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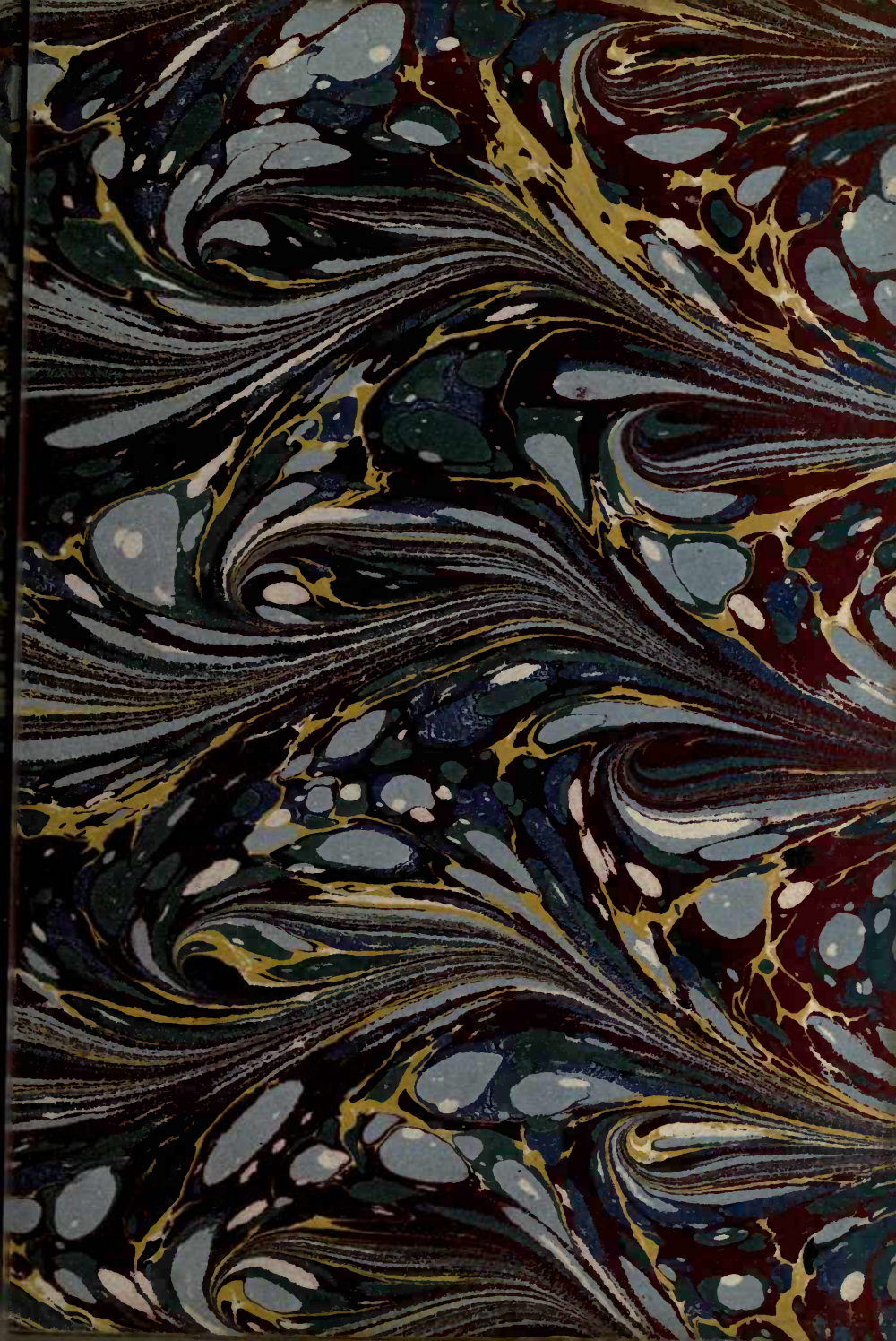
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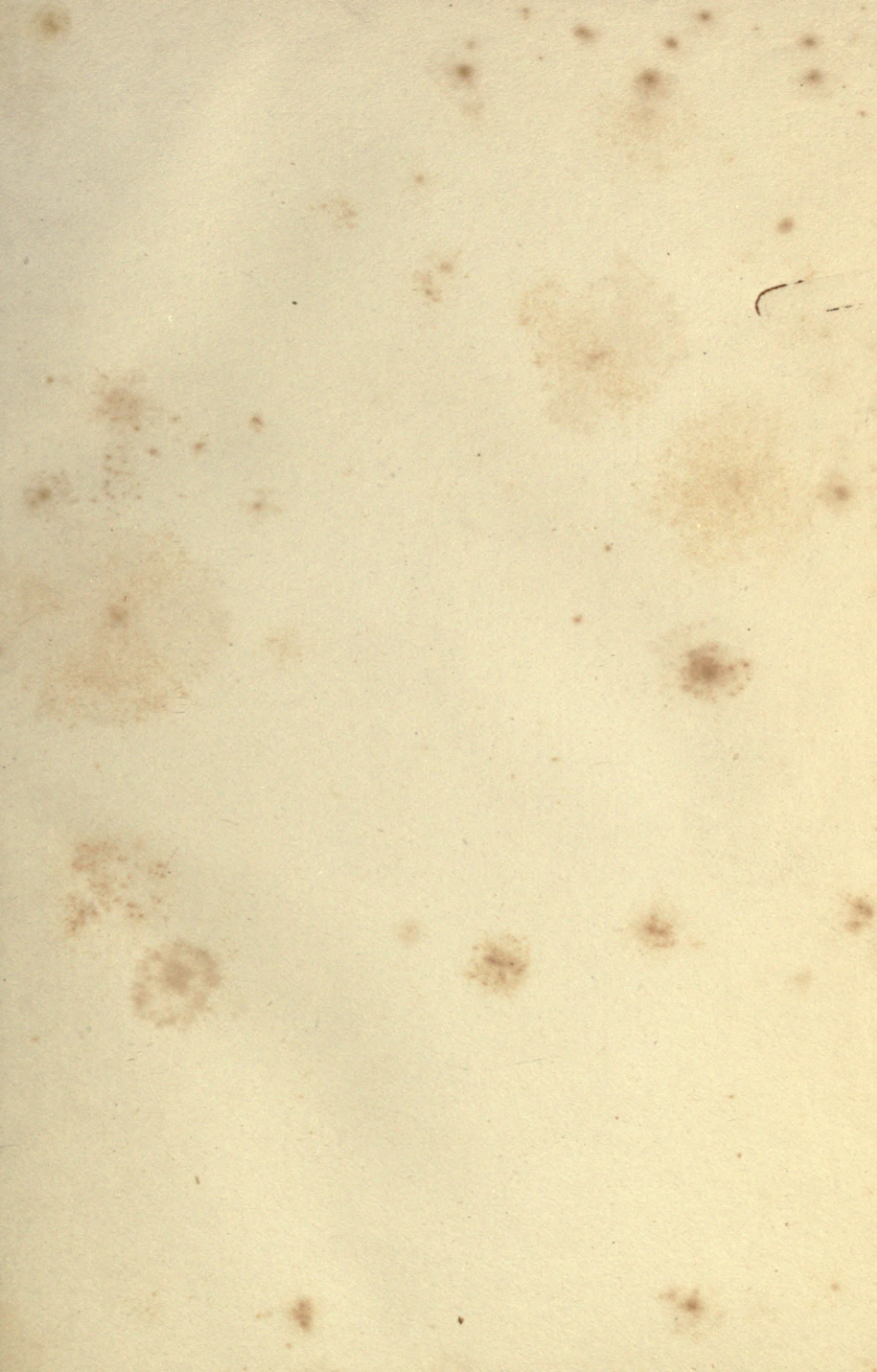


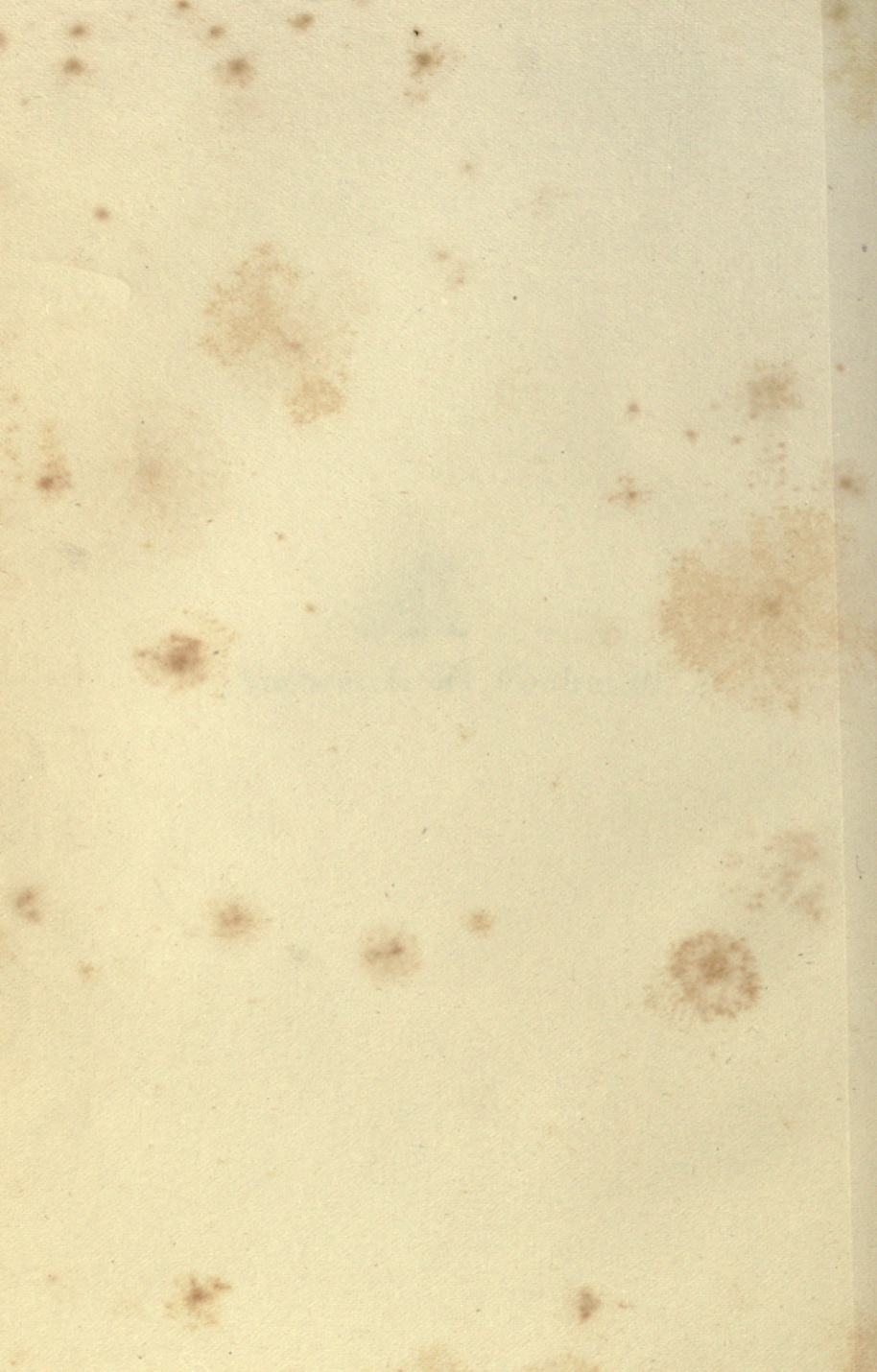
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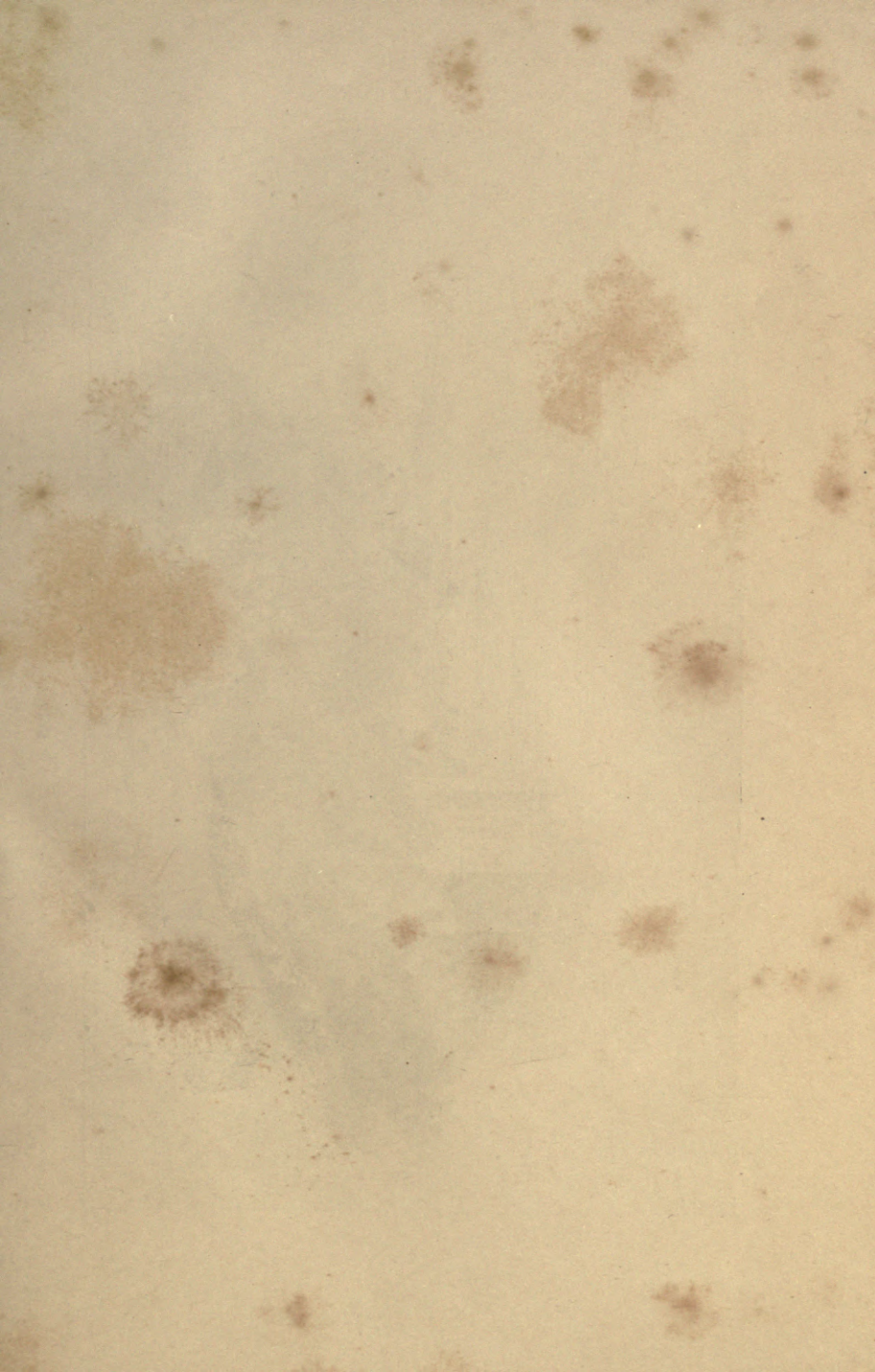
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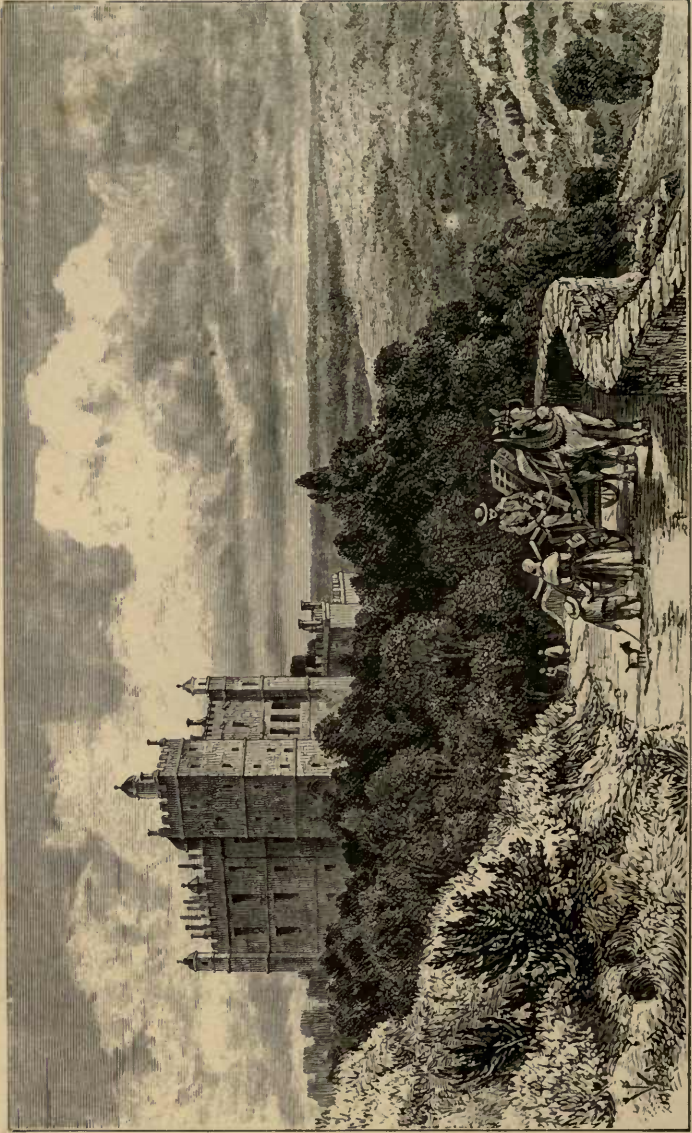








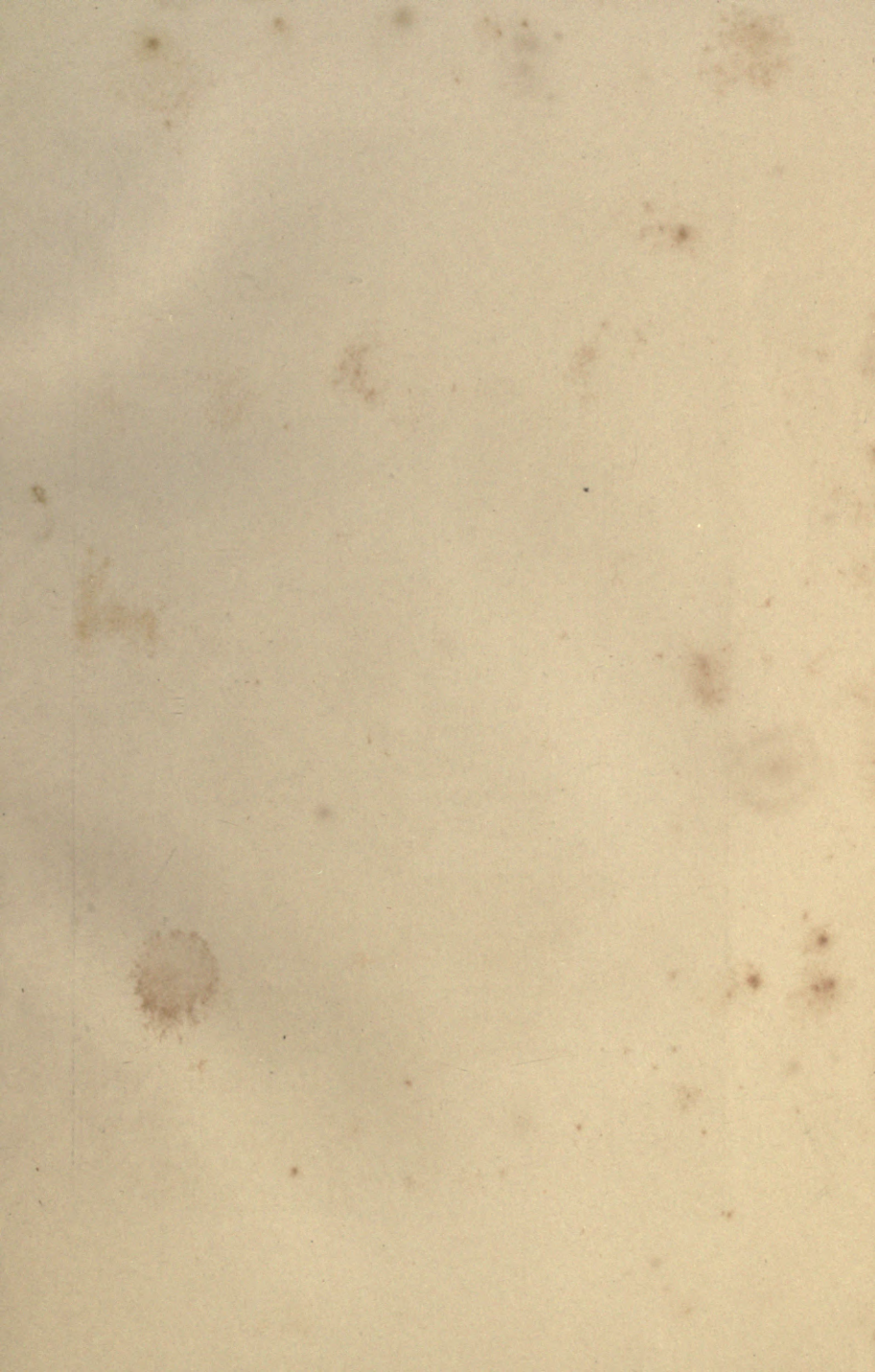


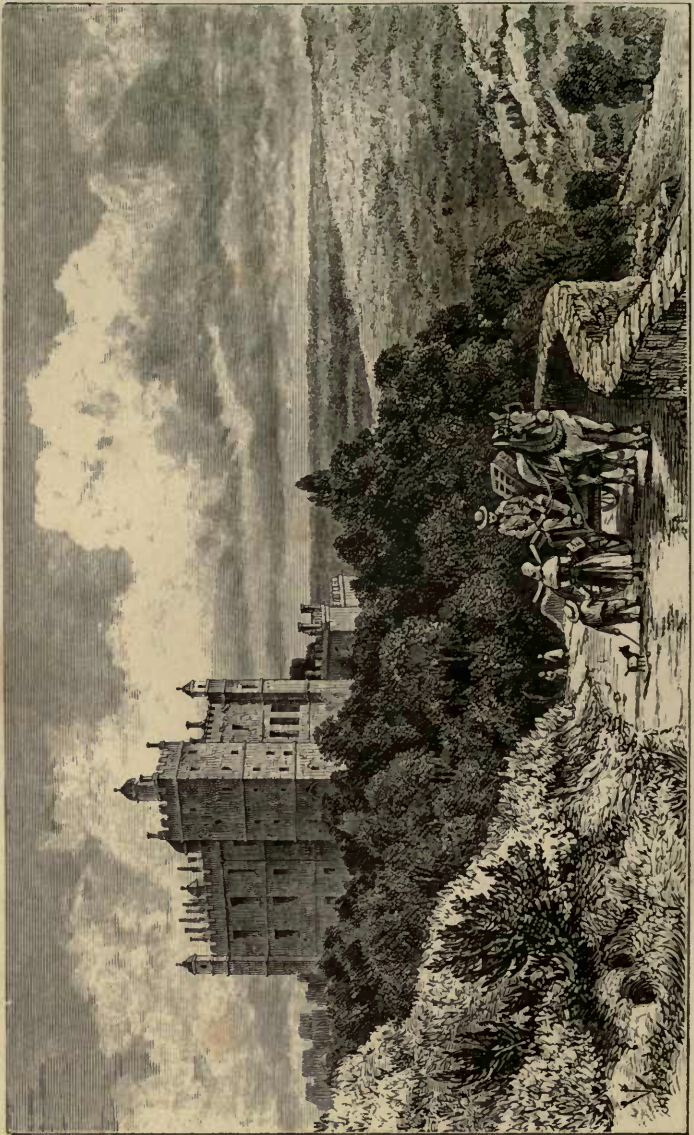


Bolsover Castle.

[Frontispiece.]

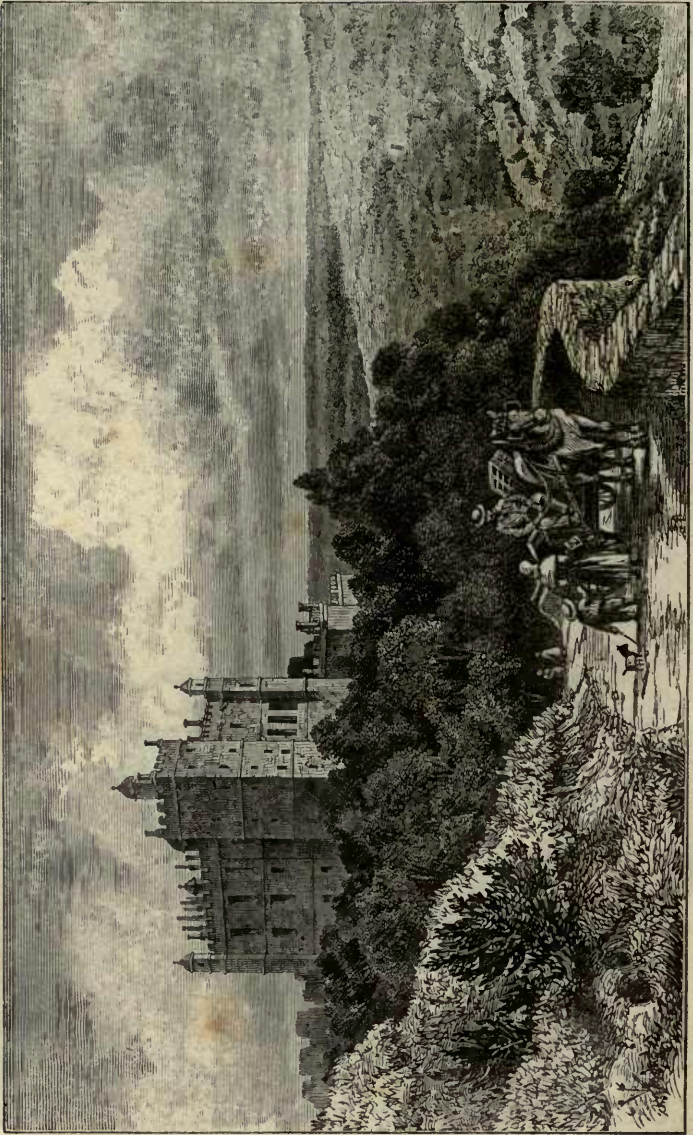














# RAMBLES AMONG THE HILLS

IN THE PEAK OF DERBYSHIRE

AND

THE SOUTH DOWNS.

BY LOUIS J. JENNINGS,

AUTHOR OF "FIELD PATHS AND GREEN LANES."

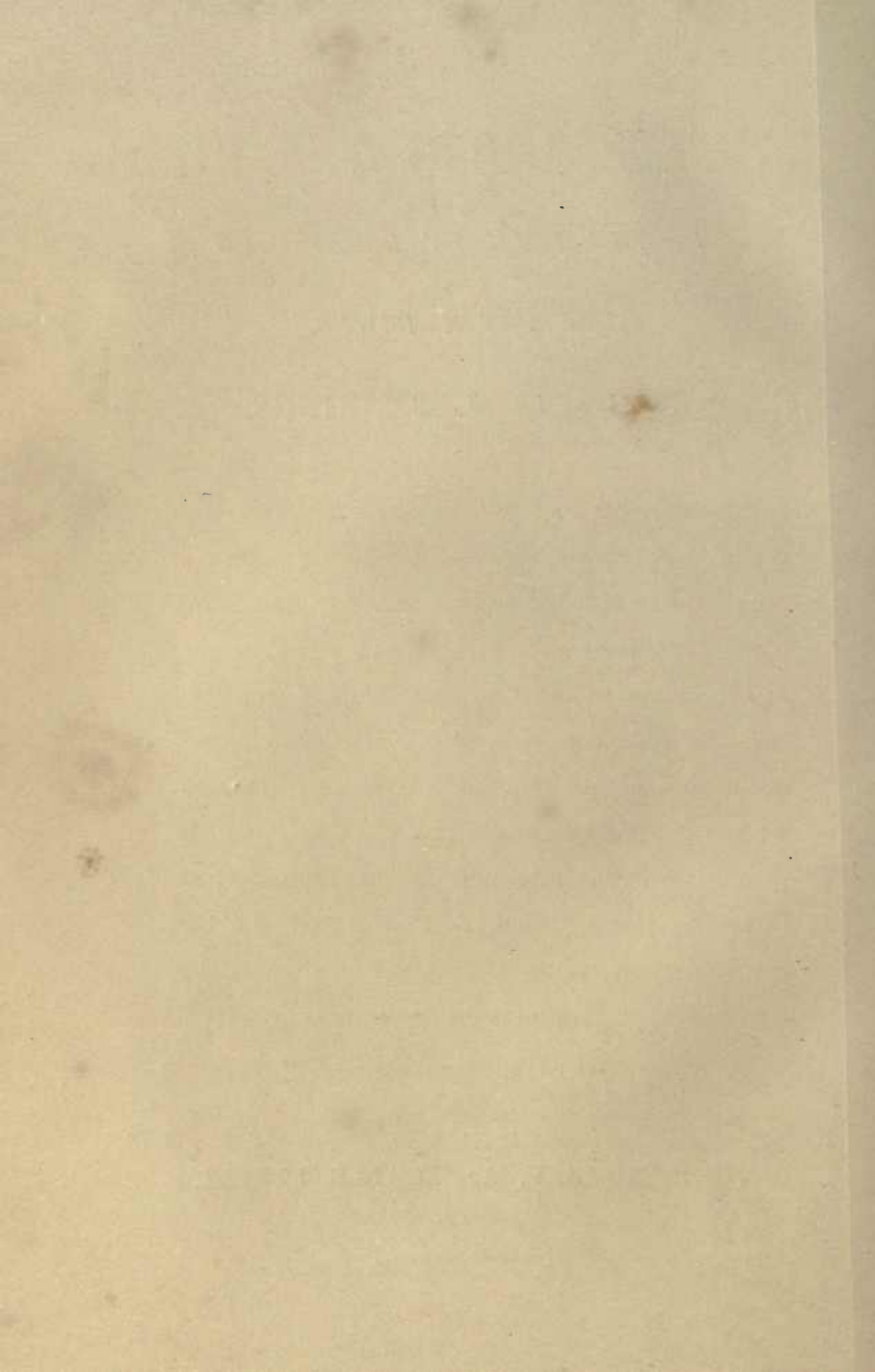


Runel Tower at Cowdray.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:  
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## PREFACE.

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THE Walks described in the following pages have been taken at various times during the last two years, whenever the mood or the skies happened to be favourable. No doubt a native of each locality touched upon could mention many places or objects of interest which I did not see in the course of my visit, but on that point my conscience is clear—I always saw all that I could in the time at my disposal. I do not profess to write a guide-book, but with regard to the Peak country in Derbyshire, and the line of the South Downs in Sussex, I believe that I have not left any important points unvisited.\* In describing my rambles, I have generally confined myself to what came under my own eyes, without making

\* Some parts of the South Downs which are not mentioned in this volume have already been dealt with in the author's *Field Paths and Green Lanes*.

a hopeless attempt to enter into competition with Mr. Murray's invaluable *Handbooks*, to which I have been so often indebted for hints or guidance. Those works form in themselves a most varied and interesting library of reference on England and English local history, and to excel them in their special field does not, happily for me, fall within the range of my design.

It will be seen that I have usually made out a track of my own, remote from much-frequented roads, and have carefully explained the path wherever it is at all difficult to find. When no such explanations are given, it is because none are needed. Everybody who is fond of walking likes to explore a little for himself, and I have left room enough for the exercise of that faculty. I may fairly say that I have been at great pains to ensure accuracy in the directions here given, and have more than once gone a long distance for the special purpose of verifying them. This task has never been undertaken before as regards the South Downs, and the few books which pro-



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fess to treat of the Kinderscout are remarkable for the absence of any useful information which they afford concerning it.

As in a former volume, which was received with so much kindness by the public, I have given a faithful account of occasional conversations with my fellow wayfarers, or of the scenes in which I have taken a part. Sometimes these little talks and adventures have served to lighten a day's journey, or to beguile a lonely evening at a country inn, and they may possibly have the same sort of effect upon these pages—at any rate, they are what they profess to be, a plain unvarnished tale of actual occurrences. There are many strange people and odd scenes to be met with in England, if a man goes about keeping his eyes open for them, and is prepared to enter into the spirit of the thing when accident throws them in his way. As for the beauty of this little country—for we must all confess it is not large—no one will ever be capable of doing justice to it. Its endless variety

astonishes me more the more I see of it; travel as much as one may, there is always a pleasant surprise in store—a landscape more striking than we have previously met with, fields and hills more exquisitely grouped, nobler and finer trees, or a view which somehow finds its way more directly to the heart. I do not believe there is any man alive who can say with truth that he has seen England thoroughly. One may have lived in much larger countries, it is true, but there are none which it takes so long to get tired of as England. Let the reader give it a few trials, avoiding beaten tracks which are haunted by tramps and the fearful man on the bicycle; going always alone, and allowing himself plenty of time. Let him study people as well as places, and muse long and quietly over the lovely pictures which will disclose themselves one after another to his eyes, and he will soon come to the conclusion that there is not a more beautiful or a more interesting country to travel in than his own. For my part, I wish I could believe that



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one half of the pleasure which my walks have given me will now be felt by those who are kind enough to read about them.

