfied with the literature of their time. Dryden is not deemed, in these later days, quite so great a poet as his contemporaries imagined him; yet of him the wicked Earl of Rochester wrote :—

> "Well, sir, 'tis granted, I said DRYDEN'S Rhymes
> Were stol'n, unequal, nay, dull, many Times.
> What foolish Patron is there found of his,
> So blindly partial, to deny me this?

> But that his Plays, embroider'd up and down
> With *Wit* and *Learning*, justly please the *Town*,
> In the same Paper I as freely own :
> Yet, having this allow'd, the heavy Mass
> That stuffs up his loose Volumes must not pass."

Probably most modern critics will hold that the Earl was right in his strictures upon "glorious John."

Behold, we are at Maidenhead. Here there is an excellent hotel close by the river, dear to boating-men in summer time; further in the town is Lovegrove's, a quaint English hostelry of the olden type, with a landlord who seems to belong to the earlier age of cosy ingles and famous port, and taking one's ease in one's inn. Better headquarters than Maidenhead for a Thames excursion cannot easily be found. The town lies adjacent to some of the most charming parts on the river; its hotels are excellent, and if you tire of Thames itself, there are plenty of pleasant places to explore in the vicinage. Foremost among these is Burnham Beeches, a wood of mighty trees, a spot which greatly arrided Luttrell, the gay and witty author of *Advice to Julia*. Ah me! did Julia take that good advice, done into such swift and sparkling stanzas? The wit and his Julia are both gone—where good advice, according to the theologians, is useless.

Close to Maidenhead is Bray, which a well-known song makes famous for its versatile vicar. The present vicar[1] may pardon us for a passing notice: he is the fortunate father of a family of sons equally renowned as scholars and cricketers; and the other day, when Berkshire met

[1] The Rev. Austen Leigh, nephew and biographer of Jane Austen the novelist.—F. C.

some rival county, at least half the winning eleven were sons of the Vicar of Bray. And one of them is a poet much above the average; *teste* some excellent verses about the Thames contributed to *Once a Week*. There are clear heads and strong arms, as well as "praty towns," "by Tamise ripe."

Surly Hall must be passed before we reach Windsor, a spot dear to Etonians, and celebrated by Praed in one of his earlier poems. Though the Montem exist no longer, it is still worth while to saunter along the margin of Thames between Surly Hall and Eton on a summer afternoon:

> "And hear them shout, and see them row,
> And cry, 'How fast them boys does go!'"

As we stroll along the banks, every winding of the stream exhibits a new view of Windsor's mighty towers. The great Castle, fittest residence of England's sovereigns, has worn a melancholy air since the Prince Consort died. We cannot look upon it without remembering that, beneath his wise and loving guidance, a happy family of young princes and princesses grew towards maturity in its stately halls and corridors. For all families, royal or otherwise, comes the inevitable day of disunion: the father is dead, his noble qualities more thoroughly appreciated since we have lost him:

> "Vita quid est hominis? Viridis floresculus horti,
> Sole oriente oriens, sole cadente cadens."

And the eldest daughter is a happy wife and mother across the sea; and the eldest son is upon the threshold of manhood, ready to do the duties of his lofty station; and the

second son has had to refuse a crown. Not even the great Henrys and Edwards, who loved this mighty pile, and made it what it is, have achieved higher fame than the noble Prince now dead. Not to him should arise mystic monolith, or Oriental obelisk, or triumphal arch, befitting a Cæsar or Napoleon,—but a Christian cross, such as our ancestors built.

Windsor Castle looks kingly, which is more than can be said for commonplace Buckingham or quaint St. James's Palace. Growing up from the days of the Conqueror, made especially magnificent by Edward III., who was born there, it is not unlike the British Constitution itself in its irregularities and anomalies, in its grandeur and strength. The history of England since the Normans crossed the Channel is symbolised in this majestic edifice. There Henry II. held a Parliament; there the Barons besieged King John; there Edward III. held the stately meetings of the famous order of knighthood which he had instituted; there also he kept prisoners the kings of Scotland and of France, doing them honour the while, in the old chivalric fashion. In that grim round tower was held captive, in a later reign, the third Stuart king of Scotland,—the first who bore the luckless name of James. Looking down from those dark walls, he saw the lady of his love walking in the garden below, and wrote concerning her verses that have much of Chaucer's fine simplicity :—

> "The fairest or the freshest younge flower
> That ever I saw, methought, before that hour."

Brief and unhappy as was the life of the poet-king—

violent and treacherous his death—let us hope that he had hours of real joy in the company of the lady whom thus he wooed.

There is other poetry connected with Windsor Castle. The Earl of Surrey wrote poems while imprisoned there; and it is believed that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was first played there before Elizabeth. But the Castle itself is a poem. You cannot enter St. George's Chapel without remembering the great monarchs who are buried beneath its exquisite roof, or tread the north terrace without thinking of the imperious queen who caused it to be made. Pleasanter place than Windsor Castle for a holiday trip there is not in England: the superb interior, with its innumerable reminiscences; the wide views over many counties from the towers and terraces; the umbrageous trees and spreading turf of the Great Park,—give one abundant occupation for a summer-day. And as Windsor is a royal town, all sorts of accommodation are also abundant. Excellent are the inns; the confectioners devote themselves enthusiastically to the supply of luncheons; there are even establishments where third-class travellers can have tea of the cheapest—as strong, I hope, as it is cheap. In the coming Lent, so say the authorities of the *Court Circular*, the Prince of Wales is to be married at Windsor: how all London, and no small proportion of the rest of England, will crowd to catch a glimpse of the ceremonial! Cavillers have been asking why the wedding is not to be held in the capital; but surely Windsor is a fitter place for it. Windsor, connected with the births, the marriages, the deaths, of so long a line of sovereigns, has higher claim

upon the Prince of Wales than Buckingham Palace, which has not been royal property a century. Even Westminster Abbey has not the regal reminiscences which pertain to Windsor Castle. So at Windsor let Albert Edward wed the blushing Alexandra; and let us all wish for them what Catullus wished for Aulus Manlius Torquatus and his bride :—

> "Torquatus, volo, parvulus
> Matris e gremio suæ
> Porrigens teneras manus,
> Dulce rideat ad patrem
> Semihiante labello."

Although Eton and Windsor may be regarded as one town, they are in different counties. Here the Thames divides Buckinghamshire from Berkshire, and the village of learning from the town of royalty. Those playing-fields of Eton are a joyous scene. As one sees the shirt-sleeved youngsters at their cricket or football, it is difficult to suppress Charles Lamb's utterance of regret that a few years will turn them into dull and decorous Members of Parliament. Who could photograph the peculiarities of public-school society? Many men have tried it; and readers of *Tom Brown's School-days* are compelled to admit that something very near to success has been attained in that charming book. Yet perhaps the most perfect picture of a great public school that can be found in English literature is contained in five brief chapters of *Coningsby*. Mr. Disraeli, in his boyhood, had no experience of a public school; yet by marvellous instinct he presents Eton to us as it is. What can be truer to the

absurd aristocracy of boyhood than the breakfast "lounge," and Coningsby's sullen dislike to meeting "an infernal manufacturer?" Then the youngster's crude political conversation about the Reform Bill, characteristically interrupted by the exclamation, "By Jove, here's the goose!" What, again, more admirable than the excitement of the school when it is supposed that Coningsby and his friends are drowned? A satirical acquaintance of mine, when Mr. Disraeli was in office, wrote a squib about him, which began thus:—

> "The model statesman, nowaday,
> If you could manage to compress him in
> A case of glass, the world would say,
> You had a very curious specimen.
> He nothing knows about finance,
> Statistics, policy, or history;
> But writes a capital romance,
> And tries to solve the Asian Mystery."

Certes, the "capital romance" must be admitted by his worst enemies. Praed himself was not more Etonian in his verse than the Tory novelist in his prose description of Eton.

And now the Thames winds many a mile before we come to any accustomed haunt of Londoners. Past Datchet Mead, into whose muddy ditch Jack Falstaff was thrown, hissing hot, amid foul linen; past Old Windsor, where the Saxon kings had a royal residence, while yet New Windsor was unknown; past Runnymede and Magna Charta Island; past London Stone, at Staines, which marks the limits of the Lord Mayor's jurisdiction; past quiet Laleham, where that glorious pedagogue,

Arnold, took pupils before his Rugby days; past St. Ann's Hill, where Charles Fox read novels on a haycock, and watched the jays stealing his cherries; past Chertsey, whither Cowley retreated to spend his last days; past Coway stakes, where Cæsar is said to have crossed the Thames; past Walton, where dwelt Lilly the astrologer, who was far cleverer in his day than any of our neoteric mesmerists or mediums; and at length we come to Hampton Court, wherein all Londoners rejoice. Here let us loiter awhile. Have you ever visited Hampton Races, gentle reader? They are not so patrician as Goodwood, or so cosmopolitan as Epsom; they are especially Cockney. They are vulgar, I admit;—how in the world is it to be otherwise when the *vulgus* amuse themselves? But you may just as well quarrel with a vulgar fraction as with a vulgar amusement. We can't all be the cream of the cream, like the writer and readers of this paper; so let us tolerate those unhappy persons who pertain to the *plebs*. However, if Hampton Races be vulgar, this can hardly be said of Hampton Court. True, the Palace was built by a butcher's son; but then he became a Cardinal; and King Edward VI. was born there; and it was a favourite dwelling of that most aristocratic monarch, Charles I. Yet, somehow, the building seems scarcely in keeping either with the magnificent Cardinal, or with his imperious master, or with the refined and artistic Stuart. One can better imagine our commonplace Queen Anne residing there.

> "Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,
> Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes *tay*."

The Palace itself is no especial attraction to the crowds who flock thither in the early summer; but the pleasant gardens and the noble chestnut avenues of Bushy are a delight and a luxury to the Londoner escaped from some close fuliginous domicile. Owen Meredith has a quaint little experience of his own to chronicle concerning Hampton Court. No doubt there are thousands who could echo it:—

> "I press'd her hand upon the steps,
> Its warmest tint the sky lent;
> She sought the shade: I sought her lips:
> We kiss'd; and then were silent."

Many a quiet osculation (not to use the vulgar monosyllable) has been given and taken in those trim gardens, and under those stately chestnuts. I am not of an envious disposition, but I really am half-inclined to envy the fortunate patricians to whom are assigned apartments in Hampton Court Palace; for the private division of that edifice is used as almshouses for the decayed nobility; people, you know, who have only some wretched three or four hundred a year to maintain their position. The contrast between the quiet of their own retired haunts, and the outdoor enjoyment when a sultry Monday throngs Hampton Court with holiday Londoners, must be delightful. Yet perhaps they do not enjoy it; perhaps they look with bitterness upon the careless crowds who come between the wind and their nobility, who make populous the parks and gardens to which they conceive they have a prior claim. If this be their feeling, they are rather to be pitied than envied.

The Great Hall is the finest part of the Palace, and is

worthy of the magnificent Cardinal. The pictures which the Palace contains are miscellaneous, and miscellaneously arranged: but he who loves true art will linger long before those unrivalled ruins—the cartoons of Raffaelle;[1] and he who loves pretty women, and cares little how voluptuous their presentment, will find amusement in Lely's portraits of the ladies of Charles II.'s court. After all, however, it is, as I have said, to garden and park that the holiday-keepers resort. They measure the great oaks and elms; they wonder at the mighty vine; they hunt one another through the unrivalled maze; they rejoice in the patulous chestnuts of Bushy. And, thereafter, plenty of good inns there are at which to dine when weary of wandering. I have, to this day, a pleasant recollection of some stewed eels that I ate at one of them: unluckily for the landlord, I forget which.

Thames Ditton was celebrated by Theodore Hook in some of his happiest verses. It is a quaint country village, where the *blasé* journalist fondly fancied he could pass a contented life. Kingston has various historic memories, which we will not disturb. Next comes Teddington, much frequented by young "apprentices of the law." Go thither any summer Saturday, and the odds are that you will meet a large proportion of the embryo barristers of your acquaintance. There usually are a half-dozen or so residing in the village, and *reading law*—by which, please to understand boating, fishing, and French novels. Alack! the railways are rapidly destroying the sequestered charm of Teddington; and in a few years it

[1] Now at South Kensington.—Ed.

will be a village of villas, with Italian turrets and ornamental grounds, such as the opulent citizen loves. When thus the Philistines take possession, the Arabs must seek new fishing and boating grounds.

Strawberry Hill, Horace Walpole's toy-mansion, has undergone great alteration at the hands of Lady Waldegrave. Let us hope that no ghost from Otranto will trouble her slumbers in consequence. Pope's Villa is not Pope's Villa at all, but a structure entirely new, which does not even stand on the same ground as did the poet's house. The last time I rowed from Twickenham to Teddington, the *Maria Wood* was moored close to the lawny margin of Thames at this point, and a gay party of citizens and their ladies held high revelry in honour of the Sheriffs-elect. It was impossible not to think of Pope's inscription on his grotto :—

> "Let such, such only, tread this sacred floor,
> As dare to love their country, *and be poor!*"

Without the slightest desire to question the patriotism of the civic banqueters, I doubt very much if one among them would dare to be poor. One can imagine your portly alderman saying, "What a foolish idea! Of course it was a poet that wrote it!" True, Sir Jacob; and it was also a poet who mourned the decadence of "plain living and high thinking;" and He was something more than a poet who drew that terrible contrast between Dives and Lazarus. Never mind: *dum vivimus vivamus;* turtle-soup is a great temptation, and there are few things equal to cold punch concocted by the hand of a master.

And now we arrive at a town especially beloved by the holiday-keepers of London. Who has not been at Rich-

mond? Who has not dined sumptuously at "Star and Garter," or "Castle," and, after a superb feed and delicious wine, growled considerably at the bill? Why are there dinner-bills in this world? Why is there a next morning? Why is too much sparkling hock, while it makes a man wonderfully witty at the moment, productive of headache some hours after?[1] Without pausing to solve these difficult problems, let me raise a pæan in favour of a Richmond dinner. You drive down on a pleasant afternoon, taking—if I may advise you—the Kingston road, entering the Park at the Old Lodge, and driving across that noble fragment of woodland until you reach the Terrace. There lies Thames beneath you, a poetic river, a visionary stream, its margin and its islets glorified by the magical light of evening. It will not, let us hope,

[1] These same ideas were afterwards put into verse, parodying Swinburne's *A Match.*

If life were never bitter,
And love were always sweet,
Then who would care to borrow
A moral from to-morrow?
If Thames would always glitter,
And joy would ne'er retreat,
If life were never bitter,
And love were always sweet.

If care were not the waiter
Behind a fellow's chair,
When easy-going sinners
Sit down to Richmond dinners;
And life's swift stream, flows straighter—
By Jove it would be rare,
If care were not the waiter
Behind a fellow's chair.

If wit were always radiant,
And wine were always iced,
And bores were kicked out straightway
Through a convenient gateway;
Then down the year's long gradient
'Twere sad to be enticed,
If wit were always radiant,
And wine were always iced.

annoy you extremely that the Earl Russell lives close by, and often strolls as far as this to look at the view and meditate impossible Reform Bills. Of course you have chosen agreeable company. There are no bores—no fellows who tell long stories—no men with exclusive political information. The ladies are charming—and charming ladies always like a good dinner. Even birds of Paradise peck a little, now and then. The talk—but who shall describe it? even the humorous gentleman who invites us to an evening party at the Hall of Egypt in Piccadilly might fail here. The printed sermons of great preachers or speeches of great orators fail to give any accurate impression of the effect produced in the utterance; and so, if it were possible to render permanent, by some acoustic process, the joyous converse of a pleasant party, the result would only disappoint us.[1] The

[1] Some more verses may perhaps be quoted on this subject, which was such a favourite one with the author:—

Stern hours have the merciless Fates
  Plotted for all who die:
But looking down upon Richmond's aits,
Where the merles sing low to their amorous mates,
  Who cares to ask them why?
    We 'll have wit, love, wine,
    Ere thy days divine
      Wither, July.

For the blossom of youth must fade,
  And the vigour of life must fly:
Yet to-day is ours with its odorous shade,
And the loving eyes which soon betrayed
  Dreams in the heart that lie.
    Swift life's stream flows,
    But alas! who knows
      Whither, July?

It is curious that the "Richmond aits" was the last bit of scenery on which the poet looked, and that it was in the month of July. He lay on a couch in full sight of his beloved river, and although he was so ill that it was probable he might not live for another four-and-twenty hours, he still enjoyed the beauty of the scene.—F. C.

bloom is gone from the peach, the feathery dust from the butterfly. No words could reproduce the malicious grace with which the lady of your love talks her delicious nonsense, or the musical tones of her gay and effervescent laugh. Nor can any verbal sorcery call up the voice and gesture and expression of the wit of your party,

> "Whose mind is a glass of champagne with the foam on 't,
> So his best things are said in the flush of the moment."

No; one word only can bring back the beauty and delight of the joyous banquet, and that word is RICHMOND. Imagination and memory must do all the rest.

Richmond Palace bore originally the name of Sheen, and received its present name from King Henry VII., who was Earl of Richmond in Yorkshire. The victorious Tudor was fond of the place, held tournament there, entertained Philip I. of Spain there, and finally died there, as Edward III. had before, and as Elizabeth did after him. We owe the park to Charles I., and the right of way through it to John Lewis, a brewer, who fought the Crown on this question in the reign of George II. In Horace Walpole's time it was an aristocratic fashion to hire a house at Richmond, and come down every Saturday and Sunday to play whist. Richmond has dearer memories than of kings and lordly whist-players. Here Reynolds came, when he could tear himself from his beloved London and the mighty Samuel; here Swift served Sir William Temple, and made love to Stella, and invented the "little language;" here, pleasantest of all to remember, Thomson wrote *The Castle of Indolence*, that

unique and exquisite poem, dear to all lazy men. How noble that outburst in the second canto!—

> "I care not, Fortune, what you me deny;
> You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace;
> You cannot shut the windows of the sky!"

Most indolent of bards! I see you now, hands in pockets, nibbling the sunny sides of peaches on a southern wall, or lying in bed till long after noon, because there was no reason for getting up. You are gone, I suspect, to the land

> "In which it seemeth always afternoon."

You are among "the mild-eyed melancholy lotos-eaters:"

> τῶν δ' ὅστις λωτοῖο φάγοι μελιηδέα καρπὸν
> οὐκέτ' ἀπαγγεῖλαι πάλιν ἤθελεν οὐδὲ νέεσθαι·
> ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ βούλοντο μετ' ἀνδράσι Λωτοφάγοισιν
> λωτὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι μενέμεν νόστου τε λαθέσθαι.

Collins, as well as Thomson, lived at Richmond; and to him Wordsworth has written some beautiful memorial verses. For Wordsworth, laker though he was, loved the Thames; and one of his finest sonnets was composed on Westminster Bridge, at a portentously early hour in the morning. How the famous poet came to be up so early, or so late, does not appear. Those, however, who have looked on London soon after sunrise in summer will agree with him that

> "Earth has not any thing to show more fair."

We will not pause at "Brentford town, a town of mud," whose chronic filth will be remembered as long as the *Castle of Indolence* is read, but seek rest and delectation on the other margin of the river, amid the Elysian gardens of Kew.

> "God the first garden made, and the first city, Cain,"

as Cowley hath it; and there surely is no diviner art for men to exercise than the making of gardens.

The quaint village of Kew, built around an old-fashioned green, is crowded with summer visitants; and no wonder. How delightful are those grassy slopes, those mighty trees, which tell of exotic forests; those blazing beds of exquisite flowers, ruby and sapphire and amethyst, set in emerald turf! Next to those fascinating Zoological Gardens, which don't lie on the Thames, and are therefore out of my circuit, the Botanic Gardens at Kew are my mania. But why cannot they be opened earlier?[1] Is it absolutely necessary to give them up to the gardeners till one o'clock? You can look at wild beasts at any hour of the day; indeed, they get more interesting as they get hungrier. But a garden should be entered as soon as possible after sunrise; for with every sunrise the world is born again, and they who are among trees and flowers, when *Rhododactulos Eos* brings light to mortals, may well be reminded of Adam and his bride in that mystic Eastern garden. And so we should like to see the delicious lawns of Kew trodden by truant feet long before the tepid hour of one.

Those who believe in mediums, and have read *David Elginbrod*, should make pilgrimage to Mortlake, whilom the residence of the famous Dr. Dee. Of Dee, as of Swedenborg, it has been doubted whether his spiritualism was not a mere mask for political plotting. Neither Mortlake nor Barnes may delay us. The next riverain towns

[1] Sir Joseph Hooker has since given very strong reasons.—T. T.

worth notice are Fulham and Putney. Fulham hath its bishop, which is something; and has had as residents Bodley and Bacon, and the creators of *Sir Charles Grandison* and *Gilbert Gurney*. Here it was that Theodore, the joyous and reckless, when indulging in impromptus of song for some guests at luncheon, was told that Mr. Winter, the tax-gatherer, wanted to speak to him. Thus he received the obnoxious visitor :—

> **"Here comes Mr. Winter, collector of taxes ;**
> **I advise you to give him whatever he axes ;**
> **He isn't the man to stand nonsense or flummery,**
> **For though his name's Winter, his actions are summary."**

Was it here or at Putney that Lovel the Widower had his suburban villa, where his biographer slept in an airy chamber opening on a velvet lawn, and enjoyed his strawberries and cigar before breakfast? Putney is one of the most agreeable of our towns on the Thames. Here the London Rowing Club has its headquarters; here the "Star and Garter," a pleasant waterside hostelry, offers excellent dinners to hungry oarsmen; here are held many first-class rowing-matches, not the least important of which is the annual one between the two Universities. This last year Oxford won easily : it was a strife of good big men against good little ones; and of course the former had it all their own way. Size must tell in all physical conflicts.[1] The soil which grows big oaks will grow big men; and that noble Oxford eight were but a type of the fine fellows who, in every department of life, make England foremost among nations. The struggle between

[1] And style even more.—T. T.

the two Universities brings down to Putney and Mortlake all the aristocracy of the realm: Palmerston and Derby had forgotten the eternal Whig and Tory contest, and drove down to see those gallant youngsters pull. Nor is this the sole athletic attraction of Putney. Upon the breezy heights of Wimbledon Common the Volunteers have pitched their tents; and every Saturday sees crowds of Londoners spend their weekly holiday in the tournament of the target, strengthening simultaneously their own health and the defences of this "tight little island." But Wimbledon is away from the margin of Thames, so that I have no right to wander thither.

There is nothing tempting in the muddy river Wandle —Spenser's Vandalis—which gives its name to Wandsworth; nor in Garrett, whose election of a mock Mayor afforded Foote material for a capital farce. If I crossed to Chelsea, I should be asked whether it was to call on Carlyle, or to drop in at Cremorne. Let us avoid both the philosopher and the houris, and taking up the map of London, inquire where next to pause. For lo! the river widens; the quaint, archiepiscopal walls of Lambeth and the statelier towers of Westminster rise above its margin; great bridges groan beneath the eternal traffic which crosses between two counties. There are no more pleasure-resorts upon the river till we reach Greenwich or Blackwall—till we turn in for our whitebait dinner at Lovegrove's or Quartermaine's. Thames is no longer

> "That joyous river, the poet's track,
> When witty with womanhood, wild with sack,
> From his gay Strand tavern set at large,
> He rhymes to the nymphs in a gilded barge."

Penny steamers are sometimes useful, not often poetical: the silent highway has lost its popularity; for, if truth must be told, its odours are abominable. So until we leave the busy throngs of the capital behind us, and come to where the wide windows of famous taverns look down upon an ampler stream, there are no more points at which to indulge in a loiterer's gossip. Whitebait is an exquisite little fish, as everybody knows; and few things are more delightful than a whitebait dinner—when the hock is good, the company agreeable, and the summer sunset broods upon the Thames at high-water. This is enjoyable, even if you don't happen to be a Cabinet Minister. But what is whitebait? and how chances it to abound in the estuary of Thames? Piscine authorities cannot agree about this mysterious little fish; they are perplexed to decide whether it is a distinct species, or the fry of some other inhabitant of the waters. It is found, I am told, in the Dart; but the remote dwellers in Totnes and Dartmouth are not civilised enough to eat it. So long as the Totnes folk can extract fifty-pound notes from candidates for Parliament they will not catch whitebait. This fish leaves the Thames in August; in October it has been caught on the Suffolk coast; and it is supposed to migrate northwards. But in what form it returns nobody knows. It is sometimes seven inches long before it commences its autumnal migration, so that possibly it comes back a very monster of the deep.[1]

[1] It is now, I believe, a settled point of ichthyology that whitebait are the fry of several fishes.—T. T.

"Enough of gossip!" I fancy may be heard from despotic editorial lips. Enough of London's royal river, ever famous for historic memories and pleasant places of resort. As I gaze downwards, where the estuary widens, I think perforce of the vast and ceaseless current of intellectual and commercial life which flows through Thames to every nation of the earth. Soon, if we were on board one of those great merchant-ships, whose wide wings bear them forward, we should have to dare the dangers of the mysterious main :—

"First the Channel's racy brine—then old Ocean the divine—
Wide white waves, a luminous line—
Sails that quiver
Toward the sunset flying free, seeking peril, seeking glee—
Lose thyself in England's sea,
Famous river!"

A WALK THROUGH OXON.

WHERE is Thaliarchus, with whom, not so very long ago, I made that pleasant trip to Cookham, narrated in *Towns on the Thames?* Where indeed? Away in lat. 59° 20′, where a city is built on a trinity of islands, amid a sea over which in winter armies have been marched, and he has heard the choric song:—

"Hespere, qui cœlo lucet jucundior ignis?"

Change is the law of life; the Destinies know no Toryism: and now, as I look over Henley Bridge upon the beautiful waters of Remenham Reach, I think somewhat sadly of the fact that my impetuous young friend may never pull "stroke" upon Thames again.

I look over Henley Bridge upon the royal river, having walked hither from a certain Berkshire cottage lost amid odorous limes. I shall sleep at the Red Lion, where Shenstone wrote upon the parlour window:—

"Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think that he has found
His warmest welcome at an inn."

May he? No; not though dictatorial Samuel Johnson

agreed in the opinion, when he also tasted the Red Lion's hospitality. "Life's dull round," too; as if the dulness were not the poetaster's own. Count Mirabel's remark in *Henrietta Temple* should be written in letters of gold: "He who is bored appears to me to be a bore." Did Chaucer or Shakespeare find life dull? Does Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Tennyson? And as to warmth of welcome: although the famous red-brick hostelry kept by Mrs. Williams is as comfortable as any in Oxfordshire, I am not to be persuaded that it gives anything like a home-welcome. But it is thoroughly pleasant; and the little lawn by the river-marge is a capital place to smoke an evening cigar and look indolently upon the swans of Thames.

This is the Henley "season," the waiter tells me. But the little town does not seem intensely gay; nor is it, I suspect, except on those two brilliant days of the regatta. *The* policeman, however, informs me that the Michaelmas "hiring" fair is a busy time. Those old bucolic annual hirings ought, one would think, to be almost obsolete so near London. But farmers are slow to move. I was talking to one the other day, who, though not an unintelligent man, was strongly prejudiced against birds and trees. The birds ate his wheat, and he had commenced a crusade against them. I told him that in France the destruction of small birds had brought on a plague of caterpillars. "Ah," he answered, "that 's in France; that ain't here." The argument was final, evidently. I also told him that cutting down trees had already considerably reduced the rain-fall. His look was perfectly indescribable; he evidently thought me fit for a lunatic asylum.

The entrance to Henley on the Berkshire side is picturesque; you descend a long steep hill, between high well-wooded banks. Not a nice hill to drive down without a drag; which two young ladies in whom I am slightly interested did the other day, thereby inducing the laziest pony in Berkshire to run away. And the vicinage of Henley is in every direction charming. It is a pleasant walk to quaint old Grey's Court, once a vast place, but now a mere trio of towers; one a pigeon-house, one containing a well of wondrous depth, whose water is drawn up by a donkey-wheel like that of Carisbrooke. A student of surnames may sometimes find curious ones in country towns. I noticed two in Henley; *Thackara,* a name, related, doubtless, to that of the great humorist; and *Ive,* which looked as if it ought to be written with an apostrophe—*I've.*

A noble elm avenue, a mile long—the Fair Mile—leads from Henley towards the Chiltern Hills. The trees, planted only about thirty feet apart, are not of the finest growth; but a high-road running between parallel miles of elms has a good effect. At the end of the Fair Mile the work of climbing begins; and there is nothing particular to attract the traveller's attention until Nettlebed is reached, five miles from Henley. This lofty village, 820 feet above the sea-level, is approached through a beautiful belt of beechwood. Why the place received so unpicturesque a name I cannot guess; it might far more aptly have been called "Fernbed," for it lies amid a wilderness of fern. The inhabitants declare that it is the highest settlement in England. On a clear summer even-

ing you can see from the summit of the windmill the shimmering roof of the Crystal Palace, the rock-like battlements of Windsor, the spires and towers of Oxford.

Rather more than a mile farther on, the road crosses Nuffield Heath; and on the brow of the hill a wide prospect bursts suddenly on the sight. *Εὐρώπη*—that "wide prospect" beheld by Homer—always comes upon my mind when I look down upon leagues of unexplored country. Enviable, indeed, were those early Greeks, fresh and keen and vigorous,

"The young light-hearted masters of the waves,"

to whom all the wide expanse of Western Europe was unknown ground. A mile or two on the left lies Ipsden Wood, where a deserted child was found in an old Roman well alive after two days and nights. Below in the valley Wallingford is visible, especially the hideous spire of St. Peter's, designed by Sir William Blackstone, as if to show how bad an architect a great lawyer may be. I don't know what prosperity Wallingford now possesses, but the diversion of the London and Oxford road is said to have injured it.

We come now to villages which of old were cities. First is Bensington,[1] about half way from Henley to Oxford; in pronunciation the middle syllable is dropped, I suppose "to oblige Benson." Here, again, I welcome the Thames, whose companionship I lost at Henley; between the two places the river travels about twice as

[1] "Town" of the "Bensingas"—"fords" of the "Wallingas" and "Shillingas;"—how strong of the same is the nomenclature of the whole region.—T. T.

far as the road. About thirteen centuries ago this Benson was a British city, and barbaric battles were fought for its possession. Two hundred years later that redoubtable warrior, Offa king of Mercia—he of the Dyke, who built abbeys at Bath and St. Albans, and corresponded with Charlemagne—was victorious here over Cynewulf of Wessex. Well, there is a battle of another sort waging now; for Benson votes with Wallingford borough; and Sir Wentworth Dilke has challenged Malins; and poor old Atkins of the Castle, formerly a post-boy, wishes he could go away till it is over, for everybody asks him how he means to vote, and everybody asks him to drink, and his head gets rarely muddled. A quaint specimen of the past is James, and full of curious stories; for he used to drive Lord Segrave—and there is always something brilliant to be told of a Berkeley. He was full of another gentleman whom he used to drive—to dinners, and balls, and races, and all other festivities; "and at last," he said, "I had to drive him to gaol. That cut me up, that did, more than it did he."

Between Shillingford and Dorchester the road crosses the Thames, which here falls into the Isis; whereupon that river is henceforth known as the Thames.

> "O Isis! noble Isis! in thee quivers
> Eternal Oxford's wondrous Gothic glory—
> Poetic towers and pinnacles of pride;
> And, loftier in thy power than classic rivers,
> Changing thy name by some green promontory,
> Thou lavest London with an ampler tide."

That green promontory is at the meeting of the waters just before we enter another ancient cathedral city that

has dwindled into a village. Dorchester has a very long church, recently restored, with much fine carving and stained glass: the tower is ugly. A very battered old cross stands in the churchyard. The see of Dorchester, or Dorcic, was founded about twelve centuries ago, by Birinus; and was transferred to Lincoln in the reign of William Rufus. A sharp, short, summer shower caught me here, driving me into a hostelry kept by one Avery Dearlove. Both names are common in the vicinage: brought together (*a very dear love*), they suggest a hero for *Henrietta Temple,* or one of Mr. Coventry Patmore's luscious love-stories. No vipers will live in Dorchester parish, they say. Did St. Patrick visit it, and deliver a reptile-banishing discourse?

> "'Twas on the top of the Hill o' Howth St. Patrick preached his sarmint,
> That drove the frogs into the bogs, and bothered all the varmint."

Perhaps St. Birinus came of the same family.

