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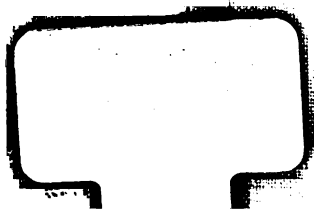
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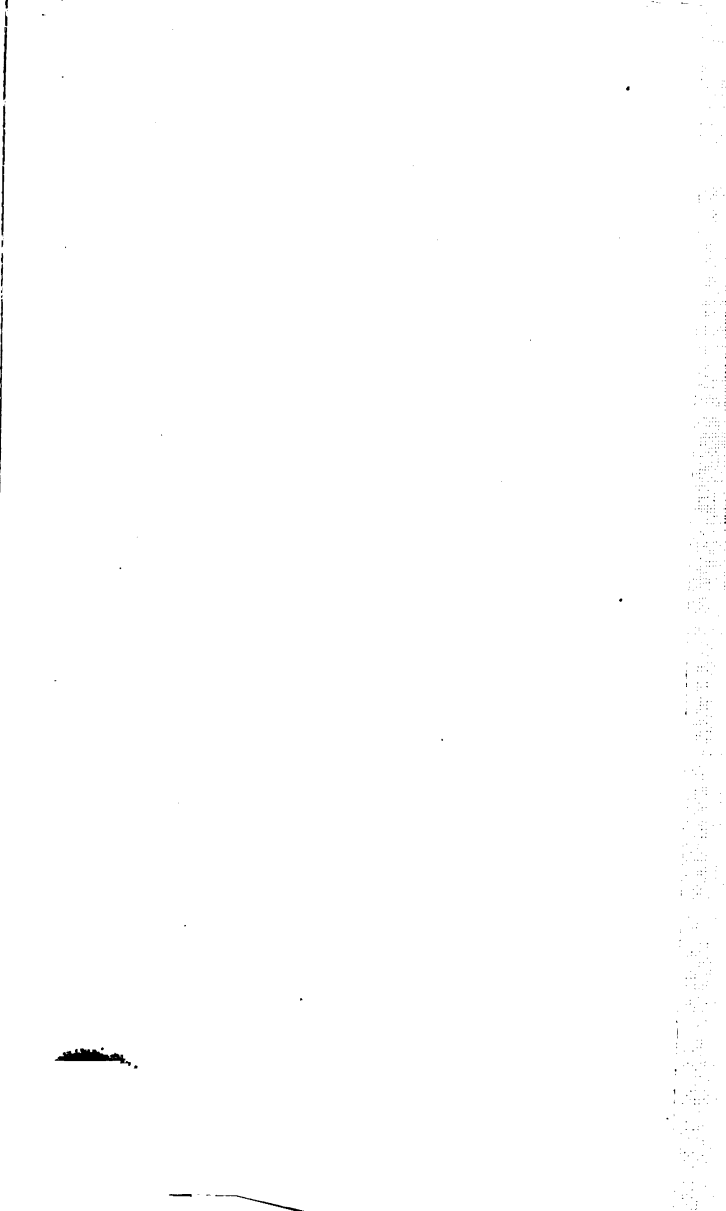


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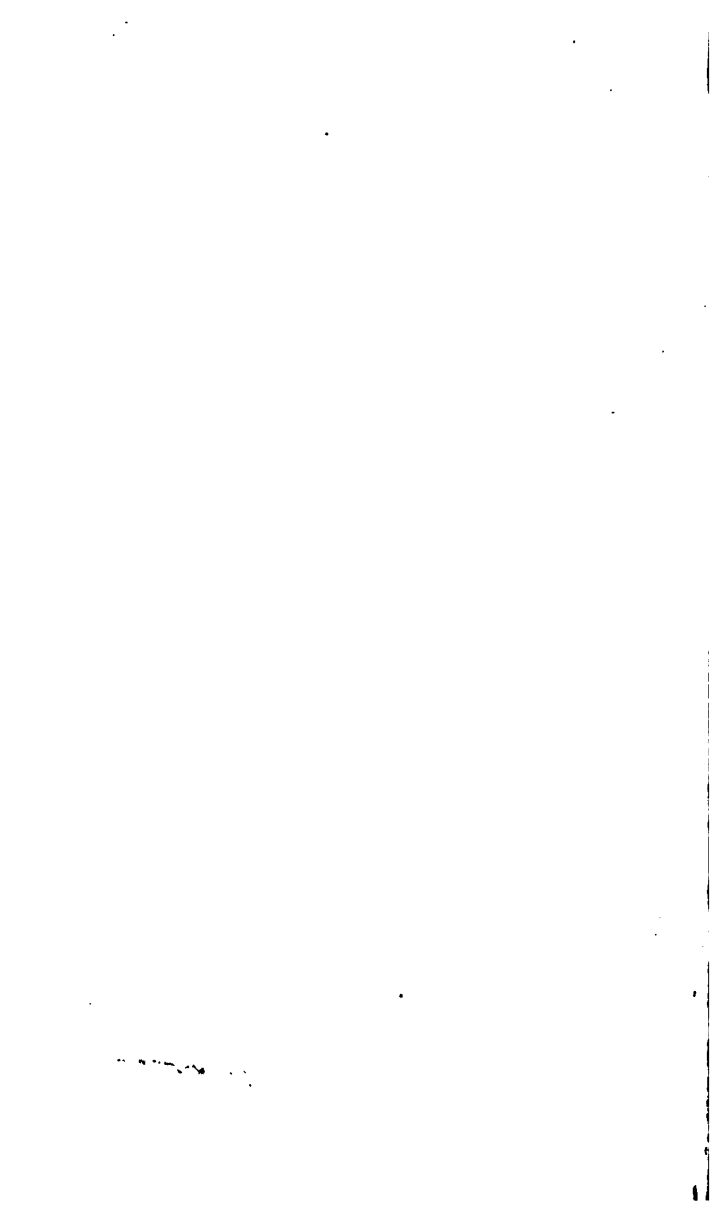




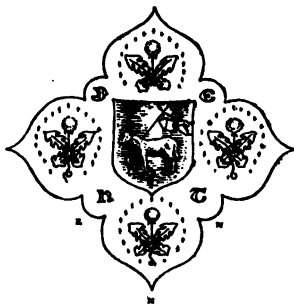


BROADWAY  
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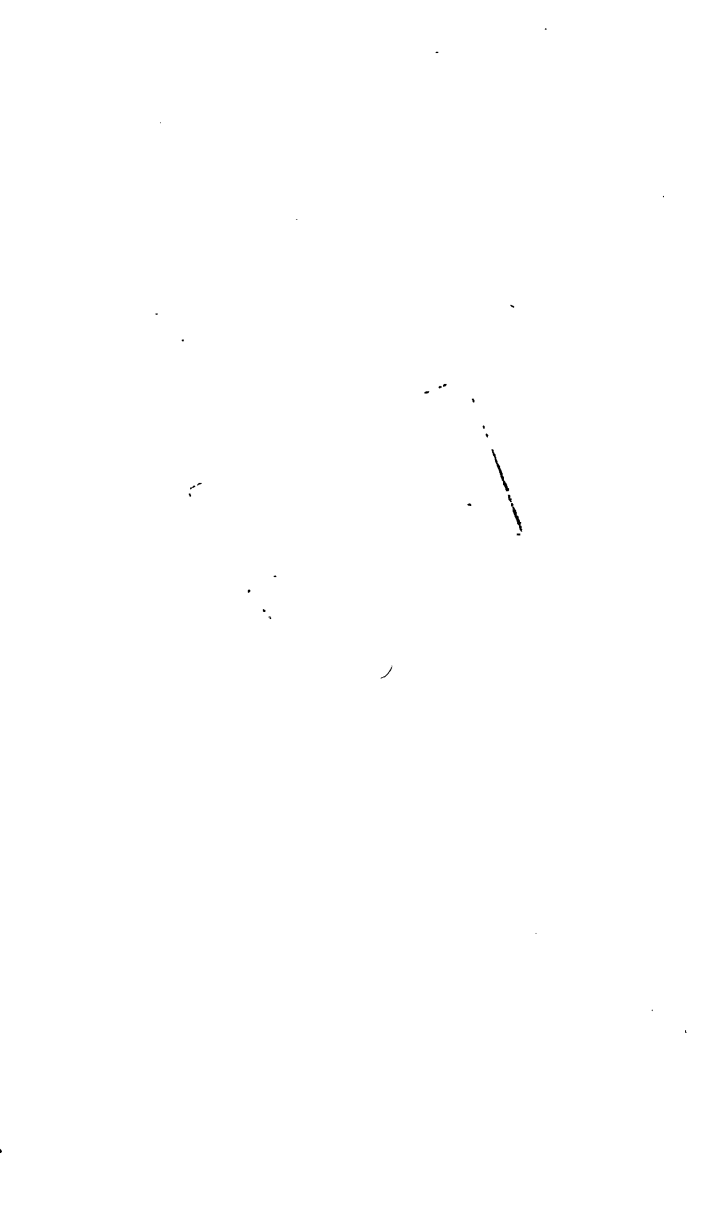
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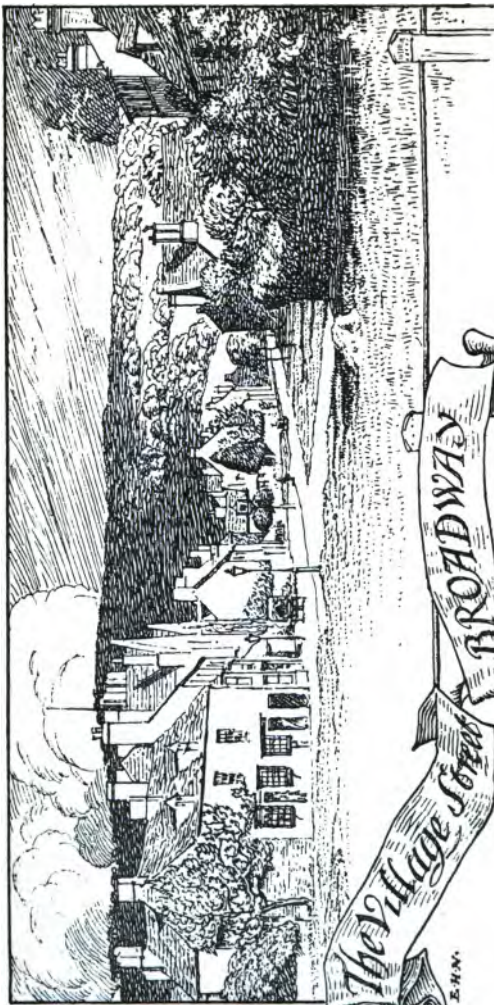
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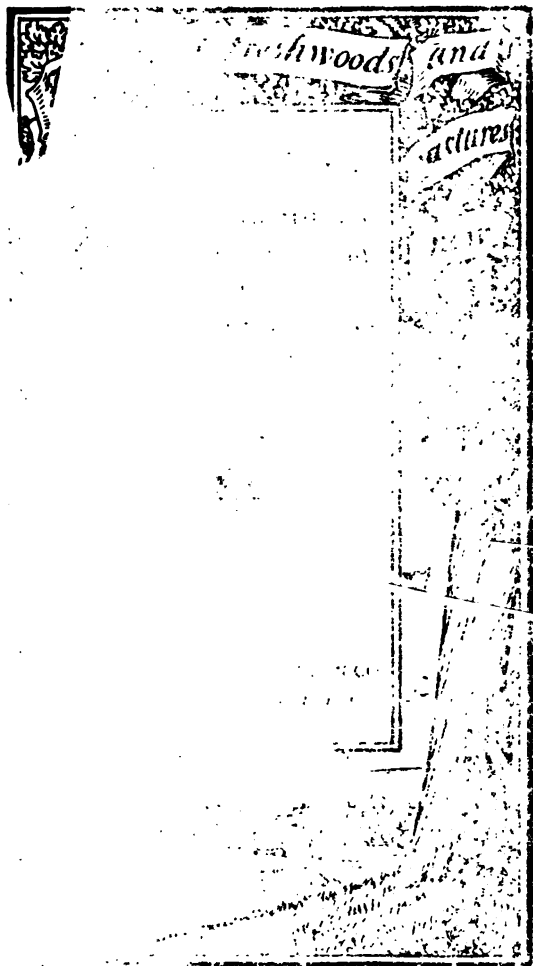




The Village Street

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*and*

*pastures*

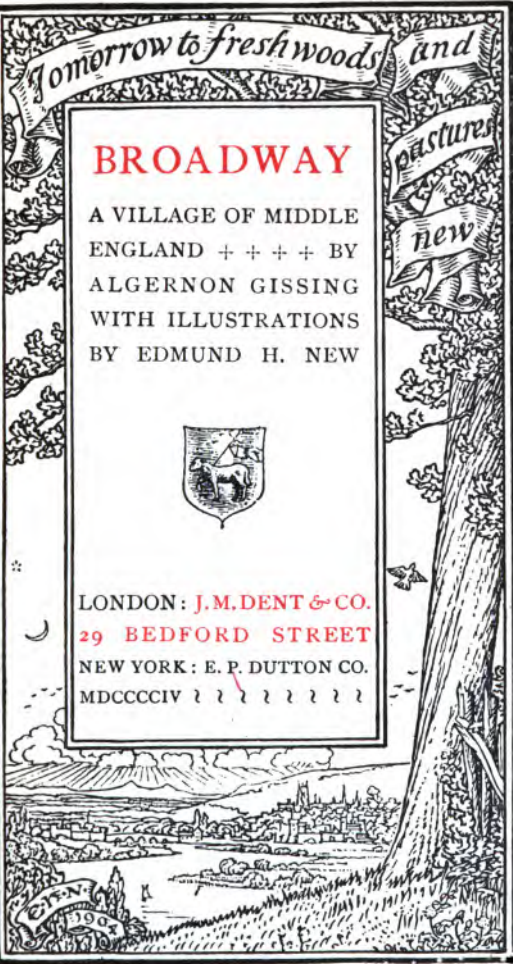
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# BROADWAY

A VILLAGE OF MIDDLE  
ENGLAND + + + + BY  
ALGERNON GISSING  
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY EDMUND H. NEW