For the illustrations which adorn this volume I am indebted to my friend Mr. A. H. Hallam Murray, who has made his sketches on the very spots described, and reproduced some of my favourite scenes with remarkable grace and fidelity.

KINGSTON MANOR HOUSE,  
LEWES, SUSSEX.



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A. H. HALLAM MURRAY. ENGRAVED BY J. W. WHYMPER.

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PART I.



THE PEAK OF DERBYSHIRE.



# RAMBLES AMONG THE HILLS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CHATSWORTH.

Chatsworth Park.—The Travelling Tinker.—Filial Gratitude.—The Two Ends of Life.—Darley Dale.—An Ancient Yew.—The Crusader's Heart.—A Comfortable Hotel.—Sunshine and Cloud.—Woods at Chatsworth.—Old Oaks in the Park.—Beeley Moor.—Pudding Pie Hill.—English Weather.—The Adopted Child.—Realities of Gipsy Life.—The Encampment.—Horse-dealing.—Through the Wood to Chatsworth.—The Library and its Treasures.—Claude Lorraine.—Generosity of the British Public.

ONE afternoon on my arrival at Chatsworth—the very best head-quarters that can be chosen for excursions in Derbyshire—I strolled into the beautiful Park, and found that I had it all to myself, with the exception of an old man who was plodding slowly along, pushing a little tinker's cart before him. He was rather lame, and seemed very tired; there was therefore every reason for supposing that a rest would be welcome to him. I pulled out my pocket-knife, and asked him to grind it for me. His little barrow-like machine was so arranged that the wheel in front on which he rolled it from place to place became also the wheel for turning the leather-band round the grindstone. First he lifted up the lid



of a box, and pulled out a piece of tin with which he scraped the mud off the wheel. Then he put on the band, began working the treadle with his foot, and very soon a little shower of sparks was flying from my knife. From time to time he left off grinding, and tried the edge on his thumb-nail. I noticed that he was thin, grey, and careworn, and that he spoke like a man of fair education and intelligence. I asked him if he travelled far.

“Not a very wide circuit,” said he, “for I have a lame leg, and cannot go far. Besides, as you see, I am getting old. It’s a bad thing to be old, sir.”

“How far do you go a-day?”

“About seven or eight miles is as much as I can do now. I go from Sheffield to Buxton—that is my round, but it takes me a long time to do it.”

“Is your home at Sheffield?” I asked.

“I have no whoam now, sir, for you see all my children are grown up and married, and they seldom come near me. So I have no whoam.”

It seemed to him quite natural that as soon as his children were able to provide homes for themselves, he should be left without one.

“But wherever I go,” continued the old man, “it is not very easy now to get a place to sleep in. The public-houses do not want me, and I have to go to a lodging-house, where they charge me sixpence for a bed. It takes me a long time to earn sixpence, and if I did not have two or three customers on the road who gave me a little extra, I could not get along at all. When I

sleep at a public-house, I am obliged to drink something, or they would not take me in, and that soon spoils the day's work."

He now pulled out a bottle of oil from his pocket, and took a stone from his box, and began sharpening up the knife, which he presently handed to me saying, "There, sir, that will pare off any corn now." The trees were all in the first fresh beauty of summer, the lilacs and laburnums were in flower, and along the road there passed a group of happy children, carrying in their hands branches of the hawthorn. They, too, in their time would desert the parent roof, and be themselves deserted, and life would seem no better a thing to them than it did to yonder poor old man, hobbling wearily along the last stage of his journey.

Through meadows bedecked with flowers, and by the side of the river Derwent, shining in the sun like the river which another tinker saw in his dream, I walked on to Darley Dale, whither I was bound on a pilgrimage to see a yew-tree, reputed to be the largest in the county, and of great age. Man's years are three-score and ten, but many such periods put together would not reckon the life of this old yew. I found it still green and vigorous, carefully guarded within an iron rail, and likely to see many changing seasons come and go long after all human beings now upon the face of the earth have passed to "the land where all things are forgotten." It stands a grim sentinel in the churchyard, watching the unceasing harvest gathered in, faster even than its own leaves fall. Inside the church there are records of

men who died five hundred years and more ago, but the yew was a venerable tree even then.

I stood for a moment or two looking at an effigy of John de Darley, dated 1325. A little girl, the sexton's child, stepped up to me and said, "It is John de Darley, sir. He died with his 'art in his 'and."

"With his what, my child?" said I, all in the dark as to her meaning.

"With his 'art in's 'and," repeated the girl. "He was a crusader, and that was how he died."

The figure holds in its hand some object resembling a heart, and this has given rise to the belief that the crusader took the precaution to remove that portion of his frame ere laying down his arms for ever. Presently the sexton's daughter ran off to join a group which surrounded an organ-man outside. He was playing an air from *Sonnambula*, and somehow or other it had a strangely foreign sound among those fields and hills. The boys demanded the air over again, and seemed impatient of a refusal. I said a few words to the biggest of them, who was about eight years old, and he nobly took the organ-grinder under his immediate personal protection. "They shan't hurt him," said he; and from that moment the Italian's life was safe. Then I found a way by the side of the river to Rowsley, and so back to Chatsworth, where, at the very gates of the Park—a Park of which it is impossible ever to grow weary—there is one of the most comfortable hotels in England, close to the pretty village of Edensor. If all hotels were like this one, how little temptation there would ever be to



go home! In wandering about Derbyshire the traveller will sometimes have to put up with hard fare, and may perchance even encounter unwelcome bedfellows, such as those which Robert Curzon tells us he met with in a Coptic monastery, where the mattress was stuffed with fleas. But it is always easy to get back to the "Chatsworth Hotel" as a centre for exploration, and there everything is so cheerful and pleasant—the dinner so excellent, the beds so clean and sleep-enticing, the entire arrangements of the house so perfect—that when, like the old tinker, I am too infirm to walk more than seven or eight miles a-day, I will go and spend my remaining years there, and recall bye-gone rambles under the shade of the oak-tree in front of the door, while the pretty chambermaids disport themselves in rustic dances on the lawn.

It was very doubtful weather when I started out the following morning, and the leaden clouds drove over the sky in heavy masses, "one long drift of ragged gloom." But it is a waste of time to pay any attention to the weather in England; one has only to go on, and take its buffets and rewards "with equal thanks." I made towards the wood at the back of the "Palace of the Peak," and stood under the shelter of a noble beech during a heavy shower, and watched the storm sweep by. Presently there appeared a bit of blue sky no bigger than one's hand; it spread gradually over the heavens, and in the course of a few minutes the sun's beams straggled through the lovely foliage, making golden patches among the blue bells and ferns, and causing the

long grass to sparkle as if all the diamonds of Brazil had been scattered over it. The notes of the thrush soon thrilled in the air, a cock-pheasant stepped out



Chatsworth Woods.

proudly from the recesses of the wood, a squirrel darted up a neighbouring tree, and a rabbit came bustling out of the ferns to see what was the matter. The clouds had passed away, and the world smiled once more. Very soon had I climbed the hill, and wandered to the right on the edge of the wood, over a carpet of the







softest moss. This is one of the most delightful woods to be seen in all England, especially in June, when the rhododendrons flame all across its dark places, and the ground is blue with wild hyacinths. There is a broad green path in the heart of the wood, and another on its brow, and from the latter there is a charming view of the Park, and far away over other woods, brown moors, and distant hills. Towards the end of this path some patriarchal oaks begin to make their appearance, and then a whole army comes in sight—an army which bears many signs of rough warfare upon it, but still presents an imposing front. In the days before Bess of Hardwicke, who had so remarkable a talent for making fortunes and getting rid of husbands, these trees were in their prime, and now they are permitted to remain in a solitary and deserted part of the Park, seldom intruded upon by any of the numberless feet which tread through the stately halls of Chatsworth. The lightning strikes them down, or hurricanes strip off great boughs, but hundreds of them still live on, their roots curling round rocks and boulders, their trunks all hollow or distorted into weird shapes, their branches prostrate upon the ground, but bearing green leaves every year. A small stream finds its way down the hill amidst these time-worn fathers of the wood, and there are places where it seems to have carried away all the earth from beneath the trees, leaving them only rocks and stones to rest upon. The oak will continue to stand when all life is extinct in it. But many of these oaks are yet living, and in summer-time their branches partly conceal the

woeful ravages which the long years have made. Each season, however, thins their number—like the “old Guard,” or the soldiers of Waterloo, they disappear one by one, and soon there will scarcely be enough of them left to cover the gaps in the ranks.

Above these relics of the ancient park, there is a gate leading out upon Beeley Moor, generally kept locked, but it is possible to find the means of unlocking it by enquiry at the Chatsworth Hotel. Through this gate a beautiful moorland walk may be at once reached. Immediately on leaving the wood the views become delightful, over valleys and hills, far beyond Stanton, and towards the wild region of the “Peak”—for though Chatsworth is doubtless in the Peak country, yet the true Peak is far from here. We may see the faint outline of it in the distance, a blue tint on the edge of the horizon. Below the wood there is a brilliant picture disclosed of the Park, with the village church and the river, and the dark moors above Froggatt Edge. To the left, standing with one’s back to the wood, is a hill ending in a sort of cape. Towards this I bent my steps, and ere long found myself upon an old cart road, running northwards, towards Chesterfield, and overlooking wide tracts of moor. Then came a still older cart-road, to the left—north-west—and from more than one part of it commanding views are to be gained of Chesterfield, Hardwicke Hall, and the country near Bolsover Castle—that strange old house which no one can ever forget who has once wandered through its mysterious rooms and looked into its gloomy



dungeon-chambers. From the end of the old lane either of two roads will take the stranger to the "Robin Hood Inn," on his way back to Chatsworth. As the upper one naturally affords the best views, I chose that, the road which leads to it passing up a slight rise, marked on the Ordnance map as "Pudding Pie Hill." Just as I reached the foot of this hill, another storm came beating up from all parts of the heavens at once, and I went and tapped at the door of one of the cottages which stand there, and asked permission to take shelter within until the rain had ceased. The clouds were so low that it seemed as if one could touch them by stretching out the hand, there was one of those bleak winds which, as Mr. Ruskin says, are "made of dead men's souls," and then a great rush of rain, and in a few moments sky and earth were alike blotted out. But by that time I was comfortably seated before the cottage fire.

The good woman of the house was busily engaged in sewing a piece of cloth into her husband's trousers, but the hole was so large and the piece so small that it looked as if she were trying to perform a conjuring trick. She told me that she paid £7 a-year for her cottage, and that besides rent there were poor-rates, highway-rates, and other rates to settle. They were very poor, she said, and her husband found it hard to pay the rent. I noticed a pair of little shoes at the fireside, and said, "So I see you have children."

"Yes, sir, but those shoes you see there are not my

child's, although she is the same as one of our own. We adopted it."

"Although you are so poor?"

"Yes, sir, for this was how it happened. Her mother sent for me three hours before she died, and asked me to take it. She was in great distress about it, for it was very young then, and there was no one to take care of it. *Her* husband had run away from her. It has been with us ever since, sir, and we feel to it the same as if it were one of our own. My husband is a blacksmith, and can't always get work—we should do well enough if he could."

The little room, however, was clean and neat, and there were two canaries singing away in a corner, and a pot or two of clove pinks in the window—that old-fashioned and sweet-smelling flower which Perdita declares is one of the "fairest of the season."

At the point where the "Cross Roads Inn" once stood, and where it still stands upon the Ordnance map, there is a road leading north-west to Barlow, another running directly over the East Moor to Calver, and a third going west to Baslow. The last is the way to Chatsworth. On reaching the "Robin Hood Inn," I saw sitting by the side of the Chesterfield road a woman holding her head between her hands, looking the picture of misery. A little boy was playing by her side. They were gipsies—that is, as much like gipsies as the half-castes of the roads commonly are in the present day, for the true gipsy stock is becoming very scarce. They are not allowed now to camp out anywhere at

night if the police are within range, there are very few open commons left, and the gipsy is either driven into the towns or the jail, and in either case his old nomadic life is brought to an end. The genuine Romany blood does not run in the veins of one so-called gipsy out of a hundred.

“Is anything the matter with you?” said I to the woman, observing that she looked ill.

“My husband is drinking up there at the public-house,” she answered; “that’s all he’s good for now. He’s always drinking.”

“What is he?”

“He’s a horse-dealer—I reckon that’s his trade when he’s got any. But he does nothing but drink, and when he’s drunk he abuses me. He’s just been giving me a *hiding* now, the second time to-day.” She began to cry, and the little boy cried too, and altogether it was quite plain that gipsy life is not by any means what it is represented in the *Bohemian Girl* and other favourite stage productions.

A little further on the road I came up with the main encampment—consisting of seven children, two women, and a man, all gathered round a fire over which a pot and a kettle had been slung on sticks. Some onion-peel scattered around showed that a stew of some kind had been in preparation. Two covered carts such as gipsies use were drawn up by the roadside. The party evidently included at least a couple of families, with a man or two absent—it might be gone for a walk in the woods or on the moors close by, for the sake of admiring the fine



pheasants and studying the habits of hares. Whether the man who lay stretched out on the grass before me, smoking a pipe, was the one who had recently ill-used his wife I did not like to enquire, for some families object to have their private affairs pried into.

These people were all rather dark in complexion, but nevertheless they were not the true Zingari. One of the women was washing her child's face, no doubt a most unusual operation, for the child screamed as though its leg were being amputated. I gave it sixpence, and the mother became friendly at once, and told me they were all going to Chesterfield, horse-dealing. "But horse-dealing is not what it was," said she, and if people who did not seem to have a shilling in the world could be horse-dealers, it was tolerably clear that the trade must be getting into a bad way.

"Some of our party's gone to buy bread," she continued, "we've had none to-day."

"Do you eat your meat without any bread?" I asked.

"We haven't tasted meat, cheese, bread, nor anything else to-day, business is so bad. All gipsy trades are gone now, sir."

"What, dukkerin pen and all?"

"Oh, plenty of dukkerin pen when we have a chance," said the woman brightening up and laughing. "One of the girls here would tell your's if you like."

"Tell me your name instead."

"My name is Moulvie. No, sir, there are no Lees among us, but you'd find a lot of them up North. The other family with us is named Grey." One of the Grey

party was a pretty girl, with a handkerchief round her neck, which had partly come untied, and caused her to present a far from unattractive picture.

“I wish you all good-bye and good luck,” said I. “I am looking for a man who has been drinking all the morning and gave his wife a hiding this afternoon.” Thus saying, I started off for the hill opposite the “Robin Hood,” across the edge of the moor, and noticed that the gentleman who had been reclining on the ground was now sitting up regarding me attentively. I kept along the brow of the hill, by the side of the water-course,—a path which winds high above the turnpike road, and leads to a little gate, opening into a fir plantation, with a beautiful landscape spread out far and wide all the way. The path finally leads into the woods above Chatsworth, at the opposite end from that which abuts upon Beeley Moor; and from the hunting tower—easily found—the visitor may, if he is not too tired, make his way to the great house, and see some of its treasures. It is a house well worth seeing, even after one has been wandering about the Park, and that would be a great thing to say for any house. If the visitor can get permission to enter the library, he will find himself in an exquisite room, looking out upon a velvet lawn and a wood-covered hill, and stored with treasures of all ages and countries. There, under lock and key, is the original *Liber Veritatis* of Claude, which was sold by the heirs of the great master for 200 scudi, and would now fetch at auction no one knows how much—perhaps £30,000. For each sketch bears Claude’s own signature, and

many of them are most carefully finished—masterpieces of their kind, passing belief, as Dr. Waagen says, in the “masterly, light, and delicate mode of the execution.” In this library also is the missal given by Henry the Seventh to his daughter Margaret, with these words written on a fly-leaf—“Remember y<sup>r</sup> kynde and louyng fader in y<sup>r</sup> good prayers. HENRY R.” Then there are magnificent illuminated manuscripts, some original Caxtons, and rare books almost without number. This priceless collection is not thrown open to the general public, but the rest of the house is, together with the Park and gardens, and sometimes as many as two thousand persons go through the place in one day. It cannot be said that the Duke of Devonshire is niggardly towards the public, nor are they wanting in generosity towards him in return, for before going away they invariably make him a present of all their sandwich-papers and empty bottles, and are careful to place them where there is no danger of their being overlooked.



## CHAPTER II.

### HADDON, YOULGREAVE, AND STANTON.

A Walk to Haddon Hall.—The Three Roads.—Old English Furniture.—The Ordnance Maps.—The Dakin and Lathkill.—Youlgreave Church.—An Old Storm.—Mr. Burne Jones's Window.—A Visitor at Lunch.—“Not eat Cheese?”—A Wealthy Bachelor.—Coaxing the Women.—Birchover.—A Shady Road.—Stanton Moor.—A Labyrinth of Quarries.—Stanton Village.—View of Haddon.—The Mother's Last Home.

Just on the outside of the village of Edensor, nearly opposite the little house which still remains in Chatsworth Park as a relic of the old village, there is a track across the fields, running in a south-westerly direction towards the woods. A very pleasant walk to Haddon Hall may be taken by starting out from this path, although it is by a route not very easy to find, especially if the visitor be desirous of losing none of the best points of the scenery. I will therefore be as precise as possible in the directions.

The path leaves Edensor village close to the right hand, near the gate, strikes up the hill, and leads eventually to a wooden gate, opening with a latch—avoid the iron gate to the left, which is the approach to game preserves and a keeper's lodge. It is important

to be careful here, for there are several gates, and this, the only right one, is also the only one which can be opened with a latch. It conducts to a short roadway, which crosses diagonally a narrow strip of wood, each wood being so full of game that it is worth while to stand quietly for a moment and watch the hares and pheasants pass from one side to the other, or come out into the sunshine (should there be any) for change and brighter air. At the end of the short lane go straight across a field until you come to a rough farm road, turn to the right, and continue on till you reach a gate. Go through, and a few yards beyond you will see a stone stile, leading to a copse. Get over the stile (not following the road down to the farm), pass through the copse, and make for the clump of beeches which you will see on the hill in front of you. Having reached this clump, fail not to turn and admire the charming view over the woods of Chatsworth, Beeley Moor, Froggatt Edge, and all the valleys and woods of which the wide landscape is composed. Then go through the clump of beeches (avoiding the locked gate to the left), and you will come to a gate opening with an iron latch, and leading into a meadow between two plantations. At the end of this meadow there are two gates near to each other. Take the one to the right, and you will find yourself in a wood, on the brow of a hill, with another and totally different view spread before you, commanding a large part of the Bakewell Valley and the country towards the Peak. It is now necessary to make the best of one's way through this wood,

observing only two things, namely, to keep always going downwards, and to choose the path which runs south-west. If this be done, the traveller will find himself coming out at a point where three green paths meet at his feet, like the three roads which in moral tales are so frequently exhibited to us. With two of them the stranger in these parts would very gladly dispense, especially as there is a seductive one, apparently going in the right direction, which suddenly betrays the unwary pilgrim who trusts himself to it, and shoots him out, much to his disgust, at Rowsley. Follow the path leading west, even while it seems to turn too much to the north, for it will in due season bring you close to a farm, and then, a few yards further, upon the meadows at the back of Haddon Hall—which meadows are generally sopping wet and very slippery after a little rain.

Of Haddon Hall there is nothing to be said which has not been said ten thousand times before. I have not the courage to enter into rivalry with the many writers who have devoted so much power of description to this shrine of all Derbyshire pilgrims, and therefore I will merely suggest that after the visitor has seen the Hall, he should ask permission to look inside the cottage below, near the bridge, for in that there is some very good old oak furniture, collected with judgment and care from various farm-houses by the late keeper of the Hall. There is a little bed-room which is particularly well worth examination. Having bidden adieu to Haddon, I crossed the river and took the path which



runs past a barn south-west, intending to make my way to Youlgreave, where the books gave me to understand I should find a fine old church. There is a path to the right and one to the left, the one to the right being the most direct. But it was so sunk in mud that I turned to the left, and made for the high road, across several fields, and struck down towards a bridge over the river Dakin—a bridge not marked upon the one-inch Ordnance map. It is all but useless to consult these antiquated and misleading maps in finding one's way about the country; most of them have been engraved from surveys taken at the end of last century, and all of them are shamefully and ludicrously inaccurate.

The river Dakin joins the Lathkill, and the Lathkill in its turn runs through a beautiful valley, in which the traveller will be disposed long to linger. The Dakin is generally a clear and lucid stream enough, but in the autumn of 1879 it was a turbid, foaming torrent. The road runs through the little village of Allport, and thence to Youlgreave, where there is a church well worth turning aside to see—a good deal restored, but less ruined by the restorer than many other churches that could be named. The most curious of the ancient relics still existing are the font with a chrismatory, and a statue to one of the Cockayne family. The records preserved in the parish register are unusually interesting, for they tell of many things besides the births and deaths of the villagers. Thus it is related that the summer of 1615 was so dry that between the 25th of March and the 4th of August there were only three

showers of rain, and "this part of the Peake was very sore burnt upp." In the previous winter there had been a great fall of snow, and it lay upon the Kinder-scout till Whitsuntide. "It cover'd the earth," says the chronicler, "fyve quarters deep upp on the playne. And for heapes or drifts of snow, they were very deep, so that passengers, both horse and foot, passed over gates, hedges, and walles. \* \* All countries were full, yea, the south part as well as these mountains." The feature of the church, however, which now chiefly attracts the attention of the stranger appears to be the stained glass window over the altar. This window at certain hours, especially when the western sun begins to fall upon it, is said to exhibit very remarkable effects, and it is at once clear that in all respects it is a striking and meritorious piece of work. It was designed by Mr. Burne Jones and Mr. Morris, and whatever may be said as to the "school" to which these gentlemen belong, there can scarcely be a doubt that their window at Youlgreave is a vast deal better than most of the modern stained glass which is put up in our churches. There may be objections to details. Some people, perhaps, may not admire the jars of pickles and preserves at the top—but the general effect of the window is extremely good, albeit there are occasionally visitors to the church who, the moment they hear that Mr. Burne Jones has had a hand in it, declare that it is an abomination, and point at it with the finger of derision. "So much for there being nothing in a name," said the worthy post-master who showed me the building.

As I had still rather a long journey before me, I thought it well to go in search of some modest refreshment, and directed my steps towards the inn at the farther end of the village. The resources of the place were limited, but I found that bread and butter and cheese and ale were to be had, and I ordered them all, excepting the cheese, which I happen to dislike. After that, I walked into the kitchen and sat down, while the landlady went on making currant cakes for the children.

Presently an odd figure entered—an elderly man, in a soft slouch hat, with a stubbly grey beard and shaggy eye-brows, and a big pair of spectacles adorning his nose. Two things were at once clear—first, that he had followed me in to see who and what I was; secondly, that he had not come very far, for he had his slippers on. In the course of a few minutes, he came up close to the table where I was sitting, and examined my frugal luncheon very carefully. I took it, as it is well to take everything, quite as a matter of course.

“Excuse me, sir,” said the stranger after he had finished his inspection, “I thought you were eating cheese, and that I should like to try a bit. It is so hard to get it good.”

“I am sorry I cannot offer you any,” said I, “but I never eat cheese.”

“Not eat cheese?” cried the stranger, raising his shaggy eyebrows, and looking very much as if he were determined to take the matter up in a personal way.



“Not eat cheese,” I replied.

“Well, well, you are a strange man. Where do you come from?”

“From Cheshire,” said I, thinking it was as good a place to name as any other.

“From Cheshire and not eat cheese? Are you ill?”

“I am rather poorly,” said I, cutting a huge piece out of the loaf.

“I thought there was something wrong. Why, I bought a cheese the other day weighing twenty pounds at fourpence a pound. This is a pretty good cheese of mine, and if you like to come over to my house you shall taste it.”

“Thank you,” said I, “I don’t eat cheese,” just as Monte Christo keeps on repeating to Madame de Morcerf that he never takes peaches or grapes.

“Never mind,” said the stranger, “come over all the same. I have £14 a-week coming in, and am not married. So come over and taste my cheese.”

“You are a rich man,” I replied; “no wonder you like cheese. But how is it that you never got a wife to help you eat it?”

The landlady here remarked that he ought to have got married long ago, in which sentiment I concurred until she left the room for a minute or two, when I privately encouraged this old bachelor of Youlgreave to persist in his present courses, and on no account to introduce a new tenant into his house.

“I will not,” said he, “for I am very comfortable,

and the women only upset one. Besides, I can't get on with them—I can't coax 'em enough," and he shook his head dejectedly.

"Then you stand no chance, for without coaxing nothing can be done. But try again—you really do not know how good marriage is for people, almost as good as cheese." This I said, because the landlady had again made her appearance. "I would advise you to try that beautiful warming-pan on the wall there by way of a beginning in housekeeping—you will find it very useful."

The landlady seemed to interpret this innocent speech as having a great deal of meaning concealed behind it, and burst out laughing. She added several remarks of her own upon the subject, which so nettled the cheese-eater that he retaliated by some personal references to her, and it struck me that, having stirred up this pleasing strife in Youlgreave, it was a favourable time to get on with my journey. Therefore I left the warming-pan question under debate, and returned to the church, and took the little lane which goes by the side of it on my way to Birchover. This soon brings one to a pleasant field-path running through a beautiful country, over picturesque little hills and through shady dingles, and comes out on the high road, where it is necessary to turn to the right. The road is now fringed for some distance with pine-trees on one side, and oaks on the other. What more could a road desire for its adornment? It goes on climbing a hill, and, as it ascends, unfolds some very beautiful views, which present most

of the true characteristics of Derbyshire scenery. Birchover, to which it leads, is one long street of old-fashioned cottages, and from this street I struck up by the cart track for Stanton Common, on which are the Andle Stone, the Nine Ladies, the Rowter Rocks, and other "Druidical" curiosities, concerning which there is very little known, and very much written and said. The Rowter Rocks are especially curious, and next to them the Andle Stone, a large pile, is worth a visit. But what will please the visitor as much as anything will be the grand view up the Matlock valley, the only defect in which is the castle on the top of the hill, said to be a water-cure establishment, but hideous enough for a madman's dream.

On Stanton Moor I got entangled among the stone quarries which have been dug out in every direction, and which must render navigation in these parts very difficult after dark or in a fog. These quarries are deep, and not fenced off, and seem to extend a considerable distance. It was only by scrambling down one of them, at the risk of a dislocated ankle, that I managed to get free from the labyrinth, and on to an old road, which I knew must lead to Stanton—one of the Derbyshire villages which look like a piece cut out of Ireland. It straggles irregularly up a hill-side, and can boast of almost as many pig-styes as houses. A road leads downwards through the village, and another keeps on the high ground to the north-west. The latter is the best, for it is the shortest way to Rowsley by at least two miles, and it commands at one particular point,



which cannot be missed, a charming view of Haddon Hall—the most effective, in my opinion, that can be gained from any spot for miles around. The whole of the Bakewell valley is spread out before the eye, and in the middle of it stands the ancient Hall among its trees, looking a stately home fit for habitation, rather than a dismantled house abandoned to tourists.

As I passed by the top of the village, a group of persons clad in mourning were leaving the churchyard, and many of the villagers were returning to their homes from the same sad spot—sad enough for the mourners who were passing out at the gates, for a mother had been taken from her little ones at the time when they most needed her.

“It is ——’s wife, sir,” said a villager, “and she has left six children behind her; the eldest of them only nine years old. She had to work very hard, and had been ailing for some time.”

“Were they poor?”

“Very poor. She was only thirty-two. There go two of the children with the father.”

He led them, all unconscious of their heavy loss, one by each hand, followed by five or six men and women, and presently they went into a cottage, and the door was shut—shut for the first and last time upon the poor wife and mother. The village boys ran towards the grave, and with much laughter and shouting helped the sexton to fill it in, and when that was done, jumped and danced upon it with noisy merriment. Thus tears and



which might be missed, a panoramic view of Hadley Hall—the most effective, in my opinion, that can be gained from any spot for miles around. The whole of the Downland valley is spread out before the eye, and to the north it is bounded by the ancient-Hall among the trees, looking a lovely home for habitation, rather than a dwelling for a mere monarch to consort.

As I passed by the gate, a group of persons clad in mourning, and many of the children, were gathered round their houses from the road, and I saw the women and girls weeping as they passed. I saw a woman and her children, and a man and his wife, who were weeping as they passed.

"I am a widow," said one, "and my husband has been killed in the war. I have three children, and they are all poor and hard, and had been living by their wits."

"What are they doing?" I asked.  
"They are doing nothing," she said. "There are no jobs for them."

The poor folk, in the course of their heavy life, and by some local influence, to that of my men and women, are extremely poor, and their earnings are very small. The poor folk are very poor, and their earnings are very small. The poor folk are very poor, and their earnings are very small. The poor folk are very poor, and their earnings are very small.







laughter, the tragedy and the farce, ever follow closely upon each other in this life—

For some must laugh, while some must weep,  
Thus runs the world away.



Eyam Cross.





Fox House.

## CHAPTER III.

### EYAM AND MIDDLETON DALE.

A Derbyshire Village.—The Valley of Rocks.—A Cure for Love.—Church Tor.—An Old Garden.—Eyam Church and Hall.—A Mother of Soldiers.—The Lead Trade.—A Clergyman's Devotion.—Cucklet Delph.—Roads about Chatsworth.—The Sheffield Road.—Wellington Pillar.—Froggatt Edge.—“The Fox House.”—“Robin Hood Inn.”—Hard Times again.—The Jack of All Trades.—A Delicate Question.

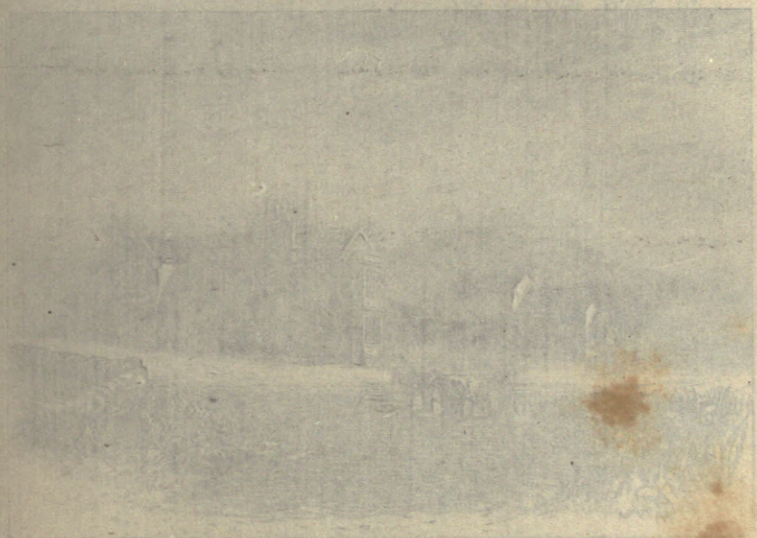
THERE are several places of interest to which the traveller who is desirous of exploring Derbyshire, and who makes Chatsworth his head-quarters, will have to make special excursions, and foremost among them are







The day is through and  
 the night is here by the side of the  
 road. The night is dark and  
 the moon is shining through the  
 clouds. The night is dark and  
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Eyam and Middleton Dale. The way is through the village of Baslow, then to the left by the side of the river over Calver Bridge, and onwards through Stony Middleton, an unsightly and squalid-looking village, said to be a favourite halting-place for tramps and poachers. Derbyshire villages are not often very picturesque, and many of them will recall to the stranger the miserable places which abound in the West of Ireland. Stony Middleton is not attractive; but it stands almost at the gate of a very fine valley, guarded by a precipitous rock, from the top of which, as the story goes, a love-stricken young woman once threw herself in despair. This no doubt was an effectual remedy for love, but so is time, as the young woman would have found if she had only waited patiently. From this point onwards the rocks are massive and grand, standing high above the road, and broken into shapes suggestive of old castles, or dilapidated mansions, or a ruined church. One of them is known as Castle Rock, another as Church Tor, and a stranger who saw them for the first time would find it easy to believe that they were the remains of buildings made by man rather than natural formations of limestone. There are caverns beneath the rocks, and in some places a little gallery half-way up, along which the curious sightseer may cautiously creep. Close by an inn near the centre of the vale there is a road leading to Eyam, another somewhat melancholy village, but not on any account to be passed by unvisited, for there is much beautiful scenery round about it, and the place itself is associated

with a touching and memorable story of suffering and devotion. The streets have now a grass-grown appearance, many of the houses and cottages are left empty or in ruins, and the only pleasant-looking spot in it is that upon which stands Eyam Hall—a comfortable old English home, with a garden laid out in antiquated lawns and terraces. One almost expects to see a gay party of cavaliers and maidens step out from behind a hedge, and gather the flowers which bloom as they did in the self-same garden more than two centuries ago.