About three miles farther on, the road cuts through the beautiful park of the Harcourts. Where is the Oxford man who has not, like one of Clough's heroes,

> "Gone in his life and the sunshine rejoicing to Nuneham and Godstowe:
> What are the claims of Degree to those of life and the sunshine?"

The river-side grounds[1] of Nuneham Courtenay are thrown open to visitors, and many are the joyous Oxonian picnics which summer sees there. In the noble park is a beauti-

[1] Full of memorials of Mason.—T. T.

ful conduit, which once stood near Carfax Church at Oxford. Beyond the entrance-gates is Nuneham, a transplanted village, one of the Harcourts having removed it from the neighbourhood of the house. Its cottages, on both sides of the road, with pleasant gardens, and horse-chestnuts and elms and sibilant poplars in front, have an appearance of picturesque comfort. The gardens flourish; asparagus-beds are frequent; Goliath plums are ripening on the south walls. At the top of the hill is a very clean country inn,—the Harcourt Arms,—with wide windows opening on a flowery lawn. The landlord hath an ecclesiastic look, and might be mistaken for a Fellow of All Souls.

Beyond this the road is full of memories. Below Sandford Church is the fatal Lasher, where many an Oxford man has been drowned. On the left, at Littlemore, is the beautiful little chapel which Newman built, in days before the Perversion. Iffley lies too far to the left for a visit now, for Oxford draws me on; but its noble church and old rectory must not be unnoticed. The tower and cross and great yew-tree form a fine group above the Thames. The west window is filled with memorial-glass for Elliot Warburton.

All the suburbs of Oxford are hideous.[1] There is much new building; and the place is delivered into the hands of that tasteless class of artists in brick and mortar who run up mushroom terraces, in which discomfort and ugliness are blended. This is the less tolerable on the

[1] This is no longer true.—T. T.

outskirts of a city which contains so much noble architecture. When we have got through this wretched south-eastern suburb, the entrance to the city is perfect. It is a sweet summer evening. I cross Magdalen Bridge, and look down into the cool waters of Cherwell. The great trees in those secluded walks are touched by the sunset, as is also the lofty tower, from whose summit arises the song of May. On the right, through Inigo Jones's Gateway, a fountain plays amid the multitudinous leafage of the Botanic Gardens. Grey towers and stately edifices are before me; and on my left is the Angel Hotel, where cold beef and a tankard await me.

John Murray's inexorable *Hand-book* thus describes (1860) the Oxford hotels,—"Inns: Angel, High Street; Mitre, High Street; Star, Corn-Market; King's Arms, Broad Street,—all bad, dirty, comfortless, and very high in charges." I don't agree with this verdict. Of course Oxford hotels are rather above the average in charges; their class of customers makes them so. But the Mitre and Angel I have known for years, and can praise their cleanliness and comfort, not to say luxury. Few family hotels can surpass the Angel; and what Oxford man will not back the Mitre for a dinner against all England? The Angel is doomed: the lease has expired, and the University has purchased it. All publications of the day are sent to the Bodleian Library. The Bodleian has already overflowed into the Radcliffe, whose collections are transferred to the Museum in the Parks; and the University will in a year or two build new Schools on the site of the Angel and the adjacent

houses, and give up the whole of the existing Schools to the Bodleian,—so High Street will have another stately edifice. The Star Hotel, in the Corn-Market, has been rebuilt by a company, and is called the Clarendon. There is a Clarendon Club held here, with Alderman Spiers as president, and a two-guinea subscription; and I suppose the hotel, a large but ugly caravanserai, does a great deal of second-class business. Then, at the corner of Beaumont Street, opposite Taylor Buildings, the Randolph is in course of erection: a large building in ecclesiastic style, named after Principal Randolph, who founded the University Galleries. This is designed to be Oxford's first hotel; but I don't suppose Mr. Venables is much alarmed.

I venture to hope that the new Schools will be intrusted to some fresh architect. Mr. Scott is to be greatly admired; but his genius is not versatile; and Oxford is becoming monotonously Scottian. Very beautiful, though not original, are Exeter College Chapel and the Martyrs' Memorial; though the spire of the former is too toy-like, and it is impossible not to regret the disappearance of Exeter's former picturesqueness. But the new buildings at Christ Church are ugly: they have no collegiate look; they are just as much like a monster hotel as the Randolph is like a college. It is impossible not to marvel at the fatuity with which architects rear ugly edifices of their own in close proximity to structures of supreme beauty. How could Mr. Scott pass under Tom Gateway day after day to watch the construction of that unmeaning row of buildings? How could the architect of that last addition to Magdalen conceive such a mean and

ugly structure, after looking at the rare old cloistered quadrangle? It is a touch of the same spirit which made Mr. Tupper finish Coleridge's *Christabel.*

Having dined, I strolled down to Christ Church at nine, to hear Great Tom of Oxford ring out his hundred and one strokes; and here, for the moment, I became a *laudator temporis acti.* Clever as we are, we cannot rival the bells of the past. What a terrible failure was Big Ben! Now Great Tom, whose nocturnal music closes the day at Oxford, and "the bonny Christ Church bells" in the Cathedral tower, come alike from Oseney Abbey. Six hundred years old, probably, are those bells which delighted the merry and musical Dean Aldrich. Tom has been recast; but then he is still made of the same sonorous metal. He weighs between seven and eight tons, with a clapper of about three hundredweight.

Oxford—"great mother of Churchmen and Tories," as Lockhart styled her—is moved now by no trifling contest; for it is a question whether Gladstone, the great scholar, orator, and statesman, shall be punished for his Liberal tendencies, as Peel was in 1829. Before this is in type the matter will be decided, and the decision is more important to Oxford than to Mr. Gladstone. If a great University is of necessity Conservative, it should be remembered that there is nothing more important to conserve than freedom of thought. Original ideas are the natural growth of a place in which the best education is offered to the best minds in England; and to repress such ideas is a sure way to weaken the influence of the University, to alienate its worthiest sons. Such thoughts

arise in me here, although on the morning of this Vacation-Sunday there is no sign of strife. The sunshine sleeps upon the tranquil lawns of quadrangle and garden; the shadow creeps over a hundred quaint dials, silently saying, *Non numero horas nisi serenas.* Everybody has gone to church except the college cats, who, drowsy and obese, blink in the sunshine like so many holders of feline fellowships. Now may the unscholastic visitor "walk gowned," as did Charles Lamb, in imagination, when he first saw Oxford. Even Wordsworth exclaimed—

> "I slight my own beloved Cam, to range
> Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet;
> Pace the long avenue, or glide a-down
> The stream-like windings of that glorious street—
> An eager novice robed in fluttering gown."

Stand at the head of that glorious street, with your back to Carfax Church. To the right branches off St. Aldate's Street, with the famous façade of Christ Church, Tom Gateway in the centre. This street leads to Folly Bridge, where boatmakers and boatmen congregate. Crossing the ferry on the other side of the bridge, you are landed on Christ Church walks, which encircle the whole promontory formed by the meeting of Isis and Cherwell. Mighty trees there are in these fine avenues, which extend about a mile and a half; and close to the bank of the river are moored the barges, whence the boat-races may advantageously be watched. To the left of Carfax Church is the Corn-Market, where is the Union, where also St. Michael's Church, with a tower enormously old amid even Oxford's antiquities. From its summit Cranmer saw Latimer and Ridley burnt. That aged tower

and the Martyrs' Memorial bear sad, stern testimony to the folly and bigotry of man. Straight on from the Corn-Market is Magdalen Street, at the right-hand corner whereof is Balliol College, founded by John Balliol to avoid a scourging which he was sentenced to receive at the door of Durham Cathedral. St. Magdalen's Church divides the street; and beyond the church is the Martyrs' Memorial, erected very nearly, if not exactly, on the spot where the prelates were burnt. The prolongation of Magdalen Street is St. Giles's Street, by Murray appropriately called a boulevard. On the left are the unfinished Randolph and Taylor Buildings, where Beaumont Street leads to quiet Worcester: on the right St. John's, behind a row of stately elms, with St. Bernard's statue over the entrance. The founder of this college was a Reading man, and Laud, son of a Reading weaver, was educated on the foundation; and his ghost walks headless every night through the library. I have not seen the ghost, but I have seen the gardens, which are exquisite.

Again returning to Carfax, let us stroll down High Street. On the left comes All Saints' Church, of which the versatile Dean Aldrich was architect. Next St. Mary's, the University Church (Carfax being the City Church), of perpendicular architecture, with a fine decorated spire, 180 feet high, and an Italian portico, at present in course of renewal. It would be worthy of the University or some great college to build a loftier tower and spire amid the glorious group. Magdalen is the finest, and with Merton, St. Mary's, All Saints', the Cathedral, Tom Gateway, and the Radcliffe, the general

effect is magnificent: but there is none which springs skyward as if to pierce the clouds, high amid sailing birds and silent air. Opposite St. Mary's Church is St. Mary's Hall; then, on the left and right, we have All Souls and University Colleges. The latter is supposed to be the oldest in the University; and, if famous for educating Eldon and Stowell, and the founder of the Newdigate, and for offering Dr. Johnson hospitality in the form of three bottles of common-room port daily after dinner, is certainly not less renowned for its expulsion of Shelley. All Souls used to be a patrician foundation, where the *bene nati* dined delicately; but the ruthless commissioners have changed all that. Certainly the queer relief over the gateway, representing souls emerging from purgatory, is not unsuggestive of culinary operations. It seems a shame that the stoical commissioners should have interfered with the easy epicureans of All Souls. The next college on the left is Queen's, in whose buttery is the superb drinking-horn of Philippa, the foundress. And at the end of the street is Magdalen.

Magdalen is truly an architectural poem. King James I. was right, who called it "the most *absolute* thing in Oxford." Of course Christ Church is the crack college. The spirits of Wolsey and of Henry VIII. seem to pervade it. About 1530 the Venetian Ambassador, Ludovico Falier, described Henry thus: "In this Henry VIII. God has united the beauty of mind and of body so as to astonish the world. His features are beautiful; he has a Cæsarian head (*ha la testa Cesarina*), and very calm; contrary to the English custom, he wears the whole of his

beard." But he had ugly ears, poor fellow; and Holbein was threatened with the loss of his own ears if he painted the king's; so the Christ Church portrait of him is in full face, as usual. Even the great Cardinal had his vanity: *he* squinted, so his portrait is in profile. Well, as I have said, Christ Church is the great college; the noble Earl who is Chancellor, and translates the *Iliad*, is a Christ Church man; and so is that other noble Earl who is High Steward; and so is that brilliant financier who is just now frightening the old fogies of Oxford. And, fashionable as German princes are, Christ Church could not the other day find room for one. But I prefer for its seclusion and beauty Magdalen—ay, even to Merton, though that also is secluded and beautiful and has a noble church within its limits. But it has not the river, the "learned grove," the deer glancing through sunlight and shade; nor has any college anything so exquisite as the cloistered quadrangle, with its enigmatical decorations. Wolsey, the boy bachelor, was educated at Magdalen, graduating at fifteen, and was bursar during the erection of the tower, which, Ingram says, "is as a building what Wolsey was as a man." The beautiful old custom of singing madrigals on its summit at sunrise on May morning originated in a requiem instituted for Henry VII. Some of the antique college customs are disused: no longer is the sermon on St. John the Baptist's day preached from that stone pulpit in the outer court. And the Magdalen May madrigal has given place to a hymn, which, however, is better than nothing.

I don't want to fall into the guide-book or catalogue style, and therefore leave many points unnoticed. It may,

however, be observed that Oxford is a city of picturesque situations. Look at it from the south-east corner of Merton Meadow, all its towers seen at one glance; look up and down the windings of the street from the pillar letter-box near Queen's; look from the corner of Holywell Street at the Clarendon, the Ashmolean, and the beautiful theatre; stand anywhere in the noble square formed by Brasenose, the Schools, All Souls, and St. Mary's Church, with the Radcliffe in the centre; at every point there is a memorable picture. This last Horace Walpole describes as conveying "such a vision of large edifices, unbroken by private houses, as the mind is apt to entertain of renowned cities that exist no longer." There is a fine view of Oxford from the top of the Radcliffe.

Whereas Cambridge has given us of late years Thackeray, Macaulay, Tennyson—foremost among modern names in literature,—to Oxford we owe Gladstone, Ruskin, Arthur Clough, Matthew Arnold. I mention especially men of literature, without reference to politics or theology; and Mr. Gladstone's Homeric studies and translations place him in the first rank of living writers. I don't know what Mr. Gladstone will say if Oxford should reject him; but possibly his own sketch of Apollo when Chryses prayed to him may shadow forth some slight idea:—

"So he prayed. Apollo Phœbus heard his prayer. With anger stung,
From the summit of Olympus straight in downward course he flung.
With his bow upon his shoulder, all compact his quiver hung;
As he swept along like nightfall in his scorn, his arrows rung."

It would be interesting to hear Mr. Ruskin on the proposal to bring to Oxford the discordant din and fuliginous

fumes of great railway factories. On the 8th of July *The Times* stated that this was to be carried out in spite of the "vexatious opposition" of the University! The author of *Sesame and Lilies* would find a fine theme for his sonorous eloquence in the system which sets the convenience of a railway company high above the vital interests of the greatest University in the world.

Oxford has not always tolerated its poets, though it offers prizes for poetry. It was an *injusta noverca* to Shelley. And though Clough, Arnold's favourite pupil, won distinction there, he could not make it his home. No man more completely understood and enjoyed "young Oxford," as his *Long Vacation Pastoral* shows; but "old Oxford" seemed to him

> "To finger idly some old Gordian knot,
> Unskilled to sunder, and too weak to weave,
> And with much toil attain to half-believe."

So the Fellow of Oriel, whose vivid hexameters photograph young Oxford men with almost Homeric directness and simplicity, became Principal of I know not what eccentric college in a London square. Matthew Arnold, however, is more fortunate; he is Professor of Poetry, and advocates hexameters, thereby becoming a "pestilent heretic" in his Chancellor's judgment. Thus he apostrophises Oxford: "Home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties." "Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene!

> 'There are our young barbarians, all at play.'

And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection—to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side?—nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen." Yet all her causes have not been lost; for when Wellington entered Oxford as Chancellor, he asked Mr. Croker what building Magdalen Wall was. "That is the wall," said the Tory reviewer, "that James II. ran his head against." But for the resolution and courage of the Fellows of tranquil and beautiful Magdalen College, William of Orange might never have been King of England. Magdalen had been true to the Stuarts—had afforded headquarters to hot Rupert and his cavalry, had suffered in the royal cause; but Magdalen was also true to Protestantism when attacked by a Stuart king. Who shall blame for its loyalty the College which, by statute, was the Oxford home of the Kings of England and Princes of Wales, and within whose walls were educated two heirs-apparent, who might have changed, by their accession to the throne, the whole current of our history — Arthur, elder brother of Henry VIII., and Henry, elder brother of Charles I., "the Marcellus of the house of Stuart?"

Within a radius of ten or twelve miles of Oxford there are numerous places of beauty and renown. Of Iffley and Nuneham I have spoken. There is a pleasant walk

to Cumnor, where once stood the Hall immortalised in *Kenilworth;* and thence,

"Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,"

to Stanton Harcourt, where is Pope's Tower, in which the great translator finished the fifth volume of Homer. There is a wonderful old kitchen connected with the ruined manor-house, with enormously thick walls, and openings in the roof for the smoke to escape. Pope describes the country people as believing that "the witches kept their Sabbath there, and once a year the devil treats them with infernal venison, a toasted tiger stuffed with tenpenny nails." It is a pleasant stroll to the ruins of Godstowe, where dwelt Fair Rosamond, whom the exploded myth declares to have been poisoned by Queen Eleanor. There is a curious crypt under the church of St. Peter's in the East at Oxford, which another myth states to be the entrance to a subterranean passage from Godstowe. And the legend is that "Rosa Mundi" came this way to church, hoping to avoid

"Those dragon eyes of angry Eleanor."

Rosamond reminds me of the pleasant town of Woodstock, where was situate her legendary tower. From Oxford to Woodstock and the palace of the great Duke is a charming excursion, and the Bear is an excellent inn, favoured by Oxford men. When you have seen the wonders of Blenheim, remember Pope's lines:—

"Thanks, sir, cried I, 'tis very fine;
But where d'ye sleep, or where d'ye dine?"

Pope, whose chief admiration was for those

"Who dare to love their country, and be poor,"

was always embittered by the immitigable greed of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough.

But to-day I have no time for any of these tempting excursions, nor to seek the "Scholar Gipsy" of Glanvil and Arnold — that mysterious wanderer, who, like Odysseus, has learnt life's secret, and avoids the feverish contact of mankind. I fear Mr. Matthew Arnold, who seems as restless as ever, has not yet encountered him among the "warm, green-muffled Cumnor Hills." The road eastward from Oxford is ugly; so I take refuge in the rail, and an hour brings me to the little town of Thame, on the river so called. At Thame John Hampden died, after that fatal skirmish with Rupert on Chalgrove Field. He was a scholar in the old grammar-school of this town. Who shall say what other course our history might have taken but for the bursting of that unlucky pistol? Typical men were those two who met at Chalgrove: the hot Prince, loyal and daring; the great Commoner, calm, resolute, reflective—rash youth (for Rupert was only twenty-three) matched against the thoughtful courage of fifty. Hampden was fated to fall, and so it came about that Cromwell ruled England. What if the fiery Palatine had fallen instead?

Thame is a quiet town, with a fine church and good inn, and two newspapers. I suppose there will be a newspaper in every hamlet soon. I know one or two where a *Gazette du Village*, like Courier's, "*ni littéraire, ni scientifique, mais rustique*," would do a world of good. But the provincial

newspapers of England are of another sort; they are dull and business-like, and decorous. Thame is on the borders of Buckinghamshire; and I was tempted to cross a salient corner of that county in order to see Bledlow Church.

> "Let rogues be fixed who have no habitation;
> A gentleman may wander,"

says either Beaumont or Fletcher. "You look like a wanderer, sir," said to me a famous bookbinding artist of Oxford, unrivalled manipulator of velvet and vellum, russia and morocco, silk and gold. I probably did—straw-hatted, knapsacked, and a little lame from wearing too new boots. But this was a compliment compared to the remark of a grave and steady old uncle of mine, who has always deemed literature a beggarly craft, when he heard of my perambulating certain counties: "Gone on the tramp, is he? Well, I always expected it." Being a wanderer, I resolved to invade Bucks for an hour or two. The old church of Bledlow stands above a ravine, which is called the Glyde or Lyde. The bottom of this chasm is a series of weed-choked pools, fed by the chalk-springs; great ivy-covered trees hang over it in all directions. It looks beautifully cool on a sultry summer day. Merlin, or Mother Shipton, or somebody, prophesies thus about it:—

> "They who live, and do abide,
> Shall see Bledlow Church fall into the Glyde;
> And they who live, and do remain,
> Shall see the church built up again."

There seems as yet no likelihood that the first part of the prophecy will be fulfilled. There is an ancient font in Bledlow Churchyard; and the church itself is curiously

arranged, the pews being in a single row round the walls, and the central area filled with forms.

Now back to Oxfordshire by the village of Chinnor. There is a little inn at Bledlow, the Red Lion; and a black-eyed girl of twelve or thereabouts seems to manage its Lilliputian business; and she points out to me a delightful path across the yellowing corn-land to Chinnor, but has not the least idea how far it is. Lying on the table is a Wesleyan hymn-book. Glance into that thick, cheap volume, and you will find almost every hymn contains what Professor Arnold calls "the lyrical cry." Compare it with certain other collections—such, for instance, as Earl Nelson's Hymnal for the Diocese of Salisbury—and note the marvellous difference. The latter is a namby-pamby affair; while Wesley's hymns are as much in earnest as Dibdin's sea-songs. I suspect Charles Wesley the poet did as much as John Wesley the orator for the permanence of Methodism. The magnetism of personal influence passes away; but the burning life of that wondrous psalmody, sung Sunday after Sunday by congregations full of faith, is imperishable. Read Robert Browning's experience of Mount-Zion Chapel in Love Lane. It is worth half the theology of the day.

The walk to Chinnor was as pleasant as it looked. Passing through the village, I looked over the graveyard of a little dissenting chapel, and read a characteristic epitaph on the Venerable Father Mead (whom at first I deemed some dignitary of the Latin Church), who was converted by Whitefield in 1762, and who lived to the age of ninety-six, and who was "not unlike Whitefield

both in person and piety." Doubtless this Chinnor double of the great preacher was a wonder of the village up to his death about twenty years ago. Farther on, I passed Chinnor Church, evidently in a state of architectural disturbance, and turned into the Crown for ale and topographic information. Here I had the honour of being taken for an exciseman, and the good people were evidently much relieved at finding that I was only a harmless wanderer. Nothing would do but that I should see the interior of the church, just restored, and to be opened by the Bishop of Oxford in two days. Indefatigable prelate! Only a few days previously I had travelled with him from Twyford to Slough; he had been chairman at a Wargrave Missionary Meeting one day, and was to lay a foundation-stone near Eton the next; and his *fidus Achates* most accurately defined the Twyford porters as "the laziest beggars that ever stepped." And now I find him about to illuminate Chinnor in the Chilterns village which Rupert burnt on the fatal morning of Chalgrove. "The Apostles," said mine hostess, "are not come from Oxford yet." It was a curious intimation. A high honour for Bishop Wilberforce if indeed the Apostles were to meet him. But the statement referred to certain famous paintings of the Apostles, the work of Sir James Thornhill. I accompanied the village pedagogue to see the interior, which seemed to be restored in excellent taste. The expense is borne, I am told, by Sir W. Musgrave, who is both patron and rector, and Mr. Turner, a landowner in the parish. Banks, of Wolverhampton, was named as the architect.

From Chinnor to Stokenchurch the walk is beautiful exceedingly. The soft swerve of the chalk hills is crowned with beech-woods. Those Chiltern Hills have the true mammal curve; the goddess Hertha seems to sleep among them. From the hill-terrace you look over a vast expanse of plain, chequered with ever-moving shadow and light. Those beech-woods are noted for plenteous wild-flowers. I, no botanist, did not stay to seek hellebore, or mountain-madwort, or musk and birds'-nest orchis. As the road swerved, far on the left I could see West Wycombe Church, built by that Lord le Despencer who held *quasi* monastic revel at Medmenham Abbey. It is a strange edifice inside; and I believe the great ball on its tower was built for a banqueting-room; but I leave all this till I go *Through Bucks.*

Here I asked my way of a buxom young woman, who seemed to think devouring half-ripe gooseberries the pleasantest thing in life; and was told, after a somewhat complex direction, that I couldn't mistake. Never trust "*You can't mistake,*" coming from the lips of rustic maidenhood. Can't you? Only try those devious paths through the dense Stokenchurch woodlands. *She* can't mistake, of course; she goes to church, or to meet her sweetheart, that way; but you will find it no easy matter to solve the silvan enigma. Country folk, with the kindest intentions, often perplex the inquirer from their ignorance of the amount of his ignorance; they speak of a series of cultivated fields as "The Common," because it was a common twenty years ago; they direct you to turn at the Crown or the Lion, never for a moment

supposing that you can know nothing of the little public-house which is the centre of their small geography. I think we too often err in our dealings with the poorer classes from a similar ignorance of *their* ignorance.

However, I managed to reach Stokenchurch through the steep beautiful woods, and was extremely glad to get away again—for there was a fair in full swing, and an ill odour of beer and tobacco, and an example of well-dressed half-idiocy throwing sticks at toys. The gipsies mustered in force, looking natural and picturesque in comparison with the slouching clodhoppers in Sunday clothing. One black-haired, black-eyed girl, with a marigold handkerchief for head-dress, might have served as George Borrow's "Ursula." Swings and merry-go-rounds delighted the children. A couple of the country-police looked on contemptuously.

Adrian Scrope, one of the regicides, was owner of Wormsley Park; it now belongs to Mr. Fane, M.P. for Oxfordshire, and one of the numerous militia and volunteer colonels whom we find in the House. A county M.P. is just as naturally a colonel of militia as a borough M.P. is a director of limited liability companies. The next village on my route, reached by a lane that seemed endless, was Fingest, with a quaint old church and a ghost-story. The spectre was one Burghersh, Bishop of Lincoln, who could not rest in his grave till the ground which he had taken from the common to enlarge his park had been restored. I wish Earl Spencer, Lord of the Manor of Wimbledon, could have a short interview with this episcopal phantom.

Passing through a hamlet whose name I have forgotten, I reach Hambleden, a pleasant village, at which I should have been tempted to delay, only that I am in Berkshire now, and that I mean to get home to supper. The church is a handsome one; and quaint old Quarles has adorned it with an epitaph upon his sister, Sir Cope D'Oyley's wife, who, according to her poetic relation,

> "Was in spirit a Jael,
> Rebecca in grace, in heart an Abigail;
> In works a Dorcas, to the church a Hannah,
> And to her spouse Susannah;
> Prudently simple, providently wary,
> To the world a Martha, and to heaven a Mary."

Now comes Medmenham, a secluded village under the hill, and my way lies to the right to meet old Thames again. The bargees of Thames are often chaffed with the question, "Who ate puppy-pie under Marlow Bridge?" For the landlord of the inn at Medmenham Ferry, hearing that a raid on his larder was planned, baked a litter of young puppies in a pie, which the unlucky bargemen devoured with much gusto under Marlow Bridge. "Puppy-pie" makes a bargee furious to this day. They are a humorous race at Medmenham, evidently; even as they were when they frightened Lord le Despencer and his Franciscans amid their orgies, by lowering a great monkey down the chimney in some grotesque costume. Mr. Scott Murray, to my thinking, has not improved the old abbey by his recent alterations. I one day asked his head workman what they were doing, and received for answer: "We're a renowating the old place, sir—making it look more ancient-like."

Here, again, I find festival. The pretty little inn is crammed with drinkers. What a pity that the working-man's holiday is so completely an affair of beer and pipes! Imagine a holiday in Italy or Southern France, with light wine in graceful flasks, and dancers equally graceful under the great chestnut-trees! Would the English labourer like his tobacco as well if it were of higher quality, or his beer as well if it were freed from stupefying drugs, and served in something more elegant than those hideous pint-pots? I don't see why not. Ale and cider, well made and pure, are as wholesome and refreshing as the weak wines of the Continent; but it is too frequently the object of brewer and beer-retailer to produce a liquid which shall excite instead of quenching thirst. Of course, greater cheapness is the financier's affair; but greater purity lies with the producer. Equally, of course, so long as beer looks like thick broth, no vendor will put it in a clear, bright glass. So the luckless lout drinks liquid dirt from an opaque vessel, until his head would ache horribly, if a long course of such dissipation had not deprived his brain of all sensitiveness.

A charmed sunset paints the west as I cross the ferry. Distance improves the spectacle: from the farther side there seems some beauty in the groups dancing to a cracked fiddle on the lawn—in the remoter and gayer group, who are noisily playing the immortal game of kiss-in-the-ring. Down beyond the Danesfield Woods a white cloud of steam marks the approach of a boat, chartered to carry home the holiday-keepers. I sit on the green bank and lave my somewhat weary feet. The scene of gaiety

looks pleasant enough beyond that shining river and beneath the mellow light of that softening sunset. I remember a certain song :—

> "Sing, maiden, sing, as we slowly glide
> Over the ferry at even-tide!"

But for me there is no music here. So, rising to pass homeward, I become suddenly aware of a balloon high above me, sprung I know not whence, silently voyaging I know not whither. That floating spheroid, traversing the pathless and unmapped air, adds strange beauty to the scene by the mystery of its isolation. I watch it gliding swiftly away above the wooded hills, till it fades into the depths of the dim grey eastern sky.

A WALK THROUGH BUCKS.

CARE may sit behind the horseman, but the pedestrian ought certainly to escape such unpleasant companionship. At any rate, when I am walking across country, I bid entire defiance to care. My worst troubles are when a boot unexpectedly splits, or when the rustic innkeeper makes difficulties about a bath, or when the rain comes on pertinaciously. The rain has done its best to baffle my Buckinghamshire exploration. Starting as heretofore from Berkshire, I ascend Ashley Hill on a fine August morning. Before plunging into the beech-wood I look backwards, and see royal Windsor stately in the sunlight, and the Crystal Palace burning like a fantastic meteor on the horizon. Soon I am in the park of Hall Place, populous with deer, and pass the square brick mansion of Sir Gilbert East Gilbert East. I don't admire the exterior of the house, though doubtless it is spacious and luxurious within; but I do admire the turfen terrace in its rear, and the noble avenue of limes, and the square old-fashioned walled garden, where brilliant spots of calceolaria and geranium, petunia and verbena, lie amid the grassy walks. What a delicious spot for an evening

stroll, in the pauses of quadrille and waltz, with a lovely maiden hanging on one's arm, and the moonlight air filled with magnolia fragrance!

I cross a yellow cornfield into the Marlow Road, just where a fragment of forest seems to have wandered into the highway. Thence it is a pleasant walk to Marlow. Were I given to coveting my neighbour's house, Mr. Vansittart's residence, Bisham Abbey, is the place I should select to covet. Here the picturesque and the comfortable meet. It is a house to admire, and it is a house to live in. Its ancient tower, and oriel windows, and noble trees, and velvet lawns, and water-lilied moat—its traditions of Knights Templars, and Earls of Salisbury and Warwick—its connection with the Princess Elizabeth—its veritable ghost story, and authentic portrait of the ghost, a negative ghost of the female sex, who flogged one of her children to death for bad writing, and who is always trying to wash her hands in a basin that will not be overtaken,—its strange secret room and great monastic barn of Spanish chestnut,—all these things add a charm to a residence whose interior arrangements are the perfection of modern luxury. And it is girdled by the winding Thames, as in the days of its first foundation, some seven centuries ago.

Great Marlow is evidently in a state of excitement, as I cross its suspension-bridge. First I encounter half a dozen young ladies, in the appropriate muslin of August; next half a dozen volunteers. There is a wicked drizzling of rain, however, which becomes a sharp shower very soon; and the young ladies take flight, and I see them sitting bonneted and shawled at the windows all the way

up the street, anxiously hoping for fine weather. The riflemen of Bucks are encamped at Marlow, and the youth and beauty and fashion of Marlow are eager to "rain influence" upon them. But, alas! they cannot influence the rain; so they sit disconsolate in their light summer apparel.

The town of Marlow is a negative sort of place. The church, only about thirty years old, is atrociously ugly—the greater misfortune, as the site is a good one. There is an old barn of Bisham Abbey left of the bridge, where in days gone by we kept some of our French prisoners. And there is a characteristic Roman Catholic church, built by Pugin. But what induced Shelley to choose Marlow as a place of residence is to me a complete mystery.

Five miles of a not very remarkable road brings me to High Wycombe. Is it called high because it lies very low? Wycombe has one long straight street—a peculiarity of many Buckinghamshire towns, as, for example, Beaconsfield, Amersham, Wendover. What idiosyncrasy in the first settlers in this shire caused them to arrange their dwellings in a straight line?[1] I don't dislike the result. You cannot easily lose your way, and there are no "back slums." The whole town is *High Street*. This should have a good moral effect. The most noticeable point about High Wycombe is, that boys carrying chairs and carts laden with chairs are perpetually visible. The Chiltern beech-woods are turned into chairs so rapidly,

[1] Was it not often the line of an ancient paved way—the "straet," or "street"?—T. T.

that Wycombe is said to produce one for every minute of the year. What in the world can become of half a million chairs per annum ?

The rain drove me into the Falcon Inn, where I got excellent entertainment, and debated within myself whether I should deviate a couple of miles to see the singular church of West Wycombe; but I was credibly informed that if you visit the church, you are also expected to see certain caves in the chalk-cliff; to become, in fact, the victim of a guide, and pass an hour or two in dirt and darkness. I had once imprudently entered a cavern at Matlock, whence I emerged after some hours passed principally on my hands and knees, to find the town-crier vigorously ringing his bell in my honour, and personally describing me to the assembled population of the place. I thereupon vowed to avoid caves henceforward; and I consequently determined not to trust myself near West Wycombe.