LONDON: J. M. DENT & CO.  
29 BEDFORD STREET  
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON CO.  
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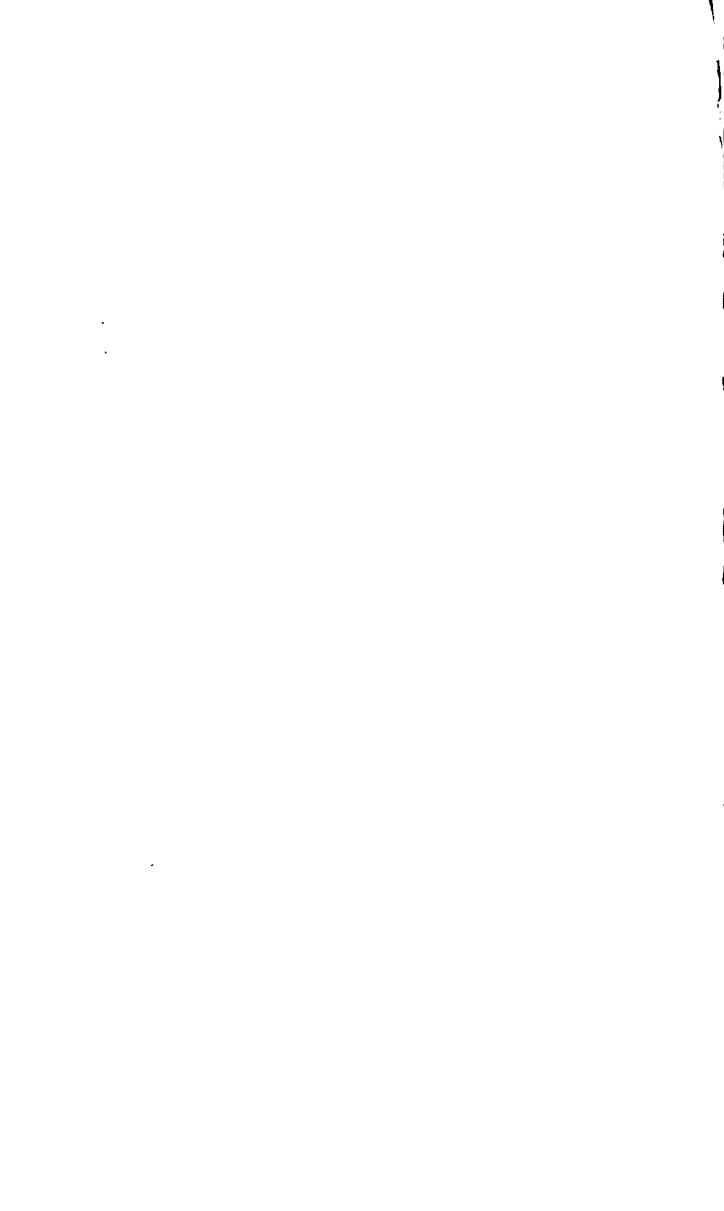
## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE HILL . . . . .	I
II. THE HOMES . . . . .	17
III. THE CHURCH . . . . .	43
IV. THE ROADS . . . . .	63
V. THE PARISH BOUNDS . . . . .	77



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>The Village Street</i> . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>Towards Bredon Hill, from the Farncombe</i>	PAGE
<i>Footpath</i> . . . . .	16
<i>Old Church and Courthouse</i> . . . .	29
<i>An Old Home</i> . . . . .	41
<i>St. Eadburg's (Interior)</i> . . . . .	55
<i>Entrance to the Village</i> . . . . .	78





## I. THE HILL

**T**HE highest point but one of the Cotswolds is Broadway Hill. It therefore ought to be in the county of Gloucester, but owing to the fact, I suppose, of this manor having been granted by King Edgar in 967 to the Abbey of Pershore in the adjacent county of Worcester, it is to this latter county that the parish of Broadway at present belongs. Like a scroll flung over a hillside it lies, in full face of the north-west wind and evening sun. Fine breezy wold on the top, with harebell and wild thyme in the hollows of old camps; pasture, quarry, and woodland on the steep broken slope; and at the foot, some hundreds of feet below, skirts of luxuriant corn-land and orchard running from the grey village out into the vale beyond.

Through the midst of the parish, over the wolds and down the steep, comes an



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## BROADWAY

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ancient yellow highway, mounting the back of the downs from Oxford and Woodstock town. This is the way to enter Broadway. Charles Lamb wished for a grace, not before meat only, but before Milton, before Shakespeare, before setting out upon a pleasant walk, and for "twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner." So he would have felt a grace especially appropriate before wading through the meadow-sweet and pushing aside the dog-roses to peep into the heart of oldest England. Anybody like-minded should enter the parish of Broadway by the hill, and if possible in a north-west wind. The world has time to fade gradually behind you; enchanting mystery still allures in front. For the last few miles the lonely highway is fairly hidden between columns of tall beech trees whose branches all but mingle overhead. The quiet of this natural aisle, echoing only the voice of the wood-pigeon or chiff-chaff in the sunshine and the halloo of the owls at dusk, puts the mind into that reflective state contemplated by the devout Elia. This brings you, just before reaching the crest of Broadway Hill, to the Cross Hands.

This is not an inn, but a lone finger-post where roads cross, stretching its four gaunt arms to the four points, with the crumbling fingers of each hand all out-

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## THE HILL

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spread. Flung upon the sky-line between the trees, to the ancient traveller its suggestion must have been one of warning, even of terror. They are wrought in iron, and pointing in affright over the desolate wolds their action, belying their innocent words, says "Fly! Fly! Anywhere but here,—speed!" The date stamped upon them is 1669, and they announce in ancient character THE WAY TO WARWICKE, THE WAY TO OXFORD, THE WAY TO GLOSTER, THE WAY TO WOSTER. Good choice of refuge. On!  
on!

The way to Worcester is that which takes us over Broadway Hill. An old news-sheet gives a vivid glimpse of this particular bit of it in the Civil War troubles. On Monday, May 12, 1645, interested readers got this scrap of information. "On Saturday last His Majesty in the evening went down by Broadway to Evesham, and Prince Rupert marched in the rear-guard, over Broadway Hill, by the light of Campden House, which they say was then on fire." A notable fire, two miles off, in a hollow to the north, on the Warwick road. The grey old town of Chipping Campden with its stately tower marks the spot, and is seen from here when the trees are passed. Half a mile farther and you are on the brow of Broadway Hill.

Having risen to more than a thousand

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## BROADWAY

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feet in a gradual ascent of many miles, here the uplands end abruptly. It is always inspiring to sit upon a hill and look over a wide green prospect to other hills bounding the horizon far beyond. In mere extent of view there is something impressive, and I believe this height of Broadway claims to afford the widest prospect in England. You see into thirteen, or it may be fourteen counties. Be this as it may, it is certain that the north-west wind in surging over the hills and valleys of England finds nothing fairer on his way than this region between the Malvern and Cotswold hills. It is the heart and soul of England. Scenery and story alike inspire the reverie which makes an Englishman sad and even desolate in the most luxurious foreign land.

It is by its striking embodiment of this characteristic spirit that Broadway claims distinction. It has nothing else to give it especial renown. It occupies no page in history, has sent no leader amongst men. Yet it bears in its face the germ of all our history, all our poetry, all our art. As poor Lear said, "Here's three on's are sophisticated. Thou art the thing itself." For this effect nature and art must blend mysteriously, and this is the case here to perfection. The signs of man's work and habitation seem a natural outcome of the soil. The only approach to an exception

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## THE HILL

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is a whimsical tower or beacon built about a hundred years ago on the hilltop. But since it was quarried from the hillside just below, the soil has generously taken it to itself and the elements have not withheld their blessing. So who will be severe?

Like this excrescence, it is from its hillside that the legitimate Broadway too has sprung. In this respect it is a hill village, and so materially differs from those in the vale. It is built of stone, and for the most part roofed with the same material, so offers a totally different appearance from the black-timbered and thatched communities characteristic of the vales. This stone in itself is of interest. Its original colour you see in the quarries, or in the hill roads, when they are wet, which, like yellow ribbons half hidden amidst the trees, come down the steep green face of the Cotswolds every mile or two throughout their extent. The geologist calls it oolite. It is deep yellow when freshly worked, and seems soft and sandy, but the weather hardens it so as to be sharp for centuries, as well as completely changes its hue, and a stranger may have to chip a corner to believe that the loose grey walls, the sombre barns and homesteads of the uplands have been carved out of the gaudy quarries that he sees.

As its walls so also its history begins in the hill. One has not to be learned in

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## BROADWAY

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archæology to enjoy the spirit of a barrow or ancient camp. There are few more enjoyable correctives to our fevered life than to sit in the sunshine of these upland memories and re-carve our dials quaintly point by point. Euscarians or Iberians, if you will, Celts, Romans, Danes, and Saxons, all were here, and all have left their record in the soil. "Noble curiosity" must, I suppose, proceed; but I may admit that I should not like to be the man who, with impious mattock and spade, appears one sunny morning to break up the velvet turf and violate these sacred tombs for the purpose of classifying the skulls, the pottery and flints that may perchance be found hidden within them. One cannot but observe how peculiarly tender nature herself is to these memorials. This alone must require no little hardihood to disregard. The softest of herbage, the most delicate of flowers, invariably spring up here. Who would not sleep under harebell and wild thyme, cowslips, bird's-foot, and rock cistus? If gorse and dwarf thistle be added one would surely have no cause to complain.

It is less than a century ago since all the uplands hereabout were unenclosed downs. What a wonder they must have been then! Though they are now deprived of this wild charm and rendered dreary at times by the geometrical network of walls that disfigure

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## THE HILL

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the rolling surface, there are still plenty of pieces where it is possible to recapture their former spirit. Old travellers frequently refer to the bleak and desolate Broadway hills, but later notions of the picturesque were not then current. It was a few miles farther south where my lord of Northumberland (the father of Harry Hotspur) exclaimed :

“ I am a stranger here in Gloucestershire ;  
These high wild hills and rough uneven ways  
Draw out our miles and make them wearisome.”

It is not my business here to deal with the Cotswold hills at large, or to enter into the question of what extent of ground was comprised under the general name. But there is plenty of evidence to show that in former times a much wider area was known as Broadway hill or hills than is at present the case. Mr. Thomas Habington (born 1560, died 1647), the earliest historian of Worcestershire, and of whom I shall say something more in another page, makes several references to them, and once or twice with a distinct view to their extent. In his account of Blockley, when mentioning the places set out in King Edgar's Charter of the “ Hundred of Oswaldeslawe ” as *in monte Wiccisca*, he adds, “ Heere wee maye see howe this greate hyll Wiccisca streached forthe in lengthe from Bradewaye to Ycumbe towe myles beyond

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## BROADWAY

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Stowe in the Wolde, and nowe best knowne by the names of Brodewaye hill and Coteswold." In speaking of another place, Daylesford, again he says, by King Edgar's charter, it is declared to be situate "*in monte Wiccisca*, the mountaynes of the Wiccians, cauled nowe Brodewaye hylles, the south-east lymit of this shyre." And he adds in his magniloquent way, "travelinge on thease Alpes I discovered Daylsford." Yet again elsewhere, in translating the Latin phrase, he says "commonly nowe called Brodewaye's Hill and Coteswolde." But the generic name for all the district is, of course, Cotswold. In mentioning other outlying places at the distance of a few miles he uses this name alone. Thus of Cutsdean, some five or six miles south of Broadway hill top, Habington remarks: "Coetes Towne, *alias* Cutsden—which, seated high on Coteswolde, seemethe to have assumed that name from the Cootes of thys wolde or hyll." And of Icomb, as we now call it, from Broadway eleven miles south-east, his words are: "Ycombe, the furthest parte of our County south-east from the city of Worcester and one of the dissevered parishes of our Shyre, lyethe in a commodious vallett amounge Coteswolde's hyls."

I have already said that it is on these rolling uplands that the earliest traces of inhabitants appear. Indeed, for the student

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## THE HILL

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there is within a day's walk illustration of almost all that is actually known of the growth and development of our earth from the time when darkness was upon the face of the deep until now. If this could but be realised, how different all local life might become. We in our villages fret under imaginary restrictions and deprivations, want of material and opportunities, with the whole pageant of this world's story between our feet and the sky. This is, of course, a very old cry ; but it was perhaps never in such need of utterance as at this time, when the restoration of life to quiet places is the black care which dogs the steps of our swiftest and boldest horseman. There is little profit in spurring on towards glittering horizons if desolation and discontent lie behind. It is scarcely possible to tread the soft turf of these broad sheepwalks without a thought of this. Indeed, the spirit of the place inspires it. The wide freedom of what were thought "high wild hills and rough uneven ways" suggest active breezy life, and to get this in the old jovial careless way is now beyond us.

"For, strong the infection of our mental strife,  
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for  
rest,"

But I am not aware that active, breezy life is incompatible with an imaginative view of things. Economics alone and sport alone clearly are. They solve no question



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## BROADWAY

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which is primarily a matter of human emotions. Perhaps some day we shall try a little of the educated imagination which we generally call intelligence, and then again may we confidently feel that we have struck new roots into the soil.

The fame of these sheepwalks and of the fertile vale before them is of ancient standing. The district very early became one of the national sources of wool, and most of the delightful grey old towns still scattered about these wolds were the direct outcome of that industry. Michael Drayton (that contemporary of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson) fancifully depicts the scene in his *Polyolbion* (published in 1613), a poetical survey of our island which, quaint and delightful as it is, comes only to the eye of the professed student, and for which reason I cannot resist the long quotation. Coming away from Severn, he says :

“ But, noble muse, proceed immediately to tell  
How Eusham's fertile vale at first in liking fell  
With Cotswold, that great king of shepherds :  
    whose proud site,  
When that fair vale first saw, so nourish'd her  
    delight,  
That him she only lov'd : for wisely she beheld  
The beauties clean throughout that on his surface  
    dwell'd.

A match so fit as he, contenting to her mind,  
Few vales (as I suppose) like Eusham hapt to  
    find :  
Nor any other wold like Cotswold ever sped  
So fair and rich a vale by fortuning to wed.

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## THE HILL

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He hath the goodly wool and she the wealthy  
grain :  
Through which they wisely seem their household  
to maintain,  
He hath pure wholesome air, and dainty crystal  
springs,  
To these delights of his she daily profit brings :  
As to his large expense she multiplies her heaps,  
Nor can his flocks devour th' abundance that she  
reaps."

Though fanciful in expression, Drayton no doubt knew the scene well. Not only was he born a Warwickshire man, but as a friend of Mr. Endymion Porter, he would travel down with Ben Jonson to enjoy the Cotswold sports on Dover's Hill, which several of them combined even to celebrate in verse.