While looking at the outside of the church, and admiring the fine old cross in the churchyard, a boy offered to go and find the sexton. But it turned out that the sexton was at that moment deep in a grave, from which secure retreat it was difficult to dislodge him, and therefore the boy brought his wife in his stead. She was a plain and simple woman, bearing upon her face the marks of a hard life, and, perhaps, more than her fair share of trouble. She told me that one of her sons was at home, but had only earned 2s. 3d. in two weeks. He was a shoemaker by trade, the making of shoes being one of the staple industries of Eyam, and leading the other. But for some time past both have been in a bad way, for nobody seems to care to buy the shoes, and the lead is no longer in demand. “Lead is so cheap,” said the woman, “that they cannot earn anything by working at it. Our trade is all gone.”

Thus saying, she opened the door of the church, the most interesting feature of which is an aisle to the memory of the Rev. W. Mompesson, who laboured among the plague-

stricken community here throughout the year of terror, 1665, when, out of the 350 inhabitants of Eyam, 267 perished miserably, and were put to rest beneath the fields which they had tilled. In one field there is a stone over a family of seven persons, all of whom died in a week, and were dragged, as tradition says, to this spot by their mother, and there buried. The stones over their remains are still to be seen. Mr. Mompesson closed his church and held service in the open air, in a lovely ravine, and isolated his unhappy parishioners so that the contagion should not spread. It was his mournful lot to see his own wife fall a victim to the scourge, but he never ceased to do his duty, endeavouring to the last to turn the thoughts and hopes of his poor people to the only sure and unfailing source of comfort under all sorrows and disasters. The aisle, which is dedicated to this faithful follower of his Master, is scarcely worthy of his name, and the ancient cross outside might have been made a more suitable memorial to both husband and wife. There is a stone over Mrs. Mompesson's grave, with her name inscribed upon it. "I have cleaned the letters out with a stone very often," said the sexton's wife, "but the moss soon fills them up again. As I was telling you, sir, I have a son in India in the 17th Hussars, and last May another one, a third, enlisted in the artillery. It is very hard."

"But not harder," said I, "than to make shoes at Eyam which nobody will buy."

"No, sir, but it is hard to bring up sons and then lose them."

As we came out of the church a gentleman spoke to me, and kindly offered to lend me the key of the gate which leads into "Cucklet Delph," the ravine in which the good parson held his services when the virulence of the plague no longer permitted the people to assemble under a roof. This gentleman proved to be the owner of the old house above, Eyam Hall, and he very kindly allowed me to see that, and also gave me the key to Cucklet Delph, towards which I made my way through the long wet grass and over pools of water. Close by the gate of the Delph may be seen another relic of the old village—the parish stocks. The ravine below is full of wild flowers and singing birds, and the rock from which Mr. Mompesson preached is still to be seen, the open space near it being known to the villagers as Cucklet Church. It is a scene now which may interest a passing artist, but these peaceful hills have witnessed the utmost extremity of human anguish and horror, echoing night after night, and day after day, with the sobs of the broken-hearted, and the cries of mothers weeping for their children, torn so cruelly from their arms.

The Eyam moors rise at the back of the village, and there is a pleasant walk over them to Hathersage, or the stranger may follow the road to Tideswell, where there is a large and beautiful church, with many remarkable old monuments, and an interior which justifies the title the people have given it of the Cathedral of the Peak. Or the road may be resumed through the remainder of Middleton Dale, and followed to Ashford





As we came out of the cavern a gentleman stooped to the ground and kindly offered to lend me the key of the gate which leads into "Guckles Delfin," the ravine in which the great insect held his services when the virulence of the plague no longer prevented the people to assemble.



the stranger may follow the road to the west where there is a large and beautiful church with many monuments and an inscription which records the life the people have given it to the north end of the Dale. On the road may be reached beyond the boundary of Middleton Dale and before a second







and Hassop, and from thence to Bakewell or Chatsworth—either of these walks will take the traveller through a wild and yet beautiful country. But, in any case,



Eagle Rock.

before he departs from Chatsworth for the still wilder districts further north, he must not fail to launch out upon the Sheffield road, and make for a pillar which is

plainly to be seen after passing Baslow on the top of a hill across the valley. Two or three hundred yards before reaching a toll-gate on this road, a field path to the left strikes off towards the pillar, and the visitor should take to this, leaving a little wood on the left, and crossing a brook. Then go up the field in front towards a barn with two or three small yews by its side, and again keep straight on beyond the barn towards the crest of the hill, turning now and then to admire the glorious views, until you reach the old wall. Get through any of the gaps which the cattle have made, and you will find a rough green path before you, which leads on to an old grass-covered cart track. Keep to the right and you will soon be brought to the tower or pillar, which turns out on nearer inspection to be a stone cross, inscribed "Wellington, 1866." You are now high up among the moors, and can pleasantly spend a summer's day wandering in almost any direction. To the left of the monument a large mass of stone is visible. It is known as the Eagle Stone, and it will be well for the stranger to walk up to and beyond it, for the sake of the magnificent views which are to be obtained from the edge of the hill. The walk may with great advantage be extended along Froggatt Edge and to the "Fox House" Inn, with delightful views all the way. Or if this be too far, the visitor may return after a stroll along Froggatt Edge, where the rocks are very curious, to the monument, and follow the green and mossy drive between the heather towards the Sheffield road again. Having reached this road, cross

it into the green lane opposite, almost at the beginning of which there is a gate, with a notice warning off trespassers. This, however, is not intended to frighten away the harmless pedestrian, especially if he be quietly disposed, and not given to frightening the grouse, and making himself an abomination in the eyes of birds, hares, and man. Follow the cart track closely—it is much the best way, although it may not look so, especially after wet weather, for it is then deep in mud. It passes through several gates, and eventually comes out upon the high road near the “Robin Hood” Inn, where the traveller will be disposed to seek such refreshment as the place affords. He will fare better if he has made his way in another direction, more towards Sheffield, at the “Fox House,” which was once an old coaching inn, and stands in a situation which ought to bring to it plenty of visitors, although coaches no longer run along the road. The moors extend for many miles around, and when the traveller has seen all that Derbyshire has to show, he will probably come to the conclusion that nothing has pleased him more than the views from Froggatt Edge and the “Fox House,” within a few miles of Chatsworth Park.

After a long ramble, I halted one day before the “Robin Hood” Inn, in the hope of securing lunch, for I had tramped from Chesterfield—a walk I do not recommend others to take, and therefore it is unnecessary to describe it here. There are parts of the road which are extremely beautiful, but many parts that are not, and there is not the slightest necessity for anyone

who is in Derbyshire to be bored even for an hour with dull roads and tame scenery. I found that the door of the "Robin Hood" opened into a little kitchen, where a girl was getting the dinner ready. A very straight and shapely girl she was, and civil withal, for she at once dusted a chair and invited me to sit down. There was one other room, with a good fire in it although it was June, and an old sheep-dog was lying on the floor. There was also the mother of the girl, making cakes.

"He is old and deaf now," said the mother, pointing to the dog, "and no longer of any use, like other old things." The girl laughed. "You may laugh," said the woman, "but you'll find it out some day, won't she, sir?"

"Not a doubt of it," said I. "But let her have her day first."

"Oh, ay, and welcome," said the woman, as she cut me some bread and butter.

"Where are your sleeping-rooms?" I asked, having read in my guide book that this pokey little roadside inn was "much frequented in the grouse season."

"There are none," replied the woman, "and I wish there were, for it is a terrible lonely place. T'weather's been so bad this year that for weeks together no one comes here. What we shall do if it keeps on, I do not know." The fact is that the "revival of trade" has not yet extended to this region. There were some symptoms of a return of good fortune to Sheffield towards the close of 1879, but they vanished almost as suddenly as they came.



A few yards beyond the inn the same story of hard times was repeated. A man was sauntering along the road with his hands in his pockets, evidently caring very little for anybody, after the fashion of most Derbyshire folks. Nowhere is there a more "independent" set of men and women. I took the liberty of remarking to this man that it was a fine morning.

"It is, sir. It will be lucky for the poor farmers if it lasts."

"They have been doing badly about here, have they?"

"Losing money, sir, although they get the farms cheap. The Duke is an easy landlord, and if he were not it would be bad for us all."

"Pray what trade are you?"

"Me, sir? Well, I am a little bit of everything. Sometimes I turn-to at shoemaking, and sometimes I do a little gardening. Sometimes I work as a mason, and sometimes I go out with gentlemen fishing. I never know what I shall do next week."

A little child here ran out of a cottage to meet him, and he took it up and kissed it.

"Is this one of your children?" I asked.

"It is not, sir," said the man, "for I am not married—and I have no children," he added, after a little pause, as if thinking that his first statement was not complete.

"Well, perhaps you are lucky."

"I generally think so, sir, though I don't know. Might be better and might be worse—can't tell nowt about it. Are you married, sir?"

“ Well, guess,” said I.

The man surveyed me carefully, and said, “ I should say—No, you are not.”

“ What makes you think that ? ”

“ Because you seem to be pretty well contented, and able to enjoy yourself, and like wandering about the country, for I have seen you several times lately, and always alone.”

“ And married men are not like that ? ”

“ They are not, sir.”

“ Then that settles the matter,” said I, for I hate to contradict anybody.

## CHAPTER IV.

### BAKEWELL TO BUXTON AND AXE EDGE.

Fishing in the Wye.—Bakewell Church.—Dorothy Vernon.—Ashford in the Water.—Monsal Dale.—Chee Tor.—Buxton and its Waters.—A Town of Invalids.—A Road to the Moors.—The “Cat and Fiddle.”—A Quiver full of Arrows.—Shining Tor.—Axe Edge.—The Source of Four Rivers.

THERE is a very fair inn at Bakewell, once much resorted to by anglers, but the fish are gone, and the anglers have followed them. Perhaps at the very beginning of the season a few trout of fair size may be caught in the Wye near Bakewell, but as a rule the stream is most unmercifully whipped all day long, and probably poached at night, so that the fishing is now scarcely worth wasting any time and trouble over. But there are always rods ready for the stranger in the hall of the “Rutland Arms,” and for the first evening of his stay he may find some amusement in trying to persuade himself that he can catch a fish or two, but he had better make all his arrangements for dinner independently of his own dish of trout. The old church is better worth a visit than the river. Here sleeps the Dorothy Vernon whose elopement from

Haddon Hall has given her a fame which probably she never coveted, and would much rather not have had. It all arises from her having gone down a pretty staircase on the night of her flight into a picturesque garden. Had she eloped from an ordinary house, nobody would have said anything about it. There is a hint in this which ladies with a weakness for the romantic should not overlook. Poor Dorothy has been the theme of innumerable poems, sonnets, and pictures, and all because she did not go out by the front door when Sir John Manners ran away with her. In Bakewell Church, however, she sleeps at peace—few of the rhymesters or sentimental tourists are aware that she was laid there. The old cross in the churchyard will remind the traveller of the one at Eyam, and he will be interested with the Foljambe monument, dating as far back as 1366. When he has looked at all these, and climbed the hill on the other side of the valley, and seen what a new and beautiful view of Chatsworth it has given him, he will be ready for his little journey to Buxton. And this he had better begin by driving to Ashford in the Water, for there is nothing worth lingering over between Bakewell and that village, and the turnpike road is likely to become tiresome. This will leave him about twelve miles to walk, or if he strikes off from Miller's Dale for Tideswell, five miles more.

Ashford has a neater and cleaner look than most villages in Derbyshire, and some old customs—the ringing of the curfew among them—still survive in it.







Monsal Dute













After going a mile and a half along a hilly road, the traveller will all at once see below him a lovely valley, with the Wye winding round to the left between charming hills, and going in another direction straight before him, far beneath the railroad. Every now and then a train dashes out from one black hole and disappears into another, after crossing a high viaduct—for the Midland railroad between this and Buxton is all tunnels and lofty bridges, a wonderful piece of engineering work, even in these days of wonders. The valley below is Monsal Dale—one of the prettiest of all the numerous dales in Derbyshire. The road winds below the hill, just beyond the little public-house with the sign of the “Bull’s Head,” and continues on through Miller’s Dale, where the rocks are very picturesque in form, in some places tree-clad from top to bottom, in others bare and stark. The most wonderful of them all is “Chee Tor,” 300 feet above the Wye, a splendid mass of freestone. Road, rail, and river are all close together, and the scenery is of that character which is universally popular, for there is something in it which pleases every taste. Ashwood Dale is also pretty, but perhaps before reaching Buxton the visitor will begin to think that there is a certain degree of sameness about these dales which somewhat palls upon the appetite, and that after all there is nothing finer of its kind than the view of Monsal Dale from Edge-stone Head.

Buxton is not a place which the traveller or sketcher will desire to visit more than once. A French tourist

who visited Buxton in 1784 (St. Fond), thus records his impressions of it: "Its waters may be excellent, but its atmosphere is impregnated with sadness and melancholy." But the Buxton waters are justly celebrated for their healing properties, and a stranger there will come to the conclusion that they cure all the diseases known to man, for he may see them applied in an endless variety of ways. People drink them, bathe in them, and even pour them into their eyes out of little glass vessels, an operation which it makes one feel very uncomfortable to witness. Invalids crowd the streets and hotels, for the springs are said to produce miraculous effects, making the lame to walk and the blind to see. At the large hotels it is customary to dine at a fixed hour with a collection of interesting "cases," all of which the visitor will sincerely hope will have a favourable termination, while heartily wishing himself away from the scene. Once I tried a smaller inn in order to escape the necessity of studying chronic forms of rheumatism and gout, but I was rather taken aback by a man informing me confidentially as I sat smoking my cigar in the parlour that when he was last there he had been tormented by "boogs." "They bite me i' th' eye, and boong 'em a' up," said he, and I was nearly decamping on the spot, but there turned out to be no occasion for alarm. It does not need a visitation of this kind to depress one's spirits in Buxton, for in bad weather everything is calculated to produce that effect—the long processions of invalid-chairs, the eye-washings, and the clouds which



too often gather from all the neighbouring hills and pour out their contents upon the town. I have been there on several occasions, and never saw the sun shining three hours together, but doubtless old inhabitants can remember days when it has been visible all the morning, or perhaps during an entire day, although it would require a considerable body of evidence to induce me to believe it. At night how the windows rattle all over the house, and by day how the keen bitter winds must rack the bones of all who are condemned to inaction, or to be dragged up and down the cheerless streets in Bath-chairs! The authorities of the town have done all that is in their power to render it attractive—it is exceedingly well kept, there is a good concert hall, a garden which must be a pleasant place to lounge in when the weather is favourable, good shops, and clean streets. The hack drivers are numerous, and seldom ask more than twice their proper fare. But when all is said, the man who is not in need of medicinal waters will shift his quarters as soon as he has explored the country round about, and this will provide him with occupation for a day or two, most of the excursions taking him a safe and comfortable distance beyond the town.

At little over a mile from the esplanade, to the west, there is a village called Burbage, and an old road leads up through and from it towards the moors. The carriage road winds to the left of it, and is a very good road of its kind, but not equal to the one which is specially adapted to the pedestrian, and which makes in a toler-

ably direct manner for the highest part of the moors. As one travels on, a broad road will be seen to the left—this goes to Congleton in Cheshire. Another, almost at right angles with it, goes over Axe Edge, the highest of the hills in this part of the country, and rather a hard place to travel over, since much of the ground is wet and boggy. The view from the summit is by no means equal to that from Froggatt Edge near Chatsworth, and the eye is constantly drawn from the distant scenery to the hideous lime-works which fill up and disfigure much of the foreground. The old road from Burbage does not go to Axe Edge, but brings the traveller out close upon the “Cat and Fiddle,” a lonely sort of inn amid a wild waste of moor, which I had hoped to make my head-quarters for a day or two. But the landlord smilingly assured me that this was impossible. Heaven had been pleased to confer upon him a large family without a corresponding number of bed-rooms, and consequently he can do little or nothing for the traveller. “There are twelve of us here,” he told me, “and only four bedrooms,” and after that simple arithmetical statement I did not press my request to be allowed to sleep there. It is a pity, however, that the “Cat and Fiddle” has not even one room set aside for strangers, for every judicious traveller would desire to stay a day or two there, and examine the country round with the attention and care which it deserves. The nearest bed to the “Cat and Fiddle,” however, is at Buxton, and that is rather more than five miles away.

The front of the house faces Cheshire, and on the

turnpike road a little way below it is a stone marking the boundary of three counties—Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire. The place is therefore rather peculiarly situated, and one would like to strike off from it as a starting point, instead of having to walk five miles to it, and then be barely at the beginning of the real day's work. I would have contented myself for one night with the little parlour, in which there is a picture on the wall of a cat playing upon a fiddle, but the landlord begged me not to think of it. Let us hope that his house will grow larger and his family remain as it is. In the meantime, the stranger may easily make an excursion to it by the way I have mentioned, or by Goyt's Clough, and having reached it, let him proceed on the Macclesfield road a few hundred yards past the inn door, when he will notice a gate opening into an old cart track. Follow this track, turning to the right, and keeping on past a shooting-box. Then go on by a wall winding up the hill to the left, and when the top of the hill is reached, a magnificent view will reward the traveller for his pains—a view extending far over Lancashire and Cheshire, and towards the Kinderscout, king of Derbyshire hills, and taking in the rocks of Beresford Dale, with many a mile of green valley and brown moorland. Everywhere the hills are broken up into scores of fantastic shapes. This is the best thing the country anywhere near Buxton has to show, and when the visitor has seen it, he cannot do better (supposing that his time is limited) than return to the "Cat and Fiddle," and take the straight road to

Axe Edge. It runs southward, past two or three collieries or pits, and at the brow of the hill the stranger should turn off on to the moor to the left, and make towards a pile of stones which marks the highest point of Axe Edge. The hill is long and rather steep, and here the beautiful river Dove takes its rise, as well as three other rivers—the Wye, the Dane, and the Goyt. It need scarcely be said that they make no very brave show at this height—it will puzzle the stranger even to find them all. The hill slopes downwards towards the south, and when the traveller has seen enough of it, he may strike down to the Leek road, over rather a long stretch of broken moor, and work his way back to Buxton, or if he is a stout walker, and wishes to see Dove Dale, he could go on to Hartington—but before adventuring upon the latter undertaking he cannot do better than make some enquiries of the landlord at the “Cat and Fiddle.” The distance is not less than fifteen miles, over very hilly country, and the road is one of those for which a few directions on the spot will be found worth all the written advice that could be offered, no matter how carefully it might be drawn up.



## CHAPTER V.

### HARDWICKE HALL.

A Field Path from Mansfield.—How to Escape the Turnpike Road.—  
“More glass than wall.”—Horace Walpole and Hardwicke.—  
Old Rooms and Tapestry.—An Industrious Queen.—The  
“Goddess of Peacocks.”—A Travelling Trunk.—The Long  
Gallery.—Portraits and Books.—Unexpected Interview with  
“Tiger.”—A Post which is no Sinicure.—Poaching as a Trade.  
—The Ruins at Hardwicke.—The Gamekeeper’s Friends.

HARDWICKE HALL is about eight miles from Mansfield, but there is a field path part of the way by which the distance may be reduced to six miles. It is a somewhat difficult path to find, and therefore I will explain as clearly as I can the proper way to go.

The stranger must first of all inquire for Westfield Lane, which everybody in Mansfield will be able to point out. A little way up there is a “fork,” where the road winds a little to the left, close to some out-houses on a farm, and to the right of those out-houses is a narrow lane between hedges. Follow this lane for a quarter of a mile or so till you come to a stile; go over the stile, and keep to the hedge on the left-hand side of the field. Then go through a gate, and straight across another field, and then over a third, keeping now close

to the hedge on the right-hand side. This third field comes out into a public road. Turn to the left, and go along a few yards till you see a gate on the right, with a path running beyond it through a field, and the hedge on the left. Take this path and follow it over *nine* other fields in all. On reaching the fourth field, you will see a windmill on ahead, which may now help as a guide, for the course lies in the direction of that mill. At the end of the ninth field, you strike a public road again, and go along that till you come to two stones on the left-hand side, which serve as a stile, and between which you pass. From the stone stile there are five more fields to cross; be careful at the last one to go over a stile, and not through a gate at the right-hand of it. In this last field of all you come close to the windmill, a battered-looking affair, propped up on a pillar. At the end of this field a sort of ladder does duty as a stile. Here three roads branch off—take the one going straight forward, to the left of the mill (north-east). It is impossible now to do better than follow this road all the way to Hardwicke, past two or three farms, and over a railroad bridge. The road is called Newbound Lane, and is duly marked upon the ordnance map, although of course the field paths are not. An iron gate leads into the park by the side of two little cottages on the right-hand of the road, at six miles from Mansfield. The country passed through is tolerably pleasant, but the ordinary turnpike-road is very dismal and uninteresting, and there is no conceivable object to gain by walking over it.

The great Hall from this side of the park looks all windows, and one sees immediately how correct, though brief, a description of it is given in the old distich :—

“ Hardwicke Hall,  
More glass than wall.”

There is so much glass that no one would take the house for an old one if he did not know something of its history. I should have passed it under the impression that it was the work of some modern architect, built sixty years or so ago for an Indian nabob or a flourishing broker. It does not look its real age, nor, indeed, any age at all worth mentioning. Many high-flown descriptions have been written of “ancient Hardwicke,” but the gifted authors evidently allowed their imaginations to run away with them. Until you get inside the doors, there is nothing which wears the look of antiquity to be seen, except the ruins near the present Hall; there are not even many trees which look very old, though I noticed some good oaks and yews, much cut about at the tops by high winds. Horace Walpole has been frequently condemned for his criticisms upon Hardwicke, contained in a letter to George Montagu, dated Sept. 1st, 1760. “Never,” he writes, “was I less charmed in my life. The house is not Gothic, but of that betweenity that intervened when Gothic declined and Palladian was creeping in—rather, this is totally naked of either. It has vast chambers—ay, vast, such as the nobility of that time delighted in, and did not know how to furnish.” Whether this account is technically correct or not I

will not undertake to decide, but I venture to say that Walpole accurately describes the impression which the house will make upon anybody who sees it for the first time. There is no one upon being brought suddenly in front of it who would not be astonished to learn that it was finished in the year 1597.

Inside, however, its true age begins to show itself by many signs—in the dark panelling of the rooms, the heavy oak staircases, and the curious little chapel, with its beautifully-worked tapestry round the altar, said to have come from the fingers of Mary Queen of Scots. It is marvellous how much tapestry this unhappy lady worked, and in how many different houses she was a prisoner. An old house can scarcely be said to be complete without a “Mary’s dungeon” in it. It is sincerely to be hoped that she never saw the inside of half the chambers of horrors which legends have assigned to her. There is a fine statue of her in the entrance hall of Hardwicke, and a very striking portrait in the library, representing her in a black dress, with a wan, haggard face, painted, it is supposed, just before her execution. In the dining-room one of the most striking objects is the mantelpiece, with the initials “E. S.” upon it, and the date 1597. “E. S.’s” abound all over the place, inside and out, some of those on the turrets outside being evidently new or “restored.” Everybody who goes to Hardwicke will of course know that it was rebuilt by Elizabeth Countess of Shrewsbury, who was as manly a woman, with as good an eye for business and her own interests, as her namesake upon the throne. Two such

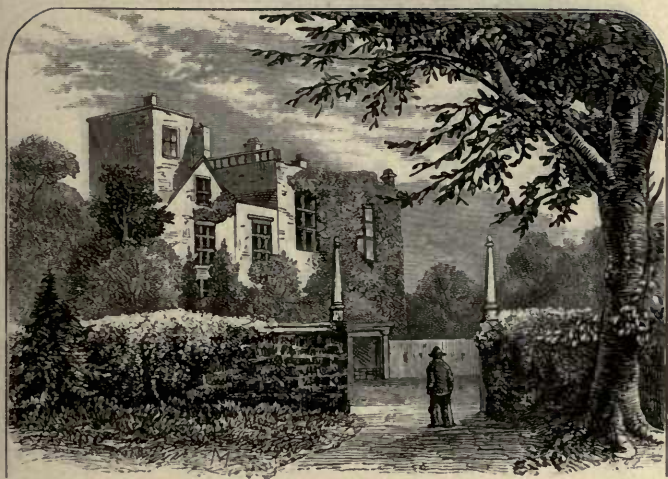


Elizabeths rarely adorn the world in the same generation. No wonder that Bess of Hardwicke took care to put her own initials everywhere, for apart from the fact that Hardwicke was hers by ancestral right, she had obtained a complete mastery over her third husband, the Earl of Shrewsbury, and even reduced him, as he complains, to the condition of a "pencyoner." On the 5th of April, 1585, he lamented in a letter to the Earl of Leicester, that the Queen had taken the part of his wife, and "hathe sett downe this hard sentence agaynst me, to my perpetual infamy and dishonour, to be ruled and overranne by my wief, so bad and wicked a woman." The Bishop of Lichfield tried to console him by telling him that though his wife was accounted "a sharpe and bitter shrewe," yet that "if shrewdenesse or sharpnesse may be a just cause of separacion between a man and wiefe, I thincke fewe men in Englande woulde keepe their wiefes longe"—a statement which perhaps concerns the unmarried rather than those who have already made themselves "happy for life."

A portrait of Bess of Hardwicke is in the dining-room—which, by-the-bye, has a floor of cement. There is also one of her second husband, Sir W. Cavendish, between whom and the present Lord Hartington the visitor will perhaps detect a resemblance. The dining-room contains some very beautiful tapestry, also the work of the ill-fated Mary; and I noticed a fine old oak chest just outside the room, and on the staircase some indifferent frescoes—one representing, as my guide informed me, "Juno the goddess of peacocks."

I was also much struck by some of the beautiful old doors, and by a table in the "State-room," with various games represented upon it in inlaid woods of divers kinds—an ingenious piece of work. In a chamber called the "green bed-room," there is a curious old brass-bound trunk—an immense affair, capacious enough to satisfy a Saratoga belle, and strong enough to defy the most Herculean "baggage smasher" in the whole United States. Was this the trunk which "E. S." took with her when she buried one of her numerous husbands, and "moved in" to the new establishment? There is a room said to have been used by the Queen of Scots, and a quilt worked by her; also some bed-hangings; also some chair-covers; also some embroidery on velvet. It is clear, in fact, that the poor lady could never have spent an idle moment at Hardwicke.

There is a very long gallery in the house, filled chiefly with portraits, some of which are extremely interesting. A wonderful portrait hangs over a doorway, representing a Spanish gentleman (apparently) dressed in red—a red-lined cloak, red stockings, and so on—and with a most attractive and powerfully-painted face. I asked my guide who this was, but she said the portrait was "unknown." It is strange that neither the subject nor the painter of such a work as this has ever been traced. The portrait of Queen Elizabeth is curious, consisting chiefly of a gigantic farthingale. Ladies of the present day contrive to do with much less round their charming persons. No doubt the visitor will notice the very striking portraits of the Earl of Cumberland,

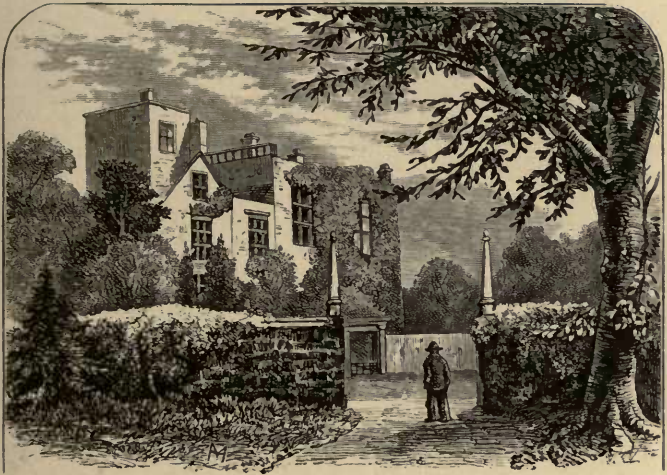


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 bear-bound trunk—an instance of the ingenious contrivance  
 to entrap a Saratoga bear, and strong enough to defy



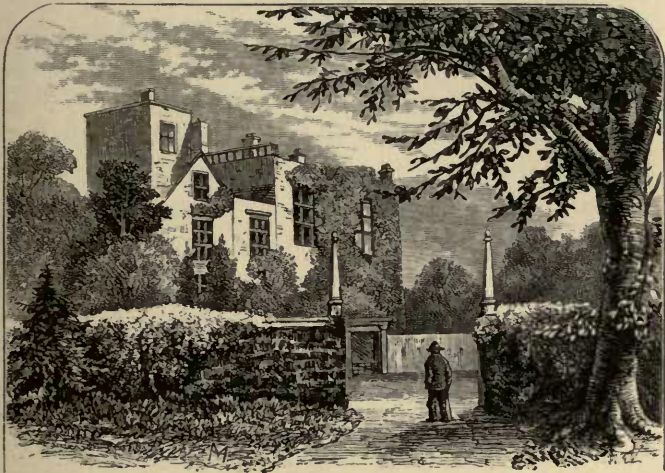
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 ... No doubt the ... will notice  
 the ... of the ...







of Richard first Earl of Cork, of Lord Treasurer Burleigh, and of Sir Walter Raleigh. On one of the low book-shelves in this gallery I remarked a queer jumble of useless books, apparently the sweepings of a better library—but among them I turned up the first



Ruins at Hardwicke Hall.

(English) edition of “Vathek,” and Woodfall’s edition of “Junius,” beautifully printed. Also on a table there is a delightful kitchen for a child, the pots, pans, and other utensils being of silver, exquisitely made. I should like to have stopped a few moments and played with them myself, but the young woman who acted as

guide whisked me through the room at a break-neck pace. When she saw me looking at the books she tapped impatiently with her foot, but I recommended her to read "Vathek," and if she did so, I am sure that by this time she has forgiven me. The silver toy-set was presented by the late Duke of Devonshire to Lady Louisa Cavendish, and a happy child Lady Louisa must have been when she first set eyes upon it.

So much I remarked ere I was deposited at the outer door in a breathless condition. There I found myself in front of two more big sets of initials, planted in what I presume may be called the front garden, and said to have been originally dug in and sown there by E. S. herself. Not having anybody now to push me on, I sauntered about the garden, which is not important or pretty. Then I made towards the ruins, and nearly had my head bitten off by a tremendous dog—a dog with a mouth as large as a cavern, lined with fearful teeth. I never saw such a dog before ; it was a dog-fiend.

"Down, Tiger," said a man close by me, and if he had spoken only a few moments later I am convinced that I should have been continuing my journey, like the showman and his bear, *inside* the dog. "It is a bull-mastiff, sir, and we need 'em here." The man was the chief gamekeeper, and lived in the cottage close by the ruins. I had opened the gate and was staring at the ruins with open mouth, when the dog opened *his* mouth too, and I nearly fell into it.

"What a horrible dog!" said I.

"I don't know what we should do here without him,"



replied the keeper, "for although I muzzle him when he goes out, the poachers are more afraid of him than they are of me."

That I could quite understand, although the keeper was a powerful and courageous-looking man.

"Is this, then, a hot corner?" I asked.

"You may say that, sir. Pretty nigh every time we go out we meet a gang of poachers. We are in the centre of three large head-quarters of them—Clay Cross, Pleasley (and some other place which I have forgotten). They rarely make an attempt to run away, but stand and fight it out. Not long ago me and my mates came upon a drove of nine, and we fought with them a long time—one of them struck me on the head with a stick, and another hit me in the chest with a large stone. We took from them 500 yards of netting and scores of stakes."

"Why, that is poaching on a wholesale scale."

"Stop a minute and I'll show you," said the keeper, and he went into his cottage.

The giant dog was in his kennel, but every now and then he came out and leered diabolically at me, as much as to say, "Come and talk to *me* instead of to my master." But I promptly declined.

Presently the keeper returned, bringing with him a double-armful of netting—fine new netting, which it must have cost a pretty penny to buy. The poacher's stock-in-trade is evidently not within the reach of everybody. The hares and rabbits and pheasants are not sought for to supply the family pot, but to supply the

game-dealers of the towns, who take as much as the colliers can send them. When these "sportsmen" have the free run of game everywhere, a partridge will soon be as rare as the hoopoe.