So I started for one of the most delightful walks I have ever taken. Scenes of interest and beauty often lie close together; after miles of rather a dull road, you come upon a perfect cluster of pleasant places. The map showed me a country-road which would take me towards Aylesbury, by Hughenden, Hampden, and Chequers. Very soon, on the summit of a hill whose slope was piled with wheat-sheaves, I saw a monumental erection, which perhaps may be called an obelisk. It is, if I mistake not, the memorial tribute paid by Mrs. Disraeli to her husband's illustrious father. On the hill beyond is Hughenden manor-house itself; a grey-stone building,

with mullioned windows, "bosomed deep in tufted trees." Hughenden Church, famous for its monuments of Simon de Montfort's descendants, is just below the house. Close by are some alms-houses, where an old woman was drawing water from a well. I daresay the old lady has about as distinct an idea of Benjamin Disraeli as of that Richard de Montfort whose mailed and cross-legged effigy she sees every Sunday at church.

"We mortal millions live alone."

Knowing a feminine Disraelite, I stole a leaf or two from the trees of Hughenden Manor, and sent them away by post that evening. How is it that the ladies admire Mr. Disraeli just as much as men of business admire Mr. Gladstone?

Would you like, O reader, to have seen Lucius Quintus the curly-haired attending to his farm when his dictatorship was over? It was my fortune to overtake another wearer of *cincinni* in a narrow lane, with a lady and a spaniel, loitering along as carelessly as if Her Majesty's Opposition could do without him. My dog Growl, a terrier of patrician taste, had a few minutes' conversation with the spaniel, but won't tell me what it was about. For myself, I recalled that immortal encounter narrated in the third book of *Coningsby*. I recollected "the hissing bacon, and the eggs that looked like tufts of primroses." By the way, Crofton Croker had some years before discovered the striking likeness of a poached egg to a daisy. I remembered that marvellous conversation, racy and epigrammatic and eloquent, over "the finest perry in the

world;" that brilliant discourse, whose keynote was that "youth is a blunder, manhood a struggle, old age a regret;" that wondrous Wahabee mare;—and I thought I should be uncommonly lucky if I were to meet a similar stranger on my travels. But I did not, though Halton and Mentmore are both in Buckinghamshire.

The spirit of John Hampden seems still to dwell amid those beech-woods of Great Hampden, high among the Chiltern Hills. You understand the man better after seeing his paternal estate. Hampden of Hampden was a son of the soil, and drew from it his vigorous, resolute idiosyncrasy. The great beech-trees, grasping the chalk with fibrous roots, and rising in stately majesty, seem to have something of Hampden about them. I have never elsewhere seen the beech in its glory—a straight round column, with smooth glossy rind, bearing at a wondrous height a mighty wealth of branches. Its beauty is transcended by its dignity and strength. The gnarled veterans of Burnham are almost contemptible in comparison with these young Chiltern giants, a couple of centuries old. Hampden is the home of the beech, which is indigenous upon its swelling hills. The exterior of the house is not promising, but it is a treasury of historical relics. Close by is the church; and on the chancel-wall a long epitaph of John Hampden's upon his wife Elizabeth, full of a stately and sorrowful eloquence. He lies near it; and when his grave was opened, nearly two centuries after death, so little changed was the corpse that a doubtful portrait of him was at once authenticated. Great Hampden is so hidden among the beech-woods, that no one at

the distance of half a mile would suspect its existence; but they are only the relics of a mighty forest, once impassable and full of thieves, for whose effectual suppression the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds was established. I wonder if the gentlemen who accept the said stewardship ever think about its duties?

Pleasant lanes and field-paths bring me to Chequers Court, the seat of Lady Frankland Russell—a most picturesque old mansion, having its name from being used as the Exchequer in King John's reign. Here the imperious Elizabeth imprisoned a sister of hapless Lady Jane Grey's for a stolen marriage. Here there are priceless relics of Cromwell, whose youngest daughter married a Russell of Chequers—portraits, the mask of his face after death, his sword and watch. The house is in a valley; beyond it the hills rise again to one of their loftiest altitudes. That summit, crowned by a copse, is the Beacon Hill—famed, they say, for its width of prospect. I ascend the steep slope and pass round the copse, and lo, a surprise! Right below me the hill descends precipitously, the tops of tall trees seeming at my very feet, and forms a secluded silvan valley, whose turf is exquisite. And that valley is full of life. There are unhorsed carriages; there are boys and girls at play; there are picturesque groups of ladies and gentlemen. I begin to recognise the feelings of a falcon, floating in mid ether, and taking a bird's-eye view of humanity. This surely is a place of chronic picnic. And those woods which clothe the hill-sides have surely an unusual appearance: what are they? Box—indigenous box—growing to a

height which would rather astonish eyes accustomed to garden-edging of the same vegetable. When I descend the hill-side into those dense woods, I find that the tall, grey, leafless stems have a ghastly appearance, strangely contorted, and having the colour of dry bones.

But the view from Beacon Hill over the wide plain of Aylesbury is utterly indescribable. The day is gusty, clouds are carried wildly hither and thither by wandering whiffs of wind, and innumerable churches and houses and hamlets now gleam in the sunlight, now are darkened by its disappearance. There are far finer views in England—views where there are lakes, or great rivers, or the remote sea, or cities and castles of nobler aspect than any in Buckinghamshire. But this is a very glorious prospect, and all the finer for its sudden contrast with the deep glades of the Chiltern beech-woods, where Great Hampden lies so secluded, that John Hampden's grandfather had to *cut* an avenue when Queen Elizabeth came to visit him.

I descended the box-shrouded hill-side into the valley, which bears the name of Velvet Lawn, its associate glades being Silver Spring and the Happy Valley. Here I come on a set of village schoolboys playing football, their master hard at work in the midst and very fagged by his exertions. An elderly gentleman from another party accosts me, assuming that I belong to the Russell family, maugre the most battered of straw hats, to offer his thanks for permission to picnic here. Tea and bread-and-butter seem to have been largely consumed by the school children, among whose patronesses there are one or two very

pretty girls. Accepting the elderly gentleman's hospitality to the extent of a tumbler of water, I take my last look of these pleasant glades, and push forward.

Yet must I not forget to say that from the breezy summit of the Beacon Hill you see immediately below the three churches of Ellesborough and Great and Little Kimble; and you also see *Piccadilly*. What?

> "Piccadilly! shops, palaces, bustle, and breeze,
> The whirling of wheels and the murmur of trees,"

as sung by Mr. Locker? No; but a curious conical hill, concerning the origin of whose name I know nothing. Perhaps the ingenious gentlemen of *Notes and Queries*, who are not quite certain, I believe, as to how the street got its name, will try their hands on the hill.

My walk to Aylesbury, through Little Kimble and Stoke Mandeville, was devoid of adventure. Aylesbury itself is an ugly old town, and its church has the most atrocious spire I remember to have seen. The architect of that spire must have been a "cure." The town appears to have been built in imitation of a labyrinth; none of its streets seems to lead anywhere; and though the church is everywhere visible, it is quite a puzzle to find it. In the middle of the open market-place is a market-house, almost as ugly as the spire of the church: this, however, is shortly to be removed, and the town seems decidedly disposed to improve and beautify itself. A new Corn Exchange is almost finished—the design by the county architect, a gentleman who seems thoroughly to understand what he is about; for the building is not only graceful and elegant, but admirably fitted for its

purpose. Indeed, the architect has attained grace and beauty by special attention to fitness—the one great principle of his art. The building is of red brick with stone facings, and will wonderfully improve the appearance of Aylesbury.

Of red brick also, its colour toned down by age, is the ancient hostelry where I pass the night. Just the fine old rambling inn where Mr. Dickens might make a mail-coach passenger tell a ghost-story. Vast staircases, an immense assembly-room, all the appliances of a county town's chief inn. I inquire about supper, and find there is nothing to be had but lamb-chops, which I order. Presently comes up *one* lamb-chop, rather an insufficient meal after a thirty-mile walk.[1] But it wasn't the only one in the house, and I did very well after all; and slept very well too, on one of those marvellous feather-beds into which you sink and are lost.

How dull your country market-town is in the evening! A village is bearable; it is open to the green fields, and you see the lads and lasses engaged in rustic courtship. But as I stood, at about ten o'clock, in the Aylesbury market-place, where, as the moon was shining, there was no gas, and where the young men released from the shops were humorously bleating in imitation of a passing flock of sheep, I thought dulness could not go much farther,

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[1] I have often heard Mortimer Collins relate that when this one chop was placed before him, he said—"Go on bringing me chops, one at a time, till I tell you to cease;" and that the number reached seven, The terrier Growl did full justice to the bones, and was, in after days, frequently reminded by his master of this day's adventures.—F. C.

and heartily pitied the commercial travellers who have to spend most of their evenings in such places. However, the truth seems to be that man can stand almost any amount of dulness, as he can of heat or cold. I should like to make Cornelius O'Dowd, who was miserable in London because he hadn't a seat in Parliament and a house in Piccadilly, pass a few months at Aylesbury. The town, by the way, is famous for ducks; but I did not see one while I was there, unless a pretty girl may be figuratively called so.

Not very far from Aylesbury is Hartwell, the seat of Dr. Lee—a crotchety old gentleman who has once or twice jocosely consented to be nominated in opposition to Mr. Disraeli for Bucks. It is a quaint old place, where Louis Dix-huit resided in his exile. This king, in unconscious irony styled *Le Désiré,* lived here with about a hundred and fifty followers, who made themselves homes in attics, in closets, even in stables and summer-houses, till there came a welcome deputation from France to bring him to his throne.

If Stowe were still the unrivalled palace of a great prince, I would go on to Buckingham; as it is, I retrace my steps, and make my way towards Wendover—a little town, said to take its name from the fact that here the traveller by the high road must *wend over* the Chilterns. This long-streeted town was disfranchised by the Reform Bill; but its freeholders vote for Aylesbury, under an Act of Parliament of 1804, passed when extensive bribery was proved in the latter borough; so the walls are still placarded with "Vote for Rothschild and Civil and

Religious Liberty." I wonder what John Hampden, member for Wendover in five Parliaments, would think about that placard. The sole excitement in Wendover to-day is a photographic establishment on wheels, hung round with dazzling specimens of portraiture. The church is at some distance from the town, and is reached by a walk through pleasant fields; and of course there is consequently a legend about witches or fairies having interfered when it was built, removing the materials from the intended site to the present one. What a queer thing is the growth of tradition!

Five miles from Wendover, along a pleasant but uneventful road, bring me to Great Missenden—a long village, which one might almost call a town. An organist is delighting the population by grinding away at those charming melodies which we have all heard in our time. Those organ-grinding Italians must see a good deal of the country; one meets them everywhere. In that white house above us lived James Stephen, master in Chancery, and vigorous assistant of Clarkson and Wilberforce in their efforts to abolish slavery. Great Missenden Church, with its massive square, grey tower, is on the hill-side beyond the village. A mile or two farther I see on my right Little Missenden, a secluded village away from the high-road, pleasantly watered by the river Miss. Had I time I should hereabout turn aside to Chesham Bois, and Chenies, and Latimers. Chenies belongs to the great Russells, having been obtained by marriage three hundred years ago. "Close to Chenies," says John Murray, "is Chorley Wood, seat of William Longman, Esquire, who has so benevo-

lently enlightened the rustics of Chenies and the world in general by his lectures on English history, delivered at the village club-house." Thus with a pleasant irony does Albemarle Street pronounce upon Paternoster Row.

Amersham—another of those long Buckinghamshire towns, another borough which the Reform Act disfranchised—is entered pleasantly by a road which runs through Shardeloes, the seat of the Drakes, descendants, I believe, of the great Sir Francis. The house is high on the right, and the green hill slopes from it down to the river Miss, here widened to a diminutive lake. Martyrs were burned at Amersham three centuries ago, their own children being compelled to set fire to the fagots: and the tradition is that nothing has since grown where they were barbarously slain. Well, these are tolerant days, thank Heaven; and when we reflect upon those times of persecution, it is rather their folly than their cruelty that provokes our wonder. But fanaticism is immortal; and when a Dean of the English Church—and Deans, having comfortable incomes, should be mild and easy-tempered men—calls tobacco "a gorging fiend," I should like to ask what punishment he would inflict on an incorrigible smoker.

Entering Amersham, I noticed the flowery luxury of some quiet alms-houses, where ancient widows dwell by the generosity of a Drake of Shardeloes. At the Crown Inn, right opposite the church—where Waller, poet and M.P. for Amersham, was christened—I stay to lunch and write a letter; and I wonder at the civilisation of a village inn where I can get bottled Scotch ale and a quill-pen. I moreover observe from my window a great number of

gentlemen wandering about in clerical costume; perhaps, as the living of Amersham brings in the highly respectable sum of £1331 yearly, the rector keeps numerous curates. While resting here, suddenly the sky blackens; the green trees upon the hill above the church seem intensified in colour by the background of thunderous sky; and there come on lightning and rain, which soon clear the long street, so that there is not a curate to be seen. There are some minor oddities at Amersham. There is a barber's-shop, with a wondrous waxen figure-head in its window, and the startling inscription "*And at Richmond.*" The hair-cutting fashions learnt in the vicinity of the Star and Garter are doubtless applied to the bucolic pates of Amersham. Another shopkeeper works in "buhl and *marqeterie.*" There is also a public notice that all ballad-singers will be taken into custody; so I hope Mr. Sims Reeves will not venture into the neighbourhood.

As I leave the town, a basket-carriage drawn by a handsome pair of donkeys overtakes me—an equipage of Lord Grosvenor's. The "moke," the costermonger's friend and slave, is by no means out of place in an aristocratic turn-out; well-bred, well-fed, and well-groomed, he is an uncommonly handsome and docile animal. His intelligence nobody doubts; indeed, he is often a good deal too intelligent to please his rider. And now, for the eleven miles from Amersham to Uxbridge, I have almost incessant rain. I pass Chalfont St. Giles, the quiet village where Milton wrote *Paradise Lost,* but am too damp to search for his cottage. Two miles farther I rest awhile

at the larger village of Chalfont St. Peter's, where the Miss crosses the road, or ought to cross it. There is no water in its channel now, with all the rain. Here a worthy innkeeper consoles me with the information that Francis Moore predicts "fair and hot" weather from the seventh instant—four days hence. The red-brick church of St. Peter, originally hideous, was cleverly enlarged and improved about ten years ago. Another stretch of five miles, and I cross the river Colne into Middlesex, and am quite ready for supper at the Chequers at Uxbridge, one of the most comfortable country inns within my pretty wide experience. Uxbridge not being in the county of my choice, I will only express my regret that the house in which Charles I. treated fruitlessly with his opponents should have been turned into a public-house.

When I come down at about eight the next morning, I am reminded of my proximity to London by the appearance at the inn-door of a four-horse omnibus, with *Holborn, Bank,* among its inscriptions. Starting at half-past eight, it is due at the Bank at eleven, Uxbridge being fifteen miles from Hyde Park Corner. There are omnibuses that travel farther than this; one finds its way to Wendover, thirty-five miles down. I should think no railway is likely to invade the quiet region through which I have walked from Aylesbury. But who knows? Even railway companies sigh for new worlds to conquer.

Though, for comfort's sake, I slept on the Middlesex side of the Colne, I am soon in Buckinghamshire again. Leaving Uxbridge by Windsor Street, I again cross the

river near a large flour-mill, and pause to admire a pleasant "cottage of gentility" just beyond the bridge, with well-kept lawns, and a rivulet running through its grounds into the Colne. The road runs for some distance between two parks; that on the right, a dark fir-wood which is said to enclose a lake, is called the Black Park, and was planted by the Duke of Marlborough. Emerging from its gloomy shade, I see before me the stately towers of Windsor, grey in the sunshine. Of Slough, through which we pass towards Eton, there is nothing to be said. Once, possibly, it may have been a place with a distinctive character; now it is a mere railway-junction, the home of dust and noise, of steam-whistles and coal-odour; a town in the same category with Wolverton and Swindon and Crewe.

And now, as Eton College Chapel becomes visible below the Castle, there become also visible numerous flies, each carrying a boy or boys towards the Slough Station. Happy youngsters! going homeward to enjoy August and September afar from classics and mathematics—which last even now don't trouble them much. How "swell" they are! how carefully-gloved and glossily-hatted! Eton streets swarm with flies; men-servants are busy collecting luggage; the quadrangle is littered with scraps of torn paper, used-up exercise-books, and grammars that have come to grief. In all the playing-fields there are only two small boys, practising cricket in a melancholy fashion. Leave-takings are perpetual at the door of Williams's shop, in whose window Lord Derby's two stately volumes of Homer take a prominent place. I

should like to have seen Praed's *Poems* there. I wonder if Eton reads the Etonian poet?

These youngsters are going home with an extra week's holiday before them, in honour of the latest addition to the Royal Family. Years ago they would have gone home less decorously; and a hail-storm of peas from innumerable peashooters would have saluted me on my way. But each generation is graver than the last, if not wiser; and the holiday Etonians show an excellent example to their seniors on the Derby Day. Some writer the other day remarked that the sons of one friend whom he visited insisted on photographing him, while those of another took him into a room where they actually printed an amateur newspaper of their own editing. Preserve me from such terrible children! To be photographed as a matter of business is bad enough, and I heartily wish it could be done under chloroform; but fancy submitting to it for the amusement of a couple of precocious brats! And what wearisome youngsters the newspaper-manufacturers must be! I would consign the whole brood to *plagosus Orbilius* at once.

The joyous youth who crowd those red-brick quadrangles, and cut their names—not a few of them destined to be historic—wherever space can be found, and play cricket in the fields, and boat upon the river, are the very aristocracy of boyhood. About eight hundred are educated here, almost every one of whom has a good chance of a first-rate career. Whether the education they receive is the best possible for their future advantage is a question that has of late been fiercely debated; and there are

still those who maintain that the changes recently introduced have not been sufficient. Mr. Howard Staunton the chess-player is one of these, and in his recent work on *The Great Schools of England*, exhibits much anxiety that the study of modern languages should be made compulsory at Eton. This shows incapacity to comprehend the functions of England's chief school. If a man has to get his living by some sort of business, it may be necessary to give him a special education; but the education of a gentleman should tend to the general and equable development of his powers. But Mr. Staunton's calibre may be judged from the fact that he would substitute expulsion for flogging at public schools! What would King Solomon have said to this, or that schoolmaster of whom Tom Hood wrote:—

> "He did not spoil the child and spare the rod,
> But spoilt the rod and never spared the child!"?

Mr Derwent Coleridge remarks, in his memoir of Praed, that his "scholarship was pre-eminently of the Etonian cast—elegant, refined, and tasteful, characterised by an unconscious and, as it were, living sympathy with the graces and proprieties of diction, rather than by a minute analysis of its laws or careful collation of its facts." This is precisely the scholarship of a gentleman. Praed was, in fact, the model Etonian, the Etonian of genius, the bright consummate flower of the system. He was Harry Coningsby and something more. If the young students in the Boys' Library imitate him, its founder, Eton need not care about the virulent

vaticinations of those who would like to destroy her distinctive features and make her something between a French lyceum and a Dotheboys Hall. Well, in the years to come many of those gay Etonians now streaming homewards will, with their poet, wish themselves boys again :—

> "Pursuing every idle dream,
> And shunning every warning;
> With no hard work but Bovney stream,
> No chill except Long Morning."

And now, with as much deference as I can muster for Messrs. Higgins and Staunton, I say *Floreat Etona!*

Thus having meditated, and taken a last look at the deserted playing-fields and river unfretted by oars, I start for Salthill by the village of Chalvey. A very dusty and unhappy-looking village; but its brook, which flows to the Thames through the playing-fields, bears the repute of producing excellent eye-water: Queen Anne and Queen Charlotte used to have the water brought up to Windsor in buckets. I wonder if our bright-eyed young princesses use it. Emerging into the Bath Road by Salt Hill, I lunch at Botham's quiet and comfortable inn—a gay place in the old days of Montem, when that hillock on the left was a tumultuous tumulus, and Eton youth, in fantastic attire, demand "salt" *pro More et Monte.* Covered with blossoming wistaria and other scandent plants, the famous hostelry looks pleasant in the summer sunshine. Nothing pretentious about it; unlike that ornate establishment of Dotesio's (now an orphan asylum), where I recollect paying twelve shillings for a bed—not in Ascot week.

There is a good view from Botham's of those "distant spires and antique towers," as well as of regal Windsor.

Now through a labyrinth of lanes to Burnham Beeches. Stoke-Pogis I avoid, though I admire Gray's "Elegy" much, and his "Long Story" more, and should like to look again at what is left of the manor-house, with its

> "Rich windows that exclude the light,
> And passages that lead to nothing."

But I was once in my boyhood taken to Stoke-Pogis for a holiday by a very didactic schoolmaster, and lectured to death. So I made straight for East Burnham, among whose "reverend vegetables," as he called them, Gray liked to wander. This fragment of beech-forest is indescribably fine, and is a charming place for an autumnal picnic, when the glory of decay is upon the trees. Some of the beeches are enormous; most of them are of quaint fantastic growth. They are all pollarded—tradition says by the troops of Cromwell. Certes, stern Oliver and his followers get discredit for a good many destructive transactions.

You may wander for hours in this forest-fragment, charmed and astonished by its varying aspects. Fresh from the younger and more beautiful beech-woods of Hampden, it does not delight me quite so much as perhaps it ought. There is something almost unearthly about the gnarled quaintness of these great trees, as in Wistman's Wood of oaks on Dartmoor. If those inexorable Roundheads really pollarded them, it is enough to revive one's Cavalier spirit.[1]

[1] A walk to Burnham Beeches from the cottage at Knowl Hill, about eleven miles, was a frequent custom with the author. When the Monarch of the Beeches fell in 1875, he wrote some verses in *Punch*,

The common beyond the beeches is very fine;—a wide stretch of purple heather, through which are cut green paths of elastic turf. Coming from the gloom of the great beech-trees out upon this width of moorland, overfilled with colour and sunlight, you feel quite a relief. It is not particularly easy to find one's way from Burnham

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which may, perhaps, be worth quoting. Mr. Vernon Heath, the famous landscape photographer, had written to *The Times* concerning the fall.

1.
The *Monarch* tree we 've sat beneath,
With fun and fizz and peaches,
Has vanished, *teste* Vernon Heath,
From glorious Burnham Beeches.

2.
That patriarch of the pollard wood
Stout arms no longer reaches,
Chief of that mighty multitude—
The famous Burnham Beeches.

3.
Beneath it, lady of my heart!
I 've made you pretty speeches,
While you were eating damson-tart
In shade of Burnham Beeches.

4.
Champagne 's been popped—the question too
(We know how love beseeches);
Ah! what said I, and what said you,
That day at Burnham Beeches?

5.
I think I quoted Luttrell's lines
(Epigrammatic each is)
When amorous were my designs
On you 'mid Burnham Beeches.

6.
Homeward we drove our four-in-hand,
Just when the owl first screeches:
A moonlit midnight 's very grand
'Neath sombre Burnham Beeches.

7.
You sat beside me on the box:
Alas! experience teaches
That hearts succumb to heavy knocks,
As well as Burnham Beeches.

8.
Your Patriarch, O photographer!
Wide arms no longer reaches:
And She is married to a cur—
Confound those Burnham Beeches!

The post brought the copy of *Punch* which contained these verses just before he started for the Beeches on a bright July morning, and he read them out to us as we sat under one of the big trees. This is his own account of the picnic:—"Burnham Beeches is a lovely bit of forest ground: few such spots are there in England. I was there this week, in company of very pleasant ladyhood: a naval officer had promised to join us, but missed his train, and missed also an uncommonly good lobster. By that lobster there hangs a tale. Most picnics have some kind of difficulty. I have known the hamper of wine forgotten. I have also known a picnic without a corkscrew; but that has never happened since with me. I never go anywhere without a penknife and a corkscrew. But our lobster! It came down from London to the Bear Hotel at Maidenhead, with other matters such as pine-apples and strawberries, which help to make a picnic pleasant; but when we opened the basket, we found that lobster was not boiled! However, Mr. Dawson, as amiable a host as ever lived, sent it into the kitchen, and we started twenty minutes later than we had intended, Astacus hot from his pot."—F. C.

Beeches to any neighbouring town. I come out near a group of new cottages, on which the erudite builder has inscribed the name "Boa Vista;" and here, when I inquire for Maidenhead, everybody recommends me to go to Beaconsfield. However, I am not dismayed; and in due time, after winding down hill through labyrinthine leafy lanes innummerable, I find, at the village of Burnham, a person of unusual sagacity. He is the landlord of the Crispin Inn; and he tells me that the village is very dull, which it certainly looks; and he regrets having come from a gay place like Eton, thirty years ago, to settle at Burnham. Thanks to him, I find a pleasant path across the fields towards Maidenhead, leaving on my right Taplow Court and Villiers's princely domain—

"Cliefden's proud alcove,
The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love."

They were wonderful men, the two Villierses, Dukes of Buckingham; both had a touch of the Alcibiades nature; both show us how vain are the greatest beauty of person and brilliancy of mind without sterner and loftier endowments. Indeed it may be doubted whether both father and son would not have achieved greater things if they had been ugly men. But they were intoxicated by the favour of countesses and kings.

The sun is setting over Maidenhead as I cross the bridge. The Thames flows cool beneath the familiar arches; the lawns are green and gemmed with flowers; there are ladies coming down to the boats for their evening excursion; and, by Jove! Skindle is building again!

A WALK THROUGH HANTS.

"THREE o'clock on the first of September, at Squance's, the Victoria Pier, Portsmouth." Thus early in August, over a lobster-salad at Epitaux', spake my friend Parma. Though of no ducal house, Parma hath pleasant possessions in a certain isle of fairy beauty, where young princes and princesses get their sea-bathing, and where a great poet gives his friends "honest talk and wholesome wine," far from any aimless gossip save that of the magpie,

"Garrulous under a roof of pine."

Parma hath horses also, and vehicles, and a friend passionately addicted to pedestrianism and photography; so the inducements to visit him in his seaside retreat were plentiful. Wherefore, agreeing to meet him as aforesaid, I sent to Walker's for a map of Hampshire, and straightway encouraged visions of the New Forest and Winchester and Romsey, of William Rufus and William of Wykeham and Lord Palmerston.

There is on the borders of Berkshire and Hampshire, high up on the chalk, an inn called the Pineapple. There I stood one day, having walked over from the primitive

station at Woolhampton, where the whole village turns out, hatless and bonnetless, to see a train come in and go out. A pleasant picture that station,—full-foliaged elms all about, and a rustic population of spectators, with obviously nothing in the world to do, and a large flock of pigeons flashing through the air, white in the sunlight, purple in the shade, and one of the prettiest girls I have seen (since that metempsychosis in which I was Paris upon Ida), come to see a friend off by the train. Stately was she, and unconscious of her beauty, and so simply attired as to remind me of a certain poet's wish :—

> "Loving thoughts pursue you,
> And your lips are kissable,
> And you 're not ungainly,
> As, no doubt, you guess;
> Wherefore let me woo you,
> Dainty little Isabel,
> White-straw-hatted plainly,
> In a light print dress."

But to return to the Pineapple. Looking from it across the hills into Wiltshire and Hampshire, I seemed to sniff the brine in the breeze that came straight from the west. And I remembered the plunges of my boyhood into the sea that washes the grey walls of Southsea Castle. And I longed again to be upon the sands with that strange longing which pertains to dwellers in islands. But that I had a novel to finish, and a Quarterly article and a ream of leaders to write, and only two half-crowns in my pocket, I think I should have walked straight away to Basingstoke and taken the train to Gosport.

When at length I started, it was in rather a melancholy mood, for a fine St. Bernard puppy, whom we had

christened Tory, had just committed involuntary suicide by running under the wheel of a cart. Poor fellow! what a fine honest head he had, and what kindly eyes! I know a young lady who wept when we buried him.

> **He lies in the soft earth under the grass,**
> **Where they who love him often pass;**
> **And his grave is under a tall young lime,**
> **In whose boughs the pale green hop-flowers climb:**
> **But his spirit—where does his spirit rest?**
> **It was God who made him—God knows best.**

I hope none of the orthodox will strongly censure this.

Unwise is the man who starts very early on a journey. The Victoria Terminus beheld me, unbreakfasted, between six and seven in the morning; a Portsmouth train was just starting; there was not an instant for a cup of coffee. This same train was an unconscionable time getting to Portsmouth; it took me straight down to Arundel, and then away at right angles through Chichester and Havant; and my sole consolation was the sight of Arundel Castle, almost as nobly situate as Warwick, with dense woods behind it, overhanging the town and the river Arun, at whose mouth excellent red mullet do congregate. It were almost worth while to be a Duke to have so stately and picturesque a dwelling as pertains to the Earl Marshal of England.

Well, I arrived at Portsmouth at last, cross and hungry. And Portsmouth is not a town to restore one's good temper. The "special" of the *Spectator*, who seems to have gone down to look at the fleets on the day I was there, describes it thus:—"At the best it is a town well described by the American epithet of 'one-horse' or 'tin-pot' city.

The place has a 'drunk-over-night' air about it, which even in its brightest and cleanest hours it never succeeds in shaking off entirely. Everybody appears to be more or less closely connected with the sale of intoxicating liquors, and to be in the habit of promoting consumption by his own example." I fully agree with this dissatisfied gentleman. It occurred to me that the surly cannon which glare down High Street from a grim wall at its upper end would be well employed in blowing it into the sea. How is it that Portsmouth is so dingy and dismal, while Plymouth, the rival seaport, is thought the pleasantest place of residence in England, after London? Has the difference between the Devon and Hampshire races of men anything to do with it?

Portsmouth was dirtier and less pleasant than ever, thanks to the fleets; its grotesque attempts at festivity were laughable; I never before saw so shabby an assortment of the flags of all nations. I hear, however, that the entertainments were very grand, and that the Duke of Somerset and the Mayor of Portsmouth distinguished themselves immensely. I had not calculated on finding the fleet at Spithead, and was rather annoyed thereat, as I hate crowds. Surely Southsea Common had a little grass upon it in the days of my boyhood—before that pier was built, before there were any bathing-machines? Of course, my first care was to dip in the sea—and a very breezeless sultry sea it was. And next I had to decide whether I would breakfast or sail round the fleet. The hotels all looked so unattractive that I decided on the latter, and got as close as I could under one or two of

those colossal machines for murder, French and English. What shall I say about them? They did not seem so ugly as it is the fashion to call them. I do not think they have less beauty than their wooden predecessors. To-day, in the midst of a gay flotilla of holiday steamers and yachts, with golden sunlight glorifying every spar and rope, they were certainly a sight worth seeing.

When my brief cruise was over, a steamer for Southampton was just starting from the Royal Pier. I went on board—not, however, without a glance to the right, where the ladies' bathing-machines are placed immediately under the pier, so that you may watch the nymphs bobbing up and down in that wonderful way which is their custom. Damp young ladies were drying themselves on the shingle close by; while the pier was crowded with loungers, men with abundant beards, and piquant girls full of fun and flirtation. Beards and flirtation, like the myrtle, always flourish best by the sea. O for Leech's pencil to sketch this indescribable scene! My steamer ran across to Ryde, whose long pier was crowded. Sailing (or steaming) on a summer sea is uncommonly pleasant; but one ought to have a choice companion, feminine of course, with whom idly to watch the long track of cream-white foam which the vessel leaves behind her. Thus provided,

"With an indolent arm round a darling waist,"

I think sea-travel about the most delicious thing in the world. However, being on the present occasion a lonely voyager, I first hunted for something to eat. There was not a biscuit on board. So, adjourning the consideration

of breakfast, I took to studying character. What is the occupation or destiny of the travelling "swell," of whom a type is near me? Everything he wears is new, from his low-crowned hat down to his shoes. He has never sat down in those trousers, and now, being tired, leans against the binnacle, which is a crazy affair, and nearly gives way. That man's function in life is an utter perplexity. Here is another gentleman, much more intelligible. He is the good-humoured and contented tourist, who has an eye of condescending approval for the scenery. He would patronise Chamouni, and smile benignantly on the Andes. I am glad I don't know him. But beyond there is a group whose acquaintance I mean to make—boys from the Southampton Grammar-School, who have been to see the fleets. I like boys—I don't object to girls; but boys, before they emerge into the ungainly and conceited hobbledehoyhood which is inevitable to them, are the pleasantest fellows in the world. Their enjoyment of life is delightful to me. Happy youngsters these, proud of their school, and intelligently anxious to tell me all about the wonders of Southampton. One of them is an Egyptian, whom that land of antique wisdom has sent to pick up the knowledge of the moderns. When a sudden gust carries away a cap belonging to a careless member of the party, their day's enjoyment is complete.