The temptation to linger with them over their glimpse of pastoral life is a strong one, but we must wave the jovial company adieu. A practical point, though, as to the price of their wool I will refer to before leaving. When Shakespeare rode over from Stratford to join them, no doubt they too would speak of it with a smile. It will be remembered that Autolycus overhears the shepherd musing his calculations. "Let me see : every 'leven wether tods ; every tod yields pound and odd shilling ; fifteen hundred shorn, what comes the wool to ?" Wool is still sold here by the *tod*, a weight of 28 lbs. But in seeing in a local paper the report of the Stratford-on-Avon annual wool sale a year or two

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## BROADWAY

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ago, I was astonished to read that "the top price was 21s. per tod," the next to it realising 20s. 5d. In view of the greatly altered value of money, how comes it that three hundred years after Shakespeare was writing the tod still yields "pound and odd shilling"? Perhaps economists may answer it. I cannot. But in another respect we have made a change which we should have expected. I inquired how many wethers tod now; that is, how many wethers' fleeces go to make a tod weight. I was told on an average five, so that where the old shepherd had to shear eleven we get the same weight from less than half. The unaltered price of the wool is more remarkable, inasmuch as only about one hundred years before Shakespeare, in 1481, at Northleach we find it was but 12s. 4d. a tod, about the difference we should have looked for.

The character of the Cotswolds is much the same throughout, and pastoral though they were they had a notoriety for rearing a ferocious type of inhabitant. It is not enough remembered that Justice Shallow was a Gloucestershire, not a Warwickshire man, and we know that in his garrulous meeting with Falstaff he boasted "I was called anything, and I would have done anything indeed, too, and roundly, too." And of himself and his three associates, one of whom was "Will Squele, a Cotswold man,"

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## THE HILL

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you had not four such swinge-bucklers in all the inns o' court again. Though Sir John discounted the good justice's opinion of himself, it was evident that the latter wished at least to claim what was proper as "a lion of Cotswold." There was an outlet for this abundant ferocity in the well-known Cotswold games (sung of by Drayton, Ben Jonson, and others, as already referred to), but as the scene of these was Dover's Hill, some two or three miles north-east of Broadway, I need but mention them. Even to within living memory quarrelsome natives harboured their grudges for "Dover's Hill," and there on the skyline muscular satisfaction was required for old scores which they would scorn to bring to the courts of law.

Truth requires a reference to this side of the picture, but what it presents now to the imagination is a scene of idyllic peace. It is evident, however, that not only a Wordsworth but a Crabbe would find abundant material here for the presentation of his peculiar point of view. The whole truth, to be sure, would lie with neither. There was only one that could give us that. It is in Shakespeare, "who did the stars and sunbeams know," that these scenes and life are realised to the full.

"Others abide our question. Thou art free."

Unless one go for sporting or other purely

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## BROADWAY

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practical purpose, there can be little enjoyment in a locality without some appreciation of this peculiar atmosphere. For this the story of a district as well as its scenery is needed. And from this point of view, what a series of interesting biographies (I was going to say) is offered by the numberless little parishes which constitute the various counties of this realm if we could but get them presented in the completeness of poetic truth. No two are the same, just as no two human faces are the same, even amongst nearest relatives. The mere thought of such a survey is, of course, a vision, but if on a humble scale a few characteristic vignettes out of this boundless store of local life can be rescued the result ought to be of some value as well as charm.

As I have said, in the story associated with Broadway there is little sensational. The place is essentially a growth of peace. The traces of warfare are confined to the ancient encampments to which I have referred. Since the place lay on the direct road between Oxford and Worcester, Cavalier and Roundhead frequently passed through it, and even encamped on the hill here, a despatch from Lord Digby being dated from Broadway Downs on the 17th June 1644; but there is no record of notable bloodshed on the spot. It is recorded that malefactors were hanged on the hill certainly, but this was nothing

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## THE HILL

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peculiar, and I have not been able to identify the site of the gallows. On the uplands, a little to the north-east, just beyond the big camp, but in the neighbouring parish of Saintbury, is a "Hangman's Close," but this is not likely to help us, as no doubt Broadway would demand a hangman and gallows of its own.

Before leaving the heights, these "large pastures for shepe on Wiccesse," as Habington calls them, let us glance once more at the prospect. Again, I say, it ought to be seen in a north-west wind. He is the matchless painter of the landscape. He requires a wide canvas to reveal half his wonders, and here he has it. Though the wolds end abruptly, it is in no uniform declivity that they drop to the vale. And this north-west face of the Cotswolds is broken up into great and little bays and headlands, luxuriant with trees, and amidst which, every mile or two, nestles a village or old-world town. In addition to this, just before us, three or four hills detach themselves from the range and run right out into the vale, the last and largest of which, called Bredon Hill, plants itself directly between Broadway and Malvern. It is behind there that, for most of the year, the sun sets, and the view at that hour from the hilltop is one of the memorable spectacles of the place. Curiosity is at rest then. Nobody would be fret-

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## BROADWAY

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ting to name the summits of those very remote hills that mingle with the flaming clouds. Whether they are of heaven or of earth you cannot always decide, nor want to decide. That hour at least can be spared for reverie. "Day's mutable distinctions" assume very different propor-



TOWARDS BREDON HILL,  
FROM THE FARNCOMBE FOOTPATH

tions, or even fade away, and a glimpse is allowed us of the background of repose in front of which our unquiet drama proceeds. Then when you turn to descend, as a startling comment, right across those slumbering downs behind, the rim of the moon appears and stars come out to play their part, "without rest," certainly, but also "without haste"—an addition worth contemplating in our day.



## II. THE HOMES

**B**UT the long broad village street reposing at the foot of this hill affords, in any light, an even more profitable subject of reverie. I have said that it is essentially a hill village (in the old-world divisions of this district into hill, vale, and forest). This distinction has reference to the style and materials of its architecture. Looking into the spirit of the stones I should call it a village of homes.

This is not so idle as might at first sight appear. It is by no means every collection of a hundred houses, whatever their age, that would prompt the feeling. A house may appear an admirable shelter, a plausible work of art, and yet suggest no home. In this mile-long range of houses from the threshold of the hill at the top to the triangular green at the bottom, every one was built as a home. Of course in social developments Broadway claims no exemption from the common lot. But the fact remains that every long low mullioned window, every latticed dormer, every gable, every twisted chimney-stack,



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## BROADWAY

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breathes an aspiration and a hope. As William Morris says of this district in another part: "The cottage gardens are bright with flowers, the cottages themselves mostly models of architecture in their way. Above them towers here and there the architecture proper of days bygone, when every craftsman was an artist and brought definite intelligence to bear upon his work." Wrangle as we will of art, here at least is the soul of it.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." We do all we can now to detract from the charm of "the good old times." We wish to prove that this charm is but a poetical illusion. Social economics and statistics irrefutably establish ugly facts. Beneath the picturesque exterior lurked hardships intolerable. Bonds, stripes, starvation and nakedness formed the lot of the toiling majority. Be it so. Economics and statistics are at least what we call facts, although so amazingly accommodat- ing to either side of an argument. But so are the skull and cross-bones facts, so are various other anatomical phenomena of the human frame facts—to most of us, I am afraid, very ugly facts. None the less the human frame in its entirety remains our ultimate appeal of beauty and nobility.

It is difficult to imagine the ancient dwellers in these Broadway homes demoralised and wretched. In fact we

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## THE HOMES

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know that on the whole they were not so. Even the facts of starvation and nakedness, though facts, did not mean then what now they mean. The life of the manor or parish was then, and until industrial times remained, an entity, an organic whole, in which the meanest had his allotted place in labour as in sport. No doubt incapacity, idleness and fraud, met then the same return as by the pitiless laws of a struggling world they are ever doomed to meet. And if might too frequently became injustice and barbarity, I fear we have not yet reached the regenerate stage from which we may view such consequences with any pious abhorrence.

The bulk of the existing village dates, we may roughly say, from Shakespeare's days, though some buildings are considerably older. Our first knowledge of the manor, whence this village and parish sprung, gives it as a possession of the Mercian kings. As already mentioned, it was King Edgar who granted it to the Benedictine Abbey of St. Mary at Pershore, about a dozen miles away round Bredon Hill. In this charter, the earliest recorded mention of Broadway, the name appears as Bradanwege. Other forms following are Bradenweg, Bradwega, Bradweia, and Bradweye, the last leading to the present invariable pronunciation in the vernacular, Brad'ey.

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## BROADWAY

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The name is said to have originated in one of the ancient trackways, this point of which perhaps was of particular importance as the neck between the desolate wolds and the fertile vale which formed the Welsh marches on this side Severn. As you look to the hill from the village green at the western extremity the place still eminently justifies its name, but in connection with this the structure of the village suggests a problem to those curious in the elucidation of ancient itineraries.

Few can doubt that if Broadway be derived from the old road referred to, then must this road have lain on the site of the present highway, so far at any rate as this threads the main part of the village. At a glance this would be pronounced to be self-evident, but on investigation certain difficulties arise which render it not quite so plain. On the brow of the hill, to which we came by way of the Cross Hands, is a lonely inn known as *The Fish*. This was built towards the end of the eighteenth century, and it is recorded that at the same time and by the same builder the present high-road was made; in its original bendings, that is, for the little divergence below the quarry, to improve the descent, dates only from 1820. The delightful meandering wilderness of bramble and wild roses that we now call "the old road" shows the first eighteenth

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## THE HOMES

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century windings. Was this eighteenth century road-making merely a reconstruction of ways that even for those days had become impracticably foul? One is driven to suppose so. But for what length of time had it been abandoned, for that it *was* the original broad way, in view of the mile-long stretch of the village through which it leads, seems, as I have said, impossible to doubt.

We know that for some century or more the London road took a wholly different route by way of Pye Corner, the old church, Coneygree Lane, and the Seven Wells on the hilltop. It is on record that there is an old deed relating to the boundaries of certain property which describes this London way as passing Aldboroughdycke, Meredycke, and the Seven Wells. The last is the only one of these names that is now preserved. The present shape of the village is that of the letter L, the principal part and present high-road being the upright, whilst the old church stands at the extreme toe on the line of what was at any rate once the London road.

It is usually argued from this that the village has in course of time changed its position. The only support for this, so far as I know, is the fact that on this line of the old church the principal buildings lay, namely, the Grange of the Abbots of

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## BROADWAY

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Pershere, the ancient chapel (on the site of the new church), the manor house of the Winningtons and the Court house of the Sheldons. This argument does not seem conclusive, since human nature appears always here and there to have demanded a "west end." From this point of view, one might conclude that the main part of the village, that of the yeomen and workers, was *not* where these principal buildings lay, but remote from them as shown at the present time.

Whatever its position, we know that for many centuries this settlement (that is, the manor and bulk of the freehold property) was a possession of the Pershere monks. It is perhaps worth noticing that the Grange or manor house, which represented their authority, stands midway between the social extremes referred to, just by the village green, which occupies the angle of the letter L. This building itself, one of the most interesting and picturesque remains of the place, will be considered presently. It is only the influence it would spread around it that I mention here. In its hall, or on the spacious green adjoining, would take place in turn the Abbot's courts and the frequently recurring jollities of the holy days.

Of this far-off time only the Grange itself, part of the church, and a fourteenth-century house up the street near the

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## THE HOMES

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Willersey road actually remain. The last mentioned is an important example of the humbler domestic architecture of the days when Chaucer lived, and when the figures which live for us through him traversed these country roads. The barn which belonged to it and shared its age (if not an actual part of the building) was destroyed but a few years ago. For, foolish as it may seem to the contemplative man, even to these silent byways is the sin peculiar to buying and selling allowed to penetrate. It has been suggested that this house and barn, coeval with the Grange, may have been the residence of the bailiff appointed to take charge of the abbey's property. In this of course there is nothing improbable, though we have nothing that leads to the proof of it. Bailiffs' as well as woodwards' accounts relating to this manor for periods between 1399 and 1480 are still in existence, but on this point afford no help. The house in question has been called the Prior's Manse (having been attributed to Randolph, Prior of Worcester, in King John's reign), and the portion destroyed, which formed the east wing, bore at one of its gable ends the symbol of the Crucifixion and three crosses, the central one more elevated than the other two. But however valuable in their day, these ecclesiastical influences were outgrown, and the manor and property came into lay hands.

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## BROADWAY

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The old historian, Habington, in his MS. collections for a *Survey of Worcestershire*, already referred to, and now in goodly print for us by the efforts of the Worcestershire Historical Society, gives such notes of the place as he could gather in his time, and as I wish again to quote from him I will here briefly relate who he was. Apart from records and original documents, which go back to Domesday Book and King Edgar's charter, this Thomas Habington was the first writer who systematically collected local details with a view to writing a history of this county, and so is of direct interest as regards our Broadway locality. He was a man of original parts and character, as a perusal of his work shows, and for at any rate forty-six years he had an eventful life. He was born in 1560, and was the second son of John Habington, who was cofferer or under-treasurer of the Queen's household to Elizabeth, and who bought and settled upon a family estate at Hindlip, between Droitwich and Worcester. Some air of papistry seems always to have hung about the family, and a searcher of suspected houses reported that Hindlip House was "as fit to harbour a priest as any in England." But the cofferer managed to steer clear in these matters. As befitted an Elizabethan courtier he had a marked taste for expense, and when he died in

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## THE HOMES

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1581 he was deeply indebted and his affairs involved. Indeed, a sale of his effects was ordered to satisfy his creditors. This possibly disorganised the family. At any rate the three sons entered into the Babington conspiracy in the cause of Mary, Queen of Scots, and when it was discovered in the summer of 1586, two of them fled together. Our author Thomas was one, then twenty-six years of age. But all three were taken, and the eldest, Edward, promptly condemned as a traitor, and hanged and quartered in St. Giles's fields. Thomas was kept some years in the Tower, and as he says, "what for mine owne recreation and what to deceive the tediousnesse of my lingering imprisonment," he began historical pursuits by a translation of the old chronicler *Gildas*. But he was released, and returned to Worcestershire with the eye of authority upon him. He married and passed some years at his Hindlip home, as it seems, not exclusively engaged in historical research, for in the excitement of the Gunpowder Plot, 1605, he was again arrested. Not directly implicated in the plot, as a papist he was with others charged with treasonous practices, and actually condemned to death. But his reprieve was obtained, by the efforts of Lord Mounteagle as is supposed, for the latter was Habington's wife's brother, and as the discoverer of



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## BROADWAY

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the plot, naturally in Court favour. This finally satisfied Habington's political or religious ardour, or at least he was more cautious henceforth. He was under attainder for the rest of his life—"a lake of misery," he terms such a condition in referring to some other family. But his reprieve was accompanied by a condition that he should never afterwards leave the limits of Worcestershire, and this, no doubt, gave him the suggestion of turning his historical tastes to a survey of this whole county. He was now forty-six, and for the next forty-one years he wandered about the shire collecting his notes, to this end traversing what he calls "the fertile vale of Eueshome and her fowle ways," to these Alps of Cotswold, or as he elsewhere phrases it, "to a faire rase on Broadway hills called aunciently Wiccesse (no doubt of the Wiccians)." He died at length on October 8, 1647, at the ripe age of eighty-seven.