"We go out with our lives in our hands here," said the man; "and two keepers were killed not so long ago"—I rather think he said at Rufford. "Now you can see why I keep dogs."

He showed me a number of other dogs, among them two puppies of "Tiger's," one of which I would have bought if I could have carried him home. These dogs have a very beneficial effect upon the professional tramp, when he is just entering upon your premises in search of a stray duck, chicken, or silver spoon.

"And how about your ruins," said I—"are they not all coming down?"

"Pretty fast," said the keeper. "The only wonderful thing is that they've stood so long. The Giants' Chamber? There it is, sir, up there (pointing to it), but no one can go in now. Almost all the floor has given way, and it would be very dangerous for anybody to walk on the little that is left. You can just see the two giants through the window there."

I looked up, and made out the large figures indicated, over a mantelpiece. I could see enough to show me that the room had been a very handsome one, and it seems a pity that it could not have been saved. Other traces of decoration in plaster remain in various places—two stags and some trees over a fire-place, and ornaments round a wall. But it is only as a group that the

ruins are of interest, the "details" being all blurred and indistinct.

On my way home I met with some of the game-keeper's friends—a knot of five men, lying down upon the grass by the side of the road, with two "running dogs" near them. The men looked thorough rascals all; faces more full of evil and cruelty it would be hard to find in any jail. The "running dogs" resembled their masters closely, but were perhaps a trifle less hard and degraded in aspect. If these are the sort of enemies which the gamekeeper at Hardwicke has to face night after night, I do not envy him his position. Of all poachers in the world, colliers are the most daring and dangerous; but of course they would not poach except to save their poor wives from the pangs of hunger, and their children from a fearful death by starvation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### BOLSOVER CASTLE.

A Ghostly House.—Astray amid Ruins.—Regal Quarters for Owls and Bats.—The Old Woman.—An ancient Hall.—Stepping backwards three hundred years.—Ominous name for a Bedroom.—The Dungeons.—Subterranean Chambers.—A Haunted Kitchen.—The Gentleman with Ruffles.—From the Past to the Present.—“Commercial Gents” at Chesterfield.—How to enjoy Life.—The Inquisitive Bagman.—Travelling in “Notions.”

OF all the houses I have seen, the castle at Bolsover is the most weird and ghostly—a place of mystery, where the spirit of the past still holds unbroken sway, and where the influences of modern life appear to be powerless. To enter its strange portals is to step back suddenly into the shade of vanished centuries. Its long vaulted passages, its subterranean chambers, the dungeon-like holes in its towers, the old-world doors and casements, the kitchen which might almost be a chapel, and the mysterious spaces beneath the adjoining vaults, which ring out a hollow reverberation beneath the feet—all transport one into a region which has nothing in common with the England of the present day. The associations which cluster round this spot take us very far back in our country's history. A castle has stood



here since the time of the Norman conquest, and the foundations and cellars of the original buildings still remain. At the time of the Domesday Survey, the lord of Bolsover, and indeed of all this part of Derbyshire, was William Peveril, the ancestor of "Peveril of the Peak." In the reign of King John it was stoutly held against the Barons, and long afterwards it fell into the hands of Thomas Howard, first Duke of Norfolk. When James the First was on the throne, Bolsover belonged to the Earl of Shrewsbury, whose wife and master, Bess of Hardwicke, often came here, and did her best to pour more bitterness into the overflowing cup of the unhappy Mary, Queen of Scots. It suited her policy to become jealous of Mary, and she never rested till she had made her husband assist in bringing the captive to the scaffold, and within three years she drove him also to the grave. Truly, a "ministering angel," this! She contrived to secure Bolsover for her second son, Sir Charles Cavendish, and his son, who was the first Duke of Newcastle, twice entertained Charles the First in the castle, with a splendour almost unheard of even in that extravagant age. Ben Jonson was sent for to prepare a masque, and "Love's Welcome" was performed for the amusement of the king. In 1644 the castle was captured by the Parliamentary troops, but it is still in the possession of Bess of Hardwicke's descendants in the female line, the Dukes of Portland. Eight hundred years and more of strange eventful history have gathered round this grim and lonely castle; no wonder that in approaching it, on a dark bleak day, when the gloomy keep is but half

visible through the shadows, a sense of mystery and wonder comes in upon the mind.

As I closed the outer gate behind me, an immeasurable space separated me from the world I had left. A lofty and massive tower, standing on the edge of a somewhat rugged hill, reared its head far above the surrounding country. The gateways were crumbling to pieces, coats of arms were mouldering on the walls of a long line of ruins, ancient terraces upon which empty chambers looked down were given up for the habitation of bats and the "obscene bird." Finely carved pillars stood stripped of the roof which they once supported, and the quaint windows gave no sign of life within save when a starling or a jackdaw issued forth, scared by the unwonted step of an intruder. I rapped on the door of a long building which might have formed the wing of a palace, but there was no answer save a wandering echo. I came to another door, and rapped there also, but still there was no answer. The whole place seemed under a spell. I came to a broad wall, on the top of which a coach could be driven, but it led only to ruined apartments, where the grass grew high and thick, and through which the north-east wind swept with a mournful sound. The mysterious influences of the place began to steal into one's blood. I wandered into a gallery, all unroofed and desolate, where there are no fewer than ten lofty windows, the largest at the south end being large and stately enough for a church. Through these vacant spaces the country far and near lay extended before the eye—the green fields, the village churches,

the towers of Hardwicke, the park of another ancient dwelling a few miles away, and the white road below the castle, winding like a snake. There were fine flights of steps leading down only to wildernesses of grass and weeds, and here and there on the dismantled walls were broken mantelpieces and cornices, preserving even in decay some remnant of their former beauty. From these melancholy scenes I turned towards the massive tower, and went down some stone steps, and hammered loudly at another door. At last an old woman came up panting from some region below, and told me that she was alone in the house, and yielded to my request to be allowed to look within. She bade me go round to the front, and after a long delay she made her appearance again, and with some difficulty opened the door, and I entered.

I found myself in an ancient hall, vaulted, with stone pillars, and mouldering portraits on the walls of men and women who lived and died three hundred years ago. Everything was very old—the wainscoting, the windows, the furniture which looked as if it might have been there from a time almost forgotten. A date upon a cabinet made it appear far more modern than its apparent age, for it went back only to 1535. Then I passed into another vaulted room, with a large stone pillar in the middle, and into a third with a stone ceiling and black panellings, and through an ancient door which opened upon the broad wall outside. From thence the view around was superb, but the winds raved and roared so violently that it was distressing to stand

there. "It is always terrible windy here," said the old woman, "and sometimes you cannot hear the sound of your own voice." The voices of the winds drowned everything—loud, angry, menacing: it was as if the guardian spirits of the place were wroth at the presence of a stranger. I went back into the house, and remarked the old paintings mixed up incongruously with modern work, a daub supposed to represent Dr. Johnson, and other pictures which some accident has drifted there. Then we came to the Star-room, with a ceiling in faded blue and gold, and a beautiful marble mantelpiece. There, too, was an old chair, originally in white and gold, but now much decayed, in which Bess of Hardwicke used to sit—for this part of Bolsover was built by her, upon the cellars and foundations of a Norman castle. There was an aspect about all these rooms which I have never seen elsewhere, and which I cannot describe. "It looks like a haunted house," said I to the woman. "You would say so if you lived here," she replied, but at that moment she said no more.

She opened a little door and remarked, "This bedroom is called Hell." Truly an uncommon name for a bedroom, but it was an uncommon room, with somewhat mutilated paintings on the ceiling and walls. Whether these are good or bad I cannot say—the day was heavy, and the light but dim, and patches were off the paintings as if they had been scraped. "It was all whitewashed in here fifty years ago," said the old woman, "and has been done up since—those spots is where the paint came off the pictures." A dreary little room is



this, notwithstanding the "pictures" and the beautiful little fireplace in the corner,—a room in which if one ventured to lie down at night spectral shapes would perhaps come in at yonder ancient door, and unearthly voices would cry out "Sleep no more." "Very strange noises are heard here at night," said the old woman, "but we do not mind them. They are heard all over the house." Then to another room called the "Duke's Chamber,"—what Duke I know not, but he must have lived ages ago. Then to another bedroom called "Heaven," which seems to have been touched by a modern hand—"in Japanese fashion," as the guide said, for the panelling has been decorated with Japanese figures. We ascended many stone steps, and came to the upper bedrooms, where the shutters are just as they were made, panellings and carvings all untouched. Then we saw dark recesses in the tower, some of them with grated windows through which a very little light struggled, and which the woman said were dungeons. One of them is called "Mary Queen of Scots' dungeon," for in this weird house, too, was poor Mary a prisoner. Then out upon the leads at the top of the castle, where there is a wondrous view, which at another time I might have dwelt long upon, but the wind shrieked and blustered, and my mind was full of the mystery of the old house. As I passed back through the rooms they filled me with a feeling which I cannot explain. It may seem that I am drawing an over-coloured picture, or taking a page from Mrs. Radcliffe's novels; but it is not so. I truly describe what I saw, and how it impressed me. It may be that

the place would not make the same impression upon another person ; it may even be that when the sky is blue and the sun is shining into the rooms, the house may wear a smiling, perhaps a commonplace, aspect. I cannot say. I only know that from the moment the outer door was closed an influence which I have never felt within any walls before came over me, and comes back perfectly clear and fresh to my recollection whenever I think of Bolsover Castle.

We went down stairs, below the house itself, to the cellars and passages which are said to be the remains of the Norman structure. There was a high vaulted roof to the chamber now used as a kitchen, and an ancient stone passage connected it with a sort of crypt, beneath which, as the old woman said—and I can neither verify nor disprove her account, but am content to take it as I received it—is a church, never opened since the days of William de Peverell, or Peveril, son of William the Conqueror. Our voices had a hollow sound ; my footsteps awakened echoes from every corner. There must be some large empty space beneath the stone floor, but what it was used for in other days no one seems to know. They say it has never been opened or examined. The chamber in which I stood was sufficiently strange—it might have been a wizards' cave, and all the world asleep. "This," I said in jest, "is where all your noises and ghosts come from." But the old woman answered very seriously, "It is, sir ; and when the family are here the servants sometimes will not come down except by twos and threes. Oh, many people have seen things here besides

me. Something bad has been done here, sir, and when they open that church below they'll find it out. Just where you stand, by that door, I have several times seen a lady and gentleman—only for a moment or two, for they come like a flash. When I have been sitting in the kitchen, not thinking of any such thing, they stood there—the gentleman with ruffles on, the lady with a scarf round her waist. I never believed in ghosts, but I have seen *them*. I am used to it now, and don't mind it. But we do not like the noises, because they disturb us. Not long ago my husband, who comes here at night, and I, could not sleep at all, and we thought at last that somebody had got shut up in the castle, for some children had been here that day. So we lit a candle and went all over it, but there was nothing, only the noises following us, and keeping on worse than ever after we left the rooms, though they stopped while we were in them." An old woman's dream or idle tale, no doubt, but there is an atmosphere about the house which makes one half believe it. For it is, as I set out by saying, a sombre and ghostly house, and I had got far on my way to Chesterfield before I had shaken its influences entirely from my spirit. The approaches to Chesterfield will effectually unloose the stoutest grip of legend or fable.

The crooked spire, the mean, dirty shops, the still dirtier-looking people in the streets, the rambling half dilapidated-looking inn opposite the market-place, speedily brought me back to the every-day world. There is something very depressing about the look of Chester-

field ; I would have given a great deal to have gone on somewhere else, but it was too late. It was necessary to make the best of it. I asked for the coffee room at the inn, and was told there was none. "You can go in with the commercial gents," said a girl. I had always imagined that this room was forbidden ground to anybody and everybody but a commercial traveller. But thither I was sent, and I always do everything I am told when travelling, and pay what I am asked. Consequently, I soon found myself seated before a longish table, with a huge piece of boiled beef, a perfect mountain, at one end, and a joint of roast beef on a smaller scale at the other. There were also a ham, some cold mutton, a pie, and other things, all serving to show how good and pleasant a thing it is to be a commercial traveller. The company present were by no means unmindful of the opportunity before them. One commercial gent with red whiskers helped himself five times, and walked out of the room as if nothing had happened. Another made even that mass of boiled beef look perceptibly less, and swallowed pie-crust as fast as a street magician bolts his strips of coloured paper. Every gent as he entered the room called for a pair of slippers, of which there seemed to be an endless supply in a cupboard—slippers which have done duty on all sorts of feet, and are still in great favour with the customers of the "Angel." The "Boots" came and put them on—an operation which I thought might have been better performed in a bedroom. The feet of these bagmen were not exactly like "white mice peeping in and out,"



but they showed them to each other and to me quite freely. Having appeased their hunger, they sat down at the tables and wrote in little books, checking off the day's orders or receipts. No one spoke to me except a sharp-looking man, who remarked upon the unwonted size of a mutton chop which I had ordered—it resembled a small saddle—saying, "It's like a Barnsley chop. I'll have one for breakfast to-morrow." It was the man who had devoured the pie. Though gorged like an anaconda, he could still let his thoughts dwell sweetly on next morning's breakfast.

All this time I noticed that an elderly and saturnine-looking commercial gent had never taken his eyes off me since I had been in the room. He sat in a corner where he could command me at his ease, and there he transfixed me with his basilisk glance. I thought of offering him a pound or two off my immense mutton chop, but was not sufficiently acquainted with the etiquette of the sacred place to venture to say a word. By and by the travellers disappeared one by one, and the black-visaged man and I were left alone. Then he took his feet off the horse-hair sofa and came slowly and mysteriously towards me. If he had worn ruffles I should have taken him for the spectre from Bolsover Castle.

"Isn't your name Henderson?" said he, when he got close to me. "I met you the other day at—what's the name of the place?"

"I wasn't there," said I, trying to include everything in one comprehensive answer.

“ Well, that’s strange. Taken any orders here ? ”

“ None at all.”

“ What, not taken one ? ”

“ Not a single one,” said I, despondently.

“ Well, that’s bad. Business is all going to the deuce, here, but I should have thought you could have got an order or two. *What* did you say you are travelling in ? ”

“ I am travelling,” said I, as I rose up to leave the room, “ in Notions.”

“ In Notions ! ” he repeated with astonishment ; “ what people call Yankee notions ? ”

I placed my finger upon my lips, and nodded twice and shook my head once, and left the saturnine man to make what he could of it.

## CHAPTER VII.

### MATLOCK AND DOVE DALE.

The Two Matlocks.—Mr. Rhodes' Description.—The Prosaic View of Matlock.—Masson and the Hills.—The "Viâ Jelly."—Letting-out Scenery.—Lunch at the "Izaak Walton."—Dove Dale.—A Hard Road.—The Twelve Apostles.—Alstonfield Church.—A "Short Cut."—The Slough of Despond.—Lost in the Swamps.—Hartington at last.—An accommodating Hostess.—The Pedlar and his Cart.—Castleton.—An Unexpected Recognition.

THERE is some very pretty scenery in and around the two Matlocks, which are a little over a mile apart, the road following the course of the river beneath the shade of lofty cliffs. In a walk from Matlock Bath to Matlock Bridge the traveller may get a very fair idea of the general character of the scenery, but he should not leave the locality without ascending the hill called Masson, and looking at the view which is afforded from that point. In the season the place is very crowded, and it may be doubted whether the quiet lover of nature will find sufficient attraction in either of the Matlocks to induce him to remain there more than a few hours. In Rhodes' "Peak Scenery" we are told that the "museums" (shops for the sale of gimcracks), the inns,

and the lodging-houses, present a "fascinating scene," nay more, "a vision of enchantment, a prospect into the fairy regions of romance, where all that can delight the mind, and excite admiration, seemed to be assembled together." Mr. Rhodes saw "well-dressed ladies and gentlemen perambulating the dale," and "paused instinctively before we proceeded onward, as if we feared to dissolve the charm by obtruding ourselves upon it." This was very thoughtful and considerate on Mr. Rhodes' part, but the sensations which he describes will not trouble the ordinary visitor who strolls through Matlock, dunned by hack-drivers, and badgered by the showmen who have taken possession of the scenery. I recommend the judicious traveller to take Matlock on his way to some other place, and if he is bound for Dove Dale, to walk over Masson and the other hills to the "Lilies" public-house, and so on to the "Izaak Walton," at the entrance to Dove Dale, where he will probably be disposed to pass the night. This was not my route, as will presently be seen, but I am now satisfied that it is the best.

The popular lion of the locality is not Masson or the High Tor, for many people do not like hills or cannot ascend them without inconvenience, but a road which the stranger will be puzzled to hear called by an incomprehensible name—the "Viâ Jelly." The design was to pay a compliment to a family named Gellia, who did much for the neighbourhood, but the people have adopted their own pronunciation, and Gellia has been turned into Jelly. My plan was to go from Matlock to



Hartington through Dove Dale, and in order to arrive unwearied at the part which promised to afford the most agreeable walk, I drove from Matlock to the "Izaak Walton" inn, having seen Matlock itself, and its perambulating ladies and gentlemen, on a previous occasion.

The Viâ Jelly—for one may as well call it as the people do—turned out to be nothing very extraordinary, certainly not justifying the hubbub which the Matlockites make about it. It is rather pretty here and there, but there are hundreds of roads in Derbyshire which in point of beautiful scenery cast it far into the shade. It runs for the most part between wood-covered hills, but is much disfigured by various tricks which have been played with the stream on the left hand, for the purpose of making it useful in certain manufactories and works. In the spring of the year the bank on the right is so covered with violets and lilies of the valley that hundreds of people come to gather them from all parts, and this no doubt lends an additional interest to the Viâ Jelly, and helps to make it pay. For most of the scenery round Matlock, as at Niagara, is let out at so much a yard, and the stranger cannot go far without being called upon to stand and deliver. A very short sojourn in a place of that kind always satisfies the present traveller. At the end of the road there stands the public-house called the "Lilies," which may be reached, as I have said, over the hills from Masson, and it is much better, as I afterwards proved, to launch out upon this walk than to go pottering along the Viâ Jelly in company with nurse-

maids, cadgers picking wild flowers, and objectionable persons on the bicycle.

Soon, however, we get beyond reach of these nuisances. At Longcliffe the country improves in appearance, and then we reach a place called Bradburn Pastures, where a brook runs across the road. This brook is sometimes so deep that the water flows into the cart or carriage which attempts to cross it. On the day I was there, in the autumn of 1879, the brook was up to the horse's middle, and was momentarily rising, for floods were rushing down from all the hills. This can scarcely be a pleasant place to pass on a dark night with a shying horse. It is no one's business to build a bridge here, and so the stranger has a taste of what travelling must have been like in England when a good road was as rare as a good inn is now. At Tissington I stopped a little while to admire the old church, and caught a glimpse of the hall, and then proceeded without further delay to the "Izaak Walton" inn, where the regulation-luncheon was soon spread before me. A gay party of young ladies were seated at an adjoining table, laughing and making merry, and to look upon their fair faces was much pleasanter than eating cold beef and pickles.

For show-places, the happy hunting-grounds of tourists, I have no mind, and consequently it was not quite with the light heart which usually accompanies me on my little journeys that I marched off from the "Izaak Walton" inn for Dove Dale. Yet it is a thing to be seen once, and not oftener, unless a person should take a particular fancy to it. Had I known before I went into

it as much as I did after I came out of it, I should have sailed away in another direction, or have been guided by old Hesiod's wise proverb, which tells us that the half is worth more than the whole.

You go over the little bridge at the foot of the meadows below the inn, under the hill called Thorpe Cloud, and find the river Dove running between steep hills, which are fringed with the hawthorn and mountain ash. The path is narrow, and after passing through a swamp, ascends to comparatively dry but stony ground till it brings you opposite some rocks fantastically called the Twelve Apostles. They are more like a set of nine pins than twelve apostles. On the hill-side I found a man selling ginger-beer, who seemed to have small respect for the Twelve Apostles or Dove Dale generally, for he declared that there was not much to see, that the path became "much worser" as you went on, and that it might be made good enough if tourists would only subscribe among themselves to keep it in order. But when one is here it is rather too late to begin the repairs. The real truth is that it is not worth while to go much farther than the spot where the man of ginger-beer has perched himself. All the rest is mere weariness and vexation of spirit, but no one has ever had the frankness to say so, and therefore the tourist feels himself obliged, generation after generation, to go the fixed round, like a horse in a mill. Knowing no better when I was there, I pushed on, and found that the path was sometimes inches deep in mud, and sometimes under water altogether, the river washing clean over it,

and leaving one no alternative but to wade—a very bad road in all respects in a wet season, whatever it may be in a dry one. In some parts of the Dale the scenery is striking, but not extraordinarily beautiful, although it has been the subject of innumerable poems and fantastic descriptions. Also, it must be confessed, there are parts of it which make very pretty pictures. But the first mile is very like all the rest, unless one can see with the eyes of the writer of a local guide-book, who says of one place:—“Descending to the river’s brink, we see suspended aloft on the steep hill-side a mighty fortress, with its magnificent arched gateway, thrown as if defiantly wide open.” This fortress I could not find, perhaps because it is not there. There are some caverns on the way, easily accessible to those who care to scramble up the hill-sides in search of them. I did so in one or two instances, and sorely repented that I had taken so much trouble. At last I came to Mill Dale, a collection of tumble-down cottages and poverty-stricken people, one of the least pleasant or cheerful villages I have ever seen in England. Not far from here, at Alsop in the Dale, there once flourished a family named Alsop for many a generation. They came to this pleasant place about the time of the Conquest, “and continued,” as Lyson tells us, “in an uninterrupted descent for nineteen or twenty generations”—a record which few existing families can equal. I now decided to strike off up the hill, by a sort of cart-track, for Alstonfield, and make my way to Hartington, from whence I proposed to make an expedition into the Dale



at the other end, having had a little more than enough of it for one day.

An old church and an old hall stand looking at each other at Alstonfield, and I soon found my way into the former, which at that moment was being energetically "restored." The inside was a confused mass of timber, mortar, old wood-work, and rubbish. First my attention was attracted to a venerable pew, which turned out to be the identical pew erected by Charles Cotton when he was the owner of Beresford Hall. It was elaborately carved, and of good old oak, but had received a thick coat of green paint at the hands of some barbarian many years before. Then there was a very strange pulpit, bearing the date upon it of 1637, at which period the people of England were just beginning to make up their minds that their king, Charles the First, must either mend his ways or have them mended for him. The pulpit is almost as large as a room, and below it there is a reading-desk, all forming part of the same fabric, and all carved with skill and care. It was of fine old oak, and yet had actually been varnished and grained to resemble oak—one of the most curious instances I have ever seen of that depravity in the natural man which leads him to prefer the artificial to the real. Here was the genuine article, and yet it must be disguised beneath a coarse and ugly imitation of itself. Having taken a good survey of the country from the top of the church-tower, and nearly broken my neck in getting down the steep, dark, and worn belfry-stairs, I gathered myself together and started off at my best speed for Hartington, for

already the shades of evening were beginning to descend upon the earth. At this critical point I fell a victim to my besetting sin, and listened to the voice of the tempter who stood as usual for me by the wayside with suggestions of short cuts and field-paths. He told me that the field-path saved at least a mile and a-half, which was a consideration of some weight with me just then, for to say the truth, my stoutest boots were all soaked with the water of Dove Dale, and cut to pieces with the stones, and I wished to get as soon as possible to Hartington, whither I had prudently sent on my bag beforehand. "You take the first stile at the end of the village, and go straight on," said the man. I knew as well as if I had been there that it was all moonshine, and that no sooner had I committed myself well unto this field-path than it would split up into three or four, or cease altogether, or blunder into some farmyard close to a big dog, and that it would not be possible to go straight on without banging one's brains out against a barn or tumbling head over heels into some river. This, I say, I knew quite well, but the temptation was too much for me. I am but a poor weak creature when field paths are mentioned, and never can see one without taking to it, and thus many and many a time have I brought myself into ugly scrapes. On this particular evening, being tired and wet and hungry, it was harder than ever to resist a short cut. For some time all seemed pleasant and all went well, as it generally does when we slip out of the right way into the wrong one; but presently the daylight began to

fade, and at about the same interesting moment the path disappeared also—not that it was too dark to see it, but the path itself was of a surety no longer there. Soon I found myself straggling on among browsing cattle, stone walls, and mud—tired, hungry, and out of humour. Then I struck a cart-track and kept on it, till I met with two labourers, who told me I was all right, and that I was to keep “straight on,” through a wood and across a river—all sounding well enough by daylight, but not so pleasant after dark, and in a country which one has never seen before. I went straight on, and before long was brought up plump against an old barn, where the cart-track utterly vanished, as the field-path had done before. What was to be done now? Keep “straight on” again? What else could one do? On I went accordingly, and in a few minutes had the pleasure of finding myself deep in water and slush in the middle of a field, every step filling my boots with mud and filth. I love the country much, but to this sort of entertainment I have as strong an objection as the veriest town bird in all London. I tried back, and tried forward, but there was no way out of this slough of despond. “Then I thought,” says John Bunyan, and his words were as barbed arrows to me in the middle of that field, “that it is easier going out of the way when we are in, than going in when we are out.” Also I remembered his description of the two field-paths which enticed Christian out of the road: “The one took the way which is called Danger, which led him into a great wood; and the other took directly up the way to

Destruction, which led him into a wide field full of dark mountains, where he stumbled and fell, and rose no more." But the recollection of these passages did not help or console me, and I continued to blunder on, tired and disgusted. When at last I got out of that field, I was heavier by a cart-load of mud than when I went into it. Then I came to a river, the Dove, and as something had been said about a bridge, I kept by the bank until I found one—a little foot-bridge, hard to discover. It was then totally dark, and there were no signs of Hartington, neither was there any light to be seen, turn whither I might. Going back was impossible, and there was nothing for it but to make a dash forward. I did so, and soon came to a check in the shape of a ditch. This I jumped, first pitching my umbrella across by way of burning my boats behind me. I alighted in the middle of some unusually well-developed stinging-nettles and some long wet grass, and then made out the outlines of another barn, towards which I bent my devious steps. I now quite made up my mind that I should have to spend the night in these delectable fields. But after dragging through another morass, I stumbled upon the high road, and all at once found myself blinking like an owl before the dim lights of the "Charles Cotton" inn, and received a friendly greeting from the landlady, although I was covered with mud, and must have looked very like a tramp of the more dangerous description.

The landlady took me into the kitchen, where there was a good fire, around which sat a group of the villagers



smoking their pipes. Then the kind hostess brought me a pair of socks, for my own bag had not been delivered by a faithless Buxton driver, and she told me they were accustomed to do this friendly turn for travellers who had been through Dove Dale, and who almost invariably landed soaking wet. "We even lend them trousers," said the good soul, but luckily my case was not so bad as to call for so great a sacrifice.

"You see, sir," said a soldierly-looking villager, "the floods have been out, and those fields have been all under water—that is why you found them so bad to cross. As for path, there is none, but by daylight you would have found your way easily enough." And so indeed it seemed, for I went out the following morning to explore, and saw where I had missed my way, and wondered how I contrived to do it. Yet darkness will mystify any country to the stranger's eye, especially if both his legs are stuck deep in the mud, and his boots are full of water.

After supper, and a chat with the villagers, who were all very sociable and friendly—the soldierly man turned out to have served in India during the mutiny—I went up stairs, and sunk down into the midst of an old-fashioned four-post bed, and slept a dreamless and quiet sleep till morning. Then feeling as if I had taken a new and altogether satisfactory lease of life, I despatched my breakfast with a thankful heart, and went to see Beresford Dale, which is a continuation of Dove Dale, short but pretty, more sylvan in character than Dove Dale proper, and upon the whole better worth

visiting. One could not but gaze with interest on a little square cottage by the river side, half hidden by trees, with the date of 1674 over the door. This was the fishing-house built by Charles Cotton, where he entertained his dear companion, and the dear companion of us all—Izaak Walton. The river winds almost completely round the cottage, and in front there are two trees with seats near them. It was a classic spot to my eyes, and I lingered round about it loth to go away. Inside, the cottage is comfortable and solidly built, and I could not but think that there is many a worse place in the world even now in which a man might spend his days. Much pleasanter would it be to live in that cottage amid sunshine and flowers than in the finest house in London amid darkness and fog. But I had to turn my back upon it, and upon Beresford Dale with its beautiful ferns and wild flowers, and its sweetly flowing river, though not until I had wandered far below Pike Pool, a lovely spot in the valley, where a rock stands out of the stream like a huge fish. When I got back to the inn I took a trap and drove over wild outlandish roads, nearly due north, to Hope and Castleton, almost twenty long miles, with lovely views all the way. Coming down a very steep hill, I saw a little old man harnessed as it were to the strangest little cart ever seen out of a museum. Its wheels were no bigger than those of a child's go-cart, and consequently it was almost on the ground, so that the entire weight of its contents must have dragged heavily on the old man's shoulders. There were three tin boxes and a

bag on this diminutive cart, and the old man was miles away from any town, or even a house. I stopped to speak with him, and he told me he was seventy-eight years of age, and that he sold blacking, black-lead, good-stuff, and "things for women." He hoped to get rid of a fair share of these at Flagg, whither he was then going.

"You must have invented that cart yourself?" said I.

"So I did, sir, and I found it hard to get the wheels made. They are bound with lead so as to make 'em last."

"If they were larger wheels you would draw your load easier. All the weight is on you now."

"No, sir—it goes quite easy. But I am getting old, and cannot walk so far as I used to. I have been going round this country over forty year."

"Selling goodstuff and things for women?"

"Yes, sir, anything to turn an honest penny."

"Then you can turn six honest pennies all at once," said I, handing him that small coin, for which he gave me many more thanks than it was worth. Then he hitched himself to again, and dragged on his little go-cart at the rate of a mile or so an hour. I, too, went my way, through Taddington, Miller's Dale, Tideswell, and thus to Hope, passing nothing more remarkable on the road than an old house with the date on it of 1540. I intended to have made Hope my quarters for the night, but the "Hall Inn" was in sad disorder with

carpenters and masons, and therefore I pushed on to Castleton, and found food and shelter at the "Castle Inn." The fair maiden who brought me my dinner promoted me at once to the rank of captain in the army, and received me as an old friend. Knowing something of the queer things which often happen in provincial towns where our gallant forces are stationed, I somewhat anxiously explained that I was not the person supposed—not a captain of any sort, not even of militia.

"Oh," said the waitress, "that *won't* do. Why I remember you very well with the other officers at Manchester—that time I was there with Betsy Miller. Of course you recollect *her*?"

It is always tiresome to go on endeavouring to disabuse people's minds of a mistaken impression, and so after a little more of this I gave in. "And how is Betsy Miller?" I asked. "Is she as pretty as ever?"

"She's married to that young fellow as was always after her—a good job, wasn't it?" said the girl in a knowing way. I even thought she gave a kind of wink, but it may have been only my imagination. "I suppose so," said I, feeling rather sheepish, although as regards Betsy Miller my withers were unwrung. "They were jolly times," said the handmaid with a sigh. It seemed to me that as I had now to bear the responsibility of what occurred at this festive period, it was rather hard some one else should have had all the















jollity; but at that moment a party of tourists arrived, and the young woman's attention was called off in another direction, and before she had time to renew her reminiscences of the army I had beaten a retreat for the night.



Pike Pool.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CASTLETON AND THE PEAK.

A Fine Morning.—Caves or Hills?—Edale Valley.—View from the Hills.—A Solitary Farm.—Lonely Paths and Moors.—Edale Bridge and Cross.—A Long Way round by a Short Cut.—The Man with the Wooden Leg.—Two Unpleasant “Hakes.”—In quest of the “Grapes.”—A Village Problem.—Bad Trade.

I STARTED off from Castleton with everything in my favour that a reasonable man could desire—good health, good spirits, a morning with a fresh breeze, a bright sun, and not a cloud to be seen in the sky. Such a day had scarcely been known once before in the gloomy year of 1879, and it served to remind one how great is our loss in England from being so often deprived of the blessed rays of the sun. For under its inspiring beams the whole country looked as the land of promise must have looked to the eye of the prophet of old, all radiant and beautiful. The hills stood out sharp and clear against the blue Italian sky, the valleys were bathed in a celestial light. What happiness steals through every vein on such a heavenly morning! I anointed myself, so to speak, with the oil of gladness from head to foot, and bounded towards the hills.

According to all rule and precedent, I ought first of all to have gone to Peak's Hole, Blue John Mine, and other caves and holes which abound in the neighbourhood of Castleton. But it is a dreadful thing to be obliged to go to places simply because everybody else goes there, and moreover I once spent a whole day in the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, which frees me, as I consider, from the necessity of seeing other caves all the rest of my life. I have made a secret vow not to go underground again while I can keep above it. Give me the hill tops, and let those who like it burrow in holes and caverns. My road from Castleton lay towards Edale and the Kinderscout, for I wanted to see that little known region which is so heavily shaded in the Ordnance map, and to find out what was inside the white space in the middle, marked "The Peak." Not one of the books, old or new, which I had been able to obtain could give any information about it. It took me some time to satisfy my curiosity, as the following pages will show.