Who has not sailed round the Isle of Wight, that exquisite specimen of cabinet scenery? The coast is very beautiful, certainly; but I greatly prefer the Channel Islands, especially Guernsey and Sark. However, there are some points in which Ynys Wyth surpasses "the

sprinkled isles" that have stolen its name. That flotilla of yachts, how bewitching they are—with all the girlish slenderness and feminine fleetness of Atalanta the unconquerable! I never wonder at a yachtsman's being in love with his fascinating craft. And, as the steamer takes me round towards Cowes—

> "The two great Cows that in loud thunder roar,
> This on the eastern, that the western shore,
> Where Newport enters stately Wight,"

past pleasant Osborne, where England's princesses bathe, I think of *Ναυσικάα λευκώλενος*, daughter of Alcinous the Strong-hearted, and that most delightful of primeval idyls whereof she is heroine. White-armed Nausicaa,—whom Athene the divine Wisdom strengthened,—may all princesses of England be like thee, royal daughter of a sea-ruling race!

Cowes is deserted: its inhabitants have gone to Portsmouth. A couple of life-boats, built by White of Cowes for a P. and O. steamer, are attached to our stern, and away we steam across to Southampton Water. Ah pleasant welcome inlet of home to thousands of Englishmen who have toiled in the scorching East! It has a beautiful prosperous peacefulness this Southampton Water; and seems to open the arms, ay, the loving bosom of mother England, to the weary homecomer. And then it is so completely English in all its features,—in the two famous abbeys, Beaulieu and Netley, which lie right and left of it; in the gigantic Military Hospital at Netley, as characteristic of the nineteenth as the Abbey of the thirteenth century. I may

as well confess at once that I had not time to visit either Netley or Beaulieu (by the natives called Bewley) on this present occasion; but I had seen them both before, and both are well worth seeing. Netley is well indicated by Horace Walpole's apostrophe, "O the purple abbots, what a spot had they chosen to slumber in! The spot is so beautifully tranquil, yet so lively, that they seem only to have retired *into* the world." For Southamptom Water, ages ago a silent highway, must always have supplied those monastic gentlemen with a pleasant view. But Netley is still overdone with picnics, though not so badly served as when Tom Ingoldsby was

> "Exceedingly angry and very much scandalised
> At finding those beautiful ruins so vandalised."

Beaulieu is fortunately harder to reach. You get at it by crossing Southampton Water to Hythe, and walking four or five miles. It stands close to where the little river Exe runs into Beaulieu Creek, and is as pleasantly and picturesquely situate as are most Cistercian foundations. King John founded it—they say in consequence of dreaming that he was severely flogged by the abbots of the Cistercian community. Few kings have more thoroughly deserved castigation; which is saying a good deal.

It was about three o'clock when I landed at Southampton, and forthwith breakfasted on fresh figs. It is a fruit which arrides me. I learnt to like it in Guernsey. Experience has given me a firm belief in its wholesomeness. The High Street of Southampton is excelled in picturesqueness only by the High Street of Oxford. It is a charming street; and, as I walk up its pavement, it is

smugglers, and there was no catching them in that wide silvan region. It may be so; I am always incredulous of impossibilities; I believe the red deer might have been preserved, yet the poaching prevented. However, it is too late now: the "high deer," whom William the Conqueror loved "as if he were their father," have been exterminated in their immemorial sanctuary; and the chief good obtained thereby seems to have been on the part of such inhabitants of Southampton as, at the period of destruction, were tempted by the street-cry of "Here 's your fine wennison fourpence a pound!"

If you want a brisk argument with a Southampton man, observe with compassionate gravity that the town should make good use of its present advantages, as the removal of the P. and O. steamers cannot long be postponed. As surely as potassium catches fire when it touches water, so surely will your acquaintance become instantaneously eloquent and argumentative. It is a topic of conversation which can never fail in this town. The townsman will not believe that the "foreign monarchs, royal Bengal tigers, Indian, African, and Egyptian princes, great monkeys, distinguished ambassadors, hippopotamuses, alligators, generals, admirals, illustrious exiles, Californian bears, and colonial governors," whom a facetious writer describes as arriving at Southampton, could by any freak of fate be consigned to some other port. My own impression is, that this generation will see the Indian mails carried by way of Falmouth and Brindisi; but it is scarcely safe to say so Below Bar. Another theme on which the inhabitants are strong, is the

monopoly of the London and South-Western Railway. They want competition—and do not seem at all likely to get it. I wonder whether Mr. Gladstone will have daring enough to fight the Railway Companies, and if so, whether he will succeed. I always think of that inevitable struggle between the people and their carriers when (which is too often to be pleasant) I am waiting for a train half an hour behind time.

But we have not yet passed through the Bar. It is a fine old gateway—one of three still standing—and you get from its roof a picturesque view of the town. The upper end of the High Street has less picturesqueness than the lower. Passing northward, I found that two parks have been made, one on each side of the street, since last I was here; they are more the size of paddocks than parks, but the town is very proud of them. On the right is a statue of another "Mayor of this Borough"—Andrews, the coachbuilder—whom an inscription describes as having reached the proud position which he occupied by "his own *genius*." Again the Southampton style. To the left is a statue of that enemy of our infancy, Dr. Watts, who wrote—

> "'Tis the voice of the sluggard; I hear him complain,
> 'What a horrible headache one gets from champagne!'"

The doctor was a Southampton man, of course; his father, though a dissenting schoolmaster, has an amusing traditional connection with Netley Abbey. The great church there was entire in 1700, and its owner, Sir Berkeley Lucy (one of Justice Shallow's immortal family, perhaps), sold its materials to a Southampton builder named

Taylor. Taylor dreamt that, in pulling down the church, he was killed by the fall of a keystone; thereupon he consulted his friend Watts, who advised him to keep out of the way when the work of demolition was doing. Taylor forgot this ethical counsel, and *was* smashed by a stone, and so the destruction of the Abbey was left incomplete. What a story for Tom Ingoldsby to have told!

I called on some friends in the neighbourhood of the parks; and when they found my destination was the New Forest, they insisted on my sleeping at Southampton. For lo! there was a picnic next morning in the Forest, and my little friend Miss Crinolina was going, and there was a scarcity of gentlemen, and I could go into the heart of the haunted woodland behind four grey horses. 'Twas unpoetic and unpedestrian; but what is the resolution of one man against the persuasion of one, two, three, four—yes, five charming young ladies? I stayed; I explored Southampton that evening, and began to think my friend the *librarius* was almost right in his theory about Alfgiva. And next morning, after a plunge into the great swimming-bath, where the water, being neither sea-water nor fresh-water, is extremely unpleasant, I found myself buried in crinolines on the roof of an omnibus behind the promised four greys. It took a long time to pack the hampers and the ladies satisfactorily, but we started at last. We passed Milbrook Church, where a very nice girl (in whom my interest was very much diminished when I heard she was going to be married) told me something about Pollok's *Course of Time*. Not being interested in that sombre poetaster, who is drearier than Blair's

Grave, and less original than the renowned *Proverbial Philosophy,* I did not care to ascertain whether he was buried there, or married, or what. Soon we entered the forest roads, where the girls' hats were imperilled by the overhanging branches, and there was a perpetual cry of "Heads!" At Lyndhurst, capital of the Forest, we halted at the Crown to "wash the horses' mouths;" and there I found a letter from an editorial friend, who never forgets me, with proof for "immediate correction." So I corrected it, and rewarded myself with a tankard; for my throat was a depository of Hampshire dust. Away again through Minstead, where dwelt Purkess the charcoal-burner, who picked up Rufus's corpse. The guide-books remark that Minstead hath its Purkesses to this day; and, sure enough, there was "Elizabeth Purkess" over a cottage-door, and in the doorway an old woman, who looked as if her existence were embittered by the inquiries of impertinent tourists. Soon we reached Rufus's Stone, which is not a stone at all, but a hideous iron erection with an absurd inscription. Here Southampton usually picnics; and sometimes Salisbury drives across to meet it. There is a wayside inn close by, where are obtainable certain necessary utensils. There is generally a forest-fiddler, but he was away harvesting; so the girls got no waltzes. There is a forest-photographer who groups the holiday-keepers round Rufus's Stone, and for a trifle immortalises the event. And the glades and open uplands are beautiful exceedingly; and in those remote retreating avenues flirtation has all requisite facilities. We got on very well; the lobsters and claret were excellent; the

only thing wanting was music for a dance. Another party, resolved to be provided with amusement, had brought implements of croquet, and were busily at play. What an absorbing game croquet seems to be! and how do its devotees manage to exist in rainy weather? It was all over at last; the crinolines and their contents were once more packed closely on the roof; and I, not ill pleased to be again a lonely wayfarer, loitered along under the bright harvest-moon to Lyndhurst. I should like to make the Crown my headquarters for a month. I should like at breakfast the thick sweet cream and delicate acorn-fed bacon of the Forest. I should like often to linger before Leighton's fresco without giving the sexton a shilling every time. I should like to explore every nook and cranny of the delicious region from Hythe to Ringwood, from Bartley to Christchurch. I should like, as Mr. Wise puts it, to follow the course of every forest-stream, making it my friend and companion, and going with it wherever it goes, through the greenest valleys and past the thickest woods and under the largest trees. I should like to learn the dialect of Ytene, whereof a friend of mine, a novelist[1] of the New Forest, gives the following example:—"Thar a bin zome rick-rack wather, 'bout a sannit back. But most peart on it ave a droud up agin. 'Twur starky, my lard, moor nor stoachy." I should like to hear Amiens sing—

"Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me;"

[1] Mr. Blackmore, who when this was written was not so well known as he now is.

or to hear Jaques, after passing near Rufus's Stone, exclaim—

"A fool, a fool! I met a fool i' the forest;"

and above all, ay, above all, to encounter dainty, sprightly Rosalind exclaiming, "Alas the day! what shall I do with my doublet and hose?" But alas the day! you cannot always have it as you like it. And *As You Like It* is the only guide to the New Forest.

Lyndhurst Church, only about two years old, and yet incomplete, is a beautiful edifice. Finer it will be by and by, when its tower rises high enough to be a landmark in the Forest. At present its most noticeable point is a noble fresco, illustrating the story of the Five Wise and Five Foolish Virgins, the gift and work of Mr. Leighton, whose marvellous "Helen of Troy" fixed every eye last May. Mr. Leighton is a painter of great individuality and intensity, though not of great originality. This fine fresco of his makes a glory in the church of Lyndhurst, and is well worth being praised; but I fancy the great parable has a depth which the painter's insight is far from fathoming. But what Mr. Leighton has seen he has right nobly painted, failing neither in joy and eagerness, nor in despair and agony. Long will pilgrims crowd to his fresco,—an awful shrine amid the forest glades. A very pretty group of pilgrims assembled there on that Thursday morning, two of them being nice little feminine patricians, in Garibaldi shirts of white and blue.

After the church you visit the Queen's House, an ancient hall famed only for William Rufus's stirrup,

which was forged in the reign of Henry VIII. What I did thereafter was to start for Boldrewood and Burleigh; and a glorious walk I had. Who is to describe such a walk? The beeches of Boldrewood are famous; while at Burleigh there stand one or two oak-ruins, sole relic of a group of great trees known as the Twelve Apostles, which are said to have been venerable when somebody shot William Rufus. Their ancient greatness did not strike me so much as the young magnificence of the oaks in Lord Leigh's park of Stoneleigh, in Warwickshire. A thousand years is a long time for a real living being to exist. But, as M. de Laprade puts it,

"Le chêne a le repos, l'homme a la liberté;"

and a millennium of repose is perhaps not very hard work—to those who like it. I had a delicious day's walking through glades of ineffable beauty and mystery, by fern-fringed streams, where I lay on the turf to drink; and often emerging into wild open spots where blackberry, honeysuckle, fern, heather, furze, and a hundred other plants mingled in profuse perfection. Many a partridge did I disturb that day. At last I came out upon a road, hot enough in all conscience, but with views on all sides that might well reconcile a man to being broiled. Upon the far verge behind me lay the mighty Minster of Christchurch, overhanging the distant sea. How strangely extremes meet! In that great church, where the monastic and the parochial styles are intimately blended, porch and turret, and the loft of Michael the Archangel, yield to one sole statue beneath the western

tower. Only a poet is remembered there,—not a bishop or an abbot, not a king or warrior,—and that poet's ashes lie far away. There are few visitants of Christchurch Minster who will not hasten first of all to that white marble presentment of a drowned man, whereon is inscribed :—

> " He hath outsoared the shadow of our night ;
> Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
> And that unrest which men miscall delight,
> Can touch him not, and torture not again.
> From the contagion of the world's slow stain
> He is secure, and now can never mourn
> A heart grown cold, a head grown grey, in vain ;
> Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
> With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn."

Here lies behind the sea one who loved the sea only too well. Not very far from Christchurch, at a place with the unpicturesque name of Muddiford, there is remembrance of another great poet. Coleridge lodged there about half a century ago ; and William Stewart Rose wrote :—

> " On these ribbed sands was Coleridge pleased to pace,
> While ebbing seas have hummed a rolling bass
> To his rapt talk."

Rose, one of

> "The mob of gentlemen who write with ease,"

lived at a place called Gundimore, and elected himself laureate of the New Forest and writer of elegiac verse on William Rufus. Somebody has scratched a stanza of his on the parlour-window of the little inn near Rufus's Stone :—

"And still in merry Lyndhurst Hall
Red William's stirrup decks the wall—
Who lists the sight may see;
And a fair stone in green Malwood
Informs the traveller where stood
The memorable tree."

Both statements are false; but what matter? As Mr. Matthew Arnold says, in approval of Mr. Kinglake's declining to retract when proved to be wrong, "On the breast of the huge Mississippi of falsehood called *history*, a foam-bell more or less is of no consequence."

A mile or two brought me to Picked or Picket Post,—the map says the former, the sign of the little inn the latter,—a tall, slender-pointed, white landmark, visible a long way off. Thence I walked over hill and dale north-eastward, through undulating miles of wondrous beauty. All the wide heath was one vast *tricolor*, as if to welcome the French fleet. Purple of heather, gold of furze, green of fern, struggled for the mastery all over those wild leagues of loveliness. Scenes like these are beyond words; why should I strive to convey to my readers their unimaginable beauty? When I had passed Malwood, and reluctantly emerged from the Forest, I found before me a not particularly interesting road to Romsey. The only noticeable matter was a wonderful white clematis, with blossoms of great size and purity of colour, outside a cottage at Ower.

I entered Romsey rather late in the evening; and loitering for a moment on its bridge, beheld through a grassy glade the white front of Broadlands. The lord of Broadlands I saw not, though a month earlier I had been

fortunate enough to overtake the Lord of Hughenden. But I thought of him as I crossed the Test, which laves his lawns, the "queen of Hampshire rivers, with broad and strong current, and water so clear that you may see every pebble at the bottom, with a high reputation as a trout stream." That's not the only *test* our octogenarian friend and ruler has safely passed many a time. He has tickled other and shyer trout than ever swam in a Hampshire stream. It seemed to me, as I looked over the old grey parapet, that if I lived to be eighty, there would shine from beyond the inevitable river a light too dazzling for me to see plainly our ordinary mundane affairs. A morbid thought! Live gallantly to the end; and if God has said, "In thy old age carry the burden of a nation," shrink not from that great labour.[1]

There is a gush of water and a smell of tan-pits all along the streets of Romsey. The inhabitants seem to be all woolstaplers. The town is in no way remarkable; there is a mighty massive abbey church, which dwarfs all the dwellings around it; and there is nothing else. The only advice I have to give any one who visits Romsey is, Don't sleep there, unless you are offered a bed at Broadlands. The waitress at my inn was a curious example of rustic simplicity, improved by a long course of familiarity with commercial travellers. I had to start early in the morning, and she greeted me with, "Breakfast 's ready for you, and I suppose you 're ready for breakfast." And as I attempted to find an unrancid spot in the broiled ham, she

[1] Mortimer Collins, although a Tory, was always a great admirer of Lord Palmerston.—F. C.

looked at me curiously, and remarked, "Why, you haven't rubbed your head dry!" But she was not by any means the least pleasant phenomenon at the hostelry.

The truth is, I had intended to go on to Winchester that night, but the fascinations of the Forest delayed me. That retardation, I regret to say, prevented my walking to Winchester in the morning, and forced me to the rail. I especially desired to pass through Hursley, of which England's saintliest poet, John Keble, is the vicar.

> "Red o'er the forest peers the setting sun,
> The line of yellow light dies fast away
> That crowned the eastern copse; and chill and dun
> Falls on the moor the brief November day."

I have just looked at a copy of that beautiful volume of his, *The Christian Year*, which I gave to somebody I love well at the Easter-tide of 1850. It was then in its thirty-third edition. Never did any poetry so thoroughly delight all who are devout, without question of sect: never was any poetry so catholic, so Christian. Even I, though one of the wicked, would willingly have walked a few more miles for a glimpse of Hursley Vicarage. But Time, the inexorable, would not permit me the pleasure.

So I went on to Winchester. And here I may observe that this South-Western Railway shakes you as much as ever it did; and that if the officials are more civil than they were, they must have been a rough lot originally. I leave the question of punctuality to be noticed presently. The traveller who for the first time reaches Winchester by rail, should take a footpath to the right of the station. At

its end he looks down a street towards an obelisk commemorative of a visit of the plague in the seventeenth century. Passing this, he will enter the city by its West Gate, and look down the steep street upon a picture of a past world. Modern costume cannot utterly modernise Winchester. The long irregular street, with its antique cross recently restored, and its penthouse, is ended by a fine slope of the green chalk downs. It is a picture to gaze upon and to remember.

The George is the best hotel in Winchester; its quaint bay-windowed coffee-room, looking upon a pleasant court-yard, is quite in keeping with the civic characteristics. The prevalent Wintonian name seems to be *Corfe*. You reach the Cathedral by a turning to the right, close to the market-cross. It is the longest of English minsters, but has a poor apology for a tower. The beauty of the interior consists in its forest of columns, whose multitudinous stems seem to rival the leafy avenues of Ytene. It abounds in chantries, or chapels, wherein lie famous prelates, awaiting in marble quietude the trump of the Archangel. "How much power and ambition under half a dozen stones!" exclaimed Walpole. Canute lies here, and the murdered Red King, and Swithin the rain-Bishop and Cardinal Beaufort, and many another whom I will not catalogue. And gentle Izaac Walton the angler sleeps under a modest marble slab, with an epitaph which has been attributed to Bishop Ken:—

"Alas! he 's gone before,
Gone to return no more;
Our panting breasts aspire
After their aged sire,

Whose well-spent life did last
Full ninety years and past;
But now he hath begun
That which will ne'er be done;
Crowned with eternal bliss,—
We wish our souls with his."

The Close of Winchester Cathedral is pleasant with turf and trees; a placid and somnolent Dean might live very comfortably there. The merry monarch lodged at the Deanery once; and good Bishop Ken, whose morning and evening hymns we have all sung in our boyhood, being then only a prebendary, would not allow Nell Gwynne to be billeted at his house. So the Dean ran up a temporary lodging for her. Years after, the Bishopric of Bath and Wells being vacant, royal Charley gave it to "the good little man who refused his lodging to poor Nell." *Was king or bishop the better Christian at the moment?*

I passed under Kingsgate to the College, whose scholars number about half those of Eton. William of Wykeham's ancient foundation is a fine old place, but I wish it had been populous with boyhood. I should like to have talked Ziph to one or two of the youngsters, and have proved that *p*, not *g*, is the right letter to interpolate. I should like to have found out whether the present porter's name is Hosea or Malachi. However, it was not to be; so I strolled through the quadrangles, and admired the chapel, with its fine painted windows and its tower of the two wardens, and looked in through the wired door at the library, which occupies the centre of the cloisters, and tasted the beer in the lofty kitchen. I think the

beer might be a trifle stronger without causing cephalalgia.

The walk along the margin of the translucent Itchen to the Hospital of St. Cross is very pleasant. Everybody will have vague remembrance of the Earl of Guildford's being master of this fine old charity. Late years have, I hear, rectified many abuses. The traveller should begin by applying for the Wayfarer's Dole—bread and beer. After this he may wander through cloister and quadrangle, and muse upon the stately memories of Winchester. For such musing I had scanty leisure, for the old college song of *Dulce domum* haunted me, and I had to find my way home by rail. And these cross-country lines are terribly trying to the patience.

Exempli gratia: My train was due at 12.12. I hurried to catch it, giving up all idea of lunch, and shortening my glimpses of the old Wintonian world. A porter volunteered the information that it never arrived till half-past twelve. There were eighteen minutes utterly thrown away. I should have been delighted with eighteen minutes more in cathedral nave or college cloister, or anywhere in the rare old city. The train actually arrived at 12.40. It was due at Basingstoke at 12.58; it arrived at 1.25; and the Great-Western train at Basingstoke, which had waited fifteen minutes for it, waited for nothing at all twenty minutes longer, and started at 1.45. How much behind time we were at Reading I was too disgusted to observe. But I should like to ask the managers of these lines, if they make it a custom to be twenty minutes behind the time, why they cannot put

that twenty minutes in the time-bills. Be systematically slow, if you must; but why be systematically mendacious?

But, after all, I did not meet my friend Parma at Portsmouth, the reason for which will have to be explained when I go *Through* . . . who knows what shire?

A WALK THROUGH SOMERSET.

THE county of the Sumorsæte, although as a whole more pleasant than picturesque, contains fine incidents of scenery in the Quantock and Mendip Hills, and in the great forest of Exmoor. And its ecclesiastical antiquities are very fine, seeing that it is wealthy in cathedral cities: Bath and Wells are all its own, and of Bristol it claims a portion; while Glastonbury is unquestionably the oldest seat of that early Christianity in Britain whose actual origin is untraceable. Joseph of Arimathea is claimed as the founder of the faith in this island by local legend—and even legends are sometimes true. Of that fine province which we call the West of England, Devon is certainly the most beautiful county, and Devonshire men are the most characteristic race; they have always been lovers of adventure from the days of Drake and Raleigh to the days of Colenso and the Kingsleys. The Somerset folk, dwelling in a quieter district, with no wild rivers like Tamar and Dart, with a muddy and sluggish sea upon their coasts, have always been cast in a more bovine mould. Bristol, however, years ago the second of England's cities and the capital of the West, has drawn to

itself a strong and restless life ; the Bristolian still differs perceptibly from the dwellers in other cities, though not quite so much as when he rioted in Queen Square, and worried Sir Charles Wetherall. If Mr. Hussey Vivian's theory about coal—that is to be found almost everywhere—should turn out to be correct, England may yet find the men of the West taking again the lead, which they lost when the wealth of the coalfields concentrated manufacture in the North.

A delicious morning of August, with a cool fresh breeze driving a few fleecy clouds over a light-blue sky, and I look once more from the railway station upon that pleasant city of Bath, crescent rising above crescent from the Avon. Twenty years or thereabouts must have passed since I set foot in Bath, though I have caught many a glimpse of it from the rail. William Beckford was alive in those days—the marvellous millionaire who wrote *Vathek* and astonished Byron. We used to see him riding slowly along the streets, followed by his groom with a bag of coppers for the poor ; and whenever he dismounted, the groom transferred himself to his master's saddle, apparently to keep it warm. Well do I remember the sale after his death of his superb collection of things curious and beautiful. The old tower-builder, who had a passion for stony summits and far prospects, lies sarcophagised in red granite beside his last high edifice on Lansdown. But, alack ! those two swift-flown decades have taken away more than the eccentric millionaire. Where are the pretty girls (Bath is famed for pretty girls) with whom I used to picnic long ago on those green

heights around the city of thermal fountains? What a chill this great interval of time gives one, when re-entering as a stranger a city wherein once were troops of welcoming friends! If we could meet again, I and some delicious little creature of eighteen or so with whom I carried on innocent flirtation, how uncomfortable we should feel! Youth is not at the helm now, or Pleasure at the prow; too probably, while Business steers, Caution is keeping a sharp look-out ahead for those confounded rocks of Insolvency. I recollect writing, when I dwelt on one of the Channel Cyclades, a reminiscent lyric, whence I propose to make a brief extract:—

"City on the sinuous Avon—
Tranquil town from tumult free—
Memory, poetic artist,
Loves to picture thee.
Idly haunting crag and headland,
While I ponder careless rhymes,
Comes a weird and wandering echo
Of the Abbey chimes."

Those Abbey chimes! They are indissolubly connected with my recollections of Bath. They are "bewildered chimes," like those mentioned by Wordsworth, and bewildering to the hearer. What queer old hymn-tune they play I forget; but often still do I hear it in my dreams, as when I lodged beside the ladder-carved western front. And to hear it again to-day is like travelling back a few years towards my joyous youth. One more stanza:—

"City, too, of literati—
Poets dwell there, not a few—
Many of thy lovely daughters
Are a little blue!

Sapient owlet of Athena
Perches on their slender wrists.
Critics love thee—politicians,
Archæologists."

As to poets, Walter Savage Landor, whose verse ran clearer than that of any English writer since Chaucer, was a lover of Bath; there also dwelt (and probably still dwells) one John Edmund Reade, who was the most remarkable of English poetasters before Mr. Tupper was discovered. Of him Landor wrote :—

"A crouching bear inopportunely bit
Thy finger, Reade.
It should have been ere thy first verse was writ—
It should indeed!"

And that many of the daughters of Bath are tinged with blue is doubtless as true now as ever. It is the very city for the azure hose. Its life has a quaint quietude, amid which you may almost hear the simmer of the steaming waters which lie beneath its soil. It has no vigorous aspects of commerce and manufacture; it is not worried by a penny daily newspaper; it pleasantly blends "a youth of folly with an age of cards." Its pavements are a trifle too hot for sensitive feet, whence it is said there comes an abnormal development of the aboriginal ankle. But I saw some pretty ankles in Bath.

I did not sleep there. For me, it is a haunted city, and I preferred getting beyond the reach of visions of the past. One or two sentimental pilgrimages I made to places which friendship had rendered sacred, or flirtation pleasant, to the remembrance; but it was as empty an affair as the endeavour of the monk, when they unburied

Queen Guinevere at Glastonbury, to seize a tress of her wondrous golden hair, which crumbled into impalpable dust at his touch. To quote Charles Lamb's melancholy music :—

"All, all are gone, the old familiar faces."

Wherefore, fortified by oysters and chablis at the York House, I started for Wells, along what was a portion of the old Roman Fosse way, from the north to Totnes. The road is rather a dull one, though it rises breezily over the downs : but at the old village of Stratton on the Fosse (the street-town on the Fosse) you turn to the right towards the Mendips, avoiding the dreary stocking-making town of Shepton Mallet. Here the aspect of affairs greatly improved. Somewhat weary—for twelve miles of a dull country are more tiresome than twenty of scenery crowded with sensations—I rested on a bench in front of the Old Down Inn, and drank some abominable cider. "Zummerzet zider" is a proverb for badness ; and Somerset is almost as bad as Wiltshire in the matter of wayside inns. The Berkshire singlestick man in *The Scouring of the White Horse*, who had to hit his Somersetshire opponent five times on the head before he could draw blood, remarked : "You see, mates, there's no 'cumulation of blood belongs to thay cider-drinking chaps, as there does to we as drinks beer." The old gamester was right. Berkshire beer is wretched enough, except such home-brewed as I drank at Kingston Lisle ; but Somerset cider is worse. By the way, the Berks people are crying out to have the White Horse re-scoured. Why doesn't the Member for Lambeth come down and do it ?

Soon after this humble refreshment, I passed Lechmere Water, which is not exactly what we call a *mere* in the lake country, but is a pleasant pool to look at in a dry shire, where no water is. A joyous south-west wind, happily rainless, meets me all the way as I descend to where the city Wells lies amid its guardian hills. How well those old builders of cathedral and abbey knew how to choose a site! You might compare Wells to a magical city defended by giants. And, confident in such colossal defence, it is the drowsiest city in England. The canons of its cathedral live the very tranquillest of lives: they grow pines and practise photography. You may stand a whole day in the market-place and not see a mortal. The drip and tinkle of its scaturient waters are audible on a quiet day half-way up the Mendips. But extremes meet: in this silent city, rather more than a decade ago, Archdeacon Denison preached those famous sermons of his which horrified Low Churchmen, and resulted in the immortal case of Ditcher *versus* Denison. Imagine the polemic Archdeacon ("George without the drag on," as one of his brilliant brothers called him) choosing somnolent Wells as the city wherein to explode his theological sky-rockets! It was as if one were to set up a treadmill in the Castle of Indolence.

Bishop Jocelyn, who founded Wells Cathedral in the thirteenth century, seems to have been an unusually fine old fellow, even among the prelates of that magnificent epoch.

> "Of prelates by birth the age was once prolific—
> Now we 've but one, and he 's in the Pacific,"

wrote somebody long ago, referring to Bishop Selwyn; and certainly it seems to me that the thirteenth century was the very time when both bishops and kings were *born* to their functions. Any way, Bishop Jocelyn's miraculous west front, a gallery of superb statuary, was a work worthy of a great prelate. Both for beauty and historic significance, that series of statues (half of which are either colossal or the size of life) has nothing in England to rival it—certes, nothing that we in these latter days can do, when the newspaper is killing the book, just as the book killed the cathedral. Architects and their subordinates were *poets* six centuries ago. Witness the wonderful Resurrection series in the sixth tier of this west front! witness especially the divine conception of Eve's Creation! witness again—as deliciously grotesque in stone as Robert Browning in words—the capitals of the transept: one man with a toothache, another taking a thorn from his toe, and another whistling obstreperously, and so on! , Ay! there were poets in stone when Jocelyn was Bishop of Wells.

How beautifully calm and quiet is the Cathedral Green, with the quadrangular Deanery to the north of it! This was the charming decanal retreat which inspired certain Praedesque verses called "The Dean's Daughter:"—

> "Calm, silent, sunny: whispereth
> No tone about that sleepy Deanery,
> Save when the mighty organ's breath
> Came husht through endless aisles of greenery.
> No eastern breezes swung in air
> The great elm-boughs, or crisped the ivy:
> The powers of nature seemed aware
> Dean Willmott's motto was DORMIVI."

That divine oriel which overlooks the Dean's delicious garden wants nothing for perfection save a sunny head looking serenely forth on the serene pleasaunce. But perhaps the most striking thing in Wells is the mighty stair of the Great Hall, which came to grief first in the Reformation days, and was thoroughly stripped under Cromwell. Verily it must have been a glorious room in the days of old, with its roof of mighty oak timber, and its nine great windows, splendid as sunset. But reformers, religious and otherwise, have had their wicked will with it.

You always get good fare in a cathedral city; wherefore I need not praise the antique hostelry which received me at Wells. "Boots"—they preserve that old-fangled name in the West—was rather a nuisance. He decided that it was my duty, early next morning, to visit Wookey Hole, and the Banwell Caves, and the Chedder Caves, and so on. Now, I hate caves. Their entrances are always low and dirty; there is nothing to see but darkness. I have not the slightest pleasure in worming myself through holes, reptile-fashion, just to see a few bones, and stalactites, and stalagmites, at the end. But I could not convince hereof the incredulous boots; he thought I was "chaffing" him; and I could not silence his intolerable pertinacity until I had used language of a more emphatic character than seems consonant with the ecclesiastic dignity and repose of a cathedral city.

Early in the morning, resolutely avoiding all caverns, I started for Glastonbury, six miles off. As I traversed this rather uninteresting bit of road, raised above the flats upon materials taken from the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, I was fortunate enough to gain a companion. He

was a pedlar. I like pedlars, as did my friend Wordsworth; and this fellow, though neither as witty as Autolycus nor as sage as Wordsworth's peddling hero, was very pleasant. He was on intimate terms with all the skeletons resident in all the great houses of the West. Some of the stories which he told me would make the fortune of a sensation novelist. I dare not tell them here. But he was not solely romantic and sensational, he was also etymological. He was a Somerset man, proud of his birth, full of belief that his race are still the purest Saxons, speaking the purest dialect. As we walked towards Glastonbury Tor, he lectured most eloquently on this matter. He produced from his pack a volume of poetry, by an author whose name is Barnes, written in the Doric of the West. Good poetry, be it known—some of it idyllic as Theocritus, and in the very style of the unique Sicilian; some of it lyrical, with a real English lilt. Indeed, so delighted was I with the book that I persuaded my friend the pedlar to sell it me, though it was his favourite companion from village to village. He knew where to get another.[1]

And as I lunched at the quaint old pilgrims' inn at Glastonbury, where the black bull of Clare meets the white lion of Mortimer, I glanced over this volume of verse, and concluded that my Somerset Autolycus was right both as to the beauty of the dialect and the excellence of Mr. Barnes's poetry. Seriously, the language of

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[1] This book was afterwards a great favourite, from which he often read aloud.—F. C.