Such, then, is the picturesque old traveller who visits Broadway in early Stuart times and sees several of the beautiful old homesteads new built or actually abuilding. He says of the place: "Broadwaye, the Broad and highe waye from the Shepherdes coates which on the mounted woldes shelter themsealfes under hylles from the rage of stormes downe to the most fruytfull vale of Eusham, or rather

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## THE HOMES

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of England, is a towne extended in a streete tedyous in leangthe, especially in the wynter. This paryshe, though nowe obscured as a village, hathe in auncient times byn graced with a marcate and feyre (market and fair) as appeareth in the charters of Peareshore's Abbey, whose homager and servant shee was; for thoughe she presentethe in her Churche, Mr. Nicholas Sambache, whose auncient gentry is unquestionable, and many freeholders who furnish juryes, yet the Abbot of Peareshore was not only Lord of the Manor, but also had heere a farme famous for the greatnes."

And here it may be well to point out to the general reader that in speaking of a manor and a lordship of a manor, it does not signify that the owner of it was the proprietor of every acre that that manor contained. In early feudal times when originally granted it would be so, but it soon was broken. Within the bounds of the manor (which were usually those of the parish also) there might be many freeholders, as well as the servants and leaseholders of the principal proprietor. In Broadway this has been particularly so from very early times. Since the dissolution of the abbeys there has been no greatly predominant landowner here, with the exception, perhaps, for a short time of the Sheldons, to be presently mentioned.

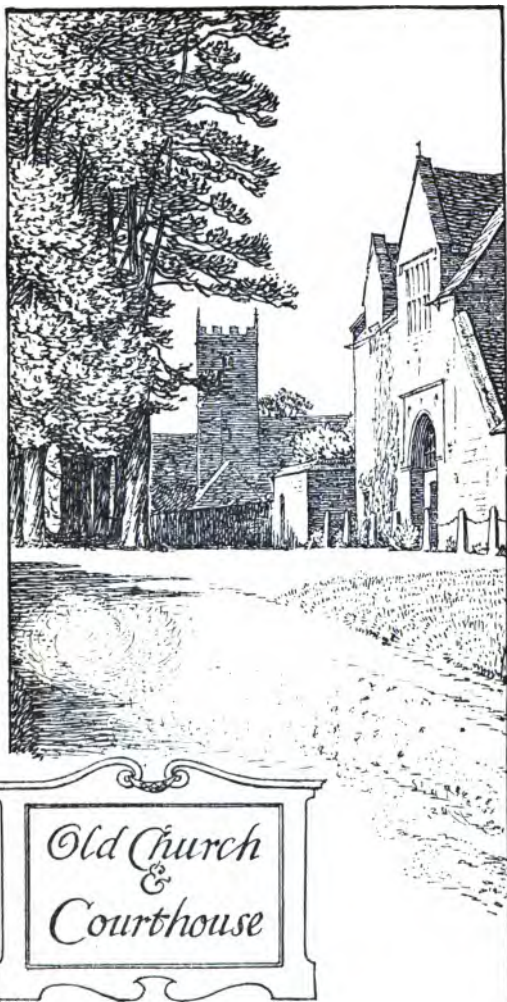
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## BROADWAY

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The abbey property was first of all leased by the Crown, portion to Anthony Daston in 1535, and the remainder to Ralph Sheldon in 1538. But twenty years later, one William Babington bought the whole. Of him we get no glimpse. Evidently he did not hold it long. At any rate, by the twentieth year of Queen Elizabeth, Mr. Ralph Sheldon possessed a goodly proportion of the parish, for in that year he conveyed sundry lands "in Bradewey" to Richard Strech, Phillip Gardiner, John Harrys, Thomas Severne, Nicholas Blackie, John Hodges, Nicholas Hobdaie, John Sambage, Robert and Thomas Ligon, Thomas Strech, Robert Hodges, and William Ligon. As Mr. Habington remarks, "Thys it seemethe increased the number of ffree-houlders in Bradewey." And by them, no doubt, several of the Elizabethan homesteads will have been built.

Of Anthony Daston, sheriff of the county, and lord of this manor in Elizabeth's time, we shall get the actual effigies in the parish church presently. But the first family really identified with these scenes in post-Reformation times was, as I have said, that of Sheldon, of which the Lady Daston was one. Originally lessees merely, they came to possess the manor with much of the property, and no doubt built the residence known as the Court



Old Church  
&  
Courthouse

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## BROADWAY

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which stands beside the old church. Only the gateway of this Court House remains. It was under the eyes of this family that the village, as we now see it, sprang up. Of a generous enthusiastic temperament their local influence cannot but have been great and good. The remains of several of them lie in the parish church.

Sprung originally from Sheldon parish in north Warwickshire, they settled upon an estate at Beoley in the north part of the county of Worcester, and from this centre the other Worcestershire branches spread. It was clearly a family after our old historian's heart. In enumerating the offshoots he mentions, with others, one "Baldwin Sheldon of Brodwaye," and says that they were "all men of note in our county." After touching upon their estates, marriages, and dignities, he concludes thus: "But to leave these worldly shoves they run on a race of true virtue, hospitality, and charity to the poore, whose exceeding troopes I saw there (at Beoley) releyved, beeing the invisible treasures of Heaven." These worthy family characteristics evidently attended the Broadway branch, and not in the male line alone, for we are told that Anne, daughter of William Sheldon of Beoley, first the wife of Francis Savage of Elmley Castle, and next of Anthony Daston, "Mistress of Bradewey's greate farme," after she had survived both

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## THE HOMES

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her husbands in a long enduring widowhood, and with this and other her ample possessions maintained a post of admirable hospitality, concluding in death, left this farm equally between her two sons Walter and Anthony Savage.

In the turmoil of the Stuart times the Sheldons plunged vigorously into the cause of loyalty, one of the family falling on the field of Newbury. God and king were then no abstract terms. When, as we have already seen, King Charles came over the wolds to Evesham on that evening in May (the flames of Campden House lighting Prince Rupert after him), he stayed to have an interview with Sheldon of Broadway Court. What excitement for the villagers that night! There is strong probability of his Majesty's having been here on at least one other occasion, but the visits have no historical importance. As an emblem of loyal devotion it was no doubt a Sheldon who was instrumental in placing the painted escutcheon of King Charles I. on the wall of the church, where it still remains, as seen in Mr. New's drawing.

Recusants, we may be sure, would have no warm welcome in such a neighbourhood. Accordingly in the County Quarter Sessions records of 1638 it is not surprising to find that the Broadway parish constable was active in getting the grand

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## BROADWAY

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jury to "present" Henry Streeby, Clerk (I suppose the vicar) of Broadway, for two recusants that sojourn in his house, viz. Francis Dormer and John Dormer. Unfortunately there is no record of what came of it. No doubt Justice William Sheldon had an efficient constable, and saw that he attended to these imperial matters as well as to the lighter parochial concerns, that led but to the ducking-stool or the stocks.

Since the disappearance of the Sheldons there is no family name prominently associated with the place. The manor came into the hands of the ancestors of the present lord, Sir Francis Winnington, but there is no record of their local activity. This family had yet another residence, distinct from the Grange and the Court, represented now by the farmhouse known as West End, originally called the Manor House. This has long since been wholly reconstructed without any regard to architectural features. Judging by the mullioned windows now filled up, the principal part of the original residence seems to have been the building at present used as a barn. Associated with this property was another house, long since disappeared, which stood in a field sloping to the brook nearly opposite the new church. Tradition (such as it is) hangs about what is remembered as the house in the wilderness,

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## THE HOMES

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and if this may be trusted the end of the place was tragic. Coming to the occupancy of a lone woman, the masked men duly appeared by night to rob the house of plate, but, as in anticipation of this fate the valuables were stored for safety at a cottage in the village, the only satisfaction the ruffians could find was in tossing the terrified inmate, like Sancho Panza, in a blanket. Such treatment shattered the poor woman's brain, and she became a familiar figure in the village clad in newspapers and brown paper. To avouch the truth of this, the cupboard where the plate was stored can still be shown to you. The edifice where such an atrocity was perpetrated naturally soon crumbled from the face of the earth, or was removed for building purposes elsewhere.

Local imagination affords but little tradition here. This is not a race of poets. Shakespeare's shepherds and clowns faithfully preserve the characteristics of the district familiar to him, and there is little alteration since his day. It is to the yeoman class that the change has come. This, indeed, is no longer in existence, but their homes remain. And it is undoubtedly from these middle figures that most of the charm of a spot like Broadway springs.

It is they that gather about every



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## BROADWAY

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building that meets the eye, and around them that all the interesting social life must cling. Significantly named homesteads, with their grey gables and low-mullioned windows of three or four lights on the ground floor, diminishing by one for each storey—these Elizabethan and Stuart farmhouses make pathetic appeal to the world to stand still, or at least to turn again and consider. The life suggested by them must have been sane, and some elementary laws of health which to its cost it disregarded, even did not suspect, could so easily be engrafted upon it. It was so evidently a growth consistent with the conditions of rural life, and not a scheme framed in the interests of surplus population, discontent, or greed. If we consider it, the outcome must be very different.

Nothing is gained by attempting to draw a foolishly idyllic picture of human life at any stage of this earth's history. Corporate life is much the same as individual character, warp and woof, good and bad, sunshine and shadow. Such distinctly is the life's story of this little parish of Broadway. In looking intently at the life of the people that built these beautiful houses, admirable and lovely though the general result, it is even encouraging to know that they had all our struggle with ignoble facts. In reconstructing the picture one must gather up these

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## THE HOMES

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facts, and so graphic are some of them that they light up a dark and bygone period as with a lightning flash. Even then there had to be our Mr. Justice Shallows or Sheldons, with their parish constable and Quarter Sessions. Not only was it the too amorous swains that had to be corrected, or the unlicensed dispensing of sealed quarts to be put down, but a sharp visit of some pestilence would even force a hint at sanitary law. In 1637 there was a serious outbreak of plague in Worcester city, to which place Mr. William Sheldon and his fellow justices would have to ride from Broadway to take places on the bench. That year, no doubt, they returned with sober conversation on the way, part of the outcome of which lies in the notable fact that their constable's eye fell at once upon the butcher's shop in their own parish. With the dreaded plague on our very high-road there must be no temporising. So forthwith the justices have to hear an indictment of "Anthony Brooke, otherwise Weaver, of Broadway, for keeping Pig blood in his butcher shop in Broadway street to the common nuisance of the inhabitants." What was the consequence I cannot find, but probably a fine and a chairman's injunction to have more regard to neighbours' susceptibilities in time to come.

These same invidious records reveal the fact (if it were a secret) that even the clergy

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## BROADWAY

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themselves were not above occasional reproach. I have not found any direct reflection upon Broadway's vicar, beyond that merely conscientious one of harbouring recusants; but as a vivid glimpse of what such country districts could afford in this way, two instances may be given. Not far away, by Bredon hill, the parishioners of Defford were driven to lodge a complaint at Quarter Sessions against their vicar, the Rev. Henry Hunt, wherein it was alleged that the reverend gentleman broke out into violent swearing before he came forth from the pulpit. He called his parishioners by names "most unfit to be used by a man of his calling." He threw stones at them and said one of them was a devil. As this latter term was then no figure of speech, the vicar may have felt a conviction of truth in his utterance, but clearly here was a state of things for Mr. Sheldon and his fellows to investigate.

At Alvechurch, about the same time, farther away and towards the north of the county, the church had even a more questionable representative. This vicar was accused before the magistrates of being a frequenter of alehouses and spending his time there on Sabbath and week-days in excessive drinking, and procuring, persuading, and enforcing others to the drinking of whole cups. His morals are stated to be as bad as his predecessor's. He is accused

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## THE HOMES

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of going about with a dangerous armed papist, that he prevented the Protestation being signed, that he was a curser, swearer, and notorious liar, a quarreller and fighter, and never prayed for the House of Commons or the distressed Protestants in Ireland. But in this formidable indictment it is only fair to remember that Alvechurch was a Puritan stronghold, and that the vicar had been actually presented by King Charles I. None the less, the clergyman was removed, so presumably some truth lurked in the representation.

Here clearly we get into the thick of parochial life on its non-idyllic side. Numerous other instances might be given from this side, but just as the police news is no complete record of our life at the present day, so no chronicle of ancient offenders can typify the existence of those older centuries. It is an essential part of it, to be sure, and must not be overlooked, but above and around it was going on the perennial life of health and activity that records the normal pulse of the land.

“The evil that men do lives after them ;  
The good is oft interred with their bones.”

It is so easy to ransack all these black lists and tabulate their contents with mathematical accuracy, but the best portion of a people's life is not to be measured by statistics or a footrule. It never gets into

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## BROADWAY

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print or on to paper at all. It will not yield itself to deduction or scientific exposition—you have to extract it from the little child's nosegay, the bride's garland, the widow's wreath, and such like sentimental and indeterminate sources. So it is poetical, and we view it with a smile of suspicion. But, after all, it is only the intangible sunshine that will display the true colour, the falling and fast withering petal that nurses the fruit.

In thinking of the homes of our ancient people, these sentiments inevitably occur. The emotions and imaginations were so much more active in that simpler state of existence, and so played a much fuller part than we are willing or even able to realise in our more complex time. We have only to think how every occurrence of life was enshrined, as it were, in picturesque ceremony from the cradle to the grave. Birth customs, christening customs, marriage customs, funeral customs. These were but the principal milestones of individual and family life. Corporate life of religion and craft filled up all the intervals. Fast days and holy days had their appropriate celebrations of wholesome humiliation as well as mirth, occurring repeatedly throughout the year. The natural seasons, too, and the pastoral employments peculiar to each received unfailing recognition, when all classes assembled in jovial conviviality.