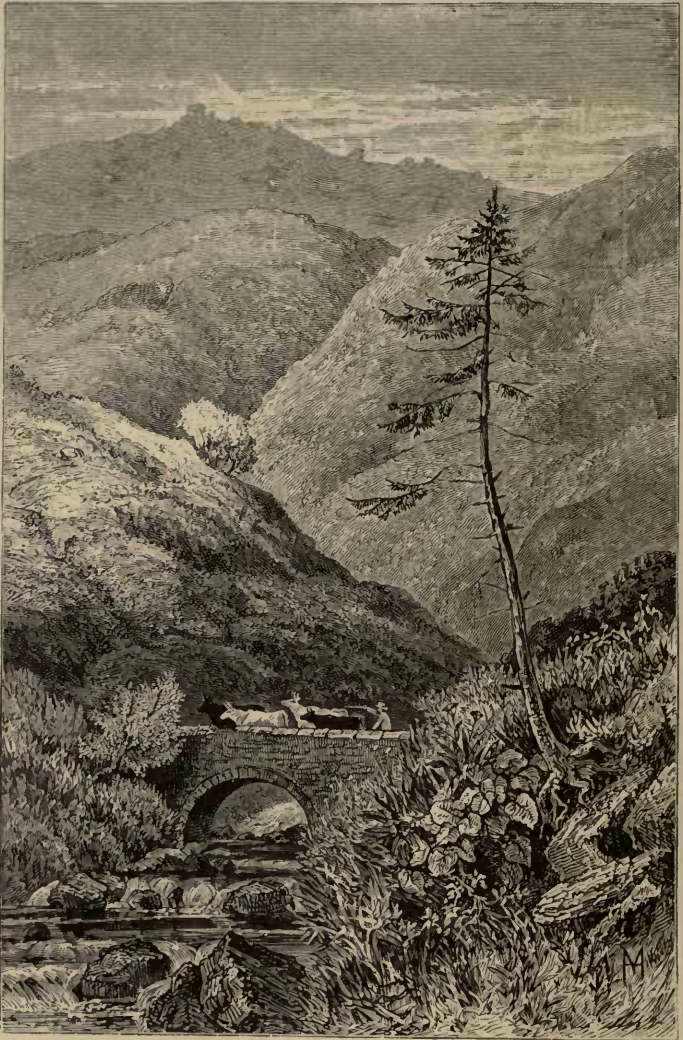
The path which I wished to pursue winds from Castleton towards the hills on the north, among wild-rose bushes, on which a few flowers still lingered in September. It is not the path which goes over a notch of the hill to be descried from the inn-yard, and which is taken by the girls who work at the mill at Edale. This one lies more towards Mam Tor, and emerges at a high point above and almost opposite the village of Edale. It is impossible to do justice to the view which charms the eye at the summit of the mountain. It may be doubted whether there is anything finer to be seen in

England, for it includes almost everything which goes to form magnificent scenery, except water. To the north, the lovely valley of Edale lies spread below, guarded by a range of hills at each end. On the other side is the almost equally fine valley of Hope, with heather-covered hills stretching away for many miles. These hills are not, as we all know, so high as the mountains of Switzerland, but they are beautiful in form and outline, and present a very noble and even grand appearance. Fresh from a visit to Switzerland, it seemed to me that I had seen nothing there more beautiful and attractive. And then one's enjoyment of this beautiful region is not marred by the great heat which hangs over Switzerland in summer everywhere except in the higher Alpine ranges, and there are no mosquitoes and no horse-flies, blessings which will be appreciated by everybody who has ever crossed the Brunig Pass, for instance, in July or August. If the Kinderscout range were in Switzerland, scores of books would have been written about it, and "Sanatoria" without number would have been established on its hill-sides. As it is, not a dozen tourists thoroughly explore the Peak in the course of as many years, and the very people at the local inns which are nearest to it—and they are all some miles distant—seem to know little or nothing about it.

I kept on the brow of the hill, on the Edale side, for some little distance, reluctant to descend. Then I scrambled down, with a careful eye for the "cloughs," which are rather steep hereabouts, in the direction of a farmhouse to the north-west. A cart lane runs from

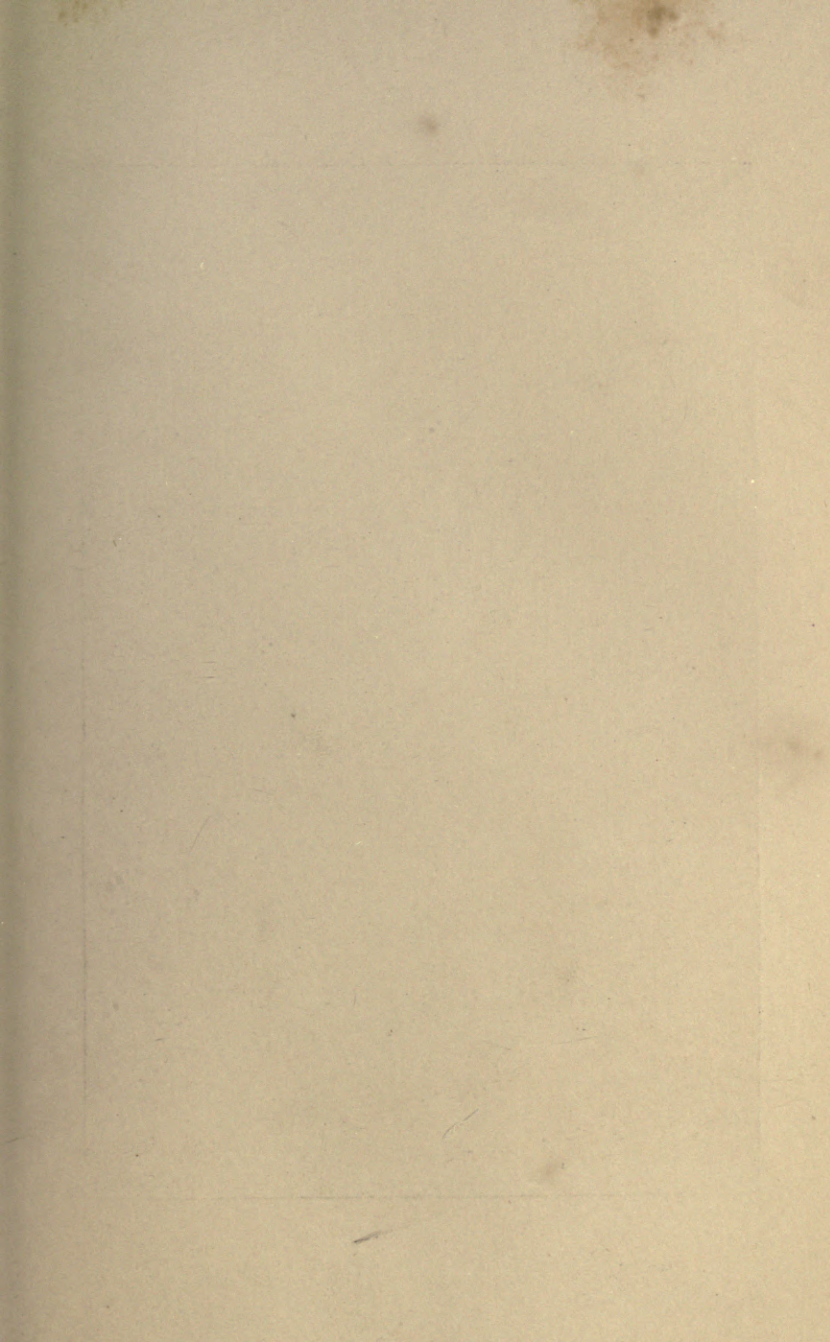






Edale Head.

[To face p. 87.]











and although the truth is not an easy one, especially



this house to the main road, and goes meandering along to two or three cottages which are known as the village of Barber Booth. Here I crossed a little bridge, and turned sharp to the right, westward, and pursued my way till I reached another small village called Upper Booth. There is nothing whatever to tempt the stranger to linger at either of these villages. An old woman told me to go on till I came to Measter Shirt's fëarm, and this I did, finding that at Mr. Shirt's gates the road came to an end, for the valley now ended also, being entirely closed up by a hill or mountain of some 1800 feet in height. A wilder or more romantic spot the heart of man could not desire. Master Shirt's farm had a very comfortable and home-like appearance, and as it stood to all appearance on the very borders of civilization, the wilderness beginning just beyond, I determined to see if it were possible to obtain a glass of milk, there being no chance of arriving at another house for many a mile to come. As it turned out, it was fully five hours before I again saw the dwelling-place of man. The good farmer's wife received me very kindly, and I sat down in her old-fashioned parlour, and had a chat with her and two young ladies, while four children stood looking at me, in evident doubt as to whether I belonged to their tribe or not. The ladies told me that a stranger seldom passed that way, and that the only person they saw there besides the members of their own family was the postman. He trudges through the Edale valley from one end to the other every day, winter and summer; and although his berth is not an easy one, especially

when the snow is three feet upon the ground, I would much rather have it than live in a city where one is poisoned with fog and smoke, and is obliged every day to gulp down "blacks" as big as a cheese-plate.

I now made some enquiries as to the Kinderscout, and was told that there would be objections to my going over the hill to it, for the "shooters" were out. This was bad news, but I found that there was a path round the hill, which took one fairly into the Kinderscout region, and from thence on to Hayfield. Perhaps, too, I could get across the moors to Chapel-en-le-Frith, which would suit me better than Hayfield, since I was to sleep at Castleton again that night. One of the young ladies then informed me that she had never yet been up the hill near the house, tempting as it looked. With the gallantry which I trust will ever distinguish me, I at once offered to conduct her up the perilous way, and down again if necessary, but unfortunately domestic circumstances prevented her accepting this proposal. Having now drank up the milk, I clapped on all sail once more, and followed a rough cart-track which had been pointed out to me, and which led upwards over a picturesque bridge across a mountain torrent, through most charming scenery, the glorious hills extending far and wide, all covered with heath in full bloom, and a brawling brook running down at the foot of them straight through the green smiling valley of Edale. The mass of rocks in front are on the Kinderscout itself—the "Joseph Rocks"—and to the right of them there is another vast pile, like the ruins



of some old castle, dismantled by a heavy bombardment. The painter or sketcher may well wish to linger long in this lovely spot. On rounding the top of the hill, a sea of mountains suddenly appears, not so high as Mont Blanc it is true, but very beautiful in form, and grouped together in a way which delights the eye and impresses the imagination far beyond the power of words to describe. It is not, after all, the height of a mountain which alone makes it beautiful, so much as its situation and surroundings. If we are to talk of mere "bigness," Mont Blanc itself is a mere baby compared with Mount Everest in the Himalayas. The grouping and surroundings of these Derbyshire hills are so charming that they linger in the memory long after much grander scenes are forgotten. Edale Cross stands a little way back from the road, just behind a wall, and may easily be passed unseen; but happily the noble view from the hill top cannot be missed by any traveller.

The true nature of the "Peak" becomes clear from Edale Head. It is a mass of wild hills with a sort of bog or moss-covered plateau in the centre, but of this I did not get a full view till another occasion, and from a different point. At present I pursued the road round the head, bounded by moors on every side, until I reached a gate with a very fair track leading from it. As this track ran southward, and as I knew I must turn off somewhere to reach Chapel, I launched myself upon it, trusting to luck and the compass, and presently I came to a little cabin, evidently erected for the convenience of the "shooters." It stood almost in the

centre of a lovely gorge in the shelving hills, with a narrow path leading through the heather,—a perfect gem of a path, winding round secluded hills and moorlands, and conducting the stranger, as he is half tempted to suppose, straight into the abode of the blessed. Put any man up there, and ask him that foolish question of the sentimental philosopher, “Is life worth living?” and he will tell you that to live amid such scenes as these a thousand years would be all too short. But although this path runs through Elysian fields, I am bound to warn the reader that it is not the proper path to take—these beautiful paths never are; it is always the hard and stony road which it is our duty to pursue. After some time it began to melt into a sheep track, and that in its turn led straight down into a place of darkness and despondency, from which it took me a long time to extricate myself. The track vanished once for all, and it cost some hours of wandering among the moors, and crossing ugly patches of dark peaty water, and some miles of stout tramping over the hill called “Dympus” and other unknown regions, o’er bog, flood, fell, and I know not what, before I reached a cart track, from which at length I descried the square tower of Chapel far in the distance. After another long march I came to two or three cottages, and met with a man stumping slowly along the road. He had a wooden leg, but that was nothing against him at such a time and in such a place, and I gladly accosted him, for I had not seen any human being since twelve o’clock, and it was now five. He expressed some surprise that I should have

taken so wild a road alone, and told me it was still four or five miles to Chapel-en-le-Frith. Then I asked him how he had lost his leg, thinking of the man who made the mysterious answer to the same question, "It was bit off." But the old fellow said that one day there came a *haking* in his ancle. "My folks thought as it was the rheumatism, but it didn't prove it. It was in the jint, and at last they cut it off below the knee."

"And now you are all right again?"

"Pretty well for a man in his 70th year, but I have a complaint they calls the *hindigestion*—did you ever hear tell on it?"

"That I have."

"Well, sir, it comes on at all sorts of times, and gives me a *hake* in my stomach. Then I have very low spirits, so that though I may begin the day middling well, I all at once feel so poor like that I don't know what to do. The doctors have had a main out of me, but ha' not done me any good. They say as it's the food." I noticed that when the old man used the word "do" he pronounced it "dew," to "tew," true "trew," and so on—all "Yankeeisms," as people say, supposed by some to be peculiar to New England, but in reality relics of speech imported from Old England two hundred years and more ago.

As I was entering Chapel, a depressing-looking town, a drunken man stopped me, and boisterously asked me where was the "Grapes." I told him I did not know, but that I would gladly help him to find the town pump. This proposal was rejected with much scorn.

I now found that I had walked upwards of eighteen miles, chiefly over tough hills, equal to twenty-five miles on even ground, and as I am never in favour of excess in anything, I obtained a dog-cart at the "King's Head," and drove back to bed and board at Castleton.

At night I sat in the parlour listening to the talk of the villagers, who were discussing in a slow and lumbering way the probability of ever getting an engine out of the Peak Cavern, which had been taken there by the British Association, to be used in the production of the electric light.

"The mare as helped to drag it up," said one man, "stook her feet into the ground fower or foive inches. Er trembled all over—yea, but er did."

"Ay, it did that," said another man.

"When they coom to try to turn it round, to get it out again, they'll find oot their mistake."

"Ay, they will that."

Thus the conversation dribbled on, till a man followed by three women came into the room—broad-shouldered strapping women, the man's wife and sisters. They called for rum and brandy, all hot. The man sat down by me, and I got into conversation with him. He told me he had walked over from Bradwell, "for a bit of a change loik," and was presently going back again. Bradwell was a lead-mining place, he said, but trade was very bad. "They tried what they call co-operation mining," said he, "but they know'd nowt about it, no more than moi shoof" (my shoe).

"How is it everything is so bad, sir?" said the wife.



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“What are the poor people to do?” I could not tell her. In fact, before I had found any solution to the problem I grew so puzzled and so sleepy that presently I bade them all good night and took myself off to bed.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PEAK.

A Castleton Lion.—Off for the Kinderscout.—Derwent Dale and the Woodlands.—The Duke of Norfolk's House.—Old Oak Furniture.—A Wild Country.—Tramps on the March.—The Kinderscout Region.—A Land of Chaos.—A Night Encampment.—Rabbit or Bacon?—The Night Visitor.

BEFORE turning my back upon Castleton, I thought it only fair to see one of the local lions, though I adhered to my resolution not to go underground. I made my way to the "Winnates," and found it very well worth a visit. It is a pass between the hills, commanding a fine view of Castleton and Hope Valley at the lower end, and presenting a wild and bleak aspect all the way through. The pass kept up its reputation that morning, for a gale was blowing through it, and to get along at all one had to make as many tacks as a ship beating against head winds. I was not sorry to get out upon the Buxton road. This I followed for a mile or so, and was rewarded with some good mountain views Buxtonwards. Then I returned to Castleton, and in order to save time took a trap to Derwent Dale, which I proposed to explore on foot, and afterwards to make the best of

my way up the valley of the Ashop and the Woodlands, and so to attack the Kinderscout region on the north side. There is an old road from Castleton to Ashopton passing through the village of Thornhill, and commanding fine views of the Yorkshire Moors, Oscar Moor, and Windhill. It leads to what is called the Yorkshire Bridge, over the Derwent—a solidly built bridge, meant to last. The driver no doubt praised it highly when he declared that it was a “clinkin’ good one.”

The whole of this district lies in the heart of the moors, and it would be difficult to choose a better centre from which to explore the wildest parts of Derbyshire, with occasional raids into Yorkshire. The Bradfield and Derwent Moors lie away to the north, Abney Moor to the south, and the Hallam Moors to the east, all with good paths over them in various directions, and carrying the traveller over high ground, which is ever preferable to being shut up in valleys. The houses in this part are few and far between, and it may easily happen that the visitor will find himself obliged to foot it all day without coming to any place where he will be able to obtain the least shelter or refreshment. But there are running streams on all the hills, and armed with one of the pocket cups which close like a telescope, there will be no necessity to suffer from thirst. The “Ashopton Inn” is the best in this region; the “Snake Inn” at the other end of the valley may also be made a convenient resting place. If the visitor then goes on to Hayfield and takes that as the centre for other explorations, he may consider that he has done justice to the Peak.

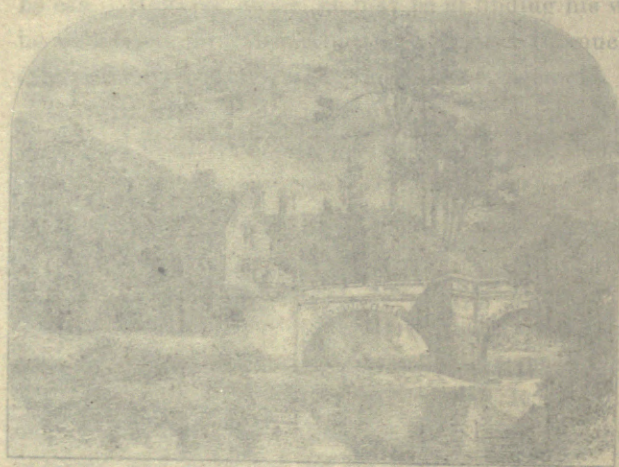
“T’scout,” as the Kinderscout is locally called, is about five very rough miles from the “Snake,” the path starting from almost opposite the inn door, on the other side of the brook, which may be crossed by a rickety old bridge a few hundred yards down the road. But this path is soon lost amid heather and furze, and the explorer must make out a track for himself as well as he can. However clever he may be at finding his way, he will often go widely and wildly astray; so much I can confidently promise him for his encouragement.

Derwent Dale winds to the right, or north, of the clean and comfortable-looking little inn at Ashopton, and is very pretty and pastoral in its general aspect, although not to be compared with the valley of Edale. At the head of it is the village of Derwent Chapel, beautifully situated among the hills—perhaps the prettiest of Derbyshire villages; and close by it is a fine old hall once the property of a family named Bacon, but now owned by the Duke of Norfolk. It bears the date of 1672 upon its doorway, and has been much enlarged and improved by its new owner. I sought permission to look within, and received it from the housekeeper, who furthermore took the trouble to show me through the rooms. I do not remember when I have been more delighted with the contents of any house, old or new. It is full from top to bottom of the most wonderful oak furniture ever collected under a private roof—any single specimen of it would make the reputation of an ordinary house, but here every room is furnished throughout with magnificent old pieces,





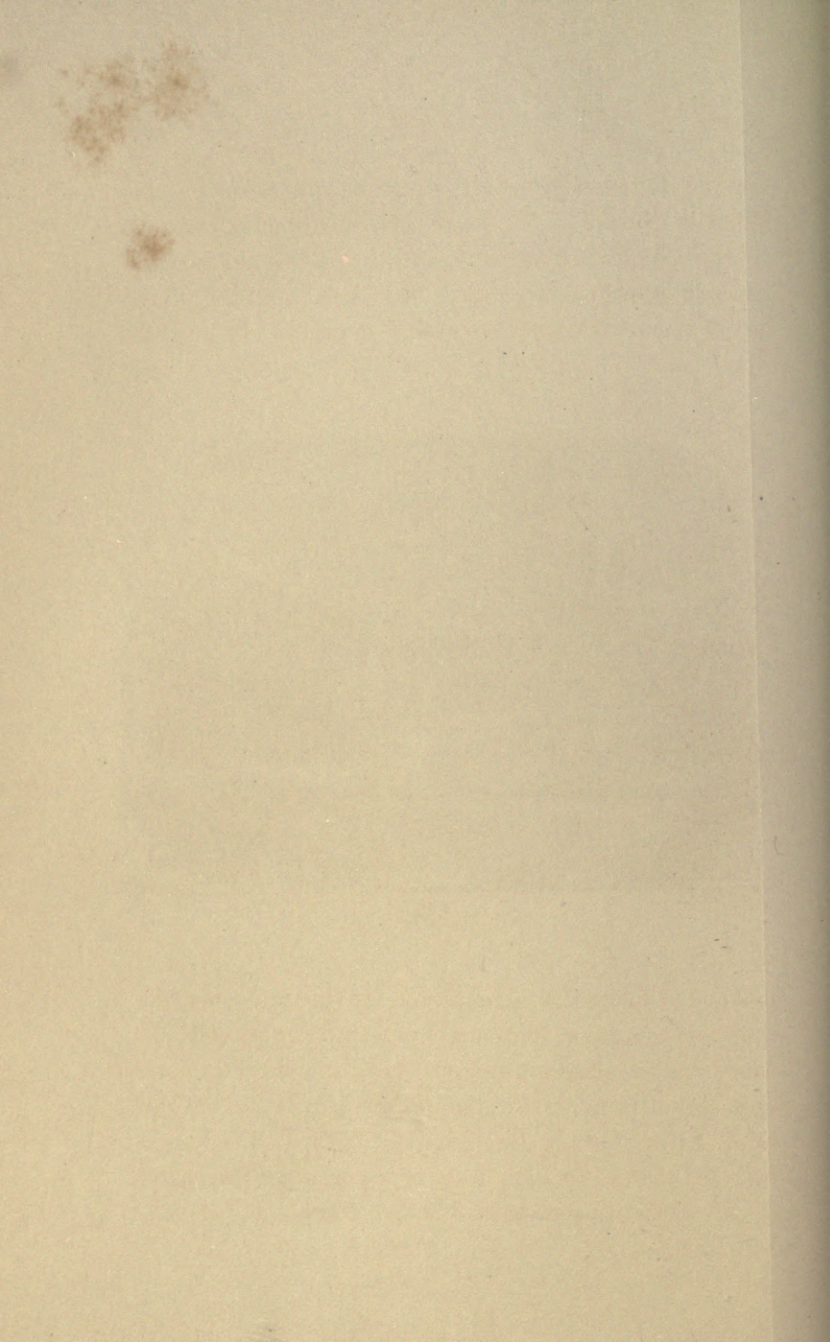
"T court," as the Hindostanis locally call it, is about five very rough miles from the "Snake," the path leading from almost opposite the inn door, on the other side of the wood, whither to be crossed by a rickety old bridge a few hundred yards down the road. But this path is strewn with small bushes and furze, and the explorer must make out a trail for himself as well as he can, and it is a long time in finding his way, though I



thought it worth the trouble to go. I sought permission to look within, and received it from the housekeeper, who had the sense to show me through the rooms. I do not remember when I have been more delighted with the contents of any house, old or new. It is full from top to bottom of the most wonderful oak furniture ever collected under a palace roof—any single specimen of it would make the reputation of an ordinary house, but here every room is furnished throughout with magnificent old pieces,









brought together from all parts of the world by the Duke of Norfolk. There are—to mention only a few of the articles which caught my eye—six figures of German workmanship, with the date of 1216 upon one of them. A grand four-post bedstead of old English



Derwent Hall.

make is a marvel of ingenuity in carving and construction, and there is a sideboard for which an ardent collector would barter almost anything he possessed, for it is most beautifully carved, and bears upon it the inscription, "Rex Carolus I., Anno Do. 1646." Then there is a fine settee for a hall, with a royal hunting party carved upon its panels, and dated 1598. The hunts-

man with his spear, the wild boar, and the king with a crown on his head, are all carefully depicted. This piece of furniture is inlaid with satin-wood and ebony. Then I saw a superb cabinet with the date of 1634, and a little corner-piece for books or china with this inscription upon it—"God with us," and above, "1653." In almost all the pieces, even in the bedstead, there are secret drawers, mementoes of the troubled days when the lives of parent or of son, of neighbours or friends, depended on the safety with which lists of names or other compromising documents could be hidden away. It was a good thing that I examined Derwent Dale with some care on my way up, for as I went back again I saw nothing in the world but secret drawers, and grinning heads, and kings hunting with their crowns on, and dates in wooden letters ranging back five or six hundred years. This house will be one of the famous places of the land when it is finished, and yet it is only intended for a shooting-box after all. Decidedly there is some advantage even yet in being born Duke of Norfolk.

The evil passion of envy was uttering its dark whispers in my ear as I turned again from the little inn towards the Woodlands, or vale of Ashop, but in half-an-hour or so I walked it off, and came to the conclusion that old oak furniture was, after all, liable to be an encumbrance in one's house, and that it was quite possible to get on without it. I now found myself in another pretty valley, which became more and more wild as I advanced towards the "Snake Inn." In many respects the scenery resembles that of the

Welsh mountains, and tempting paths run over the hills in various directions—one going to Derwent, another to Hope and Castleton, doubtless by a long and circuitous course. The only fault to be found with this road is that it is much infested by tramps, for it is the high road between Manchester and Sheffield. Trade is still in a sorry plight in each of those towns, and whole families are constantly on their way from one to the other in the hope of bettering their condition. Against these wanderers nothing can be said, for they belong for the most part to the deserving poor; but with them is plentifully mixed the hardened professional tramp, who in whatever part of the world he may be found is a worthless and dangerous rascal, scarcely more fit to be at large than a wild beast. I was stopped by a dozen or so of these wretches at different parts of the road, and followed with volleys of imprecations for refusing to give them money. Most of them are the sweepings of the jails, and it is a painful sight to see respectable artizans with their wives and children obliged for a time to associate with them. One man and his wife and six children were toiling wearily along the road, no fewer than four of the children being unable to walk. Two were too young to walk, and two more, very young also, were completely footsore. The father was carrying two, and the mother had one at her breast. They were going from Sheffield to Manchester. But a much longer journey than this must be taken before the surplus population in either town will succeed in bettering its condition.

Four or five miles from Ashopton the scenery begins to give the traveller an idea of what the Peak is actually like. There are no longer even sheep to be seen on the hills, and the frequent watercourses and spongy nature of the soil render wandering over them slow and difficult work. The mountains are broken up into huge shoulders, with streams running between many of them, deep in heather and ferns, and of a very dark colour owing to the peaty water which trickles over the surface, or stands in deep pools. After a seven miles' walk, I came to the "Snake Inn," on the edge of the sternest part of the scenery. After a slight rest, I returned to a brook which I had passed on the road, crossed the bridge to which I have referred, and followed the stream up for a long distance towards Fairbrook Naze. The track ran over the hills, amid heather and ferns, exceeding all other paths I had yet encountered in savage beauty. Vain would it be to try to describe the scene as I advanced farther and farther towards the mystic region left blank upon the Ordnance map, a region of which a large part is very rarely traversed by human foot. There is a mass of stern and lonely hills, many of them with rounded tops, and beyond them again is a wild and trackless waste of moss and heath and bog, intersected by deep runnels of water, soft and spongy to the tread, and dotted over here and there with treacherous moss. So strange, so wild, so desolate a region it would be hard to find elsewhere in England, unless, perhaps, we are to liken Dartmoor to it.

De Foe, in a work now seldom opened, "A Tour



through the whole Island of Great Britain, —makes a passing reference to this little-known tract, although he did not visit it. “This, perhaps,” he says, “is the most desolate, wild, and abandoned country in all England. The Mountains of the Peak of which I have been speaking seem to be but the beginning of Wonders to this part of the Country, and but the beginning of Mountains, or, if you will, as the Lower Rounds of a Ladder.” There was, indeed, a somewhat forbidding aspect over this dark, weird, apparently impenetrable fastness, this

“wild abyss,  
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave.”

Yet it also had a strange fascination with it, and it was only when the twilight began to close in, casting blacker shadows than before over this domain of “chaos and old night,” that I reluctantly began to retrace my steps along the brook, which comes down little platforms in miniature cascades. Sometimes a track made by the sheep runs on the side of the hills; sometimes there is no track at all, and one has to follow the brook as best one may. As I emerged from this labyrinth of hills, the darkness rapidly came on, and I was startled by seeing a fire on the other side of the road, with shadowy figures flitting before it.

Presently I came to a horse hobbled, grazing on the grass which fringed the road. A little further on was a pot hanging on three sticks over a wood fire, and near it were seated a dark woman and a little child. The woman

looked at me as I suddenly appeared above the hedge, and muttered a few words, in reply to which a man came out from a thicket and stood staring hard. The dark woman's eyes shone in the fire light like big black beads.

"Good evening," said I.

"Good evening," said the man, concealing something in one hand behind him, and looking very distrustfully upon me.

"I see how it is," said I; "you take me for a keeper. But if nobody interferes more than I shall do with what you have got cooking in the pot there, your supper will be safe enough. It smells good."

"There is nothing but a bit of bacon in there and a few potatoes," said the man; "no harm in that, is there?"

"Not the least in life—any more than there will be in your washing it down with some ale," and I handed over a trifle for that purpose. This at once smoothed the ground, for keepers are not in the habit of giving beer-money to gipsies.

"Your wife, I see, comes from the true old stock."

"She does, sir," said the man; "she is one of the Lees, and a clever woman too—aren't you, Nance?"

The dark woman smiled, and smoothed out her black hair with her hand, and drew her child closer to her, for the air was chilly. It was so dark that I had not at first noticed their little house on wheels.

"What luck to be in the open air all day, and carry your house round with you!" said I. "Will you take it amiss if I ask to see the inside of it?"

The man hesitated and looked at his wife, but she giving no sign of opposition, he lit a candle in an old lantern, and took me up the steps, and I followed him. The first compartment was filled with crockery and odds and ends, and the second was a small but not uncomfortable place, about the size of a cabin on board ship, with a bed and a few articles of furniture in it, and with neat curtains at each window, tied up in the middle with a bit of blue ribbon. Altogether, it was as snug a place as any man could wish for—one could be as happy there as in a palace.

“I would rather live here and go where I liked than have a house in Belgrave Square,” said I.

“Perhaps you would, sir, in summer,” replied the man; “but when the rain and snow came you would tell a different story. Especially if you had gone all day without making a copper, or having anything to eat. Last winter we knew what that was more than once, for you see, sir, it was a hard winter, with lots of snow. You could scarcely get along this road, and yet this is about the best road we travel.”

“Does your wife tell fortunes?”

“She does not, sir, for if she did the peelers would be after us. But she knows all about it—perhaps she would not mind telling you yours on the quiet.”

“Thank you, but mine would puzzle her too much.” We came down the steps again and out into the air. “I hope you will enjoy your rabbit—I mean your bacon,” said I to the man as I wished him good night.

I left him with a queer smile on his face, and pre-

sently the fire shrank to the dimensions of a red-hot coal, and then disappeared altogether in the distance.

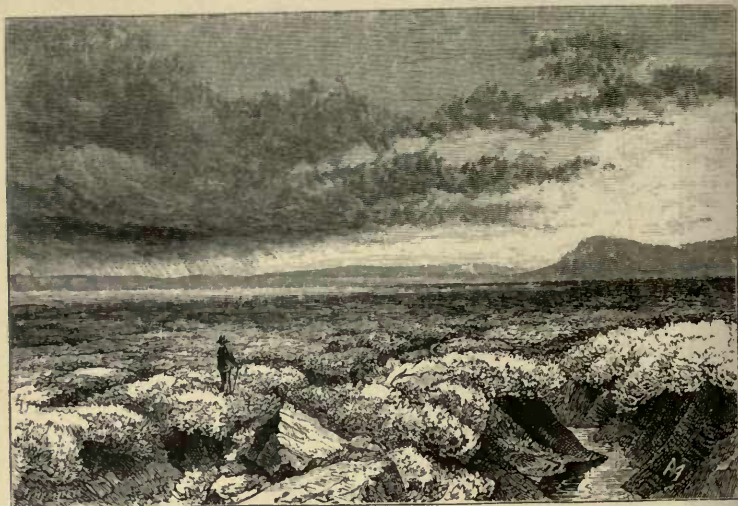
Loneliness, as many people suffer from it, is a feeling unknown to me, but that night some unaccustomed influence stole over my mind. It was autumn; the days were getting sad-coloured; the night of winter was coming on. The day had been long and the way hard, and I came back to the solitary inn tired and jaded. Weariness of spirit was heavy upon me. I sat alone in the little room, looking at the fire, musing over many things, and finding my mind travelling back to scenes and persons of a time long gone by. It is at such moments that we go once more over life's journey, and see how chequered, yet how brief, it has been; how many things have happened which we never looked for when we first started out in the "wild freshness of morning"; how many points of the road there are at which we should now choose a more excellent way, could we but set forth again with our dearly-bought experience to guide us. Useless imaginings, in truth; yet they will come. In the midst of them a friend stood before me whose journey's end came swiftly in darkness and clouds, almost before the sunshine had fallen upon the path. And now, though years had rolled over, there was the well-remembered face again, shining "like a star through autumn mists"; a face which I had never seen without a smile of welcome upon it, and a smile was on it now, sweet though sad.