The claim of Mr. Barnes to the laurel, thus first recognised by a kindred spirit, is now thoroughly established.—T. T.

the West (Mr. Barnes chooses Dorset as his type) is very rich and pregnant. Some of its words would be of worth in the ordinary poetic language of England—as, for example, *grægle*, for the blue-bell of the woods, a diminutive which suggests at once the grey-blue of the flower. Botany and poetry osculate when the Somerset man calls the hawthorn-berry a pixy-pear—the pixies being the fairies of the West Country. Among the words which, provincial in England, have got into Yankee slang—whence it will doubtless be promoted to American language—is *dander*, a Western word from the Anglo-Saxon *tynder*, and of course cognate with the common word *tinder*. The root is *tynan*, to set on fire or enrage. The slang of one epoch becomes the language of another; the Doric of one people becomes the Attic of another.

Thus did I meditate at the George Inn at Glastonbury, after parting with the philosophic and poetic pedlar. I was in Avalon: yet King Arthur's Laureate was not the poet that enchained me. Unquestionably this old abbey town is in

> "The island-valley of Avilion,
> Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
> Nor ever wind blows loudly."

So the modern poet, borrowing from the *Odyssey*, describes the valley of orchards (for *Avel* means merely an apple): but in "Le Morte d'Arthur" of the Harleian MS., the older minstrel simply sings:—

> "The kynge spake with a sory sowne,
> 'I wylle wende a lytelle stownde
> In to the vale of Avelovne,
> A whyle to hele me of my wounde.'"

Although remote antiquity has left no recognisable traces here, the earliest portion of the ruins being of Henry II.'s time, yet the strange traditions of the place haunt the imagination. I climbed Weary-all Hill, where Joseph of Arimathea is said to have rested after long pilgrimage from Palestine. Looking down upon the pleasant valley, surrounded by the blue arms of a river where now there are only marshes, he struck his staff in the ground. Though it was Christmas, the thorn-staff burst into instant blossom, and the weary traveller knew that here he was to rest. Holy thorn-trees, scions of the Arimathean's staff, bloom at Christmas still, I am told—a fact which to many minds sufficiently verifies the legend. A very beautiful legend, in any case.

The myth of Arthur appears to make that poetic hero the contemporary of Joseph of Arimathea. For it narrates that Lancelot, head of all Christian knights, once stopped at a castle where dwelt king Pelles, a cousin of Joseph. While they sat at table, there flew through the window a dove, bearing in its beak a censer of gold, whence issued most exquisite fragrance. Then entered a maiden with a golden bowl, before which King Pelles worshipped, and the table was suddenly spread with delicious food and rare wine. When the apparition had vanished, Lancelot was informed that this was the Sangreal, and that a knight yet unborn, who should sit in the Siege Perilous, was destined to find it. King Pelles was aware that his daughter Elayne was to be the mother of the stainless knight, and was eager to wed her to Lancelot; but that hero was accustomed to be persecuted in this particular

way, and came unhurt out of the flirtation. However, there were magicians in the land in those times, and by the aid of one, King Pelles carried out his design. Hence was born Sir Galahad, the stainless knight, of whom it is written :—

> "My good blade carves the casques of men,
> My tough lance thrusteth sure,
> My strength is as the strength of ten,
> Because my heart is pure."

This Elayne, be it observed, is not the same with the maid of Astolat, whose episode came much later in Lancelot's career. It is the tradition of the West that Joseph of Arimathea, and Arthur and his queen, were buried at Glastonbury Abbey ; and in the time of Henry II. search was made for Arthur's grave. Far down was found a stone inscribed : "*Hic jacet sepultus inclytus Rex Arthurus in insula Avaloniæ.*" Beneath it was a great oak coffin containing a mighty skeleton ; while in another near lay Guinevere, her abundant golden hair strangely apparelling her fleshless shoulders. But a monk who stood by grasped the shining tresses, and they fell to dust. Edward I. had the relics placed in a splendid shrine before the high altar.

Haunted by memories like this—not to mention the more humorous tradition of Abbot Dunstan, who in this place wrought at the forge, and seized with his tongs the nose of the fiend when he intruded in the form of a beautiful woman—I tried hard to realise the old heroic and religious life which lies hid under successive strata of myth and poetry. Vain the effort ! What edifices of

worship stood here centuries before the beautiful buildings, now ruinous—what manner of dwellings preceded these quaint old gabled houses, themselves so old-fangled—are questions to which the antiquary may give an approximate answer; but who can people the old town with the men and women who trod its streets thirteen centuries ago? Those yellow-haired, blue-eyed Saxons had, probably, found their way to England, but not to Avalon; and the old aboriginal race, whose ancestors gave Cæsar so much trouble, what were they really like? These things I ask myself on Weary-all Hill, below which the antique town lies cruciform, grey churches rising above red-tiled houses; but when I crossed the valley, and winded myself in the steeper ascent of Glastonbury Tor, on whose summit arises St. Michael's Tower, I looked forth upon a wider world of hill and vale, with the Channel sea shining in the west, and consoled myself with the theory that human nature is the same everywhere and at all times—unchangeable in its essence. I was standing, as this solace occurred to me, just where the last Abbot of Glastonbury was hanged and quartered by order of our "great Conservative reformer," Henry VIII. Below me, on fields where grapes once grew for the delectation of abbots, the wheat was standing in abundant sheaves. I opened my friend the pedlar's volume, and read:—

"The groun' is clear. Ther 's nar a ear
O' stannin' carn a-left out now,
Var win' to blow ar rain to drow;
'Tis all up siafe in barn ar now.

Here 's health to thae that plough'd an' zow'd;
Here 's health to thae that reap'd an' mow'd,

An' thae that had to pitch an' luoad,
Ar tip the rick at Harvest Huome.
The happy zight—the merry night—
The men's delight—the Harvest Huome ! "

And it occurred to me that perchance it would be wiser for us to try and understand the ploughmen and reapers around us, living men who are come-at-able, than to waste time in a vain effort to realise the " ancient Briton " on whom Sir Lancelot of the Lake was founded. I also, looking at Brent Knoll, a dozen miles off, thought of a gallant Churchman who dwells thereby, the most humorous and most pugnacious of archdeacons, whose love for harvest-homes is nobly characteristic of the poetic and religious soul of the man.

I had fully intended to stop at Somerton, a pleasantly-situate town which gave the county its name, and thence to visit Taunton, the most *elegant* town in Europe, and thence to Exmoor, to get a sniff of my native Devon over the border, and a look at the wild ponies and wilder red deer; but a friend had promised to meet me at Glastonbury, and he met me—in a tandem-cart, whose team reminded me of my friend Mr. Cayley's poetic description:—

" Though one leader twice
Came round the shafts, with nose almost to meet his
Driver, the present-minded Wilton beat his
Head with the whip's butt-end."

My friend will, in time, be a parson; if he preaches his sermons at the pace he drove me to North Curry, he will seldom bore any one. There is nothing to describe at this village, except my friend, who perhaps might not like me to tell the public that he is better at cricket than

at the Greek Testament, or that his Paley is not equal to his croquet. There is, they tell me, a quaint festival every Christmas in honour of King John, who, I fancy, was not quite so bad a fellow as one's *History of England* maintains. However, I was obliged to stop at North Curry so long that I perforce missed Exmoor, which I must now leave till the happy Fates take me to my own county.

Burgh-Walter, by its aborigines (famed for electoral purity) called Bridgewater, I did not visit; nor Burnham, Clevedon, Weston-super-Mare—places well known to me of old, where people with fervid imaginations bathe in the mud of the Severn estuary, and fancy it is the sea. No; having been foiled in my endeavour to reach the border, I took steam and found myself at Bristol, a city much to my taste. Well do I remember it a quarter of a century ago, when the ghost of Felix Farley still walked (a right hospitable ghost); when my friend Walter Thornbury permeated his sensitive imagination with its antiquities; when the Bishop of Oxford's pet preacher preached at Lower Easton. Ah! times have changed: the Bush Inn is a thing of the past; the Clifton Suspension Bridge is completed; and there is no one left who remembers John Eagles. Dear old dirty Bristol, with thy streets of corn and of wine, how well I love thee! How gladly would I see once more the slightly stooping form of the most gigantic journalist (save Jacob Omnium) that ever stepped, passing the Post-Office to do his matutine marketing! How gladly would I taste once more his white port wine!

But I am getting sentimental when I ought to be descriptive. Well, the first thing that catches the railway traveller's eye is the church of St. Mary Redcliff: it is the finest parish church in England:—

"The pride of Bristowe and the Western londe."

Its marvellous atmosphere of antiquity inspired Chatterton—

"The marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul that perished in its pride."

I went (I always do) to the White Hart, which I venture to recommend for various reasons. One is that you always get your wine well iced; another, that the bar, where charming nymphs hand you delicious beverages, is a capital place to hear the city gossip. I don't mean to say a word against the more pretentious White Lion, next door: but the White Hart hath a superior piquancy. The Lion was intended for graver travellers than I: Prime Ministers, Archbishops and the like.

Bristol has much picturesqueness, much mystery. The old city, unless I am greatly mistaken, will again vindicate the vigour of its people. They are rather stagnant now these Bristolians; but whoso dwells among them is impressed by a sense of unmistakeable power. A ruling race these men; the flower of the Western land, whom, if the North has for a time outrun, it is simply the accident of attainable iron and coal. Bristol against Liverpool, in the far future, to my mind.

To describe the quaint corners of Bristol, familiar to me in my boyhood, would take by itself an article. And I have not, in good truth, space to depict the clamour of the

narrow chief streets, the picturesqueness of Old Market Street, which belongs to the Middle Ages, the tranquillity of College Green, the more tranquil and indolent tranquillity of the minor College Green beneath its ancient archway, the piquant fashion in which steep Park Street leads to pleasant Clifton, where the Avon runs between, a cliff on one side two hundred and fifty feet high, and divine woods on the other.

About the people of Bristol there is a quaint hereditary tendency to blunder. Brunel's bridge across the Avon, whose commencement is beyond my memory, has only recently been finished by help of the débris of Hungerford. I recollect a reservoir for a waterworks company being excavated on the very top of St. Vincent's Rocks, and filled up again because it was found there was no right to excavate. I remember hearing that the Bristolians, having to erect a county jail for Gloucestershire, built it in Somerset, or *vice versâ*. I remember seeing Prince Albert launch the *Great Britain,* which they had built so large that the dock walls had to be pulled down to let her out. And now I hear that my friend Mr. Godwin, one of the two or three architects living (*teste* Beresford Hope), finds his plan for Bristol assize courts rejected *because* it fulfils all the conditions. Such are the Bristolians, a heavy, resolute, unimaginative, blundering race of whom the highest praise conveyable is to be found in this ancient formula: *They are not half such fools as they look.*

Brihtric of Bristol seems to have typified their queer propensity to blundering. Lord of Bristol (and much else) before the Norman Conquest, he made hot love to a

charming young creature, one Matilda of Flanders, who fascinated him while on his travels. The fascination did not last; Brihtric came home again; Matilda consoled herself as well as she could, and ultimately wedded a certain Norman Duke with a bar sinister, who swore *par le splendeur de Dieu*, and became King of England, and used to flog his queen right barbarously. Her Majesty took vengeance on the faithless Brihtric, persuaded her lord to confiscate all his manors (which she appropriated) and imprisoned the poor devil for life . . . at Salisbury, I think. This history is not only a warning against indiscriminate flirtation; it also, in allegoric fashion, shows the Bristol idiosyncrasy. Brihtric of Bristol foreshadows Bristol. The Bristolians are full of energy, strength, daring; but they miss their opportunities.

A WALK THROUGH SURREY.

A TOUR through Surrey seems a very commonplace affair. Cross the Thames at Waterloo or Westminster, and you are in Surrey. Yet there are wild hills and wide heaths in the county, small as it is, where the traveller may easily fancy himself long leagues away from any city. From the height called Newland's Corner he may on a clear summer evening see the dome of St. Paul's arise like a vision on the remote horizon—a vision that may well startle him by its suggestion of London's mighty multitude within an easy distance. In the swift garrulous Tillingbourne he may catch trout; upon Abinger Common he may kill snipe and woodcock. The "hungry and barren" land which Fuller describes as existing in central Surrey has at least done Londoners excellent service by keeping within their reach a wondrous wealth of the picturesque. The utmost dimensions of the county are forty miles from east to west by twenty-seven from north to south; but within this narrow limit there is a surprising variety of scenery.

I did not enter Surrey by Waterloo Bridge. I crossed

the border at Blackwater, where three counties meet—the other two being Berks and Hants. This is a military vicinity. Sandhurst stands upon the ridge which divides the counties; Wellington College wears the infantry uniform in bright red bricks; Aldershot, with its huts and butts, and churches and chapels and institutes, covers I know not how many square miles of sandy heath. *Certes*, the nation of shopkeepers does not forget the necessity of occasional fighting. The railway skirts the margin of Surrey for some miles, plunges definitely into it at Ash, and takes you with sufficient rapidity to the old town of Guildford, which I made my starting-point. A quaint drowsy old town, climbing a long steep street, but doubtless busy enough on Saturday, seeing that it possesses one of the finest corn-markets in England.

Murray the ubiquitous is not infallible; he praises the inns of Guildford. I paid as much at one of these for a cold-meat luncheon as could have been charged by the greediest lady manager of the most magnificent "limited" hotel. There is a grey old ruined castle at Guildford, buried in a cacodorous part of the town. Castles commonly dominate the neighbouring towns, but this of Guildford was built too low. It is best seen at a distance.

The only place worth a visit in the town of Guildford is an antique hospital, founded by Archbishop Abbot, who placed the crown on the head of Charles I. One Maurice Abbot, a clothworker of Guildford, had a wife named Alice, rank Protestants both, apparently, as they narrowly escaped being burnt under Queen Mary.

Mistress Alice was a dreamer of dreams; she dreamt that "if she could eat a jack or pike, the child she was about to bring into the world would be a great man." Soon after, drawing water from the river Wey, she caught a pike in her bucket. If she had it baked according to Mr. Francatelli's directions—or still better, crimped in slices —I have no doubt she enjoyed it. Certain it is that her son George became Archbishop of Canterbury; and the promise of the vision was far exceeded, for her second and third sons became Bishop of Salisbury and Lord Mayor of London. The Archbishop's hospital is a foundation for twelve old men and eight old women—a quiet retreat, in which they may dream away the brief remnants of their lives. A loquacious and tremulous "brother" showed me over the place: there is a small chapel, darkened by some beautiful stained glass, wherein the archiepiscopal arms pretty frequently occur: there is a wealth of black oak everywhere, in panel and balustrade. The dining-room, which is over the gateway, has been turned into a library for the clergy, whereat my guide seemed scarcely pleased. The present dining-room was, he thought, the place where the Archbishop's servants used to dine.

The old Guildhall is curious, and contains a quaint chimney-piece brought from Stoughton House. The Grammar School has a pleasant collegiate look. Guildford seems famous for bishops: five were educated at the school. Two of these, William Cotton of Salisbury, and Henry Cotton of Exeter, schoolfellows, but unrelated, were consecrated on the same day, Queen Elizabeth remarking that "she hoped she had now well *cottoned* the west." As

I passed the gateway, one of the masters mounted his horse for his afternoon ride; and when I had climbed the hill-side beyond the town, I saw him looking on while a gay group of youngsters played cricket. I wonder whether there were any embryo bishops among them. I think the world has few pleasanter sights than a set of merry schoolboys playing cricket.

There are two very noble views near Guildford, from Newland's Corner and from St. Martha's Hill. The latter is especially fine. The hill is of sandstone, and is crowned by the parish church of Chilworth village, which is far below in the valley. A few graves lie round the quaint old chapel. I have seen few sleeping places where I would rather rest than that windy, lonely height. In the valley below there runs a streamlet which spreads into ponds at intervals; Cobbett has described it in his *Rural Rides* in that simple racy English which nobody can write nowaday; and very indignant is his eloquent denunciation of the two manufactures which, when he visited St. Martha's Hill, employed the people of Chilworth, namely, gunpowder and bank notes. That these two "damnable inventions" should occupy the inhabitants of a tranquil valley, where the nightingales sing earlier and later in the year than anywhere else in England, seemed to the sturdy old Radical utterly atrocious. Bank notes, which Cobbett deemed far more mischievous than gunpowder, are no longer made at Chilworth; but the powder mills, founded by one of the Evelyns in Elizabeth's time, are still flourishing; and the editor of *Murray* was so fortunate as to see an explosion

at these mills, when standing on the top of Hindhead, in August 1864. "A small cloud of marble-like whiteness, solidity, and sharpness of outline rose slowly from the valley in front of the wooded heights of Newland, and gradually expanded into a well-defined cumulus-like mass resting on a stout column. . . . The phenomenon was as surprising as it was beautiful, and it was only after the cloud had attained its full development and was beginning to break up, that the dull heavy boom reached the ear, and confirmed but too painfully the vague suspicion of its true character."

No powder mill exploded in that happy valley for *my* delectation; but very enjoyable was my walk over the hills to Albury. The sandstone and chalk ridges are here in picturesque contrast; and intermingling with the more usual trees, clumps of dark yews are frequent. Albury is a village which everybody connects with the name of Drummond. The late Henry Drummond gradually removed the old village, which was on the margin of the stream running through Albury Park, building houses for the inhabitants farther west. Only one of the old cottages remains. In the new village, called on the maps Western Street, he built a fine Romanesque church of red brick, and then dismantled the old church, which stands near the house. The model imitated by Mr. Drummond's architect looks very well at Caen, we doubt not; but the style is unsuitable to the ordinary aspect of an English village.

At Albury I called upon a poet—one whom critics love to assail, but who derides critics and arrides the public. Pleasant indeed is the fine old house, with emerald lawn

and stately trees, wherein he dwells. Not Horace in his Sabine farm, nor Catullus at Tiburs, had a more poetic retreat than the author of the *Proverbial Philosophy* at Albury. But, like Catullus, the advent of May had set the poet longing for a flight far away :—

> "Jam ver egelidos refert tepores,
> Jam cœli furor æquinoctialis
> Jucundis Zephyri silescit auris. . . .
> Jam mens prætrepidans avet vagari,
> Jam læti studio pedes vigescunt :"

and he was about to take wing for seaside resorts, and the soft Cyclades of the Channel, beloved by Victor Hugo. Right hospitable was he; a bottle of cool claret cheered the dusty wayfarer, and an hour's pleasant talk was even more cheering.[1] Hence I walked through Albury Park towards Gomshall.

"Gang warily" is the motto of the Drummonds. But he who gangs most warily may have "a bee in his bonnet;" and the shrewd banker was an Irvingite. He built in Albury Park a church or cathedral for the believers in that superstition. Close thereto is a very comfortable, even luxuriant, house for the "Angel," as an Irvingite minister is styled. I do not know who is the angel in the house at present; but there are few dissenting ministers (not to mention rectors) who get such snug quarters. The "cathedral" itself looks more like a village church than an Irvingite eccentricity; it is a pity Mr. Drummond did not build the parish church of

[1] The "dusty wayfarer" was quite a stranger to Mr. Tupper, and, though he had no admiration of his works, presented himself on the chance of being well received. He never forgot the hospitality and genial kindliness of the poet, whom he did not see again for ten or twelve years, when he reminded him of it.—F. C.

Albury in this style and reserve the Romanesque for his private whim. The house at Albury had the advantage of Pugin's improvements; the gardens were originally designed by John Evelyn, and I saw, as I passed, the yew-tree hedge, whose umbrella development delighted Cobbett.

Beyond Gomshall, where the railway crosses the road, I turned to the right to visit Wotton. There dwelt John Evelyn, "perfect model of an English gentleman," in whose career, as Southey well put it, there is "nothing but what is imitable, and nothing but what is good." Wotton House has undergone many alterations, and is at present in the hands of the bricklayers; but there are still the "delicious streams and venerable woods" which delighted Evelyn. Much of the wood in this well-wooded parish was probably planted by the author of the *Sylva*. He and his wife both lie in the Evelyn Chapel of Wotton Church, close to where he learnt the lessons of his childhood. "I was not," he says in the famous *Diary*, "initiated into any rudiments until near four years of age, and then one Frier taught us at the church-porch at Wotton." The porch is of considerable length, and doubtless did very well for an infant school. There is a characteristic entry in the *Diary* just above this. "I was now (in regard to my mother's weakness, or rather custom of persons of quality) put to nurse to one Peter, a neighbour's wife and tenant, of a good comely brown wholesome complexion, and in a most sweet place toward the hills, flanked with wood and refreshed with streams; the affection to which kind of solitude I sucked in with my very milk." The child is father of the man; the baby Evelyn, out to nurse in some pleasant spot amid the Surrey Hills, learnt that

love of woodland and streamlet which made him a great planter of trees and designer of canals and fountains.

From Wotton I crossed Abinger Common, a wild, bird-haunted region, to ascend Leith Hill. This is Surrey's highest point, being 993 feet above the level of the sea. There are many ways to it from all sides, and all are full of picturesque beauty; more pleasant indeed is the ascent than the mere view from the summit. This I did not see at its best—an east wind is unfavourable to far prospects. On a clear day, according to Evelyn, you can see twelve or thirteen counties, and the Sussex coast; and twenty years ago the Ordnance Surveyors managed to count forty-one church spires in London on a July day from this windy hill. But Ordnance Surveyors have practised eyes —not to mention good telescopes.

It grew too dark for me to see much of my road on the way to Dorking, and I was by no means reluctant to accept a "lift" from a tradesman on his way homeward. He turned out a very agreeable companion, with a keen capacity for the enjoyment of the scenery amid which he dwelt. He was proud of Dorking and its vicinage, and with justice. Having always associated the place with those plump fowls for which it has renown, I had not at all a romantic vision of it. But I did not see a single fowl there; even as at Aylesbury I failed to encounter any white ducks. And I found the White Horse Inn a right pleasant hostelry, where the weary traveller got a cheery welcome and excellent fare. It was my first day's walk after hibernation, and I never felt more enjoyably tired. Thorough fatigue, an easy chair, a good fire, a good supper, are admirable elements of enjoyment.

Next morning I went straight to the Deepdene, Mrs. Hope being away. Benjamin Disraeli wrote in 1844 to Henry Hope: "It is not because this work was conceived and partly executed amid the glades and galleries of the Deepdene that I have inscribed it with your name." "This work" was *Coningsby;* and it is a book for which, with all its faults, I must confess a liking. It is not natural, you know; neither is *Pelham,* or *Zanoni,* or *Sans Merci,* or *Armadale.* There never was such an Eton boy as Harry Coningsby, concerning whom one wonders what Praed or Moultrie would have thought of him—or to go back to the acme of equable Etonian development, William Windham. One does not meet at forest inns with distinguished strangers riding priceless Arabs, who inform one that "youth is a blunder, manhood a struggle, old age a regret;" no, nor even with bacon and eggs so served that they seem poetical, or with "the finest perry in the world." And the characters of this story are terribly unreal, from Edith Millbank to Mr. G. O. A. Head—the only actual portrait being that of the unfortunate Rigby. But, taking it as an extravaganza, and skipping the chapters which profess to contain political history, I maintain that *Coningsby* is charming. Of course its author has no poetic faculty, or even his extravaganza must have been in a measure true to nature. Equally, of course, the almost bewildering cleverness of *Coningsby* does not prove its author to be of necessity a great statesman. But I like the book.

And oh! those "glades and galleries of the Deepdene"

in which it was conceived! These Hopes were Scottish bankers originally, who took Amsterdam by storm, and then returned upon England. Thomas Hope, first of the family to possess the Deepdene, was the author of *Anastasius*, a book of the same class as Beckford's *Vathek*. In each case a millionaire (we shall soon have billionaires, trillionaires, quadrillionaires) fettered, imprisoned, by abject opulence, strove to reveal himself to the world through a romance. The man's life was unreal to him: he felt only a superficial interest in the magnificent mansions, costly curiosities, delicious gardens, commanded by his wealth; so he poured himself out upon the anonymous pages of a strange story. *Vathek* and *Anastasius* are the day-dreams of millionaires.

The glory of the Deepdene is its sculpture; some antique, some superb examples of Thorwaldsen, whose genius was first discovered by "Anastasius" Hope. There are also some fine pictures; but I do not care to catalogue pictures. The house itself is a noble edifice, of mixed Italian styles. The gardens have an indescribable charm. Their stately beauty and divine seclusion have scarcely any parallel within my recollection. The blaze of the rhododendron bloom was mitigated by green depths of laurel leafage, or else it would scarcely have been tolerable to the eye on the sunny April day when I loitered through the gardens.

On the opposite hill is Denbies, a vast place on the summit of the ridge, looking as if a splendid fragment of Cubitopolis were erected there. It was first intended as a hunting-lodge for the Prince of Wales. To this I

did not ascend, though there is a pleasant road that way, my immediate destination being Burford Bridge and Box Hill. But before I leave Dorking a word on these Surrey lanes, which seem to culminate in beauty at this point. The fern-fringed lanes of Devon, the cool water-lanes of Guernsey, are fresh in my recollection; yet I doubt whether their beauty must not yield to that of the deep sandy lanes of mid-Surrey, with high banks, and lofty trees on the highest points of those banks. These lanes climb hills, descend valleys, and wind altogether in so unexpected and suggestive a way, that the traveller is kept in a continuous state of surprise and anticipation. Trodden down to their present depth by the pilgrimage of many centuries, they must be far older than the Queen's Highway, from which they diverge. This part of the county would be worth a visit if only to wander in those picturesque lanes.

From Dorking I determined to cross the hills to Reigate. So I walked about two miles northward to Burford Bridge, over the Mole:—

> "Mole, that like a nousling mole doth make
> His way still underground, till Thames he overtake."

So Edmund Spenser, referring to the fact that in very dry weather the river disappears in certain chalk gullies called *swallows*, re-appearing at a distance of about three miles. Was this what Coleridge's dream-poem exaggerated into the scene in Xanadu?

> "Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
> Through caverns measureless to man,
> Down to a sunless sea!"

Disappearances of rivers or rivulets in fissures of the chalk are common enough in various parts of England: the vast subterranean hollows require to be filled with water, in order that the streams may be visible above ground. At Burford Bridge, which lies immediately below Box Hill, there is an excellent wayside inn, called the Fox and Hounds, with pleasant gardens behind, into which the sitting-rooms open. Here Nelson has enjoyed the summer weather. Here Keats wrote part of the *Endymion*. It is related that the waiter one day heard him reciting:—

> "For wine, for wine, we left our kernel tree,
> For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,
> And cold mushrooms:"

and shortly appeared on the lawn with a decanter of sherry and a plate of the uncooked fungi. Here I encountered a gentleman whose little daughter had Elaine-coloured hair and a troublesome small dog, and forgathered amicably with both papa and his pet and his pet's pet. This roadside inn is a very good place for the tourist to select as his quarters, but gets a trifle too crowded when the summer brings multitudinous visitors to Box Hill.

Turning to the right, beyond the gardens of the inn, I ascended Box Hill, which rises 445 feet above the level of the river. On a hill northward is Norbury Park, as conspicuous as Denbies, famous for its chestnut and cedar trees, and especially for some primeval yews, in a group called the Druid's Grove. It is a hot business climbing the steep chalk paths to the summit of Box Hill, but the view thence is an ample reward. The box trees here

stretch over a much wider expanse than those which I saw on my walk through Buckinghamshire last summer, but those which clothe the Chiltern valley are more beautiful in their growth. Last winter's snow has greatly injured the woods on Box Hill. In my school-days I should have speculated on the vast number of capital tops that could be made from all this boxwood; but the schoolboys of the present day do not, I believe, condescend to spin tops, and are altogether superior to such childish amusements.

Some parts of the road over the hills to Reigate are very pleasant. But for a long distance you are kept to a road between the grounds of various seats; for even on these hills people build great houses; and if the Alps were within a few hours by rail of London, millionaires would be occupying the glaciers for summer residences, and building châlets as big as Chatsworth. By and by the view widens over the heath: you see village churches and windmills; then, crossing a wild tract of furze, you descend into the hot and dusty road from London to Brighton. Here, on the left, I passed Gatton Park, Lord Monson's place, where at present Sir Hugh Cairns resides. The house is fine, and has a pleasant lakelet below it. Lord Monson bought the estate a year or two before the Reform Bill, at which period its owner (happy man!) could send two members to Parliament. For Gatton was among the rottenest of rotten boroughs—second only to Old Sarum, in whose precincts there were, I believe, no houses at all. The parish of Gatton has now about two hundred inhabitants. But in Henry VIII.'s reign Sir

Roger Copley returned two members for Gatton, "being the burgess and *only inhabitant* of the borough and town of Gatton!" What would Mr. Bright have said to that?

After Gatton is past, the road reaches the brow of the hill, and Reigate lies below. The view over the town is fine, the chalk cliffs above it being very precipitous. The town itself is not extremely noticeable. The White Hart is one of the best inns to be found in Surrey, with a pleasant garden and bay-windowed breakfast-rooms at the back; and if Reigate were farther in the heart of the picturesque region, it might be recommended as a tourist's headquarters. But Burford Bridge, or Dorking, is more convenient. Of Reigate Castle, once held by the Earls de Warren, there remains only the mound of the keep, in which there are some extensive caverns worked in the sandstone. Wherever a town is built on the sandstone such vaults are commonly found, and legends are invented to account for them. The barons are said to have held consultations in these before meeting King John; but the statement is quite inaccurate. They were probably nothing but cellars. The town of Nottingham, on similar soil, is perfectly honeycombed by such excavations; and the local archæologists ascribe them to King John, to King Arthur, even to the Druids. *A good deal of modern archæology and philology may be described as daring conjecture, supported by obstinate dogmatism.*

There was a grand concert at Reigate, and Mr. Leveson Gower was there among his sympathising supporters. Reigate seemed to consider itself an ill-used borough. Not only was Mr. Gower unseated, but no new writ was

issued. The idea that any fault lay with the electors themselves had evidently occurred to no one. They were all thoroughly Liberal, I was informed, which being the case, it was difficult to conjecture why there should be any bribery or corruption. I saw addresses on the walls from a Mr. Hollings and from the Hon. Mr. Monson; but there seemed no chance of an election: indeed, Mr. Monson's announcement was to the effect that nothing of the kind was likely, and so his dear friends at Reigate must not expect to see him. The truth appears to be that there are certain offences against the law which are to certain minds imperceptible. Smuggling used to be one of these; but free-trade has almost put an end to it. Poaching holds its own, even among those who ought to know better. A highly respectable bank-manager of my acquaintance could not resist a shot at a hare on one occasion, though he was trespassing, and had no license. Similarly of bribing and receiving bribes. Although unseated M.P.'s are congratulated by complaisant committees on knowing nothing about the bribery committed for their sakes, I suppose *somebody* finds the money. These breaches of law, among the law-loving English, have always a humorous side, and usually a perilous side also. The smuggler's run of cognac and claret, tobacco and lace; the poacher's

> "'Tis my delight
> On a shiny night,
> In the season of the year;"

the electioneering agent's Man in the Moon, and back-door arrangements, and personal pasquinades, have an

obvious family likeness. The fun and the danger are together too much for the daring and humorous English, and cause them to disregard the law. If any clever legislator can eliminate these elements, we shall soon have electoral purity.