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## THE HOMES

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Seed-time feasts, shearing feasts, hay-time feasts, harvest feasts, and threshing feasts. In spite of statisticians' facts from Exchequer and Court rolls, how could it but be the "good old time," or how could a land so notably blessed by nature under such rational management be other than "Merrie England"? Yes, it was a land of homes, from Mistress Daston's "greate farme" or Mr. Sheldon's Court House down to the little thatched cottage with its clump of gillyflowers by the broken threshold stone. Whatever the hardships, there were compensations long since swept from the life of our villages, and which we could well exchange for some of the "advantages" of more sophisticated days. As it was in that classical village of Raveloe, so it was in Broadway and in numberless other similar parishes throughout the land. "Raveloe," it will be remembered, "lay low among the bushy trees and the rutted lanes, aloof from the currents of industrial energy and Puritan earnestness: the rich ate and drank freely, accepting gout and apoplexy as things that ran mysteriously in respectable families, and the poor thought that the rich were entirely in the right of it to lead a jolly life; besides, their feasting caused a multiplication of orts, which were the heirlooms of the poor. Betty Jay scented the boiling of Squire Cass's hams, but her longing was arrested by the unc-

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## BROADWAY

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tuous liquor in which they were boiled ; and when the seasons brought round the great merry-makings, they were regarded on all hands as a fine thing for the poor."

At present the outside world seeks these homes merely for imaginative stimulus, and, though of secondary importance, the value of this may be great. An enthusiasm generally finds an outlet in actual life. That these ancient homes require reanimation from some external source is painfully obvious. In too many instances the structures are crumbling to decay, and the life they harbour but too frequently reflects this outward dilapidation. To the casual visitor, who sees the picture merely, this side does not always appear. Very rightly, he has come to a lotos land, where it is always afternoon, and all he asks is to inhale the breath of the fragrant downlands or the more pungent aroma of the mossy orchards that yield their cider harvest in the mellowing days of the year. For the local life this latter time perhaps bears the palm. As elsewhere, for the hills and lanes and coppices, the primrose and blue-bell days between spring and summer are the time. It is then the woodpecker flings his most joyous laugh along the slopes ; then the woodland air swings to the chiff-chaff's notes ; then, in the shady nook, to the sound of water, the nightingale pierces you with his "tumultuous harmony."

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## THE HOMES

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But for the homesteads, it is in those weeks after an August wind, when the robin sings only, and when the shepherd leaves his track through the grass in the hoary morning dew, and white-bonneted women collect the windfalls into those



AN OLD HOME

generous heaps of fruit which the wild birds and poultry peck at. The long yellow waggons appear; the rickyard staddles support their loads of unthreshed grain. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that, most years, this radiant life continues with but little interruption until Christmas. At any time till then, as occasion offers, the farmer crushes his



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## BROADWAY

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fruit, an odd waggon-load at a time. Many hogsheads are needed. The hillside breezes are redolent of bruised apples, and the drowsy hum of the threshing-machine gives the keynote to all that golden autumnal period.

This picturesque aspect of life still greets you. The old stone cider mill is still in use hereabout, and much of the grain is yet cut by the hand-to-hand method of the sickle. It is all wonderful enough, but in looking from it to other features of the year, how foolish to single out any particular period. Each is but part of a beautiful whole, and which, to be understood and appreciated, must be seen as a whole. Nor seen only. To accept such as a merely imaginative stimulus is derogatory to the essential meaning of its art. It must not supply a fleeting, but a permanent influence. "Three of us are sophisticated. Thou art the thing itself." The last word of reflection upon a home must surely be one of wistful, grateful reverence. We smile at those simple old forebears, but the last smile must remain with him who wins. Some day we may again recognise in them, as in the poet's skylark, a

"Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;  
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home."



### III. THE CHURCH

**W**HAT may be called the ecclesiastical influences of the place are represented (for this brief historical survey) by the parish church of St. Eadburg, the Grange of Pershore abbey (without reason, long popularly called the Priory), and an old chapel no longer existing, the site of which is occupied by the architecturally unhappy structure known as the new church. From the convenience of situation it is in this last that the present village worships, to the loss of so much originally intended by the pious founders of a village church.

To feel more of this, we must follow the old coach road to the ancient building. This embraces the most beautiful part of the parish. After leaving the triangular green at the foot of the village, the road presently becomes secluded under its great elms, and seems to be leading you into the very heart of the green hillside. It threads one of those inlets or combs characteristic of this abrupt side of the Cotswolds. Wide at first, the wondrous fields draw their wooded slopes together, until, on

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## BROADWAY

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reaching the church, you are in a leafy dell whose sacred silence is broken only by the stream below the graveyard wall, or the birds and breezes playing in the elms that tower to the sky all round you. A fitting spot, truly, for the worship of the living or the last home of the dead. Beyond, for a mile, with trees more widely scattered, the crease rises up into the main hillside at the little village of Snowhill.

Knowing nothing of the original foundation of this church, it is impossible to say why it came to be erected exactly on this spot. The seclusion and the natural beauty of the site, though no doubt influential with the old builders, is not the only explanation. As the manor and rectory were in the hands of the Abbots of Pershore from such early times, it is presumable that one or other of them founded this Broadway church, and presented to the Worcester bishop their priest to minister to the spiritual wants of the inhabitants. It is not likely that they would leave their retainers here unprovided for; but of course they might possibly have pointed out to some devout and well-equipped layman what a needful and meritorious work lay in the building of a substantial church in this quarter. If such a one chanced to have his residence

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## THE CHURCH

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in this part of the manor, in some house now represented by the Knapp, the Kite's Nest, or the Court House, the church would naturally be built with a view to the convenience of his own family in those days of foul pathways. The Court House, certainly, which belonged formerly to the Sheldons, and to which I have referred in a former page, stands immediately by the churchyard wall. Of this house we get no very early account. It is not now of any special interest, as in the last few years it has been rebuilt into a modern residence and only a particle of the original structure remains.

In date, of course, the church goes far beyond this. Though mainly, as it stands, of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there are traces of the earlier Norman building, and antiquaries pronounce the font to be of the twelfth century. As will have been already seen, it is not my purpose to give in these few pages a close survey of antiquarian details, or indeed of details of any kind. For that, even in a parish small as this, a goodly volume would be needed. That every parish in the land *should* have such details, to the minutest degree, garnered and digested for its family use, it is strange at this late date to have to remark. But nothing of the kind has ever been attempted. With all our

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## BROADWAY

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lavish output of intellectual and material industry, if only for the last thousand years, it is extraordinary that such is the case. No parish suspects the meaning or the charm of its own story from the time when primeval bog or forest gave place to rude hut and terrace until now when grey-gabled homesteads and mossy orchards impart their poetic life to the landscape, and whole headlands of red wheat glow in the evening light.

Just as hilltop and village enforced reverie upon us, so does this secluded dell of the old church. Don't be too much engaged with the architectural and antiquarian detail; not at all, indeed, until you have prowled about and made secure of the spirit of the scene. Wade silently amongst the graves in the long spring grass, and look at the blue speedwell, the lady's smock, and goldilocks, and even despised kexies, that adorn the mounds of those that have none to remember them. The artificial details will seem so much more to you afterwards. Perhaps, unknowingly too, you may be paying a tribute to some "mute inglorious Milton" who is sleeping here, and who passed his life amidst bustling neighbours without one smile of recognition from human eye,

"Contented if he might enjoy  
The things which others understand."

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## THE CHURCH

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Even leap the wall and sit in the gorse up the slope on either side to hear the cuckoo and the woodpecker as they fly over you, or the ringdove in the trees of Middle Hill. Then go to examine the church. Without this, your impressions can be nothing.

Though interesting, as any building of its age is bound to be, in the edifice there is nothing greatly to excite the antiquary. In a land of fine churches it is perhaps homely, but it nevertheless asserts a quiet dignity. It is cruciform, and a substantial square tower rises from the middle. The dedication, as already stated, is to St. Eadburg, a granddaughter of King Alfred, and of whom relics were possessed at Pershore Abbey, which house also included her name in its dedications. This house for Benedictines, of which Broadway was a dependency, was originally founded in A.D. 689 to the honour of Mary, the Virgin Mother. But it was remodelled by St. Oswald in the days of King Edgar, 972, and came ultimately to claim the patronage of SS. Mary, Peter and Paul, and Eadburg. The day of this latter tutelary saint is June 15th, which leads one to inquire why this day was not appropriated for the Broadway village feast. But Habington observes, "This greate manor apperteynginge once to the Abbey

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## BROADWAY

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of Peareshore is the last of theyre Lordships in thys shyre which hathe the benefytt of the Charter warren of 8 Aug. 35 Henry III. (A.D. 1251). And to Bradeueye allso the same charter graunted a Mercate on eavery Friday and a Feyre on the Eave and Feast of St. John Baptist with the day next followinge." St. John the Baptist's day is June 24th, and the present Broadway feast or wake is neither on that day nor on St. Eadburg's, the 15th, but it is a movable one held always upon the Wednesday in Whitsun week. It may be mentioned that a charter warren merely means in current language a grant of the right to preserve your own game, which had in those feudal days to be given directly by the Crown.

Entering this church of St. Eadburg (or Eadburh, according to the stricter old English spelling) by its main doorway into the north aisle, you are in the silence of the beautiful interior shown in Mr. New's exquisite drawing. Repose reigns here, if ever it did in the handiwork of man. It is, to be sure, not the repose of those old camps with their harebell and wild thyme on the downs, but no more is it the unnatural repose of the cloister. In its almost total desertion it seems rather to be that of the grave. You feel it to be the home of the dead, and this affords by no

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## THE CHURCH

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means an unwholesome suggestion. Indeed, I never enter even a village church in solitude without that magnificent apostrophe of Sir Walter Raleigh's coming into my mind, which none can be the worse for remembering. "O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! Whom none could advise thou hast perswaded; what none hath dared thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawne together all the farre stretched greatnesse, all the pride, crueltie, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic iacet.*"

The impression here comes from the general spirit of such places, for there are but scant visible memorials within these walls to act strongly on the imagination. As is the case everywhere, several have been wantonly destroyed from time to time, and as many allowed to vanish from impious neglect. If saints are permitted a view of the altars which piety once dedicated to the honour and sanctity of their lives, or the heroic martyrdom of their deaths, it is to be feared they find the trials of paradise scarcely less harrowing than those of their temporal existence. It is true these churches are built primarily as the house of God, and so a stimulus to



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## BROADWAY

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present life as well as the sanctification of death and hope of a life to come ; but this is no place to enlarge upon this aspect of them.

Whilst bearing in mind that we see about us the emblem of simplicity and peace, of sacrifice and humiliation, let us at present regard it merely as a home of the dead. We need not forget that there is a horizon behind us as well as in front, and one which gives every bit as stimulating a prospect. Gazing in this direction we vaguely discern the figure that incorporated its name with this silent sacred building. On the threshold let us reconstruct what we can of it, and leave imagination to fill in the rest. Eadburg was the daughter of King Edward the Elder, granddaughter of King Alfred the Great. Her brief story I will take the liberty of borrowing from Mr. Freeman. "Now when Eadburh, the daughter of King Edward and Eadgifu his lady, was but three years old, it came into the king's heart to prove the child whether she would dwell in the world or would go out of the world to serve God. So he put on one side rings and bracelets and on the other side a chalice and a book of the Gospels. And the child was brought in the arms of her nurse, and King Edward took her on his knees, and he said, 'Now, my child,

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## THE CHURCH

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whether of these things wilt thou choose ?' And the child turned away from the rings and the bracelets, and took in her hand the chalice and the book of the Gospels. Then King Edward kissed his child and said, 'Go whither God calleth thee; follow the spouse whom thou hast chosen; and thy mother and I will be happy if we have a child holier than ourselves.' So Eadburh became a nun in the city of Winchester and served God with fastings and prayers all the days of her life." There is no ground for the popular notion that this Wessex princess was buried at Pershore. Indeed, she was interred amidst the scenes of her saintly life at Winchester, but according to the old custom of those days her remains were not permitted to rest. Some pious and prudent abbot of Pershore purchased for gold some of the saint's bones and enshrined them in his abbey, whereby, no doubt, material as well as devotional ends were promoted. This is how St. Eadburg came to have a shrine at Pershore, and so give her name to this little parish church of the dependent manor of Broadway.

Perhaps the memorial of principal interest at present preserved in the church is a small brass to Anthony Daston, the Elizabethan sheriff already referred to. Habington found it in "the east wall of

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## BROADWAY

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the Chauncell, inclining to the north," where it still is. Its date is 1572, too late for any special excellence in this kind of memorial. But a small effigy of the man is there in all his armour. The head is bare and rests upon a helmet. Breastplate and undivided skirt of mail leads to a long sword suspended on the left side by a strap round the waist which is knotted in front. Wrists and neck are adorned with unwarlike frills. Habington says that under this he found "a playne stone with a cros gradated layd over hym and his wydowe, the most bountifull gentillwoman for hospitality of her degree in England, Mistris Daston of Brodewaye." This lady, of whom her sons had not the grace to leave us an effigy, was, as I have said, of the Sheldon family. Some memorials of her immediate relatives still linger here, but more have disappeared. At the back of the painting of King Charles's arms, hung over the central archway, it is written, "Cleaned and oiled by J. Harvey, school-master, April 1779. The church then embellished." Doubtless Mr. Harvey and his fellow-embellishers, of that as well as of a later date, have much to answer for. Habington, for instance, found "in the middell Alley of the churche" a stone inlaid with brass whereon between a gentleman and gentlewoman was an inscription which seems worth producing, though we

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## THE CHURCH

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now look for inscription and brasses in  
vain.

“To the eternised memory of William  
Sheldon Esquyre and Cicely his Wife Anne  
Sheldon  
theyre youngest daughter dothe dedicate  
this her Altar  
Vppon my Altar stone must lye your birthe's  
eternall memory  
from esquyres both discended greate and good ye  
are commended  
This pillar telles  
What most excells  
Your uirtuous lyfe  
Your hate of stryfe  
Your Loyaltye  
Your Piety  
Your loue to frindes  
Your pious endes  
Your Grace's store  
Your praise thearefore  
My pedestal must graced bee with your deathe's  
sad memorye  
Such was your birth, your lyfe, your happy death  
Patern to all that drawe this lyfe's short breath.”