Long did we hold deep converse of scenes almost faded from the mind, yet strangely revived in all their



freshness ; of incidents now touched with a tender pathos ; of friends to whom we had bidden the long farewell. It seemed but yesterday that I had gazed on those features, now quite unaltered, so powerless had been the hand of time to mar them. Surely it was but a day or two ago that we talked together, as now, with life all before us ; talked of cherished projects, now passed away with the friends associated with them, into the land of shadows, whither all things are tending—hopes, dreams, and vain regrets.

Presently our conversation ceased, and of a sudden, too, the room grew dark, and it seemed that my visitor was gone—gone without a word. I arose and looked around ; the candle was smouldering in its socket, the fire was dead, the familiar form had vanished. The night was far advanced, and the world seemed very cold. It was but an illusion in a world of illusions, for we also are but as shadows, “such stuff as dreams are made of,” following quickly those who have preceded us to the “unknown and silent shore.” :



Kinderscout.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE KINDERSCOUT.

A "Strictly Preserved" Mountain.—"Small Holdings" on the Moors.—Half a Yard of Shooting.—Waiting for a Chance Shot.—Trespassers Beware.—The Village of Hayfield.—A Preliminary Stroll.—Evening Talk.—Mad Jack and his Advice.—The Road to "t' Scout."—The River Sett.—A Warning to Strangers.—Old Pits Plantation.—The Heron Rock.—View of the Scout.—Character of the Scenery.—Mill Hill and Hollinhead.—Moss and Boulders.—The Mermaid's Pool.—"Go back, Go back!"—The Green Oases.—Peat Trenches and Gullies.—The Kinder Fall.—Redbrook.—Joseph Rocks.—The Old Smithy.—A Shooting Cabin.—The Three Knolls.—Stoneyford.—Birds and Trees.—The Cattle Salesman and the Drover.—A Story of Prison Life.—What was done to the Cobbler.—T' Feesh-pond and t' Kara-wan.—A Lesson for Jo.—Voices of the Night.

My next visit to the "Scout" was made in the early summer of the present year (1880), from Hayfield, a village which has the advantage of standing almost in







the centre of the wildest scenery in Dorsetshire. The first discovery which my inquiries brought to light was that the Kinderscout is regarded as strictly private property, and that it is divided up among numerous holders, almost all of whom are no longerheads with either other and with the public. The mountain, for we may so speak of it, seeing that it is close upon



the English way, is divided up among a number of small holders, in patches not much larger than a table cloth. This man's share is actually under two acres in extent, and his only chance of getting a shot is on the days when his neighbours are out shooting, and the grouse are down over his field. Then he stands waiting for a chance, and if he can manage to bring a bird down on his little patch, he has had a fine day's sport, but if the bird



the centre of the wildest scenery in Derbyshire. The first discovery which my inquiries brought to light was that the Kinderscout is regarded as strictly private property, and that it is divided up among numerous holders, almost all of whom are at loggerheads with each other and with the public. The mountain—for one may so speak of it, seeing that it is close upon 2000 feet in height—is one vast moor, intersected with long, broad gulches, and abounding in deep holes, patches of wet moss, and pools of dark water. There are said to be certain public rights of foot-way, but they do not appear to lead to the best points, and even in regard to these there are constant disputes. Moreover, they are hard to find amidst a labyrinth of heath and ferns, and it is not unusual for the gamekeepers to turn strangers back even when they are upon the paths which are supposed to be fairly open to all. The owners of the moor are jealous to the last degree of their rights, and quarrel over the few birds which by some accident are still left as though the cause of empires were at stake. This arises from the foolish way in which the district has been parcelled out among a number of small holders, in patches not much larger than a table-cloth. One man's allotment is actually under two acres in extent, and his only chance of getting a shot is on the days when his neighbours are out shooting, and the grouse are driven over his field. Then he stands waiting for a chance, and if he can manage to bring a bird down on his little patch, he has had a fine day's sport, but if the bird

drops outside his boundary he goes home with an empty bag. "But sometimes," as a keeper informed me, "you may stand there all day without getting a shot." On an average during the season there are about three guns out to each bird, and in one case a gentleman who pays £50 a-year for his bit of moor only got two birds all last season—£25 each, and I hope he did not think it too much. When I heard all this, it brought to my mind a line which I had once read in a sort of burlesque almanack—"August 12th. Lobster shooting begins on the Peak of Derbyshire." If the Kinderscout is ravaged many years longer as it now is, the "noble sportsmen" of the district will have as much chance of shooting lobsters there as of finding grouse.

The stranger in these parts would naturally pay very little heed to local troubles and bickerings if he did not speedily find that they materially interfered with his freedom. If you go to the right you are liable to be warned off; if to the left, to be threatened with an action for trespass. You get permission from three or four different holders, and find that there is still another who bars the way. While mentioning these facts, however, I am bound to add that personally I experienced no inconvenience whatever. The gentlemen of the district not only placed their information at my disposal in the most obliging manner, although I was entirely unknown to them, but gave me permission to go where I pleased. Here, as everywhere else, the stranger will meet with all civility if he begins by himself showing it to others. But people who insist on



going everywhere without so much as a "by your leave," and who delight in fussing and flourishing about, and butting their conceited heads against local prejudices, ought not to go to the Kinderscout; and indeed it is a pity that they do not stay at home altogether.

There is an inn at Hayfield, the "Royal," at which the visitor may make himself comfortable during his explorations. The landlord has the power to give him permission to go over the mountain as far as Kinder Fall, which is all that most people care to see. The village lies in a hollow amid lofty hills, and there are several print and other works in the neighbourhood, so that there is always plenty of smoke in proportion to the number of houses. At night there are no lights in the streets after March, but that is of not much consequence, for there is nothing whatever to see. By daylight, however, if the visitor does not find anything to interest him, it will be because he has no taste and no eyes. On the evening of my visit, in the early part of May, 1880, I took a short stroll by way of getting a general glimpse of the country. I made for the first hilly road I could see, and a fine specimen of an old Derbyshire road it turned out to be, running between black stone walls, all in holes, and with masses of rock occasionally stretching all across it. This is the old road to Chapel-en-le-Frith, and it comes out upon the new road at about a mile-and-a-half from the village, near to a farm known as "Peep-o'-day." At that farm, just before the road begins to descend, there is a grand view of wild and rugged

hills in all directions; the stranger will not need to go any further to perceive that he is in the heart of the most picturesque scenery in the county.

A little snow had fallen that afternoon, and it was very cold when I got back to the inn, and therefore I went into the kitchen, where there was a good fire. Some labourers and workmen were there, one of whom informed me that he was Mad Jack. This interested me to hear, for I have in my time met with many people who were mad, but none of them seemed to know it. The men round the fire began giving me their opinions as to the best way of seeing "t' Scout."

"Tak' me wi' thee," said Mad Jack; "I'll riddle thee through better an anybody here."

"He canna do it," said another; "Jack is a toob-thoomper, and doesna knaw how to walk."

"A tub-thumper?" I repeated, in some perplexity.

"Ay, Mister—what you call a *cooper*."

"I tell thee," continued Jack, "I'll show thee a gainer road than e'er a man in Hayfield, and if thou go'st thyself, thou'lt see nowt. There be trenches oop there wheer you and a thousand men could be buried—ay, that there be. I tell thee no lees."

"What sort of trenches?"

"Why, made by digging peak (peat)." I never heard, however, except from Jack, that peat was dug on the moors, and assuredly the trenches he spoke of were not caused by that process.

"Coom, Mister," continued Jack, "I'd like to walk with thee."

“Eh, mon,” said one of the party to him, “you couldna walk with this gentleman—he’s not go so much puff to carry wi’ him as you. I tell thee, he can lag it on.” It seems that to “lag it” means to go fast, instead of to go slowly, as in my ignorance I had thought.

Then ensued a long and animated discussion as to the distances each could walk, at an early stage of which I stole away to bed, for I intended to be well on my road by an early hour next morning.

I turned up a narrow lane by the side of the hotel, into a little street called Jumble Lane, and kept along a road to the right, which runs above a sloping bank, with a swiftly-flowing brook at the bottom. This stream is the river Sett, and comes down from the Kinderscout, finding its way eventually into the Mersey, and so into the Atlantic. On the other side of the mountain a similar stream goes down towards the Derwent, and empties itself into the German Ocean. The Sett was a quiet, inoffensive-looking stream enough as I passed along its banks, but there are times when it can make itself dangerous, and even terrible, sweeping away mills and houses from its path, and even, as recorded by John Wesley in 1748, tearing up the churchyard, and washing away the dead bodies. Before the stranger advances very far upon this road he will notice on his right a rocky hill known as the Fox Holes, while before him stretches the Kinderscout, covering a large space, for it is about four miles in length, and in breadth it extends over a still larger area, much of which consists of “moss” and bog, inaccessible even to the most adven-

turous of travellers. The visitor is warned by a local guide-book "never to attempt to cross" the mountain "near nightfall, or in misty weather," for "even shepherds and gamekeepers have often lost their way." The warning is not unnecessary, for the moors are difficult to traverse, even in broad daylight, so cut up are they with long and deep trenches, across which it is impossible to get in wet weather. Some of them are ten or twelve feet deep, with soft peaty banks, black as ink, and offering no foothold if one has unluckily got to the bottom. No wonder, therefore, that even those who have frequently travelled the mountain lose their way in the mists which are apt to arise, or discover that instead of being in the middle of the moor they are on the verge of rocks which go suddenly down 1500 feet below them. If I had to be cast adrift somewhere on a dark or foggy night, there are few places which I should not prefer to the Kinderscout.

The road above the little river goes on past the Kinder print-works, and beyond Bowden Bridge, where there is a cottage with a sign announcing that tea and hot-water may be had within, and two or three toy ships on the top of the sign—a disfigurement to the scenery around, but happily the only one of the kind which can be found for many a mile. The hill rising to the left is known as the Old Pits Plantation—a plantation full of stunted firs, scores of which lie uprooted on the ground. There is but very little earth for them to grow in, and their roots are scarcely an inch below the surface. In this wood there is a rock called the Heron Stone, from



which a magnificent view of the whole front of the Kinderscout may be gained, with the valley and the river as a foreground—a truly exquisite picture. The road crosses a bridge, and passes along at the back of a house known as the Farlands, and from that point leaves the traveller pretty much to his own devices. There are recognized foot-tracks straying away in two or three directions, but if the visitor can find his way by any of them the first attempt he makes, he may safely set himself down as a navigator of no mean order.

From the Farlands I kept close to a wall on the left-hand side, down towards the stream, and through a narrow green lane, then across the river, and through a gate to the left a few yards up, and on to another old green lane, between stone walls, once a road for pack-horses, and now rarely used even by chance travellers. The view of the Scout from this point is very striking, for the great fissures on its rugged surface begin to stand out under a dark sky like ghastly wounds, and the huge rocks which hang upon its sides look as if some tremendous convulsion of Nature had but just shaken the world. The rocks are black, the heath, when not in bloom, is dark in hue, and the whole scene is of a stern and sombre character when the sun is not shining upon it. Through gaps in broken walls, and round by wet patches of moss, I made the best progress I could towards William's Clough on the left side of the valley—a wild and forbidding-looking spot, for all the heather had been lately burnt, giving a most desolate aspect to the scene. Through this valley it is possible to make

one's way to the "Snake Inn," described in the last chapter. A little further to the north-east is the part of the Scout called Mill Hill, covered with boulders, and with masses of rock hanging over the top. To the right of it is a deserted farm known as Hollinhead—a farm which I passed on another occasion, and a melancholy spot it is, with walls tumbling to decay, windows broken, and doors falling from their hinges. There is a narrow path by Hollinhead, which may be followed almost to the foot of the Fall—a journey short in distance, but taking a long time to get through, for the moor is very wet hereabouts, and inhospitable walls come frequently in the way. The view from above Hollinhead, on the side of Mill Hill, is another memorable one; the conical hill to the south is known as Hannah Hill, near Chapel-en-le-Frith, and to the left is the fine point of the Scout called Kinder Low End. From thence the eye can wander gradually round to the Fall, with its precipitous sides and its wild drift of stones, over which dark storm-clouds lower even when the sun shines in the valley far beyond. There is, of course, no road now—all is dark moor, relieved here and there in colour by patches of a soft and beautiful green, tempting the traveller to leave his rough climbing and go and walk upon them. But enticing as they are they must be avoided, for they are ankle-deep or waist-deep in water, according to the rain that may have recently fallen. Immense rocks and boulders are strewn over the surface of Mill Hill, many of them half-covered with heather, and having deep holes at their

sides into which the unwary foot is almost sure to slip. The stranger cannot be too cautious in plodding his way over this rugged region, especially if he happens to be alone; for a sprained ankle would be quite sufficient to put him to considerable inconvenience in a spot not visited perhaps for weeks together.

Leaving the most broken part of Mill Hill a little to the left, and gradually working my way up to the top, I saw below me a pool of water high above the valley. The sun had come out for a few moments, and the blue sky above the mountain pool made it gleam like a sapphire. This is called the Mermaid's Pool, and they say that at twelve o'clock at night, as Easter Sunday is coming in, if you go and look steadily into that pool you will see a mermaid. It is worth trying, for surely we should all like to see a genuine mermaid, especially if they are as pretty as the pictures make them; but Easter Sunday had come and gone when I was there. Nevertheless, even without the mermaid, the pool shone out like a beautiful gem amid so much that was dark and gloomy in aspect. A few grouse had evidently chosen the moor near the pool as their favourite abode, and called to each other with their strange guttural cry, followed by the rapid utterance of notes sounding very like the two words, "Go back! go back!" And there are times when the warning ought to be duly heeded by the stranger, but it was not one of them on the day I am describing, and therefore I left the cock grouse to be wrangled over by his numerous owners, and in course of time found myself at the top of the hill, and kept

pretty close to the edge of it in an easterly direction. The rocks are exactly like sea-cliffs, sometimes very precipitous, and defying any kind of vegetation to take root among them for some distance down. At times they are placed one upon another in thin layers; at others they stand out in vast masses, hanging over the edge of the mountain on so slender a foundation that it seems as if the slightest touch would push them over. At the top of the mountain, the walking is far more difficult than on the sides. Now begin the deep trenches, the long winding watercourses with sandy bottoms, the dangerous holes thinly covered over with heather, the green oases in this sterile land, which the traveller will touch only to his sorrow and dismay. You go along a yard or two and come to a yawning ditch, with no water perhaps at the bottom, but with soft peat sides which will scarcely bear your weight. Down you go, and after scrambling to the top, expecting to see a smooth table-land before you, and to find all your troubles over, a long vista of similar ditches stretches away in all directions, few less than four feet in depth, and many of them at least ten. It is tiring work to go in and over them, for as the farmer complained of the claret they do not bring one "any forrarder"—one makes no perceptible progress. Besides all this, there are long round-about tramps which it is necessary to take to avoid the swamps and bogs, and the occasional wrenches which one is sure to get through slipping down holes. But the scenery is an ample recompense for all the trouble—a more glorious mountain view



there cannot be in England. The hills of Cheshire, the moors on the high ranges above Buxton, line after line stretches far away till sky and mountain meet, and the eye gets bewildered amid so much savage grandeur and so many chaotic forms and outlines. The Kinder Fall looks like a huge cliff rent violently asunder, strewn on both sides with boulders—at the top a broken mass of stone and rubble, then two comparatively smooth ledges, and then a confused heap of rocks and boulders, which extends far into the valley, sometimes almost blocking it up, so that the stream has to worm its way in and out, or is forced to continue its route in miniature cascades. The water must take its rise partly in springs, for very little was coming over the Kinder Fall on either of the occasions of my visits, although the stream at the bottom was always tolerably full. The traveller will hear stories of the Fall at Hayfield which will lead him to expect very much more than there is for him to see. A little beyond the Kinder Fall is another deep gorge known as Redbrook, from whence there is a pretty glimpse of the Mermaid's Pool. It is worth while to scramble down Redbrook a little way, among the rocks, for the purpose of seeing the hillside and moors from that singular point of view. Beyond that again, keeping round the hill, we reach after another hard tramp the highest point of the Scout, marked by a small heap of stones and a stick. It was here that the Ordnance survey was taken many years ago, and it might as well have been left alone, for the map of "the Peak" then planned out was

inaccurate in many important points, and for the traveller in this region it is worse than useless, for it absolutely misleads.



Redbrook.

From the "Soldier's Lump," as they call this point, it is easy to get to the pile of rocks known as the







Swampy Rocks, standing like sentinels above the valley of Edisto. The view is very beautiful, and the traveller who knows the country will have no difficulty in making out numerous farther landmarks, including the

Old and New Rivers, the great river valley, however, is very fertile, and the hills above Cape Edisto are very high. The view towards the north is very beautiful, with mountains in the distance. The weather is very healthy, and the climate is very pleasant. The water is very pure, and the air is very fresh. The scenery is very beautiful, and the view is very interesting. The traveller will find it very pleasant to visit this place. The view is very beautiful, and the traveller who knows the country will have no difficulty in making out numerous farther landmarks, including the Old and New Rivers, the great river valley, however, is very fertile, and the hills above Cape Edisto are very high. The view towards the north is very beautiful, with mountains in the distance. The weather is very healthy, and the climate is very pleasant. The water is very pure, and the air is very fresh. The scenery is very beautiful, and the view is very interesting. The traveller will find it very pleasant to visit this place.



The traveller's cabin, built by A. M. S. and located near him, is in a beautiful spot, near the water, which stands a little apart from the main



Joseph Rocks, standing like sentinels above the valley of Edale. The view is very beautiful, and the traveller who knows the country will have no difficulty in making out numerous familiar landmarks, including the "Cat and Fiddle," near Axe Edge. The Edale valley, however, shows to better advantage from the hills above Castleton. From the Joseph Rocks I came back to the brink of the Scout, and worked downwards towards a shooting cabin, over very rough ground, and with many moss-traps strewing the way. On the way to the cabin I passed what is called the "Old Smithy," where there exists something like the rough outline of a rude stone building, once, as it is said, the smithy where steel was made before Sheffield was heard of. Fragments of large grindstones are to be seen near the "smithy," and several in a perfect state still exist—two I noticed before reaching the shooting cabin, and another was by the side of that comfortable little house, so arranged as to serve as a table, with stone seats all round it. And many a merry carousal must have been held on this spot, if one may judge from the champagne and claret bottles which have been cracked on the old grindstone, and now lie in heaps on the heather. How came the smithy there, who worked in it, and what were the huge grindstones really used for? These are questions which no one has ever answered quite satisfactorily.

The shooter's cabin, built by a Mr. Sidebotham and named after him, is in a beautiful spot, near to three rounded hills, which stand a little apart from the main



ridge of the Scout, and are known as the "Three Knolls." The visitor should try to find them out as soon as he can, for they will serve to guide him in the event of his losing his way. From the cabin a narrow track runs round close under the "Three Knolls," amid charming mountain scenery. More than one dead sheep did I find upon it last May, for apparently the rot, or some other fell disease, had been playing sad havoc with the sheep even in these high places. As they fall, there they lie, no one even taking the trouble to carry their skins in. Hawks and carrion-crows soon leave the bones whitening on the moors. The track among the heather under The Knolls leads into an old bridle path, and finally comes out upon the primitive road between Hayfield and Edale. In front of us now is the hill "Dympus," whose acquaintance I had already made, and further towards Hayfield is Mount Famine, and through all the valley there flows a beautiful brook, dancing over the pebbles in the sunlight, and fairly alive with trout. Hard by the point where the bridle path meets the road there is a most refreshing spring, known as Stoney Ford, at which the purest and sweetest water is always ready for the thirsty traveller. A little farm by the side of the road, with "E. B., 1804" over the door, stands in one of the most delightful positions in all the valley, for its own green fields form a lovely contrast to the dark moors above, and the pleasant trees on the slope of the hill are most welcome to the eye. There are few hedges or trees in all this region to



relieve the sombre character of the scenery. Nor is the air much enlivened by the songs of birds—at long intervals one hears a thrush or blackbird, or on the moors the cry of the peewit and the calling of the grouse. Larks are scarce, because, as a man acknowledged to me, the people “will go miles to catch one,” after he has injudiciously sung his song in the sky in that bird-destroying country. After taking many turns, and going heedlessly up hill and down, the road comes out at last at the imitation tea-garden with the toy ships, and so back to Hayfield.

While I was sitting in the little bar-parlour of the “Royal” that night, thinking of the strange dark trenches on the moors, a cattle-dealer and his man arrived, and forthwith called for ale. The ale disappeared in a twinkling, and the cattle-dealer put his empty glass down with a huge sigh, saying, “It’s a dree walk ower t’ top.” He was a ponderous, broad-faced, heavy-jawed man, and as he sat on the bench his Falstaffian stomach touched the table. When he laughed he shook all over like a big jelly. His drover, on the other hand, was a lean and wiry-looking old fellow, with a grizzled beard, shaggy eyebrows, and a keen, knowing, cruel face. His voice was so deep and hoarse that it seemed to issue from a cavern in the earth rather than out of a human throat. He was rather deaf, and required to be well shouted at before he picked up the meaning of anything addressed to him. These two worthies were evidently old acquaintances, and it soon appeared that the drover had recently come out of jail, where he

had been spending thirty days in solitude, though not in idleness. "I'd ha' paid his fine and the coosts—£6 10s."—said the dealer to me, "only they'd soon ha' had him in agin. You know they divide them fines among 'em."

"What, magistrates and all?" said I.

"Of course—so Jo served his time. Why, if he'd paid t' money they'd allus a' been nabbin' him. That's how they live, loike. Ask him what they sent him for." I did so, but did not succeed in making myself heard. Then the cattle-dealer put the question in tones which sounded like a distant clap of thunder. All the glasses on the table seemed to shake with the reverberation.

"Genelman wants to know what they put thee in for, Jo?"

"Ay," growled the drover; "because at back eend o' t' year I jest gien a coo a clip ow' t' nose. It bleded a little, and they tuk me."

"Where did they put 'ee, Jo?"

"In Strangeways jail. Ay, but it was a cawld spot. But mazin' fine place, loike—the gates were so big yow'd thowt you were gine into Chatsworth Park. And sich kase (keys)! I went in t' kara-wan, and there was a little light oop above about as big as a penny. It were a fine kara-wan, with a policeman sittin' on t' step. It went asy, loike."

By "kara-wan" he meant the prison van, and evidently did not use the word by way of burlesque, but because it seemed stately and grand, like the vehicle in which he was conveyed to the "cawld spot."

“There were a cobbler wi’ thee, wasna theer?” roared the cattle-dealer.

“Ay, there wor that. His hair hung down his back like a coo’s tail. He wor a’ coovered wi’ hair, oop an’ doon.”

“What did do to him, Jo?”

“My word, they fetched a pair of scissors half-a-yard long and clipt un. Ay, but he made a naze (noise). Then they made un get into t’ feesh pond and wished (washed) him. They scroobed him wi’ a big broosh, and he did yowl. He thowt he was drowndit.” By fish pond Jo meant the prison bath.

“How didst find thy bed, loike?” asked the fat dealer, who clearly knew all the story, but never could have enough of it.

“T’ bed was a’ oop on end, and in t’ night yow coomed down off un’, cloos an’ all. There was nowt but a wooden pillow, and t’ yead slipped down. It was awful cawld, too—and nowt to eat but dree bread. Yow couldna sleep for t’ cawld.”

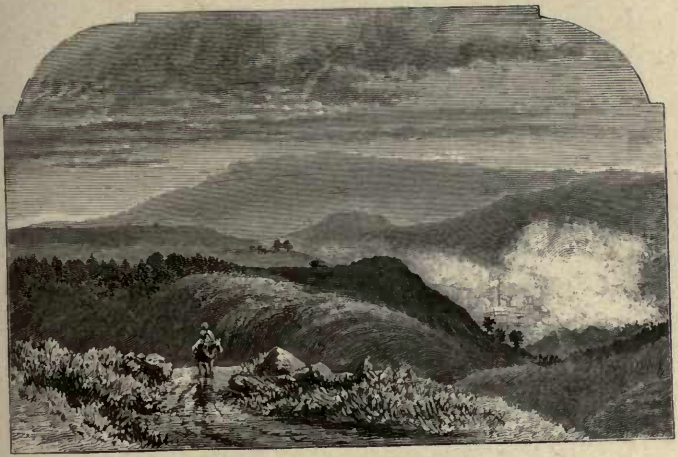
“What did t’ do to cobbler, Jo?” bellowed the dealer, for this was the part of the story he liked best, and when the drover slackened up a little, this question instantly set him off again. “Did t’ wish him, Jo?”

“Ay, they did that, I tell ’ee. He wor all black, but they scroobed him with a big broosh, till t’ feesh pond was all black wi’ ’s dirt. He wor covered wi’ long hair, but they clipt un.”

The company thought it was very hard on Jo that he should be sent to prison, but his face belied him if he did not well deserve it. Indeed, the salesman whispered

to me that he was "mighty quick with his ash-plant,"—a big stick with a crooked handle which he carried in his hand. I am inclined to think that the journey in the caravan will do him good. But it may not be well for him to be kept in "free drinks" every night while he spins his yarn. The cattle-dealer stood ale as fast as he wanted it, and long after I was in bed I heard him bellowing, "Jo, what did t' do to cobbler?" and the hoarse tones of the drover describing how they clipt un and wished un i' t' feesh pond. Such were the voices of the night at Hayfield. Small as the town is, it is not a very quiet place at night; few small towns are. But by twelve o'clock at the worst all is silent, indoors and out, and then the traveller may sink into a serene slumber as he passes before his mind's eye the various pictures which he has seen during the day—the broken and desolate hills, the wandering stream, the spectral outlines of the peaks and rocks, the black moor stretching far away into mere cloudland. The best point from which to see all the Kinder Scout is Hayfield, and the best way of reaching Hayfield is to walk to it from Castleton, over the hills and through the Edale Valley, and by Edale Head. Then go to Mill Hill and the Fall, and find your way to the "Snake" near Glossop, and so to Ashopton, and afterwards wheresoever you will. Having done all this, you may say with a clear conscience that you have seen the Kinder Scout, and have been where not one Derbyshire man in a thousand has ever dreamt of going, for down to the present time it has been somewhat troublesome to reach the heart of the Kinder Scout;

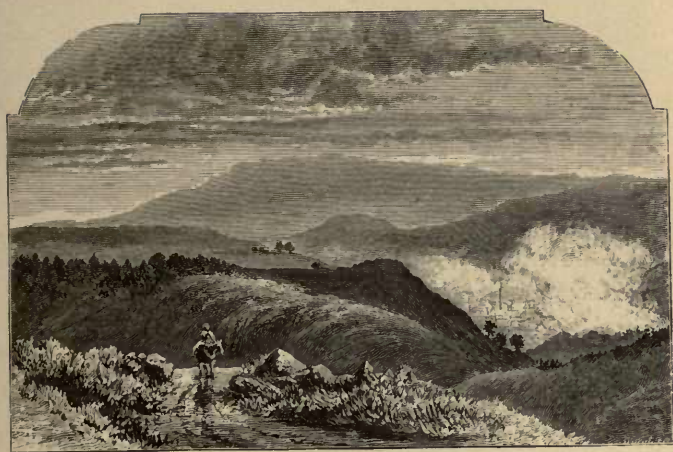




to me that he was "mighty quick with his nah-plant,"—a big stick with a crooked handle which he carried in his hand. I am inclined to think that the journey in the caravan will do him good. But it may not be well for him to be kept in "free drinks" every night while he spins his yarn. The cattle-dealer stood all as fast as he wanted it, and long after I was in bed I heard him bellowing, "In what did I do to cobbler?" and the horse



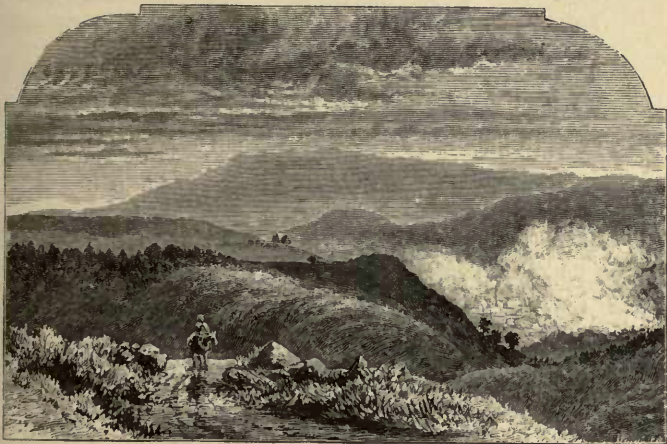
best way of reaching the heart is to walk so it from Carleton, over the hills and through the Edale Valley, and by Edale Head. Then go to Mill Hill and the Falls, and find your way to the "Snake" near Glossop, and so to Ashington, and afterwards wherever you will. Having done all this, you may say with a clear conscience that you have seen the Kinderhook, and have been where not one Peabodyite man in a thousand has ever dreamed of going. For down to the present time it has been considered unprofitable to reach the heart of the Kinderhook.







but now they talk of carrying a railroad into it, and it may soon be possible to explore it, after a certain fashion, and get back again to London the same day. But there must always be a large tract of this romantic region which droves of excursionists will not venture to invade, for the deep trenches will not fill up in our time, nor will the green soft "moss" turn dry. The lover of wild and unfrequented places may safely journey to the Kinderscout, even after the railway is built; and when once he has gained the top of the hill he may ramble on while the daylight holds out, and find himself the only human being within the compass of many miles around.



Hayfield, from road near Edale Cross.

## CHAPTER XI.

### SHERWOOD FOREST.—THE “DUKERIES.”

The Haunts of Robin Hood.—How to Get to Sherwood.—The Walk from Peafield Lane.—A Bad Field Path.—Some Advice to Visitors.—The “Butcher’s Shambles” and “Major Oak.”—An Elderly Juvenile.—Birklands.—Rufford Park and Abbey.—Woods and Game.—An Old Domain.—Edwinstowe.—Thoresby Park.—An Avenue of Beeches.—Normanton Inn.—Clumber Park.—The Avenue of Limes.—Welbeck Abbey.—Model Lodges.—An Avenue of Firs.—The late Duke’s Building Craze.—Tunnels and Underground Chambers.—How Money may be Squandered.—The Riding School and Gallop.—A Friend of the Duke’s.—Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.—The Drives through the Park.—Lord George Bentinck.—Was he Poisoned?—Clipstone and the Water Meadows.—Concluding Recommendations.

IN the Kinderscout, where all is wild moor and barren hill, a strong desire laid hold of me to go and see some trees, and therefore I made my way as quickly as I could to Sherwood Forest, the home of many a legendary tale. One does not expect to meet Friar Tuck or Robin Hood there in these days, though I should have no objection to doing so, for I have met with and even known several persons in my time compared with whom Robin Hood was a pattern of all the Christian virtues. But people have grown wiser since his day; they have learnt

the art of taking what belongs to others under the forms of law instead of running themselves headlong against it. More can be made in this way than was ever gained by the outlaws and freebooters of olden days. Robin Hood, however, is gone, and as one approaches Sherwood it almost seems that his forest has gone with him. When there, one's first question is, where is it? The woods lie in large patches amid fields, rather than stretched out as a continuous forest. But these woods are larger than they look from afar, and although an immense area of ground has been cleared from time to time, there are deep shady recesses and hundreds of fine old trees still remaining. If the stranger strays from any of the beaten paths he will find himself knee-deep in bracken and grass, and although he may not be able to lose himself, he will perhaps find it sufficiently hard to make his way from point to point.