The only point about Reigate Church that interested me was an obelisk in memory of Baron Maseres, a Cursitor Baron of the Exchequer, frequently mentioned in Windham's *Diary*. A fine fellow was old Maseres—a good lawyer, historian, scholar, mathematician. He knew by heart all the works of Homer. He was one of the first of our mathematicians to suggest a theory of the "negative sign," whereon he published a treatise in 1758. He lived to be more than eighty. His obelisk in this churchyard of Reigate has a prolix Latin inscription by one Fellowes, whom Hazlitt somewhere mentions in a fashion not complimentary. Maseres left funds for an "afternoon sermon" on Sunday at Reigate Church, and is therefore esteemed a benefactor. By the way, some leading shopkeepers here are named "Marriage and Wood:" why not "woo'd and married?" From Reigate I walked to Red Hill Junction to take the train to Croydon. The groups of new houses growing up around Red Hill are atrociously vulgar and dreary. But time will improve all that, no doubt, and make the vicinity habitable. Croydon is altogether too well known and commonplace to be described. Who has not been there, and who wants to go again? Its archiepiscopal palace was a laundry when last I saw it; its inhabitants are all Cockneys, and it has nine railway stations, whose arrangements are only intelligible

to a man well up in the fifth book of Euclid. To come into Croydon, without any knowledge of whether you will be landed at East Croydon, West Croydon, North Croydon, South Croydon, Old Croydon, New Croydon, or some other station of name unknown, is rather a nuisance. So the less I say of the village the better; and indeed, after luncheon with an old friend, I started across country towards the Thames. After all this walking over soft sandstone and hot chalk, the idea of the royal river attracted me. Away I went, crossing first Mitcham Common, where a numerous encampment of gipsies had just settled down. I have a proclivity towards those mysterious wanderers,[1] and envy the author of *Lavengro* his capacity of fluent conversation with them. Commons, no thanks to gentlemen like my Lords Spencer and Brownlow, are common enough round London yet. I passed in this day's walk another, Merton Common, one of those sociable green spots where everybody lives around a pleasant open space, and fifty-pound householders are

[1] He was particularly interested in gipsies, and encouraged them so much that his cottage was regularly visited by all those whose travels took them on the Great Western Road. He knew many of them by name, and took delight in going into their travelling vans, and eating and drinking and talking with them. He perhaps suffered something in reputation amongst "respectable" people by his habit of conversing with "tramps" and "vagabonds." But he cared little for that. He would sometimes pick up a tramp in the road, and bring him into the kitchen, and then come round to the sitting-room, with a guilty look, to say he had "brought a man—really a most respectable man—to have a meal." As he did not carry money, because of the indiscriminate use he made of it, he always brought his gipsies and tramps either to the kitchen or the sitting-room window, which opened to the ground. But it was necessary to discourage him, as he could not afford this hospitality; and so he was a little nervous as to how his visitors would be received.—F. C.

next door to five-pound householders, and there are a great many taverns, and a great many babies, and a great many boys playing cricket. Why the girls don't turn out and play croquet I don't understand. It would not suit everybody to live on one of these small commons near London, but the people who do live upon them seem thoroughly to enjoy it.

The twelve or fourteen miles from Croydon to Kingston yielded little of interest. Kingston itself was full of the militia. I went to the Griffin Hotel to write a letter, and was shown into a room where a solitary commercial man was grumbling over the fact that these amateur warriors extinguished for the time the knights of the rail and road. The chambermaid can scarcely be expected to smile upon the stout traveller in drugs or groceries, when she comes fresh from the chaff of those gay young red-coated heroes, who for a fortnight may think themselves the real thing. I saw their bright coats, and heard their joyous voices through an open bay-window of the Griffin, and wished them a merry evening. There were amateur theatricals that night, and the pretty girls of Kingston were rapidly arriving in their broughams and other carriages. Kingston was a gay town.

Too gay for me. I thought that if your important commercial "gent" commanded no respect, the dusty and deliquescent pedestrian would have small chance thereof. Besides, did I not know of the Swan at Thames Ditton, where militiamen were not likely to be found? Thither I went, though the dusk had settled down upon the river marge. And the worthy landlord showed me into a room

where men in flannels were smoking short pipes, and soon satisfied me with supper and stout.

It may be considered an axiom that a man who wears flannels is generally a good fellow. My comrades that evening were charming—the fine athletic intellectual young fellows whom this age freely produces, who are capable of anything from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter, who can quote Horace, manage a punt, play billiards, make money on the Stock Exchange, do a hundred other things whereof their fathers dreamt not. The Admirable Crichton would be thoroughly beaten by these youngsters of the nineteenth century. One of my new acquaintances was perfectly delightful: he belonged to that amusing race of young Tories who settle all political questions by the remark that "John Bright is a cad;" and I found his conversation peculiarly instructive. We interrupted our political colloquy for a game of billiards. The Swan has a capital billiard-room, built so close to the water's edge that in last winter's flood the Thames took possession, and the table was circumnavigated in a punt. A pleasant room in summer though!

Theodore Hook loved Thames Ditton, and has left some charming verses about it, whereof a fragment is hung up at the Swan:—

> "Give me a punt, a rod, a line,
> A snug arm-chair to sit on,
> Some well-iced punch, and weather fine,
> And let me fish at Ditton."

Most men who know the place will say ditto to Theodore's Ditton. A six-pound trout had been caught there

on the day preceding my arrival, and as I left next morning I saw a man trying to tempt from the water a still bigger one that for some time has defied the anglers. Mention of Theodore Hook suggests that something should be done for the preservation of any of his improvisations which have not perished. There never was his equal in dealing with the intractable English language in this way; and although he has been dead a quarter of a century, there must still be some of his extemporaneous songs haunting the memory of men who heard them. Are none of them recoverable? A humorous improvisation is not likely to be either sublime or polished; but in its way it may be equal to anything Miltonic or Horatian. Coleridge, after hearing Hook, said he had as great a genius as Dante.

There are two beautiful aits just opposite the Swan at Ditton, and they belong to a stern old lion of the law, who prosecutes people whose goslings or ducklings land upon them. Some time ago he pounded the ducks of a neighbour, who brought an action against him for eating their eggs while in durance. I could not learn how it ended, but probably the ex-Chancellor got the best of it. The landlord of the Swan grumbles because he dares not let any young aquatic fowl enter the river; otherwise he might occasionally offer the hungry rowing man a young duck instead of a chop or steak. Why does not his lordship fence his aits? It seems rather hard upon his neighbours to debar them from keeping birds on the river. And while reverentially noticing Lord St. Leonards, we may ask why he allows great elms, blown down months

ago, to lie obstructively in the Thames? *Noblesse oblige.*

My friends promised to wake me early for a dip in the river. Only one appeared: him I heard shouting to me at about half-past six. So we took a punt and went up the stream and had a delicious dip in the cool Thames—with both of us the year's first dip *al fresco.* Then breakfast—looking out upon the river, where the morning haze still slept, and a slow barge went down with the stream, and the scene seemed one of indolent enchantment.

Thereafter I crossed the ferry into Middlesex, and walked through Hampton Court Gardens, which I had never seen at so early an hour. They were exquisitely quiet. Many gardeners were at work with the scythe; many birds twittered their April love-songs; many insects darted to and fro, or rose and fell in clouds; while from a tree, beneath which I rested, I watched the lime-sheathes dropping as the lime-leaves burst. But I had no time to saunter through those pleasant lawns; there were eight good miles to be walked to Staines, where I recrossed the Thames and re-entered Surrey for a while.

Unhappy are the necessities of a man of letters: even in his vagrant moments he cannot wholly forget work. At Egham I was obliged to stop and scribble an article for a remorseless editor, rather amazing the landlord of the little wayside inn by my demands for much note-paper. Thence, leaving on my right Magna Charta Island and Runnymede, I made my way into Berkshire

by Virginia Water, whose toy frigate and other absurdities remind one of a certain illustrious sovereign, famous

> "For building carriages and boats,
> And streets, and chapels, and pavilions,
> And regulating all the votes,
> And all the principles of millions."

But pshaw! a man is naturally cynical with a long walk homewards through dreary Berkshire lanes in prospect. The south-eastern corner of the Royal county is miraculously dull, seeing that it lies only just beyond the twenty-mile circle whose centre is Charing Cross.

TOWNS ON THE AVON.

THERE are Avons and Avons. The word, etymologists tell us, is simply Saxon for a river; no wonder, therefore, that there are half a dozen Avons in England. I am no great believer in modern etymology. It has two primary canons: first, that everything is derived from the Sanskrit; secondly, that the greater the difference between two words, the more likely that one is derived from the other. These postulates are rather too much for me. But as they say *Afon* or *Avon* was Saxon for a river, and as there are several rivers which bear that name to the present day, the etymon of the immortal river with which I am about to deal may be considered settled.

Of course Shakespeare's Avon is the famous stream which takes precedence of all others. It rises at Naseby, in the yard of a small inn near the church. So for two things is that village of Naseby renowned. A good many years ago a hospitable agriculturist, resident near Naseby, asked me to come over and see the battle-field and the source of Avon. I came and saw. The battle-field, truth to say, impressed me in no degree more than the river-head; I saw a quantity of ploughed land, undu-

lating in true Northamptonshire fashion. Doubtless grim old Oliver and hot Prince Rupert saw a good deal more; and that heavy land is responsible for many oaths on the part of the prince, and prayers from the ever-prayerful lips of the Roundhead general. But Naseby field is very much like all the rest of Northamptonshire. There is not a hill in the country, or a brook that a boy cannot leap, or a church-spire that a boy cannot throw a stone over, or enough level ground for a game of cricket. Yet is it a capital hunting county nevertheless.

My bucolic friend made me uncommonly comfortable. How I ate and drank, and smoked and slept! His sole family was one daughter of about nineteen, of that robust and buxom type which only the country produces. A noble creature—tall, graceful, lissom as a hind,—with the perfect simplicity which cannot exist within reach of a railway. How well I remember her kneeling before the fire, scorching her beautiful face, to toast delicate rashers of bacon for our breakfast. The absolutely refined woman, creature of the neoteric world, who wears Anonyma driving-coats and uses Piesse's perfumes, and reads the *Owl* and the *Saturday*, and can talk art or science or literature with their professors, is very charming indeed; but there is also a great charm in the daughter of the farm, who can read and write and cipher, and milk cows, and churn butter, and feed pigs, and carry her produce to market, and who is by no means unlike a lady after all. For what is so ladylike as simplicity?

Well, this was many a year ago, and if the young lady who toasted my rashers sees this paper, she will read it

laughingly to daughters of her own. Her father drove me to some railway station, I think Leicester. He had a well-appointed dog-cart, and a mare he was very proud of, and at first we dashed along at about sixteen miles an hour. By and by the pace slackened, just as I had noticed another dog-cart ahead. I inquired his reason; whereupon he told me that "the Squire" was in front of us, and he didn't like to pass the Squire. I remember at that date thinking there was some flunkeyism in this; but I have altered my mind. If the relations of landlord and tenant are properly carried out, the latter will naturally have a certain amount of respect for the former. I think my friend was quite right in declining to show that his mare could trot faster than the Squire's.

It was from the queer old village of Rothwell that I went over to Naseby and the source of Avon. When I first went to Rothwell I was greatly puzzled. I stopped at the George Inn, Northampton, and inquired for the village in question. Nobody had heard of it. At last the landlord suggested that an octogenarian post-boy, at present out with a pair of horses, might probably give me some information on his return; the landlord also suggested dinner. Accepting his suggestions, I dined extremely well; and when the veteran returned, I found I ought to have asked for Rowell. The *theta* was ignored in those parts. Next day I managed to reach the village; but was much amused by the octogenarian driving me a mile or two beyond it. It is a village lost in byways; and, well as he knew the country, he managed to miss it. The only point worth mentioning about Rothwell is the

proximity of a fine place, belonging now, I believe, to one of the Hopes, which in days gone by belonged to Tresham of the Gunpowder Plot. He was building a town-hall for Rothwell while conspiring against King James. There it is, unfinished, roofless, as the frightened masons left it, with a Latin inscription: "*Dulcis Patriæ bonum quæsivit,*" or something of the sort. Clear proof that those conspirators really believed that they were doing their country good.

Descending the Avon from Naseby, we pass through much dreary Northamptonshire scenery. At a village called Catthorpe, we are reminded of a certain poetaster named Dyer. Poetry was in a poor state when the author of *Grongar Hill* could be considered a poet. He was an amiable clergyman, who wrote mediocre verse; but Horace's opinion of such verse is peculiarly popular in the present day. The first town of any consequence which the pedestrian reaches is Lutterworth; and concerning Lutterworth there is little to be said, except that Wycliffe was once its rector; and the ashes of the great reformer were disinterred by certain ecclesiastical vultures, and thrown into the brook which runs into the Avon at Lutterworth. So says Fuller, whom Wordsworth has followed:—"This brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."

The next town is Rugby; an immortal town, for ever connected with the greatest of schoolmasters. What was it which gave Arnold his power over boys, so that reckless

youngsters, "untameable as flies," were tamed by him? First, he thoroughly sympathised with them; was himself boyish; never enjoyed anything more completely than to look on at a game of football or cricket. Secondly, he trusted them. He treated them as gentlemen; he put them on their honour. "It would be a shame to tell Arnold a lie," remarked one of his pupils; "he always believes you." There is a sound philosophical reason why this is the way to treat boys, or, indeed, any other reasoning animals. If you want human beings to be moral, you must get them to understand the great truth that sin is its own punishment. To be hanged for murder is bad enough, but it is worse to be capable of murder. To be flogged for a lie is humiliating; far greater the humiliation of telling the lie. Arnold, unconsciously perhaps, and from the instinct of a noble nature rather than from reason, acted on this principle; hence did he become the prince of schoolmasters. It is rather a misfortune that his career should have been melodramatised in *Tom Brown's School-Days*. I am glad to think that his fine genius is not extinct; that his son takes rank among living poets, after Robert Browning and Alfred Tennyson. He has not the vigorous power of the first, or the exquisite execution of the second; but he is a true poet, nevertheless. Whoso doubts this should read *Tristram and Iseult* or *The Scholar Gipsy*. But why in the world has Mr. Arnold neglected poetry of late, writing tractates about the translation of Homer and the Lyceum of Toulouse? Surely he does not mean to allow the spirit of these unpoetic days to transform him into a pedant!

The scenery about Avon begins to improve near Newnham Regis, a small village, remarkable for having nothing of the church left except the tower. The rector of Church Lawford is also vicar of King's Newnham; and as the two villages together cannot count five hundred inhabitants, we perhaps need not regret the destruction of the ancient church. Yet am I always prone to lament the disappearance of any edifice, however humble, within which God has been worshipped, and outside whose walls the dead have found rest. Whatever be a man's religious opinions—and these are days when you can't be sure of even an archbishop—cordially do I pity him if he does not respect the idea of worship as embodied in an English village church; prayer and praise are made permanent therein, so far as human hands can make them.

The city of Coventry lies not very far from the Avon. It is, I think, the dirtiest place in England, Bristol and Birmingham not excepted. In days gone by it had great fame, this *Coventria civitas;* and its earl, Leofric, who used to stride about his hall among his dogs,

> "His beard a foot before him and his hair
> A yard behind,"

was a worthy ancestor of our young friend Lord Palmerston; and we all remember who wrote—

> "I waited for the train at Coventry;
> I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
> To watch the three tall spires."

What strikes me in this city of Coventry—when I look at those noble spires, which Tennyson has immortalised (St. Michael's is second to Salisbury only), and at

the splendid city-hall—is the wonderful change between the past and the present. It is now one of the most sordid and miserable towns in the empire. What generous and magnificent inhabitants must it have had when the spires of St. Michael's and Trinity were raised heavenwards! I'll be hanged if Godiva the beautiful would have

"Unclasped the wedded eagles of her belt"

for the present population of Coventry. I fear that among its makers of watches and ribbons there are a goodly number of "low churls, compact of thankless earth."

The beauty of Avon begins where it enters the park of Stoneleigh Abbey, seat of the second Lord Leigh. The first baron, when Mr. Chandos Leigh, published some elegant poetry. His title to the estate was at one time questioned; and an inventive attorney produced a most marvellous case against him, accusing him and Lady Leigh of pulling down one side of Stoneleigh Church, to get rid of some genealogical testimony furnished by the monuments, and of causing a huge stone to be dropped on some men who were engaged in building a bridge across the river Sow, it being important to suppress their evidence. I forget how many murders this lawyer (who very justly suffered imprisonment) charged against one of the gentlest and most amiable of men. Of the old abbey nothing is left but a gateway; and the great mansion of the Leighs, though doubtless magnificent and luxurious within, has no external beauty. But the park is redolent of *As You Like It.* All this Warwickshire

woodland breathes of Shakespeare. Under these stately oaks, the noblest I have ever seen, beside this sparkling river, how sweet it were to moralise with melancholy Jaques, to fleet the golden time with joyous Rosalind! As the traveller lies beneath a patrician tree, amid the magical noontide, well might he fancy the mellow voice of Amiens in the distance, cheering the banished Duke with music. Of Stoneleigh village I have only to say, that when last there I found it impossible to obtain a glass of ale, Lord Leigh having an objection to that wholesome liquid. An English village without ale is awful to think of.

Two miles through field and woodland, and we are at Kenilworth. Wise were the monks when they settled down in that green valley. Very quaint is the village that clusters round the old church; traditions of monastic and baronial times linger there; the exteriors of several of the antique houses made me wish to catch a glimpse of the interiors and their inhabitants, which I was not lucky enough to do. They are just the sort of houses where a good dinner and a bottle of rare port is the order of the day. The end of the village near the church is quite another affair; instead of seeming coeval with the castle and the priory, it appears to have sprung up simultaneously with the railway-station. Extremes meet at Kenilworth: in these modern villas you would expect to find no inhabitant less active than a commercial traveller; in the old houses at the other end you would hardly be startled by an interview with Sir Walter Raleigh or rare Ben Jonson.

Of course I ought to describe Kenilworth Castle; but I cannot do it, that's a fact; besides which, the thing has been done a hundred times. It is a glorious ruin; and as one lies on the turf on a summer day in the shadow of its grey stonework, watching the flying clouds, and the choughs in the ivy, and the little river shimmering through the meadows, and the immoveable old towers decaying in their stately strength, there descends upon the spirit a mystic and unutterable feeling, worth more than all the poetry ever written, ay, or all the claret ever pressed from Bordeaux grapes.

Although I cannot describe, I can grumble a little. Why does the Earl of Clarendon permit that thirsty old porter to dwarf one's ideas at exit with a clamour for coppers? The land, I suppose, is his lordship's; but the castle belongs to Sir Walter Scott and the British nation. Pension Cerberus, my lord! If we pay twopence to enter the great cathedral of St. Paul, at least let Leicester's castle be free to all.

The winding stairs of Kenilworth are queer nooks for a casual encounter. I was meditating in one of them,—thinking of the multitudinous feet which had worn their stone steps concave, of the numberless eyes of lady and knight and page that had gazed through that narrow window on the pleasant green fields beyond,—when there suddenly descended upon me the prettiest possible maiden, with chestnut curls under a brown hat, and a humid blue eye, and a great deal more that was exquisite. The charming apparition startled me; and I have no doubt it was reciprocal, for she vanished like snow. Just after,

I picked up a scrap of note-paper, whereon, with much difficulty, I deciphered the following rhymes. I cannot help thinking they refer to the young lady, and the best way to return them to her is to print them here:—

Amy lives at Kenilworth,
  Rare old village of scenes historic;
Quaintest place on the wide green earth,—
  Quainter than Coventry far, or Warwick.

Amy,—prettiest possible girl,—
  I saw in the church her sweet eyes glisten;
Lips of the preacher dropt many a pearl
  Doubtless; but certainly *I* couldn't listen.

How I long for a photograph
  Of the fair young creature beauty-laden!
But who could calotype Amy's laugh,—
  Merriest uttered by mortal maiden?

Why, her very step had music in 't,
  As the tremulous woodland bells caressed her
Tiny feet, which made no print
  On the turf that paves the halls of Leicester.

Amy's poet seems to be rather an imitator of Robert Browning. Apropos of whom, I wonder how Colenso and the "Essayists and Reviewers" feel after *Caliban upon Setebos.* But they probably will not wince under the terrible satire of a mighty poet. Caliban wouldn't have cared about sarcasm from Prospero, but had a wholesome fear of being racked with cramp. I take that poem of Browning's to be the finest answer to the modern neology that could possibly be produced.

There is quite a gem of a Catholic chapel a little way out of Kenilworth, with a snug dwelling for the priest

close by. The said priest acted as my cicerone one evening: I don't know whether I said anything too liberal, but I fancy he began to think he might pervert me. His interest in me ceased abruptly when, in reply to a question of his, I told him I was married.

There was a profuse show of flowers in pots,—arums, genistas, cinerarias,—arranged before the altar. To mar the effect of this there was the most insufferable odour, arising, I found, from the tapers being allowed to expire in their sockets. This smell, and the very small amount of light admitted into a chapel so diminutive, made it too like a vault to be agreeable.

I like the way the Roman Catholics have of making the graves of children together in a cluster. There is a pathos about those little graves covered with spring flowers, which few can help feeling. The inscription to Mary Magdalene E., aged five years, moved me to verse:—

Thou sleepest, Mary Magdalene;
Above thy head the grass grows green,
The saffron primrose blooms;
Yet not too sad our hearts should be
When 'neath the cypress shade we see
A group of little tombs.

Young voices hushed,—young feet no more
To tread on any mortal shore,
Young eyelids closed for aye:
How oft his bitter tears must start,
Who knows the darlings of his heart
Have passed from life away!

Yet not less often joy may shed
Its sunlight on the grassy bed
Where silently they rest.

Heaven lies before the pilgrim's feet;
What infinite delight to greet
His lambs on Jesus' breast!

Avon winds back into Stoneleigh Park after leaving Kenilworth, and passes the little village of Ashow, where I tasted the juiciest mulberries I ever ate,—blood-ripe as those wherewith the laughing Naiad Ægle stained the temples of Silenus. Cool and peaceful is that pleasant village, where Avon murmurs softly amid reedy islets. Passing onward, we see a cross upon a wooded hill: there poor Piers Gaveston was beheaded, some five centuries and a half ago. There is a capitally-written inscription on the cross: I copied it, and of course lost the copy. Somewhat farther is Milverton Church, with a quaint wooden tower; they say it is not worth while to build a stone one, as the lightning strikes it so often. Any way, you may be electrified by a capital sermon in that old village church.

But Guy's Cliff!

Perhaps I had better let those three words stand as sole suggestion of what that exquisite residence is. The strange legend of Guy of Warwick, vanquisher of Colbrand the Dane and of the Dun Cow, hovers around this delightful old place. But I don't know whether Mr. Bertie Percy's poetic dwelling is not surpassed by the mill close thereto.

I think now, if I had my own sweet will,
And could command whate'er I chose to be,
I'd be the miller at that Guy's Cliff mill,
Whose rushing waters thunder like the sea,

Yet in the pool above lie hushed and still,
  Swept by sweet leaves. In that quaint balcony
I 'd smoke cigars and listen to the water,—
And Alfred Tennyson should woo my daughter.

I spent an afternoon a week ago
  Haunting that vicinage. The departing swallow
Flashed on the pool; brown shadows to and fro
  Flickered, the wild caprices forced to follow
Of the low wind; a dust like summer snow
  Floated around; the rhymer's friend, Apollo,
Could never paint the scene, or teach his fluttering
Harpstrings the tune those woods and waves were uttering.

Few places I have seen dwell in my memory like this beautiful old mill, surrounded by a wealth of water, a luxury of leafage. If there be mills in fairyland, they are built on this pattern. If the miller's daughter, "so dear, so dear" to the Laureate that he plagiarised from Anacreon for her sake, had any actual existence, it must have been at a mill like this of Guy's Cliff.

I scarce dare approach Warwick after Nathaniel Hawthorne. The reaction from a fast, loud, vulgar, sordid life makes the most refined and poetic natures of America dreamers of dreams. Such, with especial emphasis, was Hawthorne. To him the ideal was more real than reality. What visions he saw in Warwick, where the great castle "floats double" in the lucid Avon; where a strange old-world tranquillity broods over the famous Earl of Leicester's antique hospital! After Windsor (and I do not forget Alnwick), I think Warwick the noblest castellated building in England. Built into the solid rock, it overhangs Avon with a wild sublimity. As you look down from the windows of the great hall upon the river far beneath, you think that

thus may Guinevere and Lancelot have looked when the angry queen cast into the water the nine great diamonds, while the doomed barge bore to her burial the lily maid of Astolat. Why over that old broken bridge, green with the ivy of a thousand years, may not the blameless king have passed, and Merlin the sage, and Tristram of Lyonnesse, leading Iseult of Ireland? Who knows? Are these things fables? Are ye enchanters, Alfred Tennyson and Matthew Arnold?

The Earl of Warwick's courtesy throws the Castle open to the public two or three days a week. Rumour says that the late Earl's housekeeper, whose monument may be seen in Warwick Church, left her master sixty thousand pounds, accumulated by visitors' fees! At the very gateway you are met by wonders,—an iron porridge-pot of the great Sir Guy, holding a hogshead or two, I suppose. The old knight must have had a rare appetite for breakfast. There is also his sword, a gigantic weapon, which I defy Jacob Omnium to wield with both hands. As for the contents of the castle, I will not say a word about them; though of historical portraits, Vandycks and Rubenses, there is a fine collection. I commend the traveller looking out upon Avon from those wondrous rooms, to call back, if he can, the heroic and poetic times when it was possible to build such a castle; when it seemed fit habitation for those who dwelt in it,—for Nevil the Kingmaker, to wit, who fills a marvellous page, brilliant with gold and stained with blood, in England's history, and who well deserved to be found in Shakespeare's peerless portrait-gallery.

Warwick town is very quaint, and has two old-fashioned hostelries, the Warwick Arms and the Woolpack, at either of which a hungry and thirsty traveller will find ample refreshment of the right sort. From the top of Warwick Church tower there is a magnificent view over a rich country. The church's chief glory is the Beauchamp Chapel, just 400 years old, a perfect poem in stone, an absolute triumph of the good old artist-workmen, who find no rivals in the days when artists are never workmen, and workmen never artists. Its dead inhabitant was last of the Beauchamp Earls, and that crowned saint, Henry VI., conferred the earldom upon the Kingmaker; thus commencing the third line of its holders, for the first Earl was a Newburgh, or Neuburg, of the Conqueror's creation; then, two centuries later, it passed through a female branch to the Beauchamps; two centuries more, and the last Beauchamp was succeeded by a Nevil; on Nevil's death, "false, fleeting, perjured Clarence" had the earldom, whose son, last of the Plantagenets, ended the fourth line, when he and Perkin Warbeck died on Tower Hill; next came the Dudleys, creatures of Henry VIII., the elder of whom, Lady Jane Grey's father-in-law and worst enemy, is better known as Duke of Northumberland; then Lord Rich, whose great-grandson married Cromwell's daughter, was created Earl of Warwick by James I.; and finally George II. conferred the title on Greville Earl Brooke, ancestor of the present Earl. Thus six families at least have held this famous earldom.

The traveller will of course turn aside to Leamington, town of fashion and frivolity, about a mile and a half

from the poetic stream. Leamington owes its existence, as anything beyond a village, to one Dr. Jephson, who hit on the brilliant notion that the mineral waters of the place would cure all possible diseases. A great hotel sprung up—The Regent, which for years was a kind of hospital for Dr. Jephson's patients. The medical genius is quite deified in the town. There are pleasant gardens dedicated to him, to which none are admitted save subscribers of a guinea, or something of the sort. It is a downright apotheosis (or apodiabolosis) of physic. But other causes concurred to bring Leamington into the first rank of pleasure towns: there is capital hunting in the neighbourhood, and a first-rate pack of hounds. It is almost the metropolis of archery, a pastime which young ladies wisely patronise, since a pretty girl cannot look prettier than in her toxophilite costume of Lincoln-green. I remember remarking in the summer of 1856 that

> **Whoe'er of Jephson Gardens the management possesses,**
> **When the feathered shaft flies swiftly in the dewy morns of spring,**
> **Instead of taking guineas from the pretty archeresses,**
> **Should reward them for the grace and the beauty that they bring.**

So much for a remark in verse. I also remarked in plain prose: "Why should not every Englishman be a rifleman now, as he was a bowman under the Plantagenets?" What would Dr. Cumming say to that as a prophetic suggestion?

And Leamington is pleasantly built, wide-streeted, with luxurious villas, with fine trees in its boulevards, with first-rate shops. Lounge in Hewitt's reading-room;

loiter in the Jephson Gardens, while the pretty coquettes of the place practise archery; lunch at Oldham's; gossip at Bright's; dine at the Regent or the Clarendon; smoke a cigar afterwards on the Parade; play a game of bowls at the Bath, or of billiards anywhere, and then exclaim, "*Dulce est desipere in loco!*" If you are there in the winter, you will find there are balls at the Assembly Rooms, and a suave master of the ceremonies eager to introduce you to charming Calicopolitans in petticoats, with fortunes made before the United States committed suicide. Leamington is a famous place for bridging over the great gulf between the aristocracy and the cottonocracy; for uniting patrician paupers with the daughters of mercantile millionaires.

It is, moreover, a capital place for the study of character. England produces a class of people who have not been brought up in any regular groove, or if they have, have managed to get out of it. A baronet who has turned actor; a cotton-spinner's son who has money enough for an earl, and too little education for a farmer; the head of an ancient family, who has managed to make himself penniless, and now lives on the credit of his name and possible prospects; a cadet of an old family, writer of excellent poetry, and marvellous driver of a four-in-hand, but as mad as a March hare—these are people whom years ago I met at Leamington. I dare say there are quite as many originals in the town now as then. It is just the sort of place where such men are to be found. Its society is facile; and there are not too many questions asked as to who's who. It will not do to be personal in print,

or I should really like to paint a few portraits of dwellers by the lazy Leam, I am afraid to say how many years back.

Nothing can be more beautiful than the walk by the margin of Avon through Lord Warwick's park. After passing through several pleasant villages, full of the Warwickshire quaintness, we reach Charlecote House, the seat of the Lucy family. It has always appeared to me that Haydon, more admirably than any man, expressed the feeling which is produced in poetic minds by the places sacred to Shakespeare. Painting under the stress of a noble ambition, with the sad certainty that the age could not perceive his greatness, had injured his health; instead of joining "the vulgar idlers at a watering-place," he sought change of scene at Stratford. How the man enjoyed it, and how vigorously he depicts his enjoyment! "To Charlecote," says he, "I walked as fast as my legs could carry me, and crossing the meadow, entered the immortalised park by a back pathway. Trees, gigantic and umbrageous, at once announce the growth of centuries; while I was strolling on, I caught a distant view of the old red-bricked house, in the same style and condition as when Shakespeare lived; and on going close to the river side, came at once on two enormous old willows, with a large branch across the stream, such as Ophelia hung to. Every blade of grass, every daisy and cowslip, every hedge-flower and tuft of tawny earth, every rustling, ancient, and enormous tree which curtains the sunny park with its cool shadows, between which the sheep glitter on the emerald green in long lines of light, every ripple of the river with its placid tinkle,

'Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
It overtaketh in its pilgrimage,'

announced the place where Shakespeare imbibed his early, deep, and native taste for forest scenery. Oh, it was delightful indeed! Shakespeare seemed to hover and bless all I saw, thought of, or trod on. Those great roots of the lime and the oak, bursting, as it were, above the ground, bent up by the depth they had struck into it, Shakespeare had seen—Shakespeare had sat on."

In the same spirit of delight, and with the same realising power, did the great painter—one of those

"Mighty poets in their misery dead,"

"of whom the world was not worthy"—enjoy Stratford itself. Thus does he write of what he felt as sunset descended on the church where lies all that was mortal of God's greatest human creature. "I stood and drank in to enthusiasm all a human being could feel; all that the most ardent and devoted lover of a great genius could have a sensation of; all that the most tender scenery of river, trees, and sunset-sky together could excite. I was lost, quite lost; and in such a moment should wish my soul to take its flight (if it please God) when my time is finished." God willed otherwise; that great soul took flight in a moment, not of delight, but of agony.

There seem to be always American visitors at Stratford. The refined and thoughtful Americans, like Washington Irving and Hawthorne, have, by the intensity of their reverie, thrown a halo of fresh beauty around many places sacred to genius. But too many of these

transatlantic travellers merely visit a place like Stratford just to say they have been there; and people of that class are singularly unpleasant to meet. There is a story that one Yankee offered an enormous sum of money for Shakespeare's house, to take it to the States for exhibition.

I must hurry on. Village after village, quaint and beautiful, lie along the margin of Avon; the keen eye will notice whence Shakespeare drew his choicest descriptions of nature; the longest summer-day will not be too long to loiter around the vicinity of Stratford. One of the best proofs that Avon river flows through rich and lovely country is the multitude of monastic institutions which have left their names to the villages, with here and there a noble tower and graceful gateway. Founders of abbeys loved a pleasant river flowing through fertile meadows; salmon and trout and eels for fast-days were as important as beeves and deer for festivals. So there are more conventual remains between Naseby and Tewkesbury than in almost any equal distance of which I have knowledge; and the glory of those old ecclesiastic foundations is peculiarly realised as the noble bell-tower of Evesham Abbey rises above the town. The great monastery had lasted more than a thousand years when the ruthless hand of Henry VIII. fell upon it. The bell-tower and a most delightful old gateway are the only relics of it left.