These ghosts worshipped here. It is good and strange to contemplate as you look around, and from your mouldering silence within hear the clear soliloquy of the blackbird in the sun outside. From this old pulpit too, near by, the parson preached to them in that old chapel where the new church now stands, for it was brought here as a last relic of that structure when the latter was demolished. “Where the word of God is not preached the people perish. Proverbs xxix.” So runs

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## BROADWAY

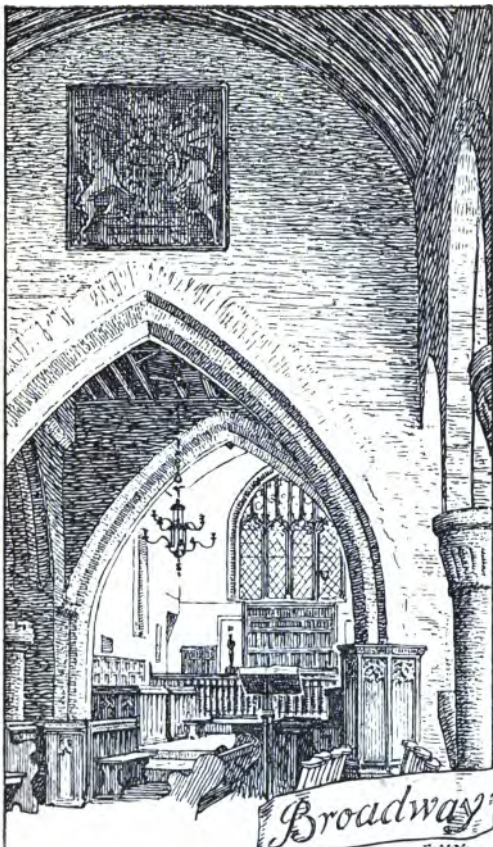
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the legend, in old English character, round this pulpit top, and did run for some centuries before even the eyes of Anthony Daston rested upon it, for it is spoken of as of the fourteenth century. This would suggest that the old chapel was almost as old as this its mother church. . . . Yes, perhaps there is efficacy in preaching. But I wonder whether the long silent tones of ancient pastors ever had the effect of this little fling eloquent on a stone still beside you.

AS THOU  
ART SO WAS  
I AS I AM  
SO SHALT  
THOU BEE

No name or date attends it; but, man or woman, that deceased was loth to leave the world, and did not intend to go without a longing, lingering, even envious look behind.

But for the really curious, perhaps an old pillar alms-box of extremely antique look standing near the door, with its usual three locks—one for the priest and one for each of the churchwardens—is as interesting as anything the little church contains. As is usual in these Cotswold village churches, the tower possesses a peal of six bells, which in a south-west wind carry down to the village that wonderful



Broadway

E.H.N.

St Eadburg's

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## BROADWAY

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music without which no village life seems half complete. It is but one of the numberless symptoms of rural decay that the charm of these church towers is lost to the inhabitants. Even mechanical apparatus for automatically chiming the bells have been introduced in places. Carlyle's cast-iron parsons will presumably follow. Change-ringing as an art scarcely lingers here. I shall perhaps be reminded of the unedifying scenes which attended those exploits of the belfry, but I fearlessly proclaim for grandsire triples, with pots of cider on the benches, in comparison with a silence of propriety so complete as to be hardly ever broken. The church tower entered deeply into old parish life. Like so much else it has now no part in it. There was almost a personal feeling towards the bells, and they were invoked upon every possible occasion. The peal here, as at present existing, is not particularly old, nor is there anything unusual in the inscriptions that the bells bear. They are inscribed thus:—

“1st. Cantate Domino Canticum Novum. Matthew Bagley made me 1778. Mr. Coleman, Mr. Stephens, Churchwardens.

2nd. Thomas Frost, gentleman, and John Higford Griffiths, gentleman.

3rd. Walter Savage, William Sheldon Esq., William Hodges, William

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## THE CHURCH

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- Brooks, churchwardens. Anno Domini 1603.—W. M. A. B. H.
- 4th. Walter Savage Esq., William Sheldon Esq. 1609.
- 5th. Cantate Domino Canticum Novum. Matthew Bagley made me 1778. Mr. Coleman, Mr. Stephens, Churchwardens.
- 6th. Tenor Recast at Gloucester by John Ruddall A.D. 1828. John Russell and James Stockford, Churchwardens."

Many other points of architectural and antiquarian interest will be revealed to the student, not one of which ought to be unfamiliar to any Broadway parishioner. These reflections suggested by the church indicate where the gap between us and the old time seems to be widest. We no longer develop indigenous resources in rural places, but import the interests and pastimes of altogether different conditions of life, to the destruction not only of all individuality but with it all sense of distinctly local attachment. For that old development in most places we are no doubt much indebted to the Church. This is perhaps especially the case where the parish was a dependency of a monastery or abbey. I have included the Grange of the Abbots of Pershore under the ecclesiastical influences of the place, but it was rather one of the social and economical.



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## BROADWAY

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The house stands for the inevitable relaxation from monastic seclusion demanded by the human soul. The social blending of the two which such a house affords must have a peculiar charm for all, and on various accounts this resort of the reverend fathers stands first in individual interest of all buildings that the parish contains. It is also the completest here of any of its age. Unlike the church, it was of course not here primarily for religious purposes. If all reports be true, we know that abbots could be very sociable on occasion of their visits to a country seat, and although actual record is wanting, there is no reason to suppose that the abbots of Pershore were different from their kind.

The house was built in the early years of Edward III., and, with the exclusion of a fifteenth century addition at one side, the Grange can be seen virtually as originally constructed. At the end of the village green, withdrawn in its old-world garden, the grey ecclesiastical-looking building can scarcely escape the eye. After passing through various adventures and weathering numerous perils, the custody of it seems at present secure. Amongst its post-Reformation vicissitudes, it is said to have been used as a lock-up, then a poor-house, and was ultimately divided into labourers' tenements. This last necessitated an altogether new division of the

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## THE CHURCH

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interior, which obscured not only the original arrangement but much of the ancient work. This mischief is being undone, and the building will in due course be re-established pretty much in its pristine condition.

This can be described as consisting of three portions. The first included the entry and staircase on the ground floor with the abbot's room over them; the second containing the hall; the third, a cellar on the ground floor and a chapel or oratory over it. The old entrance was probably in the position of the present doorway and protected by a wooden porch. Entering here you are in a small hall, which is a low apartment with a window opposite the entrance, and on the left is a fireplace, the only one in the original building, the chimney on the exterior being carried by bold corbels. By the side of the fireplace is a small doorway with the remains of the iron pivots on which the hinges of the door were hung, but whether this was an external entrance or only a shallow cupboard cannot be decided, as the fifteenth century building is placed against this part of the house. At the right of the entrance are the stairs up to the abbot's room and chapel, and the way into that main portion of the house known emphatically as "the hall." This was of course the general living room in

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## BROADWAY

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old times, occupied the centre of the building, and reached right up to the roof, which was lined with good decorated timber work. It is lighted by two beautiful traceried windows, and in the abbot's room above was an aperture called a squint, from which the spiritual father could glance good-humouredly at his retainers' mirth. At either end of the abbot's room also is a traceried window of two lights, and at one end of the chapel or oratory, which is very small, is a similar one still containing portions of painted glass. Corresponding to the abbot's squint there is in the chapel a circular opening to communicate with the hall, having formerly trefoiled tracery, by means of which those on the ground floor could share in the devotions going on above.

The end of the hall opposite to the abbot's room has two doorways walled up and a doorway in each of the side walls. These doors, which were most likely shut off from the hall by a low screen, gave access probably by covered ways to the buttery, the pantry, and the kitchen, which latter was often built only of timber. The original floor, which has been destroyed, was most likely of stone, strewed with rushes, with which were often mixed sweet herbs. There is no fireplace, as they were unusual in halls of the fourteenth century, the fire being made in the middle

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## THE CHURCH

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of the floor, so as to diffuse a general heat, whilst the smoke escaped as it could through an aperture in the roof. Opening out of the hall and under the oratory is a small cellar.<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, we are to imagine the worthy abbots of Pershore alighting in the sunlight of those old days after ambling some twelve miles across the vale by such highway as would at that time be afforded them, and having crossed the Avon at Bengeworth to greet their lordly brother of Evesham, if chancing at the time to be on speaking terms with so near a neighbour. Perchance on arriving some petty offender would be found clapped fast in the stocks which were pitched on the green there, and, whilst graciously acknowledging the acclamations of the parishioners assembled to greet him, a good-natured abbot would no doubt direct the culprit to be released in honour of the occasion. Whereupon more cheers.

Needless to say that this life of the past must be reconstructed in the mind if a survey of old buildings, as well as of scenery, is to be enjoyed or understood. It is just this life through past centuries that is the history of a parish, and it is just this of which a parish itself knows least. It may be thought that I have moralised too much

<sup>1</sup> In this reconstruction I have helped myself liberally from a paper in the *Archæological Association's Journal*.

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## BROADWAY

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already for an essay of this kind, but the situation of these secluded places is so critical, and yet so important, that it seems a duty to moralise and repeat well-worn platitudes on their behalf in or out of season. Let me repeat, therefore, that not for the amusement of the curious merely, but for the awakening of intelligent local attachments, ought each parish to realise its past life for itself. A few very simple experiments will satisfy a sceptic as to the possibility of imparting this interest even to simple minds. Richard Jefferies asserted that standard historical works were the books for sale in a rural district. This I cannot venture to confirm, but that it is essentially the historical vein which, on the educational side, can be most profitably worked for them admits of no doubt. The difficulty is in getting this peculiar labour suitably organised. But it could be done, and the social, economical, and even political reward would be great.



#### IV. THE ROADS

**I** HAVE already made some reference to the roads in speaking of the situation of the village and its name. By whichever route, whether by the Fish Hill or Coneygree Lane, the London to Worcester high-road ran through the middle of the parish, and from this thoroughfare two principal cross roads turned off; one in the heart of the village to the north-east, skirting the foot of the hills to Stratford-on-Avon; the other at the western extremity going south-westwards through Winchcombe to Cheltenham and Gloucester. These roads, with their ramifications, field paths, bridle tracks, and what not, gave access to the numerous villages and farms sprinkled over the green—such a green!—landscape.

We saw how the main road entered the parish by the hill from Oxford and Woodstock. It leaves it in the vale, for Evesham and Worcester, in a much more matter-of-fact way. There is no mystery here. You see what is before you for many a mile to come. But no matter how far,

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## BROADWAY

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all is delightful. Whether highway or byway, every road hereabout has liberal green margins with ditches full of flowers, and hedges of may, dog-roses, clematis, and wayfaring tree which are not trimmed with what Dr. Johnson would have called "a needless degree of scrupulosity." Indeed, in flower time, hedge and ditch blend into a varied screen of blossom, every detail of which gets imprinted on the heart of one that loves the English landscape. Add to this a goodly supply of overarching timber and you find little difficulty in bursting into song with Autolycus as you trudge in the sunlight.

"Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,  
And merrily hent the stile-a :  
A merry heart goes all the day,  
Your sad tires in a mile-a."

The very subject of a road is a fascinating one, and perhaps England has no more fascinating roads to show than these. With regard to the mere question of the construction of them it is difficult to form any conception of what they must originally have been. I shall give a graphic glimpse or two of this presently. But in view of the ordinary state in which travellers found them, one cannot realise what pitch they must have reached to necessitate a formal complaint to the authorities. Since it was on the high-road to London, the name of Broadway occurs frequently in the early

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## THE ROADS

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county records with reference to the state of its road. We saw that Mr. Habington talked of the vale of Evesham "and her foule wayes." But he should not have ventured in this direction during wet weather. From time to time ineffectual spasmodic attempts were made to regulate the repair of the roads—from that law in 1285 that directed all trees and shrubs to be cut down to the distance of 200 feet on either side of roads between market towns, to prevent the concealment of robbers in them. As this was enacted but some thirty years after Broadway had got its charter for a Friday market, no doubt the abbots took care to see it was complied with between Pershore and these outlying dependencies. Robin Hood, we remember, had a peculiar love for a bishop or abbot, and with the Forest of Arden not far away, no doubt representatives of the greenwood archers would frequent these highways.

The first systematic attempt to cope with the difficulty was in 1555, when an Act was passed requiring each parish to elect two surveyors of highways to keep them in repair by compulsory labour, and the county records contain several instances of the working of this Act in the vicinity of Broadway. All the inhabitants were liable to repair, and they either did the work themselves or sent others to work in their places. The surveyors fixed the



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## BROADWAY

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days when people were to come and work on the roads. The neglect to appoint surveyors rendered the parish liable to an indictment. If the surveyors were appointed and did not fix the days they were liable to indictment for neglect of duty; whilst if the people did not attend on the days that were appointed and work, they in turn were liable to indictment. As an instance of these proceedings, in the Quarter Sessions papers it is recorded that in 1600 the sheriff was ordered to distrain upon "Anthony Dickins, Ralph Francklyn, and William Sambage, inhabitants of Broadway, for the repair of Broadway street in the highway leading to London." In 1633, again, it is presented to the magistrates that "at Broadway and the highway in the said town of Broadway to the hill there is in decay and ought to be repaired by the inhabitants of Broadway." But by June 7th of that year they had looked to their duty (the summer weather perhaps helping), for on that day a certificate is given by William Sheldon and others (the Sheldon of Broadway Court that Charles I. a few years later calls to see), to the effect that "the highways in Broadway have been repaired"; but they further acquainted Quarter Sessions of several matters it behoved them to know concerning the highway, to wit, "the turning of the common stream forth of

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## THE ROADS

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the usual course and the plantation of willows in the street." It is noted that a warrant has been issued to bring the offenders before the next monthly meeting. I may mention, too, that in the same year complaint is made that the highway from Broadway to Evesham at Wickhamford, "in a place called Langdon Hill," is in decay, and that the inhabitants of Wickhamford ought to repair the same. But for a very vivid glimpse of that old state of things I will borrow an entry relating to another parish, and, oddly enough, it is that same one of Alvechurch where we saw difficulties between parishioners and clergy. In this case it is the clergyman himself who lodges the complaint. He is a predecessor of the one who was accused of sitting too long on the ale benches, and here are his words:—

"The parish of Alvechurch has many roadways and thoroughfares for travellers both on horseback and for carriages by wains and carts, and other common highways to divers market towns through sundry parts of the said parish, but all generally so ill and negligently repaired that divers enormities redound therefrom not only to many of the parishioners themselves but also to many others travelling those ways; in particular myself in this harvest time riding about my lawful and necessary occasions of tithes, have been

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## BROADWAY

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twice set fast in the mire in common roads and market ways not without danger." [Jocose parishioners perhaps looking on behind the hedge and not assisting!] "By occasion of these ill repaired highways I am forced to sell much of my tithes far under value. Much of this ill repair is caused by some who staunch up water in ditches, and turning them out of their course to water and overflow the adjoining grounds; and in some of the roads formerly used for passage on horseback and loaded waggons and cattle, cannot be used for passage on horseback without danger of getting fast and myring."