The best way to enter the somewhat rambling and broken-up district known as Sherwood Forest is to go from Mansfield, either by the Water Meadows through Clipstone, and round by the "Duke's Folly," or by Peafield Lane. The latter is the road I strongly recommend in preference to any other. You go past the village of Mansfield Woodhouse, turn off to the right on Peafield Lane (anyone will point it out), and continue straight forward till you come to a large mill on the left-hand side. This is known as Warsop Mill. A few yards beyond it you come to a cross road—keep straight on as before, and you will almost directly see a gate on the left leading into Welbeck Park. Keep still on the road

till you come to the *second* gate, where turn in, and it will lead you straight to the "Shambles Oak," one of the well-known landmarks of the park, concerning which there will be more to say presently.

There is another way to walk to this second gate, by a so-called "field path." I tried it one day, and found that it went a long way round, through a rather dull country, and came out eventually near the New Buildings Farm, from which there is a green drive to the gate I have recommended the visitor to make for as his starting-point. If anybody wishes to try this walk for himself, he has only to go up Leeming Street from the market place, Mansfield, take the second turning on the right, called Bath Lane, go over a bridge, and follow the *upper* path through a field. He will leave Rushpool Farm on the right, and make for New Buildings Farm; near which the green drive begins. Once more, however, I strongly advise the traveller who wishes to see the woods not to waste his time upon any walk whatever till he gets to the second gate leading into the Duke of Portland's park on the Peafield road, and to drive to that point from the "Swan Inn" at Mansfield. Let him then walk to the "Normanton Inn," near Clumber, and sleep there, after strolling hither and thither in order that he may see the avenues of trees and other attractions of the "Dukeries." The next day let him go to Rufford, making another halt for the night if he thinks proper at Edwinstowe, where I found a very comfortable, homely little inn, the "Royal Oak." This will enable anyone to see the "Dukeries" and the forest pleasantly, and to



lounge about among the trees to his heart's content. If only one day can be spared, and it is desired to see as much as possible, the best and only plan is to get a carriage or phaeton from the "Swan" at Mansfield, and drive over the ground, the distance being upwards of thirty miles. The landlady of the "Swan" (Mrs. White) has the privilege of allowing visitors from her house to go through all gates in the park, and she provides them with keys for that purpose. Her people have been trained for the tour of the "Dukeries," and know every inch of the ground. I went over the forest by all the methods referred to, and will now bring together such of my notes as seem likely to be interesting or of use to others.

We will suppose, then, that the pedestrian has taken my advice, and driven as far as the second gate into the Duke of Portland's park at Welbeck, on Peafield Lane. He will not fail to notice on his way the wreck of a fine old oak standing on the right-hand side, a little way back from the main road. This is the Parliament Oak, under which King John and the barons held a consultation in the year 1212. Two-thirds of its trunk is clean gone, and what remains of it is held together by chains and iron bands. It will continue, however, to make a fair show of green leaves in summer while an inch of it is left.

Peafield Lane, if continued straight on, would lead to Edwinstowe, but this we may leave for the present. The first gate leads also into the forest, but from the *second*, as I have said, there is a tolerably direct path to

one of the well-known trees—the “Shambles Oak,” or “Butcher’s Shambles.” This tree, when I saw it in May, 1880, was propped up by five stout pieces of timber, and all the inside was burnt out. I asked a keeper about the burnt appearance, and he told me that in the summer of 1878 a “party of Sheffielders” came over, and amused themselves by setting fire to this venerable tree, which a band of savages would have respected. What pleasure there can be in wantonly destroying an object like this it is very hard for the ordinary mind to conjecture, but there stands the charred remnant of the tree—a mark of the gentle instincts which inspire some people when they are out for a holiday. The Shambles Oak is probably hard upon a thousand years old, and must once have been of enormous girth, but scarcely half of it was left before the inside was burnt. It is held together by chains and props, and on one side of it is a plate of iron bearing the inscription, “P. 1833”—signifying, doubtless, that the Duke of Portland had the props fixed where they stand in the year named. Although it is but a shell, the tree was preparing to put forth its green leaves in May last, just as it did when Robin Hood used to hang his venison among its branches, or sat under its shade “deluderin’” the pretty Maid Marian.

Not far from the “Butcher’s Shambles” is a tree standing almost in the centre of the green drive. This is called the “Central Oak,” and down the path beyond this is another of the lions of Sherwood, the “Major Oak,” a magnificent old tree ninety feet in circumference,



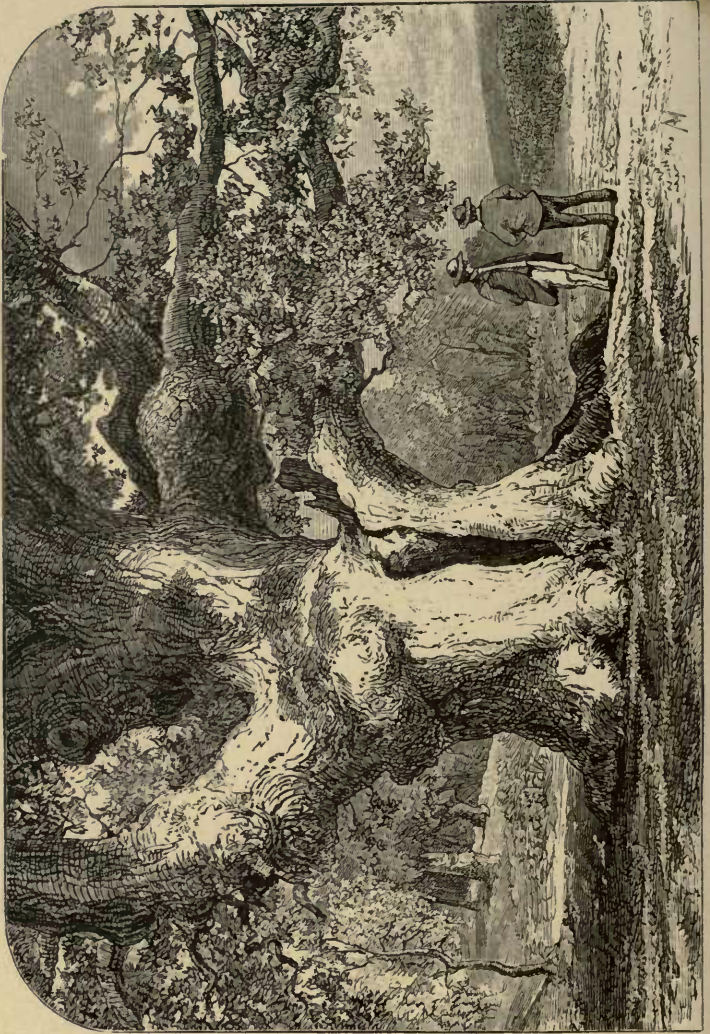




The Major Oak, Sherwood Forest

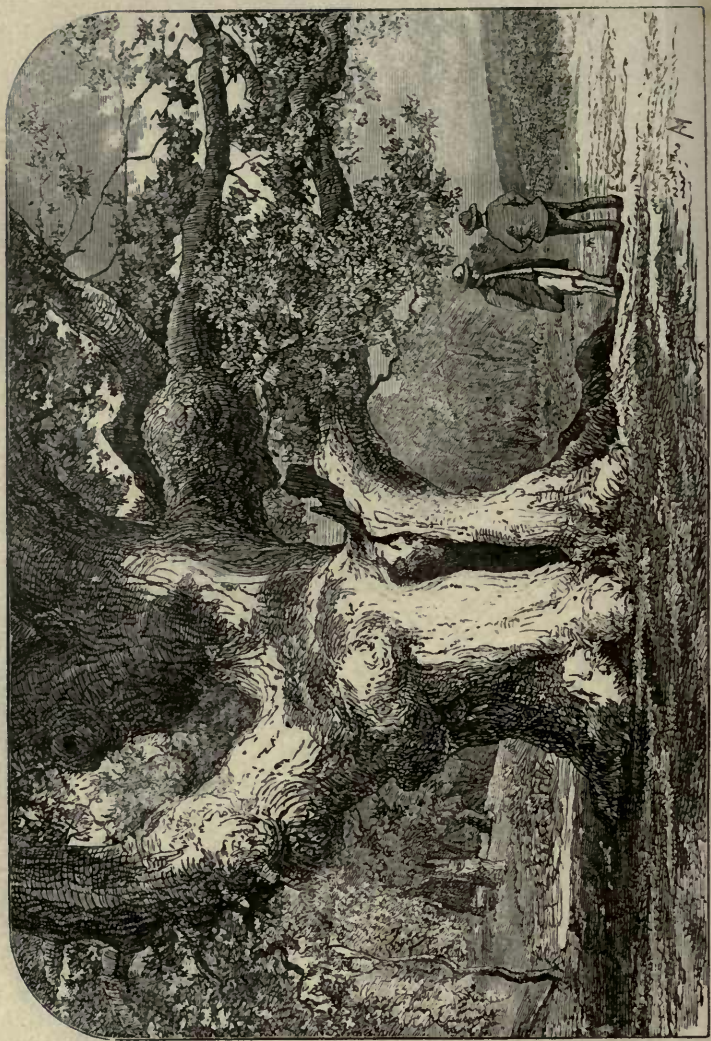














and apparently in perfect preservation, although on getting up to it you find that it is quite hollow. You may walk inside, and see the sun shining through large holes in the trunk, but its branches spread out as vigorously, and are as green and strong, as though the tree were in the first freshness of its youth. Its measurement is said to be twenty-nine feet at about five feet from the ground, and one day I saw eighteen persons, men, women, and children, standing hand in hand, stretching round it at arms' length, and they were but just able to meet each other.

The "Major Oak" is guarded by a man who told me that he had recently superseded a fellow villager who was now "breaking up." "He is getting old," said he, "and could not come any longer."

"How old are you?" I asked.

"I am eighty-four," said he—what age then must have been the man whom he replaced, and who was only beginning to get old? Perhaps the people hereabouts measure life by the duration of oak trees. My friend of eighty-four evidently looked upon himself as a mere juvenile. He is stationed in a useful part of the forest for giving directions to strangers, and it will be easy by following the path he will point out to reach Thoresby, or to go straight for Clumber, or make for Edwinstowe. My own advice is that the visitor should wander for some time amid the Birklands, which are close to the "Major Oak," and are not excelled in beauty by anything within the entire range of Sherwood. This part of the old forest seems at first sight to have suffered

very little from the mania for tree-felling, which at times has run riot over the district, although in reality nearly 30,000 trees were cut down in the course of a couple of generations. The visitor will find his admiration equally divided between the grand old oaks and the beautiful silver birches which cover many acres of ground. Finer or lovelier trees are not to be seen in all England, and the contrast between their delicate tapering branches and the rugged trunks and gnarled boughs of the old oaks is full of picturesque effect at every step. Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, in his edition of Gilpin's *Forest Scenery*, tells us that this is the most ancient part of Sherwood, and describes it as "an open wood of large ancient oaks, free from underwood, except in one place, where some natural birch is growing; but most of these old trees are in a state of decay." The decay has made rapid progress since this passage was written; many of the oaks are in a dangerous state, and the visitor may be advised not to trust too confidently to the protection of their branches. In the summer of 1879, a little child was killed while playing beneath one of these trees, and less serious accidents are by no means uncommon. The oak does not fall to the ground suddenly, like the elm, but huge branches sometimes drop from it without the slightest warning, and wrecks of this kind are plentiful in many parts of the Birklands.

I confined my first exploration of the forest to this region, and started off the next day from Edwinstowe for Rufford, distant about two miles south. The road from Edwinstowe enters the woods of Rufford amid an

advanced guard of firs. At the end of the road which runs straight from the village, turn to the right, and keep on past the first park gates leading to the house to a small lodge on the left hand of the road, at which point there is free entrance for the public to the park. From a bridge over a stream in the park there is a path to the east, and if this be followed a fine view of the domain will be gained, including Rufford Abbey—a large and stately house, some parts of it being of great antiquity. The local guide-book tells us that it “boasts not the grandeur of a Clumber,” but the truth is that Clumber must always have had a commonplace aspect compared with Rufford. The park is extensive, and to the east of the house are several plantations bordered with firs. Finding a public path through one of them, I passed through the gate, and wandered amid countless primroses, violets, and wood anemones, and listened to the song of the lark and the thrush, the ever-welcome notes of the cuckoo, and the murmuring of the wood-dove. I had not gone far before I came to four jays hanging to one tree—a bird whose good looks should almost save him from so ignominious a fate; but the jay is reputed to be a great sucker of pheasants’ eggs and destroyer of young birds, and therefore receives no mercy from game-keepers. Whether this reproach be well deserved or not, it causes the destruction of hundreds of jays; and Professor Newton states in his new edition of “Yarrell” (a most valuable book) that the bird is, in consequence, rapidly becoming scarce in many parts of England.

The path I was following led to a circle of yews, with paths radiating from it in various directions—it might almost have been a Druids' circle. Let the visitor stand quietly within that circle for a few minutes, and he will have the opportunity of seeing and hearing in that one spot a very considerable number of our British birds. A path to the north soon brings us back to the top of the knoll on which the plantation stands, and reveals another good view of the house, and of some distant hills through an opening in the trees far across the park. Then strike across the path in a westerly direction, over the grass. The hares are well aware that they are perfectly safe here—they keep in their seats till you are close upon them, and when at last they condescend to move off, it is with an indolent and careless jog-trot indicative of a sense of entire security, and a determination not to put themselves out of the way to please you. Soon we come to the remains of an old castle or abbey, a large square tower and some ivy-clad walls, standing in nearly a direct line with the Rufford Abbey of the present day. An old domain is all this, for long before a monastery was built upon it in 1148 a Norman house stood here, and before that again the estate belonged to a Saxon Thane, whose name was Ulf, and whose swineherds probably roamed about these woods with brass collars round their necks, like Gurth, the vassal of Cedric the Saxon.

When the visitor has seen all that he well can of Rufford, he should return to Edwinstowe, recruit himself with lunch, and then start out for Thoresby. Turn



to the right on leaving the inn door, and follow the road to the point where it forks. Take the right hand of the fork, and the path will be found to lead straight to the entrance of Thoresby Park known as the "Buck Gates." Thoresby House (Earl Manvers) is one of the three mansions popularly known as the "Dukeries," the others being Clumber (Duke of Newcastle) and Welbeck (Duke of Portland). Thoresby is a large and very imposing edifice, and deserves to be regarded as a favourable specimen of modern house-building. The trees in the Park, however, will be of the chief interest to the traveller who loves picturesque beauty. Nowhere in Sherwood are there more magnificent oaks. The visitor should by all means make his way to a small lodge leading to a private drive, beyond the house. It is open to the pedestrian, and a lovelier walk is not to be found in this part of the country. A beautiful green avenue opens out before the visitor, bordered at first with a line of Wellingtonias and a clump of yews, while trees of various kinds stand so thickly in the background that a true forest-like air is imparted to the scenery. A little further on we get among fine beeches and oaks, with feathery birches and dark firs scattered among them. Then we come to a magnificent avenue of beeches, splendid and stately trees, of a most delicious green in early summer, and presenting a thousand varied tints of brown and gold later in the year. The tree lover will never forget this avenue—it is as delightful a sylvan walk as the foot of man can tread. The domain of Thoresby, taken altogether, comprises by far the most

attractive part of Sherwood, although each of the other parks has some special beauty of its own, as the traveller through them all will not be reluctant to acknowledge when his journey is done.

Beyond the beeches there come some hundreds of young oaks, and then there is a gate leading out to the public drive. The visitor should go straight forward, turning neither to the right nor to the left, and he will presently find himself at the "Normanton Inn," standing on the Duke of Newcastle's property, in the park of Clumber. This inn was being enlarged or altered in May last (1880), and is another convenient place for anyone to choose as a central point if he desires to see the forest quietly and at his leisure. The house is clean and comfortable, and nightingales abound in the neighbouring trees, as it is quite natural they should do in such a Paradise for birds. The inn is five miles from Worksop, on the road to Retford. The best approach to Clumber from it is to walk straight on towards Worksop, cross a bridge, and go on till the lodge gates are reached on the left hand. The visitor will now be delighted with a noble double avenue of young limes, and as he walks onwards he will be surprised to find the avenue still stretching before him in an apparently interminable line. Seen from the top of the rising ground beyond the lodge, they are set against a dark background of firs, and form a wonderful picture when the limes are freshly clad in their summer foliage; for then they seem to have been dipped in a shade of green far too lovely for painter to imitate. The avenue

is upwards of two miles in length. The house, which was more than half destroyed by fire two years ago, stands to the left of it, in front of a lake, and the best view of it is to be obtained from a bridge over the fine sheet of water.

Continuing the walk in a westerly direction, the visitor will soon come to the borders of the third of the "Dukeries," Welbeck Park and Abbey, and will be struck by the strange appearance of the lodges which the late Duke of Portland erected all over his estate in pursuance of one of his outlandish whims. In most of these lodges the kitchen and other offices are underground, and a more inconvenient and unhealthy place for them could scarcely have been found. A woman who showed me over one of them bore strong testimony in her very appearance to the injurious effect of spending a large part of the day beneath the surface of the earth. Her face was bound up in consequence of a violent attack of neuralgia, and rheumatism had so crippled her that she could scarcely walk. The damp is always great on the walls, even in a dry season, and the light is not good, although large round glasses have been let in the garden overhead. If this freak of the late Duke's surprises the stranger, much greater will be his astonishment at the incredible extravagances which he will find on every side of him at Welbeck.

Soon after passing the little village of Carburton Chapel, I came to another of the three or four woodland scenes which alone are worth taking this journey to gaze upon—a fine avenue of beautifully shaped spruce

firs, whose branches, touching the ground as many of them do, present a most striking picture, and contrast strangely with the light green of the turf on which they stand. Any two of these firs would be deemed an invaluable addition to ordinary grounds, and here there are hundreds of them, for at the back of the avenue there is a thick grove, beneath which in some places daylight is scarcely visible. The avenue of beeches in Thoresby, of limes in Clumber, of firs in Welbeck, and the birches and old oaks in Birklands and Bilhagh, are the special portions of the "Dukeries" which best repay a visit, and which everybody who goes to the region should make an effort to see. It is needless to say that none of them can be looked upon as relics of ancient Sherwood except the Birklands, the oldest of the avenues being that at Thoresby. The limes at Clumber were planted, as I was informed, by the grandfather of the present young Duke of Newcastle, though I should doubt whether they could have made so much progress in so short a time.

To those who take an interest in the results of individual eccentricity rather than in natural beauties, Welbeck Abbey will always be far more attractive than any trees which Sherwood has to show, old or young. The house would be the shrine of curiosity-mongers for generations to come if it were open to the public; but in mere self-defence the owner will always have to keep its doors rigorously closed against tourists. The old Duke, as is well known, never allowed any stranger to go near it, but by proper management it is now possible



to see some of the results of his unaccountable caprices, and however much the visitor may have heard or read of them before he arrives at the spot, they will fill him with amazement. The ruling passion of the late possessor of Welbeck was to build—to build anywhere and everywhere, above ground to a great extent, but underground to a much greater. Had he been a poorer man, he would have ruined himself in bricks and mortar, but as he enjoyed an income of an almost fabulous amount, he could gratify his vagaries without danger of impoverishing himself or his heirs. I have been told on very good authority that he spent £2,000,000 at Welbeck on tunnels, underground chambers, and other works. There is a large ball-room attached to the house, built entirely underground, a “chapel” to which one is taken up and down by lifts, conservatories, skating rinks, and tunnels without end. One of the tunnels is two miles and a quarter in length. I went through two other tunnels, lit partly with gas and partly by ground glass from above, and the work inside is as carefully finished as though it had been intended for the front of the Abbey. The ordinary motives for human actions supply no explanation of the aims to which the Duke devoted himself. Dancing underground could have given him no pleasure, for he never danced. He made his servants skate at times, but otherwise the costly skating rinks were never used. He walked in the tunnels occasionally, but he did not have them built for the purpose of shunning observation, as is popularly supposed. He went about his park without fear of

being seen, and made these enormous tunnels, as he seems to have made everything else at Welbeck, because he had a maggot in his brain. There is a magnificent riding-school, 140 yards long and 40 yards wide, lit by over 7000 gas jets, and ornamented within in the most extravagant manner. The tiles are all of copper, there is a cornice in solid stone which cost five guineas a yard to carve, and a beautiful frieze of brass-work representing numberless varieties of birds, every single specimen being finished with the utmost care and artistic skill. It is like a palace—and the man who built it scarcely ever entered its doors. Close by is another marvellous place, “The Gallop,” all under glass, built at enormous cost. The tan was always carefully raked over and watered every day, as if the Duke might at any moment come to ride in it—and yet he never crossed a horse for many years before he died. What gratification did these costly structures give him? Most men get some pleasure for their money—what did he get? He belonged to a family in which the love of money had always been a dominant passion, and one might have supposed that its wild and reckless waste on objects scarcely consistent with perfect sanity would have been far from congenial to him. The Bentincks have been a saving, not a spendthrift race, and thus it happens that they have become the owners of 153,163 English acres, exclusive of their London property, although their family only took root in this country in modern times. Hans Bentinck, its founder, did indeed “come over with William,” but it was with William the Third. After

his time, almost every head of the house went on adding to the possessions and revenues of the family, until the yearly income became so vast that even the prodigal and ridiculous expenditure of money habitually indulged in by the late Duke could have made scarcely any perceptible difference in his banker's balance. Had he sought to accomplish any good with his money, it might have been better for himself, better also, perhaps, for his family in the coming days—but he has left scarcely anything behind him but monuments of gigantic and inconceivable folly. He was not even popular with the workmen whom he employed, for they felt that their labour was worse than thrown away. It gave him no pleasure when it was finished, and it can be nothing but a source of embarrassment and annoyance to his successors. Will they keep up these immense tunnels and underground chambers merely for the sake of making Welbeck talked about, or fill them all in, and endeavour to efface all traces of the late Duke's craze? At present everything is kept up most carefully; the tunnels are swept out and looked to every day, the tan in the riding-school and gallop raked over and watered. But the present possessor of Welbeck will probably prefer to take his exercise above ground rather than to burrow under the earth like the "old mole" addressed by Hamlet. When he wants a walk, he is scarcely likely to take it in a damp and close tunnel. These are parts of his inheritance with which he would be glad to part at a very liberal sacrifice.

An old man at Welbeck, who lived there all through

the late Duke's reign, is almost the only person I ever met with who gave a favourable account of him. He declared that he was not the morose and gloomy recluse generally supposed—that he was a kindly, good-hearted man, “never a better.”

“But what about these tunnels and underground places?” I said. “It puzzles one to see what good they are.”

“It would puzzle a priest after the order of Melchisedek,” said the man; a remark so strange that I thought I could perceive why it was that he had been a favourite servant of the old Duke's. They were two odd characters together.

“Don't you believe, sir, what you hear about the Dook not speaking to his servants. He would come over here and make a butt of me by the hour together when he wanted one. And as for no maid-servant having been allowed in the house, it is like the rest of the tales—all nonsense. The Dook would speak to them whenever he met them, like anybody else.”

“What did he make all these tunnels for?”

“To get rid of money and have something to do. Just look at this place,”—we were then in the crystal palace known as the “Gallop,”—“what do you think of this?”

“Wonderful! I was not prepared to see half the wonders you have got here.”

“No—it's like the Queen of Sheba and Solomon—she had not heard the half of his glories. I have never seen anything equal to Welbeck, and I've been in France.”



“With the Duke?”

“Oh, no—I go and spend my holidays there, instead of going on the spree in public-houses here. It’s worth doing, for you see many curious things, and I like everything there except the living. The people live on slapdash, and that don’t suit me.” The man, I ought to mention, was merely employed about the offices; how many people of his class or position have the enterprise and good sense to go and see a little of other countries when they happen to have a week’s holiday, and three or four pounds in their pockets?

The house at Welbeck, with its pointed roof and gables, makes a great show from the western approach, and the extensive lake near which it stands adds much to the beauty of the scene. Throughout the park, and everywhere in the Portland part of the forest, drives have been carefully made on the green sward, in three channels—the two outer lines laid in chalk for the wheels, and the inner one in gravel for the horse, so that at a distance three broad ribbons seem to have been laid upon the turf. Miles of drives have been thus planned, and are still kept in good condition—the sure sign of the Portland property wherever one may come across them.

I found the famous “Greendale Oak” in the park—a mere fragment, supported by so many large pieces of timber that there are more props to be seen than tree. It is said that a carriage can be driven through its trunk, but the story doubtless had its origin before the tree had fallen into its present dilapidated condition.

It is believed to be 800 years old. It was in this park, on a path leading to Thoresby, that Lord George Bentinck died so suddenly and mysteriously in 1848. He was going on a visit of two days to Earl Manvers, and was walking from Welbeck. Two men saw him leaning against a gate, and thought he was reading, "as he held his head down." They passed on, and some hours afterwards he was found, as Lord Beaconsfield says in his "Life"—one of the most interesting of his books—"lying on his face; his arms were under his body, and in one hand he grasped his walking-stick. His hat was a yard or two before him, having evidently been thrown off in falling. The body was cold and stiff." It is supposed that the attack was "a spasm of the heart." I have never seen the fact referred to, but a fact it is, that the belief was general in Mansfield and Nottingham that Lord George Bentinck was one of the victims of Palmer, the Rugeley poisoner. Lord George had often made heavy bets with Palmer, it was known that Palmer had recently lost large sums to him, and it is said that the two men were together the very day before the catastrophe in Welbeck Park. It was not till long after the death of Lord George that Palmer's career as a poisoner was brought to light, and this would account for the circumstance that no suspicion of unfair play was entertained at the time. The "spasm of the heart" may possibly have been produced by Palmer's strychnine.

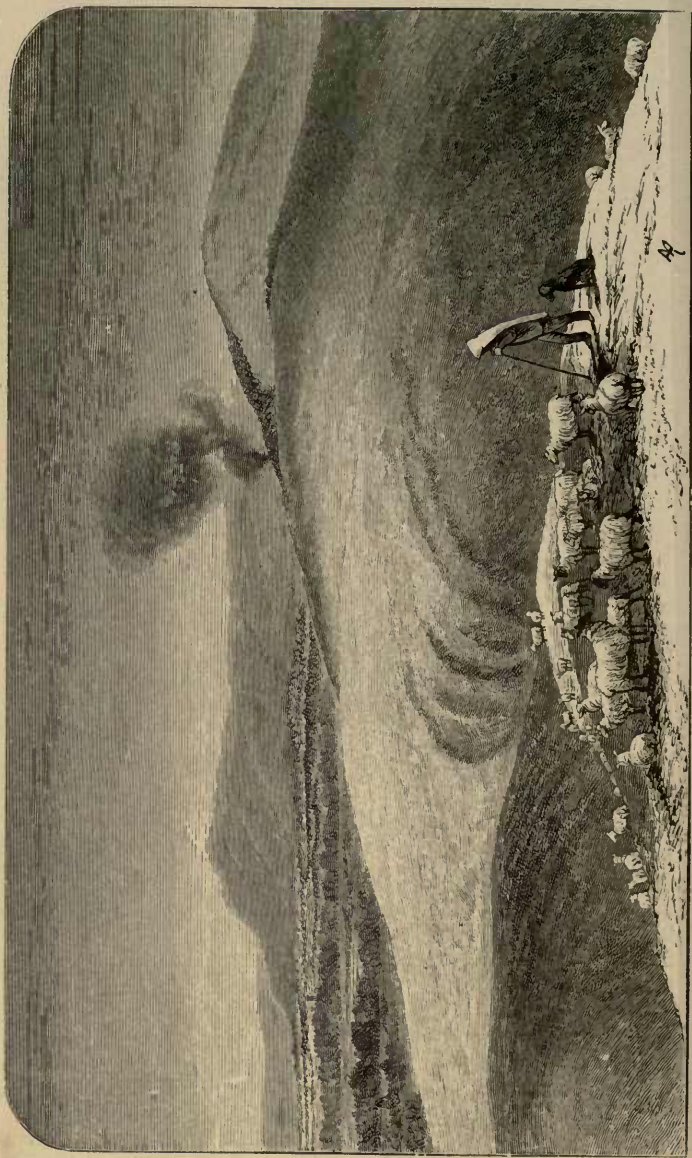
Clipstone Park is curious chiefly for the drainage and irrigation works which have been carried out there, and

which are sufficiently described in Murray's *Handbook*. I went through the "water meadows" one day, to the slight ruins of King John's Palace, and so on to Edwinstowe, but there is nothing in this part of the district which the lover of scenery will consider equal to the wilder parts of Sherwood. The best points to make for, and all that is really worth seeing in Sherwood, will be found indicated in the preceding pages. The avenue of beeches at Thoresby, and the beauties of Birklands and Billhagh are accessible only to the pedestrian, and require peaceful and leisurely exploration for their true enjoyment.