The pilgrim through the beautiful Vale of Evesham comes upon another battle-field, where, 600 years ago, fell a famous leader of the Commons against the Crown.

Simon de Montfort fought for the right, so far as we can judge at this remote period; but his antagonist was the greatest general of the day, and afterwards became England's greatest king. He was but twenty-six when he won the immortal victory known as the Murder of Evesham. If Montfort gave England its first Parliament, Edward gave us Wales and Scotland, and made the priests pay taxes in defiance of the Pope. A poetic prince, as well as a gallant; for did he not, when Eleanora the Castilian died in Lincolnshire, cause Peter l'Imagineur to build a stately cross wherever her corpse rested on its way to Westminster? Thanks to the poetry of a railway company, London is to see the last and stateliest of those crosses rebuilt in what was once the quiet village of Charing.

There was another abbey at Pershore, which takes its name from its abundant pear-trees. Bredon Hill, not far from this town, is worth climbing, for its fine view towards the Malverns. At the village of Strensham the author of *Hudibras* was born. I must not be retarded by reminiscences of that most humorous writer of wonderful doggrel; but pass on to Tewkesbury, last of the towns on the Avon, which here falls into the wide and shining Severn. Tewkesbury had also its abbey and its famous battle; it has, moreover, its legend of that unfortunate gentleman, Brihtric of Bristol.

Farewell, beautiful Avon, with all thy poetic and historic memories; thy great abbeys and bloody battle-fields; thy golden dream of Shakespeare the divine. As I stand in the Bloody Meadow at Tewkesbury and look

at the meeting of the waters, my chief thought is how many great men have fought in tented field—have written famous books—how many strange and terrible events have occurred—ere this England could become what it is,

> "A land of settled government,
> A land of just and old renown."

TWO POETS OF ROME.

"FRERE'S *Aristophanes*, all four plays, very rare, six pounds ten shillings." Such were the words of a courteous and intelligent *librarius* in the Strand when, not long ago, I inquired the value of the book in question; and not being a millionaire at the moment, I left the coveted volume, cheap at the price, to somebody who could spare the money better than I. Hookham Frere, diplomatist and confederate of Canning, was a brilliant versifier by nature, his *Anti-Jacobin* rhymes are of the very best of their class, infinitely superior to Theodore Hook and Tom Moore; and being at Malta, and having plenty of leisure in that torrid island of the Midland Sea, he amused himself by translating four plays of Aristophanes. He did his work well. Three of the plays—the *Birds*, *Knights*, and *Acharnians*—were published together; the *Frogs* was not printed for years after; so to find all four plays in one volume is rare.[1]

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[1] An edition of the complete works of Hookham Frere, edited by Sir Bartle Frere, has since been published by Pickering. Mortimer Collins begged for a copy on the ground that he could make some mention of it. Publishers were usually generous to him in this respect. He was refused; and the copy he bought, which I now possess, contains the following inscription on the fly-leaf:—

"I bought the book, for courtesy's a flickering
Flame in the breasts of Bartle Frere and Pickering."—F. C.

The English love of Greek and Latin verse—the resolute way in which English gentlemen who have any leisure occupy themselves with translation from those two languages—is a remarkable fact. Mr. Kebbel has recently dealt with the Latin-loving tendencies of Englishmen in an able essay. But he does not call attention to what is probably the translator's chief satisfaction. Wordsworth, blending philosophy and poetry into a single crystal of thought, wrote of

"The vision and the faculty divine."

Now, for one man who has the high poetic vision, there are thousands who possess the faculty in some degree. If they are foolish, they publish volumes of "original poetry." If they are wise, they keep their originative power in abeyance, employing it perhaps in political squibs and album-verses for the ladies. Translation is a work such men can do well. They have a keen eye for the niceties of language, and they versify with easy fluency. It is theirs to reveal to the less learned some portion of the beauties which lie buried in antique verse. Hence, within the last few years, we have had really good versions of Horace from at least six unusually able hands, —Mr. H. G. Robinson, Colonel Whyte Melville, Mr. F. W. Newman, Lord Ravensworth, Mr. Theodore Martin, and Professor Conington. Hence we have had the *Iliad* of Homer from the Earl of Derby, a translation which will take a permanent place in English literature; hence even Mr. Gladstone has found time to turn the first book of the *Iliad* into a ringing fifteen-syllable ballad measure, very sonorous, but no sufficient representative of the

dactylic hexameter. Still it is a fine metre. Listen when Zeus binds himself by his inviolate pledge to silver-footed Thetis :—

" 'It recedes not, it misleads not, it shall stand accomplishèd,
Whatsoever I assever with the nodding of my head.'
Then beneath his raven eyebrows Zeus Kronion gave the nod,
And the locks ambrosial started from the temples of the god :
Huge Olympus reeled beneath him, root and summit, rock and sod."

Lord Derby and Mr. Gladstone are far too wise to publish original poetry ; they are conscious of the absence of the visionary power ; and the public, who would be very sorry to meet them as professed poets, delight in their translations. There is a translator of a higher order, doubtless—the real poet who deigns to do such work. Of such there naturally are few ; the latest being Mr. Worsley, whose version of the *Odyssey* is as near perfection as is possible for any version not in hexameters.

Caius Julius Cæsar, as all men know, prostrated the haughty but effete aristocracy of Rome, and conquered the Empire for the middle class. The time was not ripe for this great change when Marius attempted to hasten it ; but had it not been inevitable, the aristocracy would not have supported Sulla in his autocratic dictatorship. Cæsar was barely twenty-two at the death of Sulla, who is said to have predicted that he would destroy the aristocracy. It has been well said by Mr. Merivale that " the career of Cæsar is the prelude to the history of four centuries." But with that unparalleled career, whose influence on the history of Rome and of the world it is not easy to overestimate, I have no direct concern : I only design to lightly sketch the aspect of Roman literature just

at that point when, the old days of an inflexible Senate and invincible consuls being past, men were consoled for their loss by the brilliant glare of world-wide empire.

Caius (or Quintus) Valerius Catullus was born B.C. 87, the year before the death of Marius. The date of his death is uncertain; but he seems to have been writing satirical verses on Mamurra, Cæsar's chief engineer, about B.C. 45, twelve years later than the date given for his death in the Eusebian Chronicle. He was born at Verona; his father was an intimate friend of Cæsar's; but he himself was an aristocrat by preference, that preference of the brilliant young exclusive which is noticeable among the boyish Tories of England. Of his own personal appearance he has left no record; but Mr. Theodore Martin, to whom the poet he translates is always a hero, maintains that he was probably handsome. Judging from his style of life, he was a complete specimen of the young Roman of the best society,—full of vivacity and spirit, prone to dissipation, gay, thoughtless, prodigal, and daring. Such was

> "The exquisite poet, the consummate metrist,
> Who sang to the sparrow on Lesbia's sweet wrist."

Let me now introduce his successor.

Quintus Horatius Flaccus, whom with friendly familiarity we have naturalised as *Horace*, was born B.C. 65, when Catullus was just of age, in the year when Cæsar as ædile contracted immense debts to gratify the people with public games, and to erect magnificent buildings. His father was a freedman, and a collector of money at auctions; a frugal man, ambitious for his son, to whom he gave a good education. The schoolmaster, Orbilius, has

gained immortality by over-flogging his poetic pupil: it is curious that similar treatment caused a distaste for Horace himself in the mind of Byron, who exclaims—

> "Then farewell, Horace: whom I hated so,
> Not for thy faults, but mine."

There is a difficulty in tracing Horace's early course, or ascertaining how he became a tribune in the army of Marcus Junius Brutus, for the only time in his life espousing the losing side. But the aristocratic party were finally defeated at Philippi; and Horace escaped unhurt, leaving his shield behind him; and he lived to laugh at his own folly by way of cleverly flattering Augustus. His property was confiscated; but he took to literature for a living, and was successful; and in time Virgil introduced him to Mæcenas. That introduction made him laureate of the Empire.

Nor of the Empire only. To the sagacity of Mæcenas, who saw in Horace a literary force of precisely the kind he needed, the poet owes that he is the lyrist of commonplace for all who can read the Latin language. He is the laureate of *le fait accompli.* He preaches order, moderate enjoyment of life, reverence for the gods and the Emperor. He laughs at himself for having followed Brutus. And he has become the poet of the modern English gentleman, in whose character there is much that resembles the Roman gentleman of Horace's time. There is among us a large, influential, steadfast, stolid class, in whom there is no energy of intellect, none of that thirst for ideas of which we hear from Mr. Matthew Arnold, no active political prepossession, but a general belief that things as they are are very satisfactory, and that, though it may be extremely

fine to be a great statesman or a writer, or to do good in one's generation, or to increase the sum of human knowledge or of human wealth, yet it is still better to be an English country squire. The successful manufacturer, whom in his early stages we find at Mr. Bright's elbow on the platforms of the North, usually joins this class when he buys an estate in the country. Of such men Horace is the natural poet, and to them his *aurea mediocritas* is the most enviable condition of life.

The contrast between Catullus and Horace is singular and suggestive; neither was a great poet, neither was constructive, like Shakespeare, nor dissolvent, like Heine; but Catullus was certainly greater than Horace. His polished *vers de société* were very like Praed's; but the fierce indignation of his brief political poems shows a satiric power which Praed did not possess. There is one poem ascribed to Praed by his American editor, Mr Whitmore —an epitaph on the king of the Sandwich Islands—which contains vigorous satire; but Moxon's English edition leaves us uncertain whether this is or is not Praed's. But Catullus rose far higher than mere verses of society. Catullus was in love—passionately in love with a beautiful siren whom he calls Lesbia, who, according to Apuleius, was a Clodia. It is possible, according to the general assumption, that she was a sister of that Clodius who astounded even profligate Rome by his stupendous profligacy, who drove Cicero into exile, and who might have changed the history of the world if his gladiators and Milo's had not met on the Appian Way. Clodia married Metellus Celer, and is thought to have

poisoned him; after which she abandoned herself to an unbridled licentiousness, which Cicero in burning words described in one of his most powerful speeches. However, if Lesbia were this Clodia, it seems clear that her love-affair with Catullus (who was twenty-nine when her husband died) belonged to the spring-tide of her youth, before her voluptuous temperament had developed in the maddening and poisonous atmosphere of Rome.

Mr. Theodore Martin, whose translation of Catullus is very charming, brings together the few brief poems—exquisite though brief—which tell the story of his love. Playfully they begin, with verses to Lesbia's pet sparrow, if *passer* means a sparrow, which is doubtful; then comes an elegy on the death of this feathered favourite, whom Lesbia loved more than her own eyes; then a pleasant song of love and innumerable kisses—a song utterly untranslateable; then a comparison between Lesbia and another lady of the time, who seems to have possessed every ingredient of beauty, yet not beauty itself; then some charming lines in answer to Lesbia's inquiry, how many kisses does the man want? Thus they run :—

"Lesbia, dost thou inquire
What would satiate my desire
Of thy kisses? Libyan sands
Lie round Cyrene's lands,
Which gum-bearing trees entwine,
'Twixt of Jove the burning shrine
And old Battus' sacred tomb:
Stars unnumbered, in the gloom
Of the silent midnight, scan
All the furtive loves of man.

Kisses numerous as these
Might my wild desire appease :
Prying eyes could count them never,
Nor ill tongues by sorcery sever."

But the lady soon became inconstant; and the poems in which he laments her inconstancy are full of power and pathos, ending with five untranslateable lines, in which the purest essence of bitterness and grief is concentrated.

These love-poems have no lyrical parallel in any language. They tell a true story, which begins with all the joys of happy love, and ends in agony and shame. It is a tragedy as complete as *Othello;* but the hero is also the poet, and tells his own sufferings in song. It is the truest way, as Mr. Tennyson perceived when writing *Maud*, that the tale of a great passion can be told. For when love is at its mightiest, and possesses the soul of the poet, the world holds but two persons,—*himself* and *her*. There needs no narrative, only the spontaneous song which marks changes in the aspect of the passion. Is there any such story buried in the *Sonnets* of Shakespeare ?

But Catullus was more than a gay versifier and writer of passionate love-songs or of stinging lampoons. He has risen very high in three of his longer poems. The most remarkable of these is the *Atys*, which is unique in classical literature. Atys was a Phrygian shepherd, who was maddened by the love of that greatest of all goddesses, Rhea, or Cybele, the mother of Zeus and his two mighty brethren—mother also of Here, according to the Homeric hymn to Aphrodite. A tremendous and terrifying

goddess, apparently identical with the Earth, and wearing as a crown upon her colossal head the cities of men; whence Byron beautifully described Venice as "a sea-Cybele." Her worship was wild, tumultuous, Oriental, orgiastic, and became blended with that of Dionysus or Bacchus. The "Bacchus and Ariadne," by Titian, in the National Gallery, gives a good idea of the religious revelry of early days. The priests of Cybele were called Corybantes or Galli; and Catullus narrates the madness of Atys in a wonderful wild measure, intended to represent the ravings of that mystic priesthood, and thence called galliambic. It is the only ancient poem in that metre; and the commentators have maintained that Catullus translated it from the Greek, for no other reason apparently than its extreme beauty. It does not read like a translation.

Mr. Theodore Martin missed a fine opportunity by not attempting to translate this poem in its own metre. There were at that time no English galliambics; but Mr. Tennyson has since written them with great power, choosing, with true poetic instinct, the ravings of outraged Boädicea as their theme. Thus she "yelled and shrieked between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy:"—

"Lo the colony; there they rioted in the city of Cúnobeline!
There they drank in cups of emerald; there at tables of ebony lay,
Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.
There they dwelt and there they rioted; there—there—they dwell no more.
Burst the gates and burn the palaces; break the works of the statuary;
Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it; hold it abominable;

Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness ;
Lash the maiden into swooning,—me they lashed and humiliated ;
Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little ones out.
Up, my Britons ; on, my chariot ; on, my chargers,—trample them under us ! "

These few rapid lines, filled with the fury and agony of an outraged queen, will show the power of the metre. In these days of translation we ought not to wait long for an isometrical rendering, especially as the *Atys* contains rather less than a hundred lines.

The epithalamium of Peleus and Thetis is another noble poem, of which Scaliger remarks that "it approaches nearer the divinity of the *Æneid* than any other." Indeed, Virgil, who was an unscrupulous plagiarist, found in it the suggestion of several of his finest episodes. But perhaps the most perfect thing Catullus wrote is his nuptial song in honour of the marriage of his friend Aulus Manlius Torquatus. It has the delicacy of Spenser, the music of Shelley. "The action," says Mr. Martin, "passes before us in a series of charming pictures, from the moment when the crowd are waiting to see the bride issue from the paternal roof till she is left, bathed in blushes, in her bridegroom's arms. It has been the model for most of the epithalamia in which our old literature is rich." And he has given us a beautiful version of it, but labouring under the defect that Catullus's five-lined stanza is represented by six English lines ; whence, of course, the translator must frequently add to the original. In one stanza only, which is exquisite in its tenderness and delicacy, I will compare the poet and his translator :—

" Torquatus, volo, parvulus
Matris e gremio suæ
Porrigens teneras manus,
Dulce rideat ad patrem
Semihiante labello."

" Soon my eyes shall see, mayhap,
Young Torquatus on the lap
Of his mother, as he stands
Stretching out his tiny hands,
And his little lips the while
Half open on his father's smile."

But Catullus says : I wish that a tiny Torquatus, stretching tender hands from the lap of his mother, may smile sweetly to his father, with little lip half-open. It is just in simple passages like this that the most skilful translators must fail.

Catullus satirised the greatest of the Cæsars : Horace wrote odes in exaggerated eulogy of his successor. According to Suetonius, Catullus apologised to the Dictator for his epigrams, and received from him an invitation to supper. But Suetonius was an egregious gossip ; and the probability seems to be, that if there had been an apology, the epigrams would have been withdrawn. But they have come down to us with his other works ; and so caustic are they, that Cæsar must have been tolerant indeed if he invited the poet to sup with him afterwards. Cæsar on one occasion invited himself to Cicero's villa ; and the orator, describing the visit in a letter to Atticus, says : " He heard about Mamurra ; he did not change countenance." This has been assumed to refer to one of Catullus's epigrams on this Formian favourite of Cæsar's.

Catullus had not only courage enough to write of Cæsar

as a "puppy-Romulus," and to lash the Dictator's favourites in virulent iambics, but he also ventured on a yachting excursion, in days when most Romans had a strange dread of the sea. When Virgil went to Athens, Horace addressed the ship that carried him in a strain of timorous pathos. He exclaimed—Mr. Martin is the translator—

> "What form of death could daunt his soul, who viewed
> Ocean's dread shapes, nor turned his eyes away—
> Its surging waves, and, with disaster strewed,
> Thy fated rocks, Acroceraunia?
> Vainly hath Jove in wisdom land from land
> By seas dissevered, wild and tempest-tossed,
> If vessels bound, despite his high command,
> O'er waters purposed never to be crossed."

Sea-voyages were not to the Roman taste, and Horace would evidently have liked to prohibit "impious ships" from daring the perils of the sea. But Catullus was a man of other mould. He built a *phaselus*, which translators call a pinnace, in the Euxine. He sailed in her through the sea of Marmora, coasted Thrace, passed through the Archipelago and up the Adriatic, and then ascended the Po, till he reached the Lago di Garda, where the beautiful peninsula of Sirmio was his property. Fairer dwelling for a poet is scarce conceivable than this "*peninsularum insularumque ocellus*" at the southern end of the beautiful lake. When his voyage was accomplished, Catullus dedicated his yacht to Castor and Pollux, the twin stars whose appearance was thought propitious to sailors. The dedicatory poem is fresh and charming.

> "Pleasant pinnace, famed of yore round about the white sea-shore!
> Swiftest skiff that ever sail drove before the merry gale—
> Fleetest barque, with sail or oar!

Guests, of her the sea might tell. Threatening Adria knew her well;
And the Cyclads, Rhodes renowned, Thrace with rugged headlands
crowned,
Pontus, where the surges swell.

This, a dancing pinnace now, on the leafy Pontic brow
Was a tree with foliage green. The Cytorian hills between
Whispered every speaking bough.

Thou, Amastris, Euxine town, well this merry skiff hast known:
Thou too, sibilant Cytorus, where the box-trees hiss in chorus,
Oft didst hear of her renown.

On thy summit grew the tree: thence she passed into the sea,
From thy ever-turfen sward bearing forth her loving lord
O'er wild friths that girdle thee.

Left or right the saucy wind blowing, or her path behind
Following swift, no peril-vow needed she. Safe lies she now
In this tranquil lake enshrined.

Days of rapid flight shall never come again. She rests for ever
Sheltered from the toils of Fate: to the Brethren dedicate,
Dwellers by Eurotas river."

One could as soon imagine Horace satirising Augustus as yachting in the Euxine. But the man who could tame a Clodia and lash the vices of a Cæsar was not likely to fear the perils of the sea.

Mæcenas has become a typical name from his subtle and sagacious patronage of Virgil and Horace. He was a wise statesman, questionless. He saw that Horace's lyrics might do the Empire much service. There were among the aristocracy of Rome many dangerous men, discontented with the ascendency of a man in no wise their superior. It was important to keep them tranquil. The leading-article had not been invented; the ministerial journalist was a creature of the far future. The odes of

Horace became the leading-articles of Rome. Often they were what the modern editor calls "social articles." Sometimes he dealt with the growing voluptuousness of the young Romans, which began to enervate and effeminate them :—

> "Lydia, by all above,
> Why bear so hard on Sybaris, to ruin him with love?
> What change has made him shun
> The playing-ground, who once so well could bear the dust and sun?"

Sometimes he describes the snow upon Soracte, and advises his friends to make generous use of the wine-jar :—

> "Pile up fresh logs upon the hearth,
> To thaw the nipping cold;
> And forth from Sabine jar, to wing
> Our mirth, the ruddy vine-juice bring,
> Four mellowing summers old."

Sometimes he ridicules the nonsense of the diviners, fashionable among the superstitious Romans :—

> "Ask not ('tis forbidden knowledge) what our destined term of years,
> Mine and yours; nor scan the tables of the Babylonish seers. . . .
> Strain your wine, and prove your wisdom; life is short; should hope be more?"

Sometimes he makes pleasant reference to the Roman country gentleman's love of aboriculture :—

> "Varus, are your trees in planting? put in none before the vine,
> In the rich domain of Tibur, by the walls of Catilus:
> There's a power above that tempers all that sober brains design,
> And the troubles man is heir to *thus* are quelled, and only thus."

Sometimes he warns the fast young ladies of Rome—for there were very fast young ladies eighteen hundred years

ago—that they had better give up their coquetries in time :—

" Serenaders,
Sweet invaders,
Scanter grow, and daily scanter,
Singing, ' Lydia, art thou sleeping ?
Lonely watch thy love is keeping ;
Wake, oh, wake, thou dear enchanter ! ' "

Sometimes he remonstrates with the opulent aristocracy for their excess of luxury :—

" Soon regal piles each rood of land
Will from the farmer's ploughshare take ;
Soon ponds be seen on every hand
More spacious than the Lucrine lake ;
Soon the unwedded plane displace
The vine-wreathed elm ; and violet-bed,
And myrtle-bush, and all the race
Of scented shrubs their fragrance shed
Where fertile olive-thickets made
Their owner rich in days of old."

Now in all such lyrics as these Horace was doing what, if Addison had lived in the age of Augustus, he might have done in *Spectators*. And although the large number of educated slaves kept in the great households made the multiplication of copies of a book almost as easy as if the Romans had invented printing—which they very nearly did—yet it is clear that a short striking lyric on any subject of the day, written with the curious felicity for which Horace was renowned, was likely to adhere to the memory of the loungers in the Forum and at the Baths, and thus to have as much influence as literary persuasion ever obtains. Poets in those days recited their new poems ; if brief, they were caught up,

and again recited. Instead of saying, "Did you see that slashing article in the *Saturday Review?*" the Roman gossip would break out with the actual ode :—

> "Jam pauca aratro jugera regiæ
> Moles relinquent,"

and so on. Each method, it must be admitted, has its advantages. We should even now welcome a Horace who could lecture us in verse fit for a human being to read.

Horace's leaders were, however, often political and religious. His religion was of a moderate kind—the creed of a converted Gallio.

> "Unto the gods my vows were scant
> And few, whilst I professed the cant
> Of philosophic lore;
> But now I back my sails perforce,
> Fain to retrace the beaten course
> I had contemned before."

It was, in fact, a political religion. It has been well pointed out by Mr. Merivale that the Romans strove to console themselves for their submission to an autocracy by holding the race of their rulers divine; and when the Julian race ended in Nero, the people tried to think similarly of the Flavian race. So Horace deifies Augustus :—

> "Dire Sire and Guardian of man's race,
> To thee, O Jove, the Fates assign
> Our Cæsar's charge; his power and place
> Be next to thine."

In these later times, when the civilised world has been permeated by Christianity, there seems to us something

puerile in this: but let it be remembered that we are men of a colder race, of a purer creed, and that the Romans, with all their superstition, not only conquered but also changed the world.

Horace, moreover, addressed many of his odes to men of mark, counselling political moderation and a tranquil philosophic life. The freedman's son would not have given to these proud patricians lyrical advice in the public way, had it not been well known that he was "inspired" —that he was in the confidence of the imperial dweller on Palatinus. And sometimes these lyrical leaders would only have to be turned into prose to figure in a *Moniteur* or a *Globe*. They are amusingly semi-official. Take Carmen III. 14, *Ad Populum Romanum*. Augustus had concluded his Spanish campaign victoriously. Horace issues an ode calling on the Emperor's wife and sister to lead the processions of triumph; while he states his own determination to drink a flask of his oldest wine (sixty-four years in bottle), and suggests what more he would have done in the consulship of Plancus, when he was only twenty-four. Here is the original "*Consule Planco*" prodigiously overworked by *quasi* scholars. It must be admitted that Horace's leader is capitally done; that there is great art in connecting Augustus's return with stately processions and a full-dress holiday for the ladies, and old wine for the old gentlemen, and an interview with Neæra for the young ones.

In the brief extracts from Horace hitherto given, I have sometimes used Professor Conington's version, sometimes Mr. Theodore Martin's. Let me say a word of the two

translators. The Professor is more even, and perhaps, for that reason, more Horatian. Mr. Martin is sometimes very prosaic; but when he is felicitous, his *felicitas* is *felicissima.* *Then* his translations look like original poems; and I must say that he is most felicitous when Horace is singing of pretty girls. As to his notes on his translations of Catullus and Horace, it is impossible to do justice to their rare admixture of elegant vivacity and ripe scholarship.

To me it seems that Horace rises to his highest point in one or two odes which are *racy* of Rome. Thus, when the news reached Rome of Cleopatra's final defeat, in a very noble strain does he celebrate the fall of the woman who dared to resist the whole might of the masters of the world:—

"But hers no spirit was to perish meanly;
A woman, yet not womanishly weak,
She ran her galley to no sheltering creek,
Nor quailed before the crowd, but met it queenly.

So to her lonely palace-halls she came,
With eye serene their desolation viewed,
And the fell asps with fearless fingers woo'd
To dart their deadliest venom through her frame;

Embracing death with savage calm, that she
Might rob Rome's galleys of their royal prize—
Queen to the last, and ne'er in humbled guise
To swell a triumph's haughty pageantry!"

Again, when describing the return of Regulus to Carthage, after giving the advice which secured his own death by cruel torture, Horace renders with wonderful power the heroic calm of the Roman of three centuries earlier:—

"Well witting what the torturer's art
Designed him, with like unconcern
He pushed the press of friends apart
And crowds encumbering his return,
As though some tedious business o'er
Of clients' court, his journey lay
Towards Venafrum's grassy floor,
Of Sparta-built Tarentum's bay."

The picture of the defeated Roman general returning to a terrible death as coolly as if he were leaving the law-court for a holiday, brings before us the grave, stern, resolute courage of the wolf-nurtured race with vivid reality.

Among the poems of the Augustan age whose origin is uncertain, there is one called *Copa*, generally printed with the minor poems of Virgil. It is not Virgil's, if one may rely on internal evidence. Baehr, in his *History of Roman Literature*, ascribes it to Valgius Rufus, an intimate friend of Horace's. Mr. Theodore Martin, who translated it in his notes to Horace, calls it "a gallery-picture dashed in with the broad brush and vivid colours of Rubens." If Valgius was its author, we may wish that all his writings had been preserved. In the second number of *The Liberal* (London, John Hunt, 22 Old Bond Street: 1822) Leigh Hunt translated it in his quaintest fashion. Here is one couplet:—

"Come, if you're wise, and give a loose to laughter and your stays.
A flask or bottle? You know best the *most genteelest ways.*"

I venture on a version in a rhythm which seems well suited to render Latin elegiacs:—

Lo, Syrisca our hostess, a garland of Greece on her brow,
Skilled to the castanet to move her sinuous side,
Here in the smoky tavern is dancing gracefully now,
Shaking the hoarse rough reeds as her white arms glimmer and glide.
Who 'd be away, worn out with the summer's pestilent dust,
Rather than lie on a couch, slaking the thirst of his throat ?
Here there are stoups and cans and flagons brimming with must,
Roses, lutes, and lyres, and an arbour from tumult remote.
Here from a pastoral cave sweet sounds are issuing too,
Notes of the rustic reed, Sicilian shepherds' delight ;
Here flows flattish wine from a cask whose pitching is new ;
Here a rivulet murmurs its song in shadow and light.
Here there are violet-crowns with saffron blossoming gay,
Garlands of ruddiest roses with paler petals are dashed ;
Fair Acheloïs brings from river or tremulous bay
Baskets of lilies divine which her virgin ripples have washed.
Here cream-cheeses dry in their rustic baskets of rush ;
Golden waxen plums autumnal, to epicures dear ;
Nuts from the chestnut-tree and apples with exquisite flush ;
Beautiful Ceres too, and Love, and Bacchus are here.
Mulberries here blood-ripe, and grapes in clusters divine ;
Dark-green cucumbers hang from the pliable stem overhead :
Surly Priapus stands at the garden's boundary-line
Armed with a willow-hook, but all his terrors are fled.
Here, Alibida, come : your weary donkey perspires ;
Spare the unhappy brute that was always your favourite friend.
Now in the copses break out the chirping grasshopper-choirs ;
Now to their cool retreats the bright-green lizards descend.
If you are wise, lie down, and dip your beak in the glass,
Or will you have fresh wine poured out, untouched by the heat ?
Come, under vine-leaf shade stretch wearily forth on the grass ;
Bind on your heavy head a kerchief ruddy and sweet.
Ay, you shall gather the fair fresh lips of a beautiful maid :
Perish the blockheads to whom are the senseless scruples of old !
Why should we give fresh flowers to the ingrate sorrowful Shade ?
Who would rather that men on his tombstone this should behold ?—
Wine and the dice bring forth ! Be none of to-morrow afraid !
Death at my ear exclaims, " I am coming. Live and be bold !"

This little poem is a singularly graphic and picturesque description of a Roman's suburban place of amusement—

"a sort of ancient White-Conduit House or Chalk Farm," says Leigh Hunt, "not quite so respectable, perhaps, in one sense as those suburbanities of our beloved metropolis." And he sees in Syrisca "an ancient but at the same time young Mrs. Quickly, who lived two thousand years ago, and was a buxom little Syrian landlady, who kept a place of entertainment out of the gates of Rome, and danced for the amusement of her customers." And Alibida, whom the poet chaffs for his liking for his donkey—"*vestrum delicium est asinus*"—is a "witless Falstaff." The ingenious turn at the end, which neither Leigh Hunt nor Mr. Martin has caught in translation, is exquisitely ingenious: Enjoy yourselves now, says the poet, or else these two lines on your tombstone will warn others to enjoy themselves, profiting by your example.

The immortal commonplaces of Horace—the "*Nihil est ab omni parte beatum,*" and "*Omnes eodem cogimur,*" and other transfigured Tupperisms—will always be better known than the far loftier and more impassioned lyrics of Catullus. Indeed, as I have said, Horace has become the English gentleman's poet; and so frequent are the pilgrimages of our nation to the site of his Sabine farm in the valley of Ustica, that the peasantry of the vicinage firmly believe him to have been an Englishman.

Sidonia says to Coningsby: "When circumstances at length placed me in the presence of the King of France, I recognised—Ulysses!" Four years later this mythical sentence would hardly have been written, I suspect. But I do not fear to say that he who studies the character of

Mæcenas in the writings of Horace and elsewhere, will recognise in "the chief commoner of Rome" "the most prosperous and popular of politicians," the man of pure and ancient Etrurian blood, of indefatigable energy and genial humour, the prototype of Palmerston. And in like manner Virgil is reproduced in Tennyson, who has given to our iambic verse the same musical delicacy which characterises the Virgilian hexameter, who has found another "*pius Æneas*" in the blameless Arthur, and who has in the dedication to the *Idyls of the King* reached that perfection of poetic flattery which the Latin poet attained in the famous passage that prophesies of Marcellus.

ARISTOLOGY.

APT and keen was Sydney Smith's retort to the atheistic Frenchman who bored him at the dinner-table by annihilating the Divinity, and proving to his own satisfaction that this marvellous world came into existence without a Creator. Presently there came an *entrée* so delicious that the Frenchman grew enthusiastic in reference to its merits. "Surely," exclaimed Sydney, "you don't believe in a cook!"

I believe in cooks. Garrick's oft-quoted line—

"God sends us good meat, but the devil sends cooks"—

is only a half-truth. Doubtless the devil sends all sorts of stupidity, being himself *pater stultorum*, and the easy victim of any moderately-clever fellow, from St. Dunstan downwards; but there is no such treasure as a good cook, and it would be impious to maintain that a personage so useful is a diabolical gift. We boast of modern scientific discoveries, and laugh at Charles Lamb's famous essay on Roast Pig as purely mythical; but depend on it that the inventor of the application of fire to food (was it Professor Prometheus?) hit upon something much greater than any

of our contemporary professors. Homer describes the cooking feats of his heroes, and their powers of eating and drinking, with just as much gusto as their prowess in arms and their achievements in council. And, to skip three thousand years or so, what says Byron to his publisher ?—

> "Along thy sprucest bookshelves shine
> The works thou deemest most divine—
> The *Art of Cookery* and mine,
> My Murray !"