Such, then, were these fragrant roads in the old days, and down to a day not so far distant as might be imagined. It no doubt goes a long way to explaining that development and self-contained state of country places, of the present lack of which I have complained. In reading of the unsatisfactory condition of the highway from Broadway to Evesham it must be remembered that the first part of it had not then the advantages of its present position. It did not, as now, keep the top of the ridge by Whitechapel to the Sandys Arms at Wickhamford, but ran under the slope at the west side by the village of Childswickham and Murcott. This new route, from the branching of the Cheltenham road, was a work of the last century. The old

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## THE ROADS

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road makers would scarcely have chosen so exposed a line, and those who now ride or walk it in a south-west wind, as we say here, "straight from the Channel," will understand something of the merits of the lower level. But with regard to the condition, he would be hard to please who could now find fault with the authorities. All the main roads are excellent, and it is only some of our later methods of locomotion that are able to deprive them of much of their old charm.

For enjoying the wild flowers and the birds of the district you can scarcely do better than saunter on foot, shoe-deep, in the green margins of these roads, stepping from time to time over any stiles that may present themselves by the wayside. From the time you are arrested by the first colt's-foot or celandine to the last yarrow, herb-robert, or campion that stumbles on almost to Christmas, you get here a succession of the sweetest and most characteristic blossoms the country affords. Seasons of course vary, but few are the years that on the first mild day of March you will not be caught unawares in some roadside corner by that startling scent

"That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odour."

But early April may be considered the time of these blossoms flowering. The

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## BROADWAY

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white variety is plentiful, but not quite so abundant as the blue. In scent it is even stronger and blossoms a little later than the ordinary kind. By this time the spring host is advancing, and day by day you will find some new recurring face that you have looked for. Marsh marigold or kingcups, primrose, lady's smock ("all silver white" or lilac in colour), stitch-wort, cowslip. Children's dower, no doubt, but a wonder and a joy for ever. With May you wade in a wilderness of flowers, and no longer count them. But probably from the mass you take a sprig of the bird's-eye speedwell as that which strikes you most. It is the roadside flower of May; a patch of blue sky in the grass. But it is quickly overgrown and kecksies hold the field. This is here the general name for all the umbelliferous tribe, but as the most abundant, particularly applied to the chervil or cow-parsley. This is a weed universally scorned. Shakespeare says—

"And nothing teems  
But hateful docks, rough thistles, kecksies, burs,  
Losing both beauty and utility."

That it lacks beauty, though, is certainly a mistake. But its growth is rank, and it has a persistent habit of establishing itself in the wrong place, so has incurred the penalty of a nuisance. It is certainly well exchanged for the meadow-sweet which

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## THE ROADS

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succeeds it in these ditches. This latter is essentially the roadside flower of hot and dusty summer days. It even oppresses the atmosphere with its scent, but its almond savour always rescues it from the quite intolerable sweetness of such a blossom as the elder. We associate its name with the lush grass of meadows and summer fragrance, but in reality its present form of name is a corruption of an older one more in accord with our ancestors' tastes and susceptibilities. Old Turner, our first herbalist, calls it *mede-swete*, which in turn is a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon *mede-wyrt*, signifying the honey-wine-herb. The first half of the word has nothing to do with meadow, but stands for the old-world beverage of mead which circulated in the ancient hall whilst the minstrel chanted his ballads. Other herbalists explain the use, one observing that "the flowers mixed with mead give it the flavour of the Greek wines," and another that it gives beer and various wines and other drinks an agreeable flavour. I have never heard of this use being preserved to the present day.

Another summer flower especially luxuriant by these roadsides is the crow-toes or bird's-foot trefoil. This beautiful orange purse-like blossom usually forms little tufts in the ground, but here the tall branched varieties are as abundant as

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## BROADWAY

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the smaller one. The chalky scrapings of the roads mended with local stone indeed seem particularly favourable to the more uncommon narrow-leaved kind known to botanists as *Lotus tenuis*. Up in the quarries, too, you find this flower to perfection, and assuredly it is one of the most winsome our flora affords. It accompanies us right through the summer, until indeed the ditches beside it are full of that last of the prominent flowers, the great willow herb, the codlins and cream of the old authors, which dashes such masses of purple against the hedge, breast high. For the brother of this latter, the still more distinguished-looking rose-bay which will vaunt its spire of crimson five feet high, you must go to the moist tree-planted old quarries on the hilltop where in many places it flourishes abundantly.

But why mention any of these things if not all? There is not one that will not give some new hint of beauty and so repay a scrutiny. They enter with such depth into the affections as to excite a thrill in the slackened heart over which even some tender hand has lost its influence. And nothing owns so powerful a spell of association as a flower. And what do the metaphysicians say of association? So trudge the wayside in search of flowers. They will give you themselves and many things besides. They will even

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## THE ROADS

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form a record of the bird songs for you. There seems to be an extraordinary difference of sense-memory amongst us. Some cannot recall to the memory a sound, others a scent, a taste, or colour. I suppose it depends somewhat upon the individual habits with regard to these faculties. But anybody with vigorous powers of observation, that is of attention, can recall all the senses equally. If you have once what I may call *recognised* a sound, scent, taste, or colour, you can remember and recall it.

Many will tell you that they cannot distinguish a nightingale when singing in the daytime from various other birds. It simply means they have never *heard* the nightingale, in the strict sense of the words. For one that has, no stave of the bird (amidst however so many blackbirds and thrushes) can escape you. But of the nightingale enough is sung. He that hath ears to hear will hear it day and night through the springtime in these pathways, and perhaps be disappointed. But this is from the fragmentary nature of its utterances and not the quality. We naturally prefer a comprehensible and finished product to a snatch of thrilling harmony no matter how divine. The thrush, to be sure, has his "fine careless rapture," no two birds the same, but he keeps on with it in a flow of artistic unity. The nightingale has not



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## BROADWAY

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this consciousness, so is only for those who can appreciate the divine in fragments.

Another of the bird songs of these green roads, and perhaps the most characteristic of all when once clearly appropriated, is that of the tree pipit, or, as Burns has called it, the woodlark. If in gathering your cowslips you suddenly wake to a song about you that pierces you to the heart, a little quiet attention will enable you to trace it to that tall green elm tree or the golden oak. Then wait and watch the performer. You will presently see a little lark-like bird silently fling itself up from the spray to a height perhaps a little above the tree-top, and then, in floating down to its perch again, burst into such a passionate flow of song as will surprise and impress you. All the sweetness, with just enough of the sadness of the spring, of these radiant trees and meadows, is in it, and if ever fully appreciated will remain in the mind as an integral part of them. Just as the more homely little pipe of the yellow-hammer lives in the heat and scent of the meadow-sweet days. But this latter is easier to remember, and everybody recognises his modest plea of

“A little bit of bread and no chee—se.”

But in spite of a general kindness to this familiar bird, it is difficult to explain the old superstition that associated it so

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## THE ROADS

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intimately with the worst of company. The belief exists in England, though I have got no rhyme to embalm it. The boys of Scotland, however, give expression to it in their interpretation of the bird's notes, which is, "Deil, deil, deil, tak ye!" And they formulate their belief more fully in the lines :

" Half a paddock, half a toad,  
Half a yellow yorling ;  
Drinks a drap o' the deil's blood,  
Every May morning."

I wonder whether it is the odd smears and scratches on the bird's egg that give rise to the saying.


But I must linger in the roads no longer, for before closing there are still other parts of the parish at which to glance. We will turn back out of the byways to the village green whence by the London road we set out. From here once more the broad way mounting the wolds lies before you, and you can fancy all the past and present life gathering about it as it traverses those upland solitudes to Woodstock and Oxford. The coaches that have rumbled past, that have "got fast and myred," that have stopped at the *White Hart* here and required repairs whilst horses were changing and passengers partaking of the house's cheer. Just there in the midst of the village the beautiful old inn still stands, indeed, being judiciously

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## BROADWAY

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made more beautiful by a careful restoration of the parts disfigured by lapses of the Victorian century. It is an ancient house and ancient as a hostelry. As it now stands it was built in 1620, but in its more ancient form, in the century before, it was still an inn. The only change is in its name (for it is now called the *Lygon Arms*), and of course in the internal economics as demanded by a sophisticated time. It would no doubt astonish Master John Treavis, who built the house, and add to its attractions, if the ancient host could be bodily reinstalled with his buttery and Elizabethan appliances.



## V. THE PARISH BOUNDS

**A**S you entered the village from the hill there was, until a few years ago, a small board on the first old gabled house you came to, bearing these words :

### TAKE NOTICE

All strolling beggars asking alms or lying in the lanes or any other part of this parish will be prosecuted as the law directs.

Broadway, March 2nd, 1827.

It always appeared to me a most unphilosophical notice, but no doubt the beggars had brought it on themselves. That these lanes and hedgerows should have proved attractive to them causes no wonder, for, as already observed, the district is for the bulk of the year a veritable lotos land. If they could have resisted the temptations of game, the farmer's poultry-yard, the snapping-up of unconsidered trifles, and would have been content to lend a hand at times of pressure from haytime to harvest, it is difficult to suppose that the law would have been invoked against them. And what a life they might have led !

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## BROADWAY

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It is not easy to view with proper moral severity even those sturdy beggars that take to lying in the lanes or other parts of a rural parish to-day, not to speak of a



ENTRANCE TO THE VILLAGE

time as remote as eighty years ago. I believe Charles Lamb said that anybody who liked apple dumplings must have a pure mind. By analogous reasoning it is difficult to imagine anybody with a partiality for the hedge bottom as very seriously

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## THE PARISH BOUNDS

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depraved. For them at least the wind is on the heath, and sun and rain are their most intimate companions.

One need not, however, become a sturdy beggar to appreciate Broadway and its green slopes and hollows ; but in viewing as a whole again the parish at which in certain of its parts we have glanced, it is clear that the deepest enjoyment of it is only for the simple and healthy mind. As a picture, it may afford imaginative stimulus to many, but only in quiet intimacy is it to be enjoyed. Looked at from these close quarters, the parish boundaries expand, and the subjects of interest and delight which they embrace prove virtually inexhaustible. From the first snowdrop in the gardens of the cottagers to the last harebell on the downs the progress of the year is boundless in its charm. Second only to it is the pastoral life that keeps step with this. Indeed, as I said at the opening, the two are inseparable here. And it is in this extraordinary harmony and completeness that Shakespeare presents it to us. One gets tired of the hackneyed insistence on "Shakespeare's country," but here it is inevitable. It may indeed safely be said that only through intimacy with the Cotswold country can appreciation of a great deal of Shakespeare's humorous work be obtained. With the exception of Sir Walter Scott, perhaps there is no

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## BROADWAY

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other instance of the very highest genius being so essentially identified with a locality. This is explained by the fact of both of them having been essentially countrymen. The comment of these scenes upon what is known to most only as Shakespearian in the abstract is quite extraordinary. To see the full force of it one has only to take such a case as that of Wordsworth and the Lakes. Say what we will, here there is scarcely any natural interdependence whatever. We have made the Lakes Wordsworthian, it is true, but fancy how different and how wondrous the potency of that mountain air if distilled for us by a Scott or a Shakespeare. It is the difference of pure sunlight and coloured glass.

But this is no place to follow a speculation of the kind. I want in vagrancy to wander in various parts of this parish of Broadway, without fear of the law, by way of concluding our glimpse into the ancient heart of our land. The position and aspect of it was seen from the hill. From the beech clumps on the breezy wolds to the orchards and cornlands at the bottom, every rood has significance and charm. The boundaries of this naturally cannot be estimated by rateable area or tithes. These are to be found only in the limits of civil history, social history, religious history, and natural history. This may sound oppressive, but simply, I

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## THE PARISH BOUNDS

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think, because of our misconception of the manner in which these parochial elements should be regarded and presented. I repeat it may soon be found that even to the most ordinary mind the march of nature and of man over the fields and highways with which that mind is familiar, if simply and sympathetically shown, comes as an enchanting revelation and surprise. I frequently hear the complaints of country clergymen that they cannot sell their parish magazine. From the specimens produced I am not able to feel astonishment. And yet there is every parish languishing for its magazine.

From the old church, buried in its coomb, Coneygree lane used to run up the hill towards the tower. I say used to run, for it has since been trimmed out of recognition, and remains a lane in name only. This was formerly the London road to which I referred when speaking of the highways. But it is now principally known as the approach to a secluded mansion known as Middle Hill, formerly the residence of the antiquary Sir Thomas Phillipps, and where he established his private printing-press nearly a century ago. There was something romantic in its former condition to which there can hardly be indelicacy in referring now. Sir Thomas was an antiquary of the Jonathan Oldbuck type, but apparently



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## BROADWAY

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without the undercurrent of human warmth that glowed beneath the husk of Monk barns. Sir Thomas had a daughter, and when a zealous young friend (admitted to intimacy under the plea of illuminated missals and court rolls) turned his eyes from parchment to her the baronet was wroth. Traditional consequences ensued. Love prevailed, however, and as the property was entailed, all that the enraged father could do was to damage an inheritance which he had not the power to divert. The estate consequently became a wilderness, the house almost a ruin.

The gateway directly opposite the old church (without any lodge) was then hidden beneath trees, almost blocked between overgrown hedgerows, and in its dilapidated state gave entrance to a domain which, in my boyhood, realised all the elements of romance. Your footstep broke an enchanted quiet. The gate would fall-to with a startling sound, and the crow which had been eyeing you from overhead floated away with its ill-omened croak. Then out of the depths of the brushwood a jay would greet you with his execration, and continue to flit before you with malignant voice. The road was but a track for farm carts, with trees interlaced above you and positive jungle on each side. Brambles and wild roses, traveller's joy, honeysuckle, bryony and

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## THE PARISH BOUNDS

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woodland vetch. Of this last, almost the fairest of woodland flowers, I never saw such profusion as in Coneygree lane. Something, no doubt, counts from the fact that it was here I first really looked at it. It was evidently Sir Thomas's misanthropy that it approved, for I am not sure that the flower is to be found at all now in those old haunts. But go to Hayles wood in July, and there it will still reward you.