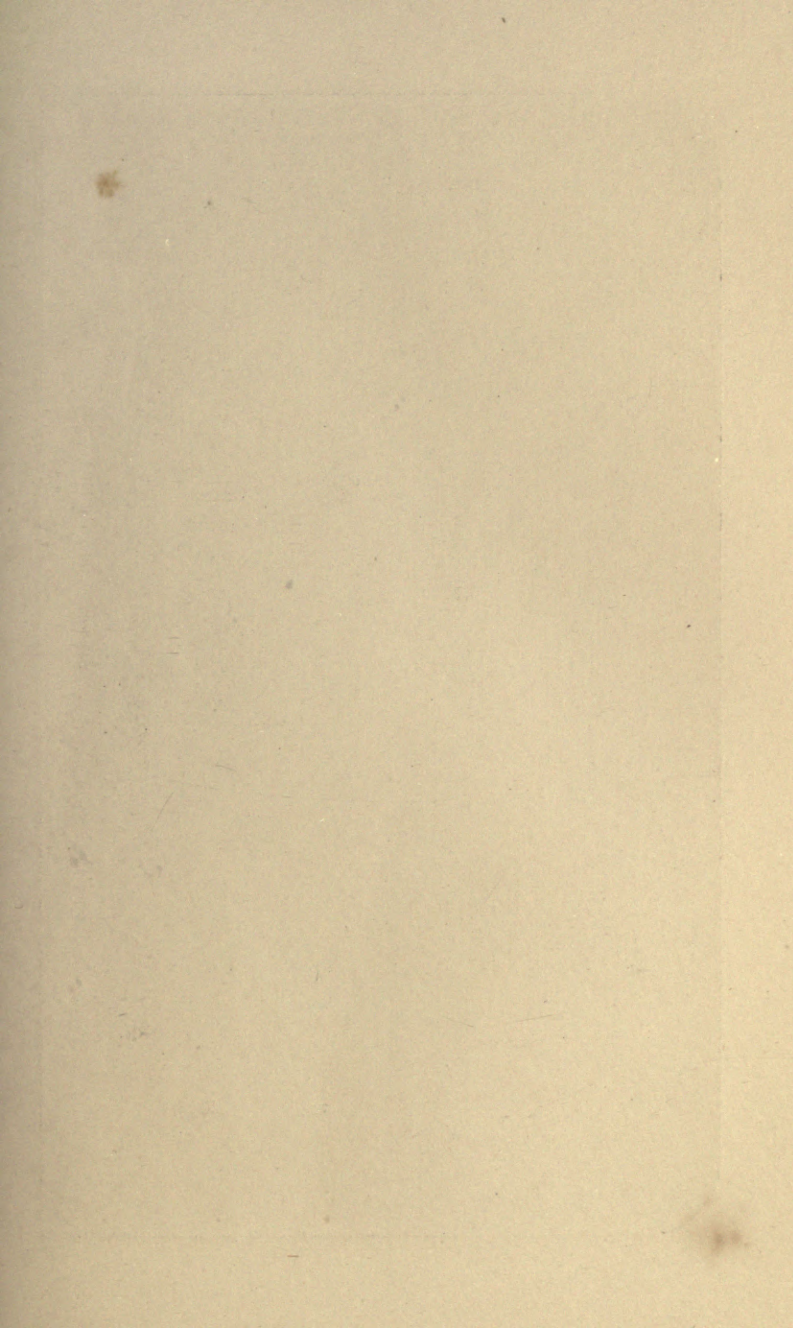




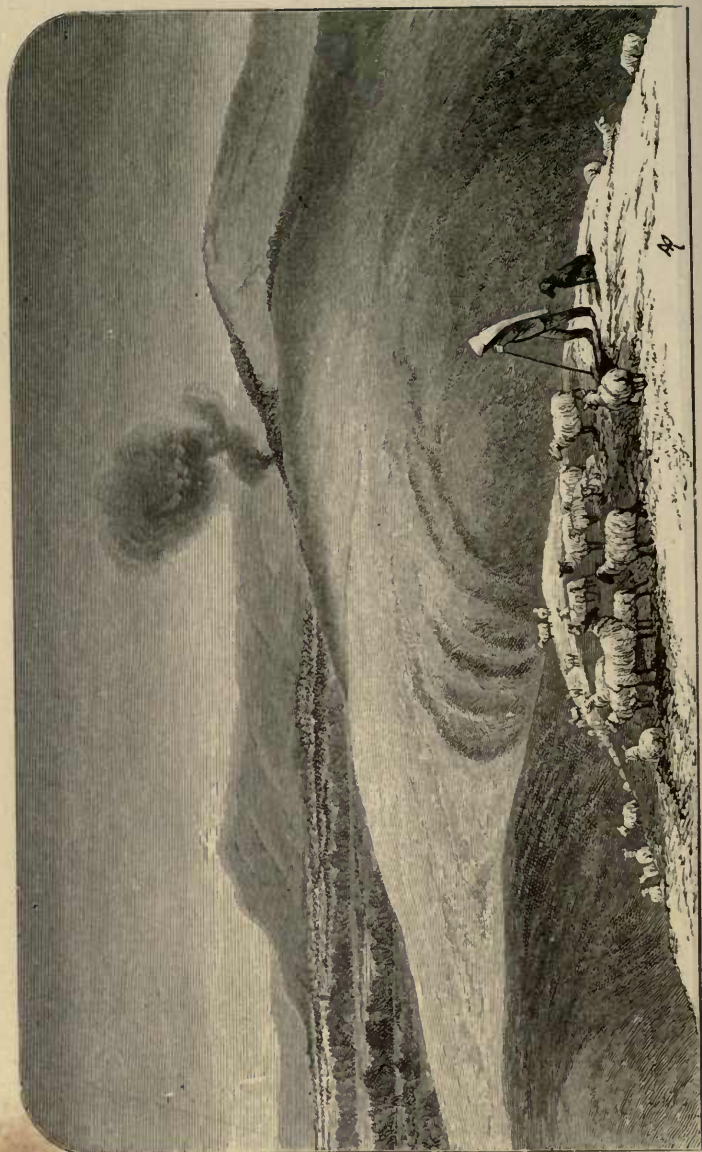




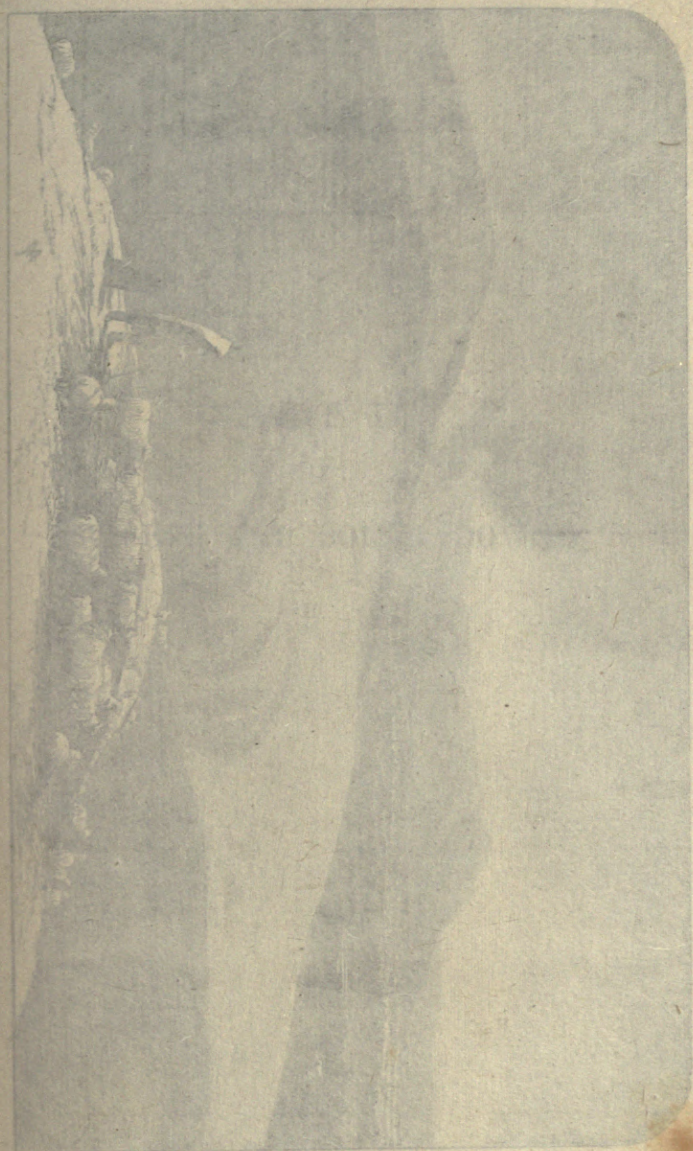
The Downs, looking towards Fife Beacon.













PART II.

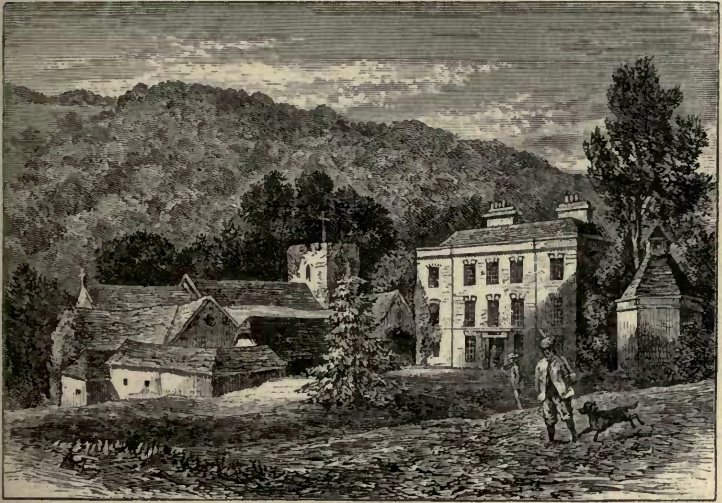


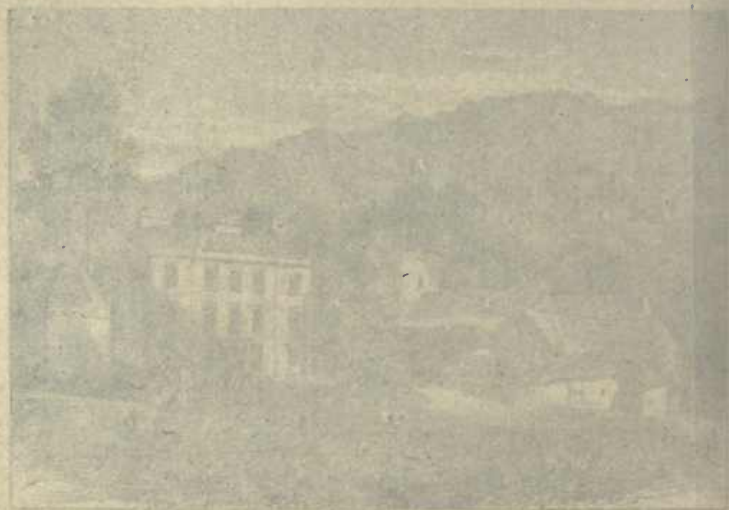
SUSSEX.—THE SOUTH DOWNS.







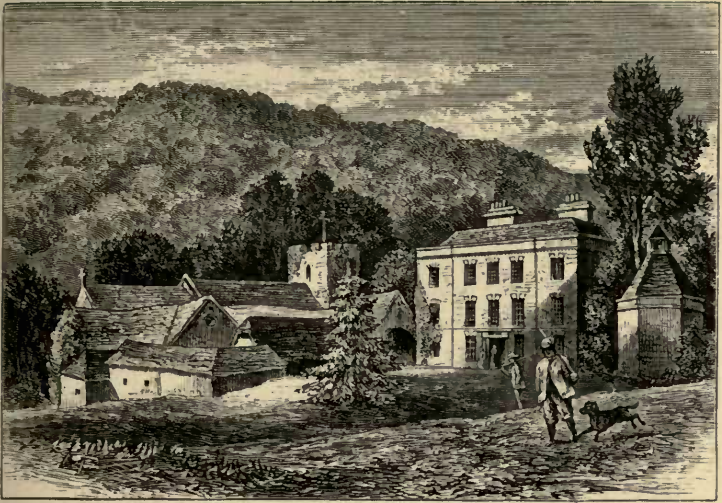












Gibbon's House.

## CHAPTER I.

### PETERSFIELD AND BUTSER HILL.

A Dull Town amid Fine Scenery.—Petersfield Hangers and Stonor Hill.—The Western Termination of the South Downs.—The Dumb Jockey.—A Playful Horse.—Buriton Village.—Gibbon's Home.—War Down and Butser Hill.—The Portsmouth Road.—An April Storm.—East Meon.—A "Holdish" Church.—"Nothing worth Seeing."—The Return by Langrish.—The Royal Marionettes.—Triumph of Virtue over Vice.—Company manners at the "Dolphin."

PETERSFIELD is one of those towns in which one always feels that it is time to go to bed. The stranger there will discover no inducement to sit up, unless he should arrive early enough in the day to allow of his

striking off into the country beyond, and in that case he will find plenty to amuse him. On the new Stonor Road, for instance, he may wander amid the most beautiful "hangers"—locally called hang-gers—which the whole county of Hampshire can produce. Even at Selborne there is nothing finer. The steep hill-sides are covered with beech, yew, and fir-trees. The road skirts a deep gorge lined with these trees, and at intervals an opening in the hangers discloses charming glimpses of the fields and blue hills far away in the distance. The country is intersected with old green lanes, some of them as wide as Fleet Street, covered with grass, and with bramble bushes straggling thickly over them. Leaves of wonderful colours may be gathered from these bushes in October—bright shades of crimson or yellow, equal in beauty to the leaves of the sumach or the Virginia creeper. One such lane runs almost in a straight line for three or four miles, and seldom is there a living thing to be seen upon it, except a woodpecker or a magpie. The people who live about here are dark of complexion, with long black hair, and are altogethier more Spanish than English in appearance. From the new Stonor Road, the visitor may easily find his way to the *old* Stonor Road, a rough and hilly cutting, which used to be the coach road in former days. At the top he will be able to survey the whole of the valley, and trace the line of the South Downs to Chanetonbury Ring, and rest his eyes upon the glimpse of blue sea at the limit of the horizon. Should he desire to make a journey over the South Downs, he cannot do better than begin at Butser Hill,

near Petersfield, which forms, as Murray's *Hand-book* tells us, "the western termination of the Downs, which here unite with the broader mass of chalk, stretching over the greater part of Hampshire, Wilts, and Dorset." The chain, it need scarcely be said, is not a continuous one, but is sometimes broken up by valleys, or throws out spurs wandering far from the main line. The tourist who desires to see the country properly will begin by making an excursion round Petersfield, in such a way as to take in Butser Hill and some of the outlying villages. He will thus get a fair idea of the nature of the region which he proposes to explore.

On my way to Petersfield last April, I met with a man leading a horse, so strangely caparisoned that everybody turned round to look at it with astonishment. On the horse's back was a high cross-bar of wood painted a bright yellow, and the trappings were ornamented with all the colours of the rainbow.

"What do you call that thing on your horse?" I asked the man—a little man with bow-legs.

"We call it a dumb jockey," said he. A dumb jockey is no rarity, but this was so queer a specimen that the rural mind was quite staggered by it. "I am training the horse for work. I only brought him in a week ago. You see he is pretty quiet."

By way of proving how quiet he was, the horse made a grab at the arm of his trainer, and lashed out behind in a fashion that induced me to give him plenty of room; for a kick from even the quietest horse will hurt.

“It’s only his play,” said the man. “I’ve been at this work now thirty-five years, and should be very glad to give it up. Enough’s as good as a feast.”

“What, are you tired of it?”

“No, not that, but my nerves give way. You don’t mind being thrown or kicked when you are young, but now I begin to be afraid of it. You see, I’m always looking out for a spill, even when I don’t get it.”

The horse now became so excessively playful that he speedily carried off both the dumb jockey and the live one some distance up the road. I, for my part, pursued my way by the road to the right of the “*Dolphin Inn*” towards *Buriton*, and at the distance of about a mile turned off to the left, through a lane richly spangled with primroses and violets. The village lies to the left of this road, and consists of a few old cottages, with an ivy-clad church in front of a pond. A large barn adjoins the churchyard, and at the back of it is a house apparently of the *Queen Anne* period.

“A comfortable-looking old house,” said I to a man who was trundling a wheelbarrow along the road, taking it in a leisurely manner, as they do everything in *Hampshire*.

“It is, sir—a farmer lives there. Did you ever hear of *Gibbon*, the historian?”

“I have.”

“Well, he lived there, sir. The rooms are in there where he studied. I never read his book myself, but they say it’s clever.”

*Gibbon*, in his “*Memoirs*,” speaks of this house as



“an old mansion, in a state of decay,” which “had been converted into the fashion and convenience of a modern house; and if strangers had nothing to see, the inhabitants had little to desire. The spot was not happily chosen, at the end of the village and the bottom of the hill: but the aspect of the adjacent grounds was various and cheerful.” The house is, indeed, much shut in, and the “adjacent grounds” are now covered with farm buildings. I went round a narrow road by the pond, touching a fringe of Buriton hanger, past three or four thatched cottages, whose overhanging eaves are wide enough to afford shelter to the traveller should he chance to be caught in a shower of rain—no uncommon occurrence in this rainy district. The road gradually dwindles down into a path, and goes by some lime-works and a hideous chimney, then crosses a turnpike, and so makes towards a hill known as “War Down,” where it comes to an end.

From the top of this hill there is a splendid view over woods, fields, and hills, and I could trace for many a mile the range on the top of which I hoped to spend the greater part of the next two or three days. It is necessary to come down from this hill in order to reach Butser, which may be identified by the numerous clumps of furze bushes upon its sides and summit. As one descends from War Down, a magnificent turnpike road is seen running like a white streak among the green Downs, and this proves upon a nearer acquaintance to be the main Portsmouth road—certainly one of the finest roads in this or any other country. It touches

much beautiful scenery on its way, and is kept up in a condition which would do credit to the finest private park in the land. Not a hole in it was to be seen anywhere even among these lonely hills; not a stone was out of place upon it. Nor was there a human being visible for miles. It is the only turnpike road I have ever felt reluctant to leave behind. A steep bank divides it from Butser, and soon I found myself at the top of that hill also—a hill which is of no mean dimensions, seeing that it is 927 feet above the sea. The top is almost covered with furze and dwarf hawthorns, amid which fine cowslips occasionally peep out in the spring. Nowhere is the cowslip seen to greater perfection than on these Downs, and in the meadows which skirt them. The furze on Butser grows breast-high in many places, and it is not easy to push through it in search of some track which may lead in the direction the traveller may wish to go. I had resolved to make my way to East Meon, and the village was plainly in sight, but it was not quite clear how to get at it without losing the hills. The views which were spread around were so glorious that there was little temptation to leave the spot. An immense landscape is unfolded to the view, including the best part of the hills in Surrey and Hampshire, and miles of the Sussex Downs. Towards the south, however, huge black clouds were drifting, and large masses hung over the sea, with streaks of light dashed through them here and there—a scene which recalled Martin's lurid pictures, and which filled me with a nameless apprehension of evil. Presently the reverberations of

distant thunder reached the ear, and drops of rain began to patter down; the tail of the storm was passing over Butser, but its strength seemed to be spent far out upon the black sea.

By keeping East Meon well in sight, I could choose my own time for plunging down into the valley, and after a walk across some fields I reached the outskirts of the village, where the cottages are little better than Irish cabins. Dirty children were running to and fro, or playing about on the edge of a brook, and such glimpses as one could get of their homes showed that the road was cleaner than the rooms. This part of East Meon is known by the natives as "Frogmore," and in despite of its name it is a disgrace to an English village. The central part of the place is much more attractive in appearance, and there are even some comfortable houses, the best of which appears to belong to a draper whose shop adjoins it. The church has a modern look from a distance, and I asked a boy if it was new. "Dunno," said he; "I think he's holdish." On getting nearer to it, its age is at once evident, and one is especially struck with the fine tower—that is, the old part of it, for a ridiculous-looking spire has been put upon it by modern improvers. Inside there is a beautiful font, supposed to have been carved by the hand to which we are indebted for the font in Winchester Cathedral. The doors and arches are also excellent, and among the new tiles on the floor I noticed a square stone on which were inscribed, in old letters, the words "Amen's Plenty." What this meant I could not find out at East Meon. The oldest tablet

now in the church is of the year 1633. Close to the church there is a rambling pile of buildings, of extremely ancient appearance, "a part of a monastery," said a man of whom I sought information.

"Is there anything worth seeing inside?"

"No—nothing. But you can't throw a stone up to the ceiling of the woodhouse."

"No? why not?"

"Because there bean't any ceiling there," said the man with a grin.

This brilliant sally of rural wit I would gladly have exchanged for a little more accurate knowledge of the man's own village, for to my discomfiture I afterwards discovered that the house at the very doors of which I stood is one of the oldest and most curious in the county—full of "images," old carvings, and strange passages and recesses. So, at least, they told me at Petersfield, and yet the local authority was positive there was nothing worth seeing in East Meon. Villagers very seldom look upon anything old as worthy of the least attention. What they like is something new and shiny.

I returned to Petersfield by Langrish and over Steep Common, through pleasant scenery, although not by any means equal to that which is commanded from the hills. From the left of the road before reaching the railway, Petersfield hanger may be clearly seen, and Stonor Hill, over which is Hawkley and Selborne—all worth visiting, should the stranger have time at his disposal. After I had disposed of my dinner at the













“Dolphin,” and two other strangers had eaten theirs at the same table, all in dead silence, I strolled out, and presently heard strains of music proceeding from the



East Meon.

square. On making my way thither, I saw a tent, and two men playing brass instruments in front of it, while a third banged away at a drum which was suspended

over the door. A couple of naphtha lamps were swung on a string, and partly lit up the tent and the little crowd outside. The music produced by the orchestra was of a mournful kind, and it had its effect upon the rustics who were gaping at the tent, for most of them seemed to be in a state of horrible depression. A big sign indicated that the "Royal Marionettes" were to be seen within. I should have preferred the regular drama, but one cannot pick and choose in Petersfield in regard to public amusements. The woman at the door told me they had come from Portsmouth, and had been at Petersfield nearly a week.

"We generally stop in one place for the winter, but now we shall be able to get out again. No, sir, business ain't good—fur from it. It's meanness that prevents 'em coming, not because they can't afford it. We ought to have begun at eight, but you see there's scarcely anybody in, and so we keep on waiting."

Bang went the drum outside, and a wild blast burst from the brass instruments; but it was all in vain. The people of Petersfield were too mean to come.

I went in and saw the performance. The Royal Marionettes were all suspended by the neck, and the shadows of the strings were magnified by reflection into the size of ropes upon the scene at the back. The stage was about as large as a cupboard, and the marionettes moved about it with a hop, skip, and jump, not altogether in harmony with the serious business they had in hand. No one can be expected to comport himself with dignity who is liable to be suddenly jerked up

by the neck, especially if, when he comes down, his face is sometimes seen to be turned over his back. Moreover, it must be awkward to find that one leg will not go up at all, while the other goes up too much, and to be without any warning doubled up in two, through an unexpected collapse of the backbone. These were the difficulties against which the marionettes had to contend. Their parts were spoken for them by a man and a woman, behind the scenes—the man had a cold, and the woman had started on the tour with an inadequate supply of the letter h. The “play” was further complicated by the rival performance of the Petersfield brass band in the Corn Exchange close by. This band was practising, and to judge from the excruciating sounds produced, sorely did the members thereof stand in need of practice. Despite these drawbacks, the play must have improved the morals of the audience. It was all about a wicked lord—dressed in velvet and satin—and a humble but virtuous maiden of his village. The lord makes advances of that kind for which lords have always been justly famous, and the maiden repels them, in the way for which maidens are equally famous. She announces that she prefers death to dishonour—a sentiment which was deprived of its due force by the fact that at the critical moment of uttering it her left leg became entangled with her right, so that it required an unusually hard jerk to bring her to her proper bearings, and get her off the scenes. The noble lord, a victim to his unbridled passions, pursues the village maid as speedily as the strings which pull his legs will

permit, and the story is wrought up to a high pitch of excitement by the appearance of a maniac lover, whose entry is always prefaced by a hoarse and gloomy "Ha! ha!" from the proprietor of the show. Here his cold was of real advantage to him. The maniac lover and the noble lord now skip and hop about somewhat wildly, and take it by turns to plunge a carving-knife into each other, the lover always raising his battle-cry of "Ha! ha!" even when at times his feet get turned in the wrong direction, and seem to be running away from him—an infirmity which may not be unusual with maniac lovers. The village maiden, unaffected by threats and promises, scorns every advance of her persecutor; and I can testify that she remained chaste as snow while I was in the tent. To be sure, I did not stay to see the performance through. I went back to the hotel, where the two strangers were smoking in gloomy silence, and for a little time I also smoked my cigar in gloomy silence, and then we all three took up candles and stalked defiantly out of the room.



## CHAPTER II.

### PETERSFIELD TO COCKING AND MIDHURST.

A Fresh Start.—The Blackbird's Song.—Harting.—Mysterious Disappearance of a Stag.—Up Park.—South Down Scenery.—Telegraph Hill.—How to get to "Kingley Bottom."—A Green Track and a Quiet Nook.—A Solitary Road.—Moss and Violets.—The "Devil's Jumps."—A Doubtful Corner.—Voices of the Winds.—An Invaded Dingle—The Village of Cocking.—An "Ill-convenient" House.—Blackthorn Winter.—Field Paths to Midhurst.—Bed or Politics?

I INTENDED to get to the Downs somewhere near Up Park, and after duly studying the map, I set off by Nurstead Rocks, through deep rocky lanes, and by the side of woods in which numerous blackbirds were singing, and over a road which commanded a striking and picturesque view of the Park, the Downs, and a large and pleasant village very near the hills. The songs of blackbirds never ceased, and what song is more delightful, especially in the earlier months of the year, when nature is recovering from the death of winter? The blackbird has not been so much extolled by the poets as the nightingale, but his melodious notes are among the most welcome of the sounds which float over the fields when the hedges and trees are beginning to put forth their leaves. Tennyson

complains of his blackbird for going too silently about the garden :—

“Thy sole delight is sitting still  
With that cold dagger of thy bill ;”

but as a rule he cannot justly be said to be niggardly with his song. I have always noticed that he is the first of the birds to renew his ditty after rain. Scarcely has the storm passed before he steps forth jauntily, smooths his feathers, whistles his few but charming notes, and says to the world—“Come out, it is all over. Look at me ! I am not afraid of rain.”

The village of Harting is beautifully situated under the Downs, with abundance of fine trees near it and about it, and a pretty church, with a deep sloping roof. The “Ship Inn” stands right across the end of the street, and seems, with some old cottages at the back of it, to completely block the way. From time out of mind Harting has been a favourite place of residence with gentle and simple, and one family—the Fords—lived hereabouts for eight generations, from 1549 to 1746. The park was sold to Sir M. Featherstonhaugh in 1747, and still remains in that family, though the house has been recently shut up—an event which seemed to excite a lively interest in Harting.

“Do you see that wood ?” a man asked me just before I reached the village. “There was a stag-hunt here not long ago, and after a great run, the stag went into that wood and has never been seen since.”

“But the wood is not large,” said I ; “perhaps the people about here like venison ?”

“Can’t say, sir, but it’s strange they have never found that stag.”

“Very strange—what can have become of him?”

“Knocked on the head, sir,” said the man in a low voice, and it may have been so, for I did not meet the stag all day, though I kept a good look-out for him.

I made for the Downs past the church, and beyond an old timber cottage which in summer must be able to boast of a pretty garden. The road skirts the woods of Up Park, and goes up a deep ravine, covered with fine elms and beeches. The view becomes more extensive and rich at every step, and at the top of the hill there is no small portion of Hampshire, Surrey, and Sussex spread before the eye of the traveller. He will be hard to please if he is not abundantly satisfied with so exquisite a landscape. To the south of Up Park the sea is visible, and the large headland of Selsea Bill, a favourite haunt of the osprey and the gull. Direct to the east is Hindhead, and behind one are the Marden woods and commons, a wild and deserted-looking country. The Downs are soft and velvety to the tread, but about half-a-mile beyond Up Park a vast colony of moles has completely cut up the surface, turning up large pieces of white chalk and flint, and quite altering the character of the country. Hundreds of acres have been devastated by this untiring little animal, and in many places there is scarcely a blade of grass to be seen. The traveller will not have advanced far on his way to Cocking before he discovers that journeying over the Downs is not quite such plain sailing as it looks from below. There scarcely a break

in the chain is visible, but when you begin to walk on the top, you find that the Downs are divided into ridges, with green valleys between them, and that there is no regular track in any well-defined direction. Consequently, there is a good deal of up-and-down hill work to be done, and it is not possible to get over much ground in a short time. People who are in a hurry, therefore, should never go to the South Downs. They will find half-a-day swallowed up before they have been able to turn themselves round, and if they have planned a walk by the standards of time and distance they have been accustomed to adopt on ordinary ground, they will probably be surprised by darkness long before their journey's end is in sight. It is not always very easy to find one's way in this region even by daylight—after dark it is excessively difficult. One rounded hill is very like another, the valleys are sometimes deep, the chalk-pits are deeper still, and spurs of the hills entice one off far out of the route. No one can be said to know the South Downs well enough to make sure of finding his way over them for many miles in the darkness. It is always best, therefore, to make an early start in the morning, and to allow an ample margin for loiterings by the way, or occasionally straying widely from it.

Beyond the first dip in the Downs after leaving Up Park is a hill locally known as "Telegraph Hill." On the top there was formerly a signal station, but no trace of it is there now, unless a square of partly enclosed turf marks the spot where it stood. From this point the Downs fall back to the south, but I continued on in



an easterly direction, over another and smaller hill, which stands almost in front of the village of Elstead, whose church spire is visible through the cleft. A rough cart-track runs between Telegraph Hill and the lesser hill below it, and this track, if followed southward, would lead over Marden Down, Bow Hill, and Kingley Bottom, near Chichester. I did not turn off on this particular day, for I had seen Kingley Bottom already, and remembered a direction which a man gave me on going to it from Chichester. "You keep along," he said, "and when you come out a' t' bottom keep thwart th'ill, till you coom to hovel wheer the ship (sheep) a' be. Then keep on the ston till you coom to a geät. Go through that geät—it's true what I'm tellen of yer—till you coom to Musser Slane's feärm, and along wheer a roäd jines the hill; crass over that roäd, and go through another geät by the sheep-wash—I know what I'm sayin' because I work on the farm. Follow right on till you coom to wheer they be a maäkin the water-works." This was the longest direction I ever got out of anybody in my life, and confused as it seemed, I wrote it down, followed it implicitly, and by dint of it made my way to Kingley Bottom, and saw the wondrous grove of yews, equal in interest to the Druids' Grove in Norbury Park. It was a silent, songless grove—there was no sound to be heard among the venerable trees except that of the strange and ghostly conversation which yews always seem to be holding with each other by means of their creaking branches. If the traveller loves yews, let him make a pilgrimage to Kingley

Bottom, but he must do it some other day, for at present we have him in tow for Cocking.

Our way now lies round the lower edge of the little hill below the "Beacon," by a green track which skirts a charming hollow—soft, well sheltered from the winds, with wooded slopes and a long line of hills beyond. Here the visitor may stand—or sit, if it pleases him better—and watch the shadows sweep over the valley, and see what pictures the sun will make out of the distant woods. There is not the slightest fear that anybody will come by to disturb his peaceful contemplation of the scene, for no one seems to wander here except an occasional shepherd with his flock. The turf is deep and soft, so that one's own footfall creates no sound, and thus there is nothing to be heard but the singing of a lark or the cry of a plover. Between Harting and Cocking I met with no one, nor could I have asked my way had I wanted to do so ever so much. It is a solitary road, but no lover of nature will think the worse of it on that account. It was this kind of scenery, however, which made Dr. Johnson hate the Downs at the back of "Brighthelmstone," as Mrs. Piozzi informs us. He declared that a man doomed to live there would hang himself if he could only "find a tree on which to fasten the rope."

I now shaped my course more towards the south-east, and saw a barn and a cottage in a field to the left, and a plantation of trees on rising ground to the right. Having reached the plantation, I kept close to it through the field—a field covered with beautiful

layers of moss, with violets growing in among them—Nature's way of decorating her favourite corners. Presently I came to a road, and crossed it to a hill opposite, and then resumed the eastward course. This description may appear involved to the reader, but, like the countryman's directions for Kingley Bottom, it will be found intelligible to anyone who is on the spot. To the left, and not very far from the brow of the hill, are five large mounds, one standing at some little distance from the other four. These are the barrows marked on the Ordnance map as the "Devil's Jumps." I went up to them and found them placed amidst a wilderness of furze, from which there scuttled out numerous rabbits. It seemed to me that there were traces of a sixth barrow, but perhaps they were nothing more than heaps of earth. The barrow which stands apart from the rest is of great size—perhaps beneath it rest the bones of some mighty chief. A few yards beyond the fifth barrow I came upon another green path and cart track, running right and left. Here there might be a moment's doubt, in the absence of a compass, as to the proper way to steer, for the left-hand path seems to wind too far north, while the right promises to go in the desired direction. The fact is, however, that the range of hills to which the latter path leads is not the main chain of the South Downs, but the spur on which Goodwood race-course is situated. The left-hand path must therefore be pursued, and gradually it will be found to wind eastward, through several gates, which are readily to be opened by means of a latch.

We are soon brought round to the crest of the hills again, and presently cross a path leading down into Didling. Questioning whether a visit to that village would recompense me for the trouble of mounting the hill again, I kept on through a gate to the right hand, beyond which the green track is continued. From the hill top I now obtained a panoramic view of the Downs along which I had come—a fine series of hills sloping backwards, and buttressed upon the plain, impressing one with a sense of inviolable strength and repose. The wind was high, as it generally is on the Downs, and strange voices seemed to ring in one's ears. Everybody knows how singular are the tricks played by the winds in producing weird sounds—now it seems that people are talking close by; anon that bells are ringing, as one may often hear them far out at sea. Who that has stood on the deck of a ship a thousand miles from land has not fancied that he heard the church bells ringing? Such are the sounds that seem to reach one's ears on the hills when the winds are blowing. The big furze bushes creak and moan like living creatures in pain, and now and then something rushes by with a loud "whish," which will startle the solitary traveller out of a musing fit, and render it hard to believe that he is really alone. From a point not far from the "Devil's Jumps" I could plainly see the spire of Chichester cathedral, and the Isle of Wight ought to have been visible if the day had been clear enough. By-and-by the path sloped down again, and there was another break in the hills, forming a sort of valley. Then I left the



green track, and took still further to the left, and by an easy slope made my way to the valley, past an old farmhouse, and a very deep dingle, from the bottom of which trees are growing to a great height. The beauty of this spot comes to a sudden end, for at the head of the dingle, round a bend of the road, is a steep embankment, with a train running on the top of it, leading to lime-works or some other works, and bringing us back at once from the poetry of nature to the prose of real life.

The path takes up the dingle again, at the bottom of which is a brook filled with water-cresses, and finally comes out at the entrance to the village of Cocking, where a finger-post informs the wayfarer that there is a "bridle-path over the Downs to Chilgrove." Cocking stands close under the Downs, and it might be made a halting place for the night if there were any decent accommodation to be found there; but there is none. I asked a man where the church was, but he did not answer; when I asked him for the public-house he understood at once, and pointed out the "Bell." According to my original plan, I had marked this as the half-way house to Amberley, but the young woman who was behind the bar informed me that there was no bed to be had for love or money—there were, she said, but five rooms in the house, and they "wanted them all themselves. It was a very ill-convenient house." Moreover, they had nothing to offer by way of refreshment but bread and cheese. To this, however, I managed to get a cup of tea added. The butter was very rank, the cheese was in the shape of a ball, of

a most beautiful pink colour outside, and a dirty yellow inside. The tea had a strong aromatic odour, but it did not taste like tea, and for once I was reduced to the necessity of drawing upon a small flask which I carry in my pocket for special emergencies, and the top of which I seldom unscrew for months together. But Cocking was too much for it—I quietly poured the tea out of the window, and took some milk slightly modified with the contents of the flask. Then, after consulting the map, I determined to go on to Midhurst, but not by the straight road, for I found that I had still some little time to spare before the hour of darkness. So I made up my mind to go round instead of straight, and turned by the church and a mill-stream below it by a field path running parallel with the Downs for Heyshott—a pretty path, enabling one to see the hills from the plain, and agreeably diversifying the day's walk. Heyshott is a straggling and untidy-looking village, and there is no temptation to loiter there a moment longer than is necessary. After passing through it there is a turnpike road on which a finger-post directs the traveller to Midhurst. We do not take this road, however, but go across it, and continue over another field into a smaller public road, leading, as a man informed me, to "Cobden's big house." "A blackthorn winter, sir," added the man, for the north-east wind was blowing rather sharply at the time. "In the middle of April it always comes on. I've noticed it for years."

The road passes