Byron was right, I suspect: the publisher estimated books according to their sale, caring very little whether it was the amorous heat of giaours and corsairs, or the commonplace caloric of saucepans and *bains-maries* that warmed the public.

Aristology may be briefly defined as the science which provides for man his best meal in the best way. Now the very first question which occurs is: What time should this meal be eaten ? Our ancestors dined at eleven, and there are still primitive folk in remote districts who dine at twelve. One has, however, become the recognised hour of labouring men and shopkeepers, and the like. But at such a time of day it can by no possibility be the noble meal which it ought to be; and my cordial wish for the man who is compelled to dine at one o'clock is, that he may have a cosy supper at eight or nine. Civilisation insists upon the late dinner, for reasons which have been put with eloquent logic by De Quincey in his essay on the *Casuistry of Roman Meals.* "When business," he writes, "was moderate, dinner was allowed to divide and

bisect it. When it swelled into that vast strife and agony, as one may call it, that boils along the tortured streets of modern London or other capitals, men began to see the necessity of an adequate counter force to push against this overwhelming torrent, and thus maintain the equilibrium. Were it not for the soft relief of a six-o'clock dinner, the gentle demeanour succeeding to the boisterous hubbub of the day, the soft glowing lights, the wine, the intellectual conversation, life in London is now come to such a pass that in two years all nerves would sink before it. But for this periodic reaction, the modern business, which draws so cruelly on the brain and so little on the hands, would overthrow that organ in all but those of coarse organisation. Dinner it is—meaning by dinner the whole complexity of attendant circumstances—which saves the modern brain-working man from going mad." Six o'clock was late when De Quincey wrote; it is now an early hour. But his theory is right. After a hard day's work, political, financial, literary, a man reaches that absolute sanctum, his dressing-room. He shuts out critics, opponents, bulls and bears; he washes care away with his bath; he arrays himself in snowy linen, with mayhap a diamond or two on its surface, and possibly a floral gem in the lapel of his coat. The day's turmoil is forgotten in the atmosphere of the dining-room. White cloth, delicate porcelain, bright glass and silver, a glow of flowers, a ruddy tinge of wine, above all the well-contented looks of his friends, make him cheerful at once. He is ready to dine. The meal, if properly conceived and arranged, comes upon him with the gradual beauty

of a symphony, each step leading easily to the next, and the end being perfection. Such a dinner demands the artistic accompaniment of charming conversation. In that colloquy there must be no argument; no politics, theology, Darwinism; only the *play* of intellect, the easy sparkle of wit, the best-natured gossip, the briefest anecdote, is permissible. Of course the ladies present are lovely and lively, and understand that most delightful of arts, scientific flirtation. This being so, dinner will fulfil its mission—to recuperate the exhausted brain, and make a man ready, after a reasonable amount of sleep, to do his next day's battle with the world. If he be wise, after a pleasant half-hour amid the music and flowers of the drawing-room, he will eschew billiards, cigars, and cognac, and find his way to bed before midnight. The best "nightcap," save in the coldest weather, is something effervescent—say a pint of dry champagne.

The author of a pleasant little volume, entitled *A Visit to my Discontented Cousin*, lecturing upon dinner, makes these remarks: "As to the eating and drinking part of it, I am comparatively, not positively, indifferent; and would rather not dine at all than talk about or criticise my food: so that the edible be hot and the potable be sound, I am content; although, to tell the truth, these simple requisites are of the rarest." This is a very careless way of dealing with a great question. But as there are

"Poets tune-deaf and painters colour-blind,"

so likewise there are men who imagine they like a good dinner, yet have no sensitiveness of palate whatsoever. Hot meat and sound wine is all they profess to care

about; and I don't often find them perfect judges of the soundness of wine: they are apt to estimate it by its price—a tendency that exists with regard to more things than wine in this money-loving island. However, the simple truth is, that a good dinner is a complex harmony; and men with uneducated palates may just as well sit down to an ox whole-roasted and a hogshead of metheglin as attend a civilised and artistic table. They have grand appetites these fellows, and, I hope, are thankful for the blessing; but a man with an appetite and no taste is like a person who hammers away at a piano without knowing a tune. To borrow Macaulay's remark on Robert Montgomery's poetry, his dinner is about as much like a real dinner as a Brussels carpet is like a landscape by Turner.

Extremes meet: here is the bill-of-fare of a little dinner supposed to have been given by Alcibiades to Aristophanes and a few other gentlemen of Athens. If anybody objects that the author of *The Birds* cut up Alcibiades rather savagely, and so they were unlikely to dine together, I can only ask him whether he has never dined with his bitterest enemy. But here is the *menu*, carefully translated from the choice Attic of the period:—

Hors d'œuvres. Tunny with cucumber, Aphritis anchovy with olives.

Poisson. Mullet of Hymettus.

Entrée. A young puppy.

Relevés. Wild boar stuffed with thrushes, beccaficoes, oysters, and periwinkles; a two-livered Bisaltian hare.

Rôts. Birds of the river Phasio; a porphyrion that has hanged itself; attagen.

Entremêts. Cheesecake of milk, honey, and sesame; assafœtida salad; Cydonian apples.

I regret to say there is no account of the wine.

And did those refined Athenians in the days of Pericles eat puppies? They did, and liked them. I suspect there are a good many edible things which we unwisely neglect. What can be more delicious than the hind legs of frogs? With a glass of Chablis, what a nice, light, nutritive luncheon they would make on these hot midsummer days, when eating seems scarcely practicable! In the long green walls of Silchester, or any other ruined Roman city, you may find lots of the big snails that the *domini terrarum* imported when they occupied this out-of-the-way island. Why does nobody eat them now?

However, as I have said, extremes meet: here is the bill-of-fare of a December *dîner de siége* given by the Paris Jockey Club:—

Hors d'œuvres. Radishes, herring *mariné,* onions *à la Provençale,* slightly salt butter, gherkins, and olives.

First course. Soup of slightly salted horse, with vegetables; ass-flesh cutlets, with carrots; mule's liver *sauté aux champignons;* horse's lights, with white sauce; carp *à la matelotte;* fried gudgeons; celery heads, with seasoning.

Second course. Quarter of dog braised; leg of dog roasted; rats cooked upon the ashes; rat pie, with mushrooms; eel *à la broche;* salad of celery and small salad.

Dessert. Dutch cheese, apples, pears, marmalade *au Kirsch, gâteau d'Italie au fromage de Chester.*

This *menu* was composed by that renowned epicure Baron Brisse, who, in days before the war, was wont to publish one daily in the *Liberté* for the guidance of *gourmets*. The erudite Baron was wont to maintain that people who dined as he taught would never be in difficulties, but have as good an appetite on rent-day as on any other day in the year. Certes, it is something in favour of gastronomy, that amid the supreme peril of Paris, Baron Brisse and his friends could cheerfully dine upon horse and dog and rat in the Chaussée d'Antin. It is an aristological triumph.

The Romans, as all men know, dined in their later days on a stupendous scale, and defied all the rules of aristology by their abominable excesses. When Cæsar visited Cicero at his villa, the great orator writes to Atticus thus:—"*Post horam viii. in balneum; tunc audivit de Mamurra; vultum non mutavit; unctus est; accubuit; ἐμετικὴν agebat.*" Mamurra was Cæsar's general of engineers, and also his master's chief associate in dissipation; and what he heard about him without change of countenance is supposed to have been the severe attack made upon him by the poet Catullus. The story is, that Cæsar, instead of revenging himself on the poet, asked him to dinner. Modern autocrats are not always so forgiving. However, the important point in the extract is that Cæsar, in order to do justice to Cicero's dinner, took an emetic.

Still they were moderate men in those days when compared with their successors; epicurism had not entirely degenerated into gluttony. Under the emperors,

Rome became the centre of all conceivable vices: all the rest of the world was taxed that its citizens, the *fœx Romuli*, might be idlers in the land. When Hadrian first saw Alexandria, a city of business, in which everybody worked for his living, the spectacle amazed him. Alexandria and a myriad other cities worked, that Rome might laze. The Roman's sole duty was to vote; he was made comfortable, in order to secure his voting as the emperor desired. This is the natural issue of Cæsarism.

It is pleasant to notice that when emperors were gluttons, poets could be epicures. In the days of Domitian, the story of whose turbot Juvenal has immortalised, Martial was photographing life in Rome with inimitable felicity. No other period has had so terse and brilliant a painter. We have more than one example of the kind of dinner which the poet loved to give his friends: the pleasantest perhaps is the invitation to Turanicus. If we turn this into the language of the *menu*, it runs thus:—

Hors d'œuvres. Cappadocian lettuce, leeks, tunny, with eggs.

Relevés. Sausage, with white sauce; cauliflower, bacon and beans.

Entremêts. Dried grapes, Syrian pears, Neapolitan chestnuts roasted.

Parched pears, boiled lupines, olives.

A simple dinner enough. As to bacon and beans, which Martial describes most picturesquely, I have eaten them in far-away farmsteads of generous Devon, and also at the Star and Garter at Richmond; and have in both ways liked the viand. At any rate, the poet and his friend had pleasant converse over it.

"Parva est cœnula, quis potest negare ?
Sed finges nihil, audiesve fictum,
Et vultu placidus tuo recumbes,
Nec crassum dominus leget volumen."

One is here reminded of Tennyson's semi-alcaic invitation to his friend Maurice :—

"You 'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine."

Of wine, however, the Roman poet on this occasion says nothing; but in his invitation (x. 48) to half a dozen of his friends he promises—

"De Nomentana vinum sine fæce lagena,
Quæ bis Frontino consule plena fuit."

Nomentum was a town fourteen miles from Rome, where Martial was lucky enough to possess a small farm; and the wine which he and his neighbours grew, though harsh and austere when new (i. 106), mellowed with years into liquor equal to any Falernian or Cæcuban. A great gift this. Not long ago a friend sent me some Mountain wine, bottled in the year 1800; it was delicious, but I suppose when bottled it must have been undrinkable.

Paris is, as I write, on the verge of starvation. Heaven knows when it will again be the city of choice dinners. Yet I do not despair. France is a country of infinite resources; its people have infinite intellectual fertility; its soil is indescribably rich. When the Prussians have left the country, the grape will still grow on the slopes of the Coast of Gold and by the margin of Marne, the truffle will still be found at Brives-la-Gaillarde. But mean-

while it must not be supposed that aristology is not understood in London. Look at my friend Mr. Jerrold's *Epicure's Year-Book* for 1868 (why has there not yet been another volume?), and you will be surprised at the marvellous variety and the artistic conception of the *menus* which he has collected. Among the most curious is that of the Rouher dinner, given in 1862 at Willis's Rooms: it was written by Colonel Money. In this the attempt was successfully made to give the exact order of the dishes, and to indicate the precise wine and vegetable to be taken with each. Thus, with *epigrammes de pigeonneaux* the diner was directed to drink claret-cup and eat black Hamburg grapes; with his venison to take dry champagne, melon, and French beans; with his ortolans, Château Yquem; with his *artichaux à la barigoule*, tokay. These niceties may seem trivial to a man with vast appetite and uncultured palate; but they give what Mr. Matthew Arnold would call "sweetness and light" to the banquet; they are the results of a subtle and recondite chemistry (or shall I say alchemy, since a rare dinner ends in golden pleasure, and sound wine is transformed into the diamonds of wit?), which renders impossible both indigestion and dissatisfaction. A dinner may be complex, yet atrocious; it may be simple, yet arranged to perfection. But a dinner without art is abominable: what says the gastronomic poet Berchoux?—

> "Je ne vous tairai rien: si parfois on vous prie
> *A dîner sans façon et sans cérémonie,*
> Refusez promptement ce dangereux honneur;
> Cette invitation cache un piége trompeur.

Souvenez-vous toujours, dans le cours de la vie,
Qu'un dîner *sans façon* est une perfidie."

On this point I quite agree with him.

Poetry and aristology were never more pleasantly combined than at the Shakespeare dinner given in New York ten years ago, and devised by Colonel Sanderson. The bill-of-fare was perfect in both ways. Thus, after oysters on the half shell was underwritten,

"Sends
This treasure of an oyster;"

and this hint as to the appropriate beverage,

"Set a deep glass of Rhenish wine;"

Bermuda potatoes were ushered in with

"Let the sky rain potatoes . . .
From the still-vext Bermoothes;"

veal sweetbreads,

"Veal, quoth the Dutchman; is not veal a calf?"

asparagus,

"Who comes so fast in silence of the night?"

boar's head,

"Like a full-acorned boar, a German one;"

tutti frutti ice-cream,

"Tut, tut, thou art all ice, thy kindness freezes;"

and the dessert most aptly terminates with

"Some aqua-vitæ, ho!"

The art of aristology approaches perfection when it thus combines with poetry and wit. I care less for the style of *menu* contrived for the dinner of the Palæontographic Society last April. What say you to having to choose between "Arnocopti herbei," "Pulluli sitotrephagroici-

censes," and "Anaticulæ pisochumizenses?" Apart from the difficulty of recognising thus disguised lamb cutlets, spring chicken, ducks and green peas, the Greek and Latin terms were barbarously mixed—an offence to the scholar as great as that to the gourmet if you mixed his port and sherry in one decanter. Moreover, they called their *menu* "Scheda Prandii;" whereas *prandium* is not dinner at all, but a light matutinal snack.

I have already said a word or two as to the difficult art of dinner-talk: reverting thereto, I may remark that aristological anecdote may fairly be introduced now and then. Nor surely is it *infra dignitatem* to talk of wines and their culture, or to quote the gastronomic fancies of poets and humorists—Thackeray on *bouillabaisse*, Sala on caviar, Father Prout on eggs. You may relate how Baron Brisse indignantly rebuked the ignorant person who declared that mayonnaise was spelt with *yen*, observing that he talked of two distinct sauces—as in a mayennaise there is *velouté*, which does not occur in a mayonnaise. You may recall the palatal delicacy of the Count du Broussin, who could taste the mule's hoof in an *omelette aux champignons*. Mushrooms, be it known, are only perfect when crushed by the foot of a mule. You may tell of the terror of an Italian prince crossing the Alps with his people, when a mule and its rider fell over a precipice. "The cook!" he exclaimed. "Holy Virgin, is it the cook?" "It is Don Prosdocimo, your excellency." "Only the chaplain: ah, the saints be praised!" If you are pathetic, there is the melancholy suicide of Vatel to narrate; if aphoristic, the aristologists of old have many a

lucid laconism at your service. Here is one: "It is a popular error to say that where there is dinner for two, there is dinner enough for three; it ought to be, Where there is dinner for three, there is *perhaps* enough for two." With which wise saying I end my desultory paper, wishing the courteous reader good dinners and a healthy appetite thereto.

"Un poème jamais ne valut un dîner:"

how much less an essay!

AN ESSAY ON EPIGRAMS.

PROFESSOR SYLVESTER, well known as a brilliant discoverer in the fashionable branch of modern mathematics, has just published a brochure on *The Laws of Verse*, which is curious as exemplifying what a great wit called "ultra-crepidarianism." Mr. Sylvester is an apostle of L'Église Invariantive, and has got into his head the notion that poetry can be produced by algebraic processes. It will be remembered by all who have read Sydney Smith's delightful *Lectures on Moral Philosophy* (which, by the way, Lord Jeffrey recommended him not to publish), that he maintained the theory that wit can be studied and perfected just as mathematics can. Wit, argued the facetious canon, results from surprise; and to prepare such surprise is merely a question of ingenuity. The feeling produced on the mind by an original witticism when first heard is not unlike that which is caused by a clever bit of prestidigitation or a startling chemical experiment. Water quenches fire: the tiro in chemistry who for the first time sees a solid substance ignite on touching water, and swim in flame on its surface, feels

precisely the same kind of pleasure as that which is produced by Crashaw's famous epigram on the miracle of Cana—

"Nympha pudica Deum vidit, et erubuit."

A similar effect is obtained by other forms of ingenious surprise—by a clever problem in chess or in geometry, for example. Suppose it required to describe an equilateral triangle with an angular point on the periphery of each of three concentric circles, "every schoolboy," as Lord Macaulay would say, ought to be able to do it. Take your compasses, O ingenuous youth fresh from Middlemist, and draw radius O C. Make O C P two-thirds of a right angle. To circle whose radius is O A apply A P equal to O B: draw C A, C B, A B, making A C P equal to O C B; then A B C is your triangle. Or take this charming three-move chess problem by Meyer, which I set down in continental notation :—

WHITE.	BLACK.
K. c 1	K. a 7
Q. g 6	R. a 8
Kt. c 5	B. d 7
Kt. e 7	Kt. b 8
	Kt. d 5

Let any fair lady who does me the honour to read these lines, and who disdains not the chess-board, ascertain for herself whether such a problem is not a species of epigram.

Now, although mathematics, which is the scaffolding or skeleton of the vast edifice of thought, has some kinship with both poetry and wit, I take it that Sydney Smith and Professor Sylvester are alike wrong in supposing that

it is easy to pass from the realm of figures to that of letters. The learned Professor appears to think that mathematical ideas are of universal application; he maintains that "music is the algebra of sense, algebra the music of the reason." This oracular saying is too hard for me, and might indeed be a tough nut for Œdipus himself to crack; but I quote it for the benefit of those who love to dive into profundities of thought. However, the fallacy which lurks in such theories as Mr. Sylvester's is, that the theorist assumes cognate results always to proceed from cognate causes. A problem in geometry or chess, the brilliant display of a chemist or a conjuror, Pepper's ghost, or Home's floatation near the ceiling, may cause a feeling of pleasant surprise akin to that produced by a clever epigram; but it does not therefore follow that an epigrammatist can play chess, or a mathematician do juggling tricks. Professor Sylvester arranges the Alcaic stanza of our dear lyrist Horace in a square matrix, such as he applies to determinants; and then he argues that the Epicurean poet had a highly mathematical turn of mind. "Had Athens been Cambridge, and Orbilius Colenso (whose private pupil at the University I was long before the far-famed Luke was heard of), I have little doubt that Horace might have come out the Numa Hartog or Pendlebury of his year." Mathematicians are notably bad hands at logic, and this is about as complete a *non sequitur* as was ever devised. Horace got his metre and a good many of his ideas from Alcæus, and did not dream of the subtle arithmetical arrangement ascribed to him.

Still, there are certain departments of literature in

which excellence is attainable only by labour; and the epigram is among them. It requires a thought tersely expressed in perfection of words :—

"Just as crush'd carbon doth produce
The diamond for Beauty's use,
Condense the wisdom of the years,
And, lo, an epigram appears."

Recently there have been published some good collections of epigrams, and there appears to exist an impression that this form of writing will again be in vogue. I doubt it. Life is not long enough. There is less thought in many a three-volume novel of the present day than in a single first-rate epigram which a man might write upon his thumb-nail.

"Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons."

This canon of literature is rather too much neglected by the easy writers of the day—gentlemen who perpetually bring to one's remembrance Rogers's epigram :—

"You write with ease to show your breeding—
Your easy writing 's damn'd hard reading."

Expect no epigrams from the man who earns his bread by the grey goose-quill. They don't pay. A Greek tyrant in the old days would give a poet a dozen female slaves for a tetrastich; a prince or an archbishop in the middle ages would send him fat venison and abundant wine; but the patron of to-day (the publisher) would probably think sixpence a line generous payment. If we are to have any epigrams in this toiling and moiling age, this perturbed period of the steam-wagon and the lightning-wire, it must be from literati of leisure. Peers of the realm and country gentlemen, deans of cathedral chapters and fellows of

colleges, are your natural epigrammatists—if only they have the genius. The epigram should be matured in a lofty library with windows looking to the sunset, shut in from all rude sounds of the outer world, with a plate of filberts and a glass of old Madeira or port to occupy the intervals of thought. It grows in the brain like the pearl within the oyster. To reach perfection, it demands silence and seclusion and time. These are conditions rarely attainable in the hot afternoon of the nineteenth century —for which reason I am not sanguine in anticipating the rise among us of a race of epigrammatists.

What the Greeks meant by an epigram was simply an inscription, and its primary use was funereal. It gradually extended itself to other themes, but never became that "rapier-pointed" versicle which the name now implies. The function of the Greek epigram is fulfilled by the modern sonnet; a felicitous invention of Italy, which has been successfully acclimatised in England. What since the days of Martial has been called an epigram differs as widely from the Greek form as Mr. Tennyson's idyls differ from those of Theocritus, or as a burlesque by Burnand from one by Aristophanes. It is, however, with the modern epigram that I am now concerned, and of this Martial is the undoubted master. Only a few of his epigrams contain that sting in the tail which now characterises the hornet of poetry; but those few are perfect. Others of the fifteen hundred which he wrote are more like the *vers de société* of Praed and Luttrel and Locker; they are lapidary verse, cameos cut and polished with infinite skill. The student cannot know

the resources of the Latin tongue until he has read Martial. His marvellous mastery of language cannot, of course, be illustrated by translations. The most felicitous of renderings can only show the wrong side of the tapestry. Still, as there is no other way, let me select one or two brief specimens. In the following (done into English by Merivale) the poet is drinking his wine within sight of the tombs of the emperors, whom it was the foolish fancy of Rome to class with the gods :—

"Fill high the bowl with sparkling wine ;
Cool the bright draught with summer snow.
Amid my locks let odours flow ;
Around my temples roses twine.

See yon proud emblem of decay,
Yon lordly pile that braves the sky !
It bids us live our little day,
Teaching that Gods themselves must die."

Here is a distich paraphrased so as to apply to modern London by that indefatigable veteran, Cyrus Redding :—

"Without calves'-head the alderman can't dine :
Well the companion cheers the civic wine."

In the following (rendered by Leigh Hunt) the poet is in a tenderer vein, lamenting the death of a little slave-girl :—

"Underneath this greedy stone
Lies little sweet Erotion,
Whom the Fates, with hearts as cold,
Nipp'd away at six years old.
Thou, whoever thou may'st be,
That hast this small field after me,
Let the yearly rites be paid
To her little slender shade ;

So shall no disease or jar
Hurt thy house, or chill thy Lar;
But this tomb be here alone
The only melancholy stone."

Addison's translation of a well-known distich has been often quoted, but will bear quotation once more :—

"In all thy humours, whether grave or mellow,
Thou 'rt such a touchy, testy, pleasant fellow,
Hast so much wit and mirth and spleen about thee,
There is no living with thee, or without thee."

One more, and I pass from Martial to the moderns :—

"Exquisite wines and comestibles
From Tod-Heatly and Fortnum and Mason;
Smoking-room, billiard- and chess-tables,
Bath in a vast marble basin;
Luminous books (not voluminous)
To read under beech-trees cacuminous;
One friend, who is fond of a distich,
And doesn't get too syllogistic;
A valet, who knows the complete art
Of service—a maiden, his sweetheart:
Give me these, in some rural pavilion,
And I 'll envy no Rothschild his million."

I cordially agree with the epigrammatist in his notion of a luxurious life.

When we come among the English writers of epigram, we find Martial frequently echoed. Sir John Harington follows the old Roman very closely. Here is an example :—

"Fortune, men say, doth give too much to many:
But yet she never gave enough to any."

Sir John was a fertile writer, and produced one epigram that is not likely to die :—

"Treason doth never prosper: what 's the reason?
For if it prosper, none dare call it treason."

Ben Jonson was another prolific disciple of Martial, from whom he borrowed his tremendous line upon Inigo Jones :—

"Thy forehead is too narrow for my brand."

Some of the rare old dramatist's songs have a fine aroma of epigram, as one stanza shall prove :—

"Follow a shadow, it still flies you ;
Seem to fly it, it will pursue :
So court a mistress, she denies you ;
Let her alone, she will court you.
Say, are not women truly, then,
Styled but the shadows of us men ?"

Henry Parrot was another of these seventeenth-century men with a wealth of epigrammatic wit. Here we have him chaffing the Welsh :—

"A Welshman and an Englishman disputed
Which of their lands maintain'd the greatest state ;
The Englishman the Welshman quite confuted,
Yet would the Welshman naught his brags abate.
'Ten cooks (quoth he) in Wales one wedding sees :'
'True (quoth the other) ; each man toasts his cheese.'"

Herrick, Waller, Prior, are specially noticeable for the vein of epigram which runs through their lyrics, like the purple streaks that lie deep in the snow-white marble of Sicily. What can surpass the delicious couplet in courtly Waller's girdle-song ?—

"Give me but what this ribbon bound :
Take all the rest the sun goes round."

The same peculiarity belongs to those fine gentlemen and facile poets, Suckling, Etherege, Sedley, Lovelace ; masters, it seems to me, of the lyric epigram, though three out of the four are not even named in Mr. Dodd's

portly and valuable volume, entitled *The Epigrammatists.* If Sir John Suckling's piquant little chanson—

"Why so pale and wan, fond lover?"—

is not to be classed with the epigrams, I am at a loss how to define it. The light literature of two centuries ago had a choice flavour of its own, being the natural growth of a lively and careless society. The men who wore rapiers were gay intriguers, and their love-songs sparkled like the Toledo steel they were always ready to draw.

"Out upon it! I have loved
Three whole days together,
And am like to love three more—
If it prove fine weather!"

sings Sir John Suckling: and the words bring before us a picture of the man, young, gallant, daring, ready with pen and purse and sword, the darling of St. James's, the marvel of the Mall, the handsomest fellow that ever ate mulberries and drank iced champagne in Spring Gardens. Iced champagne, sayest thou? an anachronism, surely. I am not certain about that. Wicked and witty Wilmot, Lord Rochester, who wrote a few decades later than Suckling, describing a bad dinner to which he was invited, says:—

"And now the bottle briskly flies about,
Instead of ice wrapt up in a wet clout."

And as he twice mentions champagne—or *campaign*—in the same poem, I suspect that effervescent wine was a favourite with the poetic cavaliers of the time. We find even grave and stately John Evelyn "treating divers

ladies of his relations in Spring-gardens ; " and years later paying a visit of inspection to " the New Spring-garden at Lambeth, a pretty contrived plantation," since known as Vauxhall, where some of us old fogies may in our youth have met Mr. Pendennis in superb apparel, with little Fanny Bolton hanging happily on his arm. How they are faded and forgotten, those ancient haunts of folly and fantasy ! Quiet offices stand where once was the Spring-garden ; on the site of the Mulberry-garden— " now (wrote Evelyn in 1654) the only place of refreshment for persons of the best quality to be exceedingly cheated at," for Cromwell had closed the Spring-garden— now rises the hideous pile called Buckingham Palace ; Chelsea Hospital has replaced the famously fashionable Rotunda of Ranelagh :—

" Mais où sont les neiges d'antan ? "

I must not leave this brilliant group of thoughtless gentlemen without quoting Rochester's best epigram, familiar though it sounds :—

" Here lies our sovereign lord the king,
Whose word no man relies on ;
Who never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise one."

But, as Charles II. retorted, his deeds were those of his ministers, and his words were his own. Still, when he acted for himself, he did one or two things which, though eccentric, were not unwise. Take, for instance, the story of the episcopation of the saintly Ken, who, when the king visited Winchester, where he held a prebendal stall, declined to give up his house for the reception of Nell

Gwynne. Afterwards, when the bishopric of Bath and Wells was vacant, "old Rowley" said, "Where is the good little man who refused his lodging to poor Nell?" So Ken became a bishop, and was the King's chief consoler on his death-bed. Again, there was Allestree, educated for the church, who loyally joined the army of the first Charles, carried on a perilous correspondence for the second in his exile, and narrowly escaped hanging by the Roundheads more than once. Possibly he was saved by his atrocious ugliness, which appears in his portrait, and which might well frighten even a hangman. Him Rochester one day, after the Restoration, met in a street of London, ragged and starving. Unknowing who he was, the reckless Earl—"a very profane wit," writes of him excellent Evelyn (having encountered him at dinner at the Duke of Albemarle's, better known in history as General Monk)—saw an opportunity of a little fun. So he made a bet with the King that he could find an uglier man than the Duke of Lauderdale, and produced Allestree; whom Charles recollected on the instant, and made him Provost of Eton, which famous foundation he raised from the ruins in which the Roundheads had left it. Afterwards Allestree was Dean of Westminster—the pleasantest preferment in the English Church. Its holder lives in the best London society, controls the metropolitan minster, and has none of the worries of a bishop, who is often plagued by a recalcitrant herd of wild curates.

It may surprise some readers to learn that two of the four celebrated psalmists, Sternhold and Hopkins, and Tate and Brady, were epigrammatists. From the lace-

ruffle-wearing gallants of the court to these grave versifiers is a long step: it is the truth, however, that John Hopkins and Nahum Tate wrote epigrams, but they were very bad ones. Grave men write good epigrams occasionally: there are many dignified clergymen in *l'église épigrammatique.* The Rev. William Clarke, chancellor of Chichester a hundred years ago, produced one epigram which it would be hard to excel. On the tomb of a Duke of Richmond in Chichester Cathedral was an inscription ending with these words:—

"Hæc est domus ultima."

This is the epigram:—

"Did he who thus inscribed this wall
Not read or not believe Saint Paul,
Who says there is, where'er it stands,
Another house not made with hands?
Or may we gather from these words
That house is not a House of Lords?"

Passing onward, I might delay with Gray and Garrick, both epigrammatists, and the latter singularly fertile in the art. He is the best of all prologue writers, and a prologue must be epigrammatic. His epigrams on Johnson's Dictionary and on Goldsmith's oddity of character are pretty well known: let me quote instead of them the Rev. Richard Kendal on Barry and Garrick, who were playing King Lear at rival houses:—

"The town has found out different ways
To praise its different Lears;
To Barry it gives loud huzzas,
To Garrick only tears.

A king? Ay, every inch a king,
Such Barry doth appear;
But Garrick 's quite another thing—
He 's every inch King Lear."

Epigrams sometimes produce permanent changes. The present Primate of all England signs himself "Archibald Cantuar.;" but a hundred years ago "Cant." was the customary abbreviation. Horace Walpole caused the change. Thus wrote he of Archbishop Secker :—

"The bench has oft posed us, and set us a-scoffing,
By signing Will. London, John Sarum, John Roffen.:
But this head of the church no expounder will want,
For his grace signs his own proper name, Thomas Cant."

Secker got nicknamed Tom Cant throughout his diocese in consequence; and hence it happened that his successors took to "Cantuar."

But I must hasten to the end. Perhaps the most marvellous store of epigram ever embodied in a continuous poem exists in Byron's *Don Juan*. It is a treasury of such gems, from which even Douglas Jerrold has not disdained to borrow. On the other hand, Byron's implacable adversary, Savage Landor, has written a greater number of beautiful isolated epigrams than any other Englishman. At this moment, his lines to his friend Louis Napoleon are not without interest :—

"Pleased was I when you told me how,
In hat that buffeted the brow
And mason's loose habiliment,
With masons through Ham's gate you went.
Heartily pleased was I to see
A prisoner, though a prince, set free.
'Prince,' said I, 'you've escaped two worst
Of evils.' 'I have known a first,'

Said you, 'but that is only one.
Tell me the other.' ''*Tis a Throne.*'
I could not add what now I might,
It keeps the worthy out of sight,
Nor lets the sitter sit upright."

Landor was close on ninety when he wrote thus.

Another veteran epigrammatist, the last I shall name, died at the age of eighty a few months ago—the Rev. Charles Townsend, rector of Kingston-by-Sea. This fine old parson was famed as a lover of his friends and a hater of women. I suppose some wicked witch had played him a trick

"In his hot youth, when George the Third was king."

He had been a great friend of Wordsworth and the other Lakers, on whom he bestowed this impromptu :—

"They dwell at the Lakes ; an appropriate quarter
For poems diluted with plenty of water."

Not long before his death some thieves broke into the rectory ; whereupon he naturally consoled himself with an epigram :—

"They came and prigg'd my stockings, my linen, and my store ;
But they couldn't prig my sermons, for they were prigg'd before."

This pleasant old clerical poet spent the sunset of life in his quaint rectory by the sea-marge, with a garden famous for flowers and peaches and choice Latin inscriptions, the legend over its portal being *Patet janua, cor magis.* To sit with him on his lawn under ample foliage, with a few peaches, and a flask of cool claret, and a paper of epigrams, was enjoyable on an autumn afternoon—a charming change from the wild whirl of brilliant Brighton. I hope he was not the last of the epigrammatists.

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