In spite of inevitable changes, this ramble from the old church to the hilltop remains one of the most beautiful in the parish. The slope is well wooded, and you soon get to the natural freedom of the hillside with the gorse and the cowslips. Here you seem to be in a hollow of the hills, the great vale being nearly shut out by the spur forming the bay. The grey gables of a wonderful old farmhouse or two peep out from the trees, and from certain points you get glimpses of the modern residence that has replaced the one sacrificed to the caprice of Sir Thomas Phillipps. On one hand you get, over the trees, a view of the distant horizon vale, vague and blue like the sea; on the other, the bare uplands around the village of Snowhill, and the sources of the little river Windrush. Just below nestles the solitary church, the present existence of which, as we wander through his fields, we must bear in mind we owe to the

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## BROADWAY

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crabbed Sir Thomas. In accordance with the ordinary mid-nineteenth-century thrift and wisdom, when the new church was built, the old one was naturally condemned to be pulled down as useless. This Sir Thomas Phillipps successfully resisted—if report be true, not upon the highest grounds, but upon such as were amply sufficient. Some of his ancestors' bones lay buried within. So whatever the sentiments of his descendants, ours, upon parting from him, must be those of thanks.

Of the uplands we have noticed far from enough, but as much as is allowed by our limits. As we mount above the trees, not only the prospect but our footpath alters. The sheep-pastures for which these hills have long been famous afford the velvet turf of downs, and the flowers with which it is bespangled are such as inspire a peculiar tenderness in those who regard wild flowers at all. Cowslip, harebell, and wild thyme are familiar to all, but who regards the tormentil? Poets have sung the daisy and the celandine, but this little golden star of the downlands with its great Norman-sounding name goes uncelebrated. Yet it is the gem of all. In the woodlands, or sheltered by a clump of gorse, when it is unnibbled and obtains support, it will grow a foot in height, but when sprinkled abundantly in the shortest-bitten turf it engages most

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## THE PARISH BOUNDS

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attention. Here, as you pace noiselessly to and fro on the skyline, it does not assert certainly, but claims an individuality which scarcely Chaucer's daisy can rival. The crow-toes, too, which I spoke of by the roadsides, here puts on its best. This latter, like most reasonable creatures, especially loves an old quarry, of the kind with which these hills abound. The nose-gay of the quarry differs, of course, from that of the open downs, but as it is part of them, it largely shares their charm.

A Cotswold quarry is not to be exhausted in a few lines, and, with all its temptations besides the crow-toes, it is rash to have brought it here within the parish bounds. A mere list of its features is of little good. Step into it on a sunny morning as the cloud shadows flit across, and—after startling the hawk from the sitting stone, after hearing the pebbles roll which the scuttling rabbits have thrown down, and watching the hare bound over the rim into the corn—try and exhaust in a summer day all the enchantment it will offer you. If by good hap you find the parish road-mender at work with his pick, it will go well if you escape the spell within the week.

In one sense you get here the very germ of the parish. In the fossils you may trace the growth of the soil of it. Hence came the stone for the churches and houses we

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## BROADWAY

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have seen, for the byways we traverse, the barns and long grey walls spread around on the wolds. It is true that Broadway has no great quarry, like those of the adjacent parishes of Chipping Campden and Bourton-on-the-Hill, but characteristics are not dependent upon size.

It is not growing like a tree  
In bulk, doth make man better be ;  
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,  
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere :  
A lily of a day  
Is fairer far in May,  
Although it fall and die that night—  
It was the plant and flower of light.  
In small proportions we just beauties see ;  
And in short measures life may perfect be.

It is just this that we have been apt to forget in our pursuit of a strenuous life. The features of our own land have not seemed big enough. But there are evident signs of reaction, and now we are in danger of discovering too strenuously the homely charms of our own country. That is, in a peripatetic way ; but if I may still preach, I would repeat once more that it is in each parish awaking to the attractions of its own individual charms that the importance lies. For the generality of the world it is a far more vital matter to soar than to roam.

I may surely be excused this moralising in a survey of Broadway, for if there is any real interest or attractiveness in the place

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## THE PARISH BOUNDS

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at all it arises solely from the beauty of prolonged obscurity and simplicity of life. Like the violets of its own lanes and the cowslips of its meadows, all its life of health and fragrance has sprung from what we call these natural conditions. Strictly natural, of course, they are not, but they at least matured under just such degree of art as is consistent with the dignified processes of nature. Nature was properly subdued and broken in, but not in arrogant, impious revolt throttled and annihilated for its golden lore. The Faust legend is a profound apologue. It is evident that the compact may be made, but the forfeit soul will be rigorously exacted.

All this you will find in the hill quarry, lurking in the flowers (the bee orchis is there too, if you can find it) and carved upon the stones, together with much of a wholly uncontroversial, and so more enjoyable, kind. In the midst of your deepest speculation a jackdaw from the beech trees will make fun of you or a woodpecker fly over with a laugh. This latter bird, indeed, is a constant corrective here, and may be called the characteristic voice of these slopes in sunlight, as the halloo of the owl is of them at night. This propriety of note in local sounds has much to do with the right effect of scenery upon us. What would the lone sweep of moorland be without grouse and curlew? sea - cliffs

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## BROADWAY

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without the gulls? or mountain burns without the sand-piper and dipper?

But, beyond merely characteristic sounds, there are bird-notes without number that give life also to these slopes. From the free and varied character of the ground, it is peculiarly favourable to bird life, as it is to that of flowers. The coppices, the untrimmed hedgerows, the lopped withy trees, and the broken pastures of gorse and elder bushes, harbour a multitude of birds, to gain even a casual acquaintance with which requires a special study. But anybody that will may enjoy what others understand, and perhaps enjoyment is after all the truest key to understanding. Though we have now to smile at such simplicity, Wordsworth's well-worn line is, in private, still well worth considering—"We live by admiration, hope, and love."

If a Cotswold quarry was seductive, a coppice of the district is equally so; but we must snatch a glimpse of one as we flit round the parish. They consist for the most part of ash and hazel, and are divided into drifts, each one of which is cleared after ten or twelve years' growth. This is very favourable to the vagrant in pursuit of enjoyment, for the contents and appearance of each drift vary considerably not only throughout the year, but amongst themselves, at different stages of develop-

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## THE PARISH BOUNDS

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ment. At full growth they become too shady for many of the flowers, until in spring the bluebells and in summer the ferns hold almost undisputed possession of the ground. But after a clearing, and in the earlier years, you can see what has been lying dormant, awaiting the sun. The first and second year is the time for primroses. Celandines and the wood anemone make a gallant beginning, but even they are smothered as the primroses open their eyes. The ground is literally a carpet of the blossom. From that time they gradually diminish as the wood grows. Even campion and St. John's wort, too, retire before the shade, and are content to wait their turn by the sides of the cart-tracks whereby the faggots are removed. Another clearing made, and they all rush in.

By the side of one of these tracks, also, you may encounter the hedge-carpenter at work making a hurdle or a gate. He will generally equal in interest the road-mender of the quarry; and, if woodcraft have no charm, he will at least afford an example of the local speech in supplying his bits of parish history. In common with all our dialects, that of Cotswold has become irremediably debased, and it is only in particular words and phrases that it can now give any degree of satisfaction. One such word alone I must mention,



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## BROADWAY

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which I have heard but once in use. An admirable word which ought hardly to have dropped out even of our standard tongue. That is *twichild*, for the childishness of old age. It is difficult to see how we have lost this, so eminently needed as it is for the condition it denotes. Now, I fear it must even have dropped out of this limited vernacular with the old tongue, now silent, that gave it me.

But it is not with a regret that we must follow the track from the coppice, and traverse the meadows that bring us to the village again. Amidst so much that is positive, it would be hard to do so. Even a picture, if it be a true one, cannot present itself to us for nothing, and I have endeavoured to suggest that such a place as Broadway is very much more than a picture. The stimulus that everything within its boundaries affords goes to the very foundation of civilised existence, and ought to be no more a matter of moods than is the animation afforded us by the best poetry. It is at least a constant hope. Within these boundaries must subsist a daily life in harmony with the spirit of its surroundings. The old *rêve champêtre* in a new guise? Perhaps it is. Some sort of a pastoral dream is clearly to constitute the mature thoughts of the world. But it must not originate in a dream. Beginnings, means, and ends must be adapted.

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## THE PARISH BOUNDS

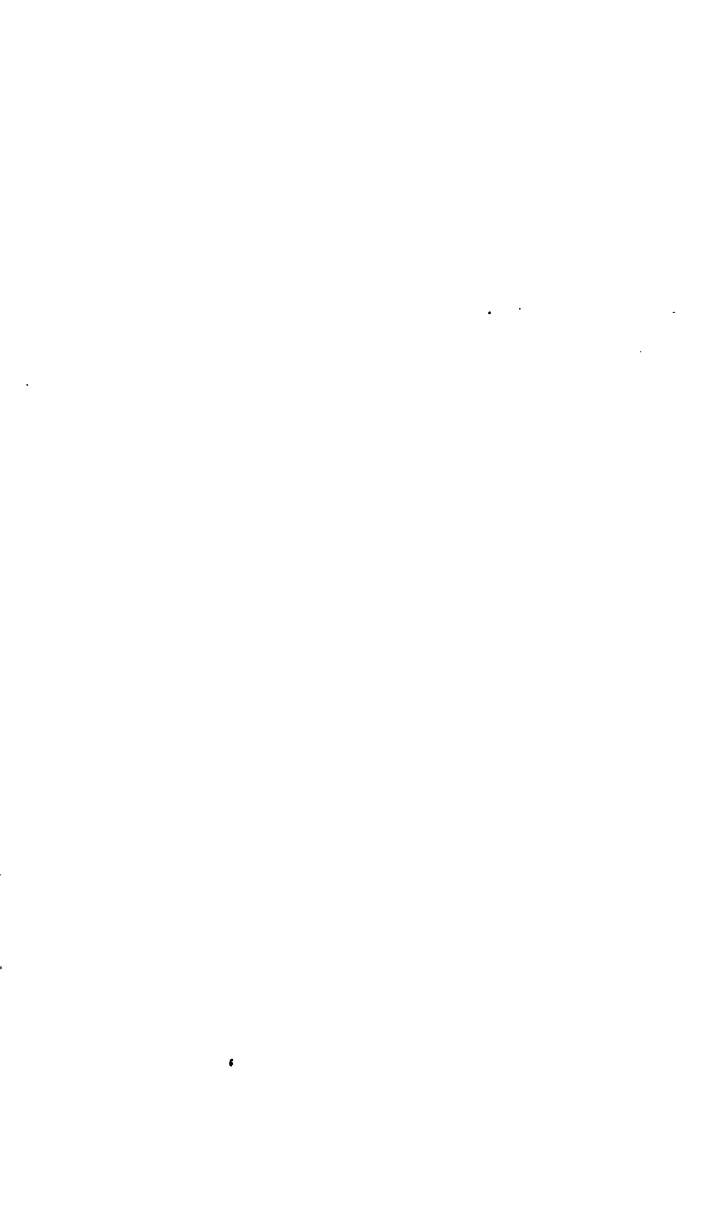
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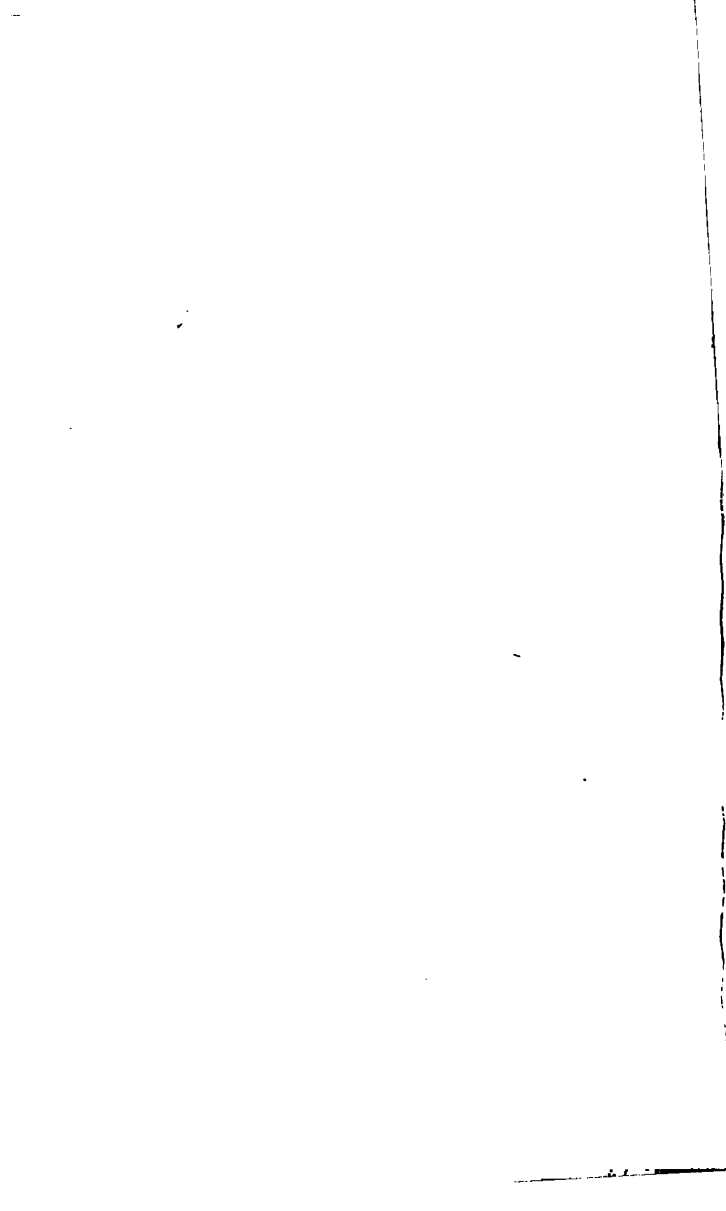
If we have learned anything through our fifty years of evolution it is the law of growth. We know that the law of the universe is growth, not spasmodic impulse. It is on such ground as this of the Cotswold slope that the necessary growth of pastoral life not only may, but demands to be, regarded, and whereon the fit lines of its development distinctly appear.

And here, as I conclude, after several days of east, comes a north-west wind to remind me of what I said in opening. Wonderful enough, the parish lies in this flood of evening sunlight, sweeping from the village green up the broad way to the green hill behind. It would be impossible to take leave of it in a better light. Lambs are already heard in the fields and a black-bird is singing. Soon we shall have the cuckoo. Farewell!

THE END

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b. e. e.









MAR 9 - 1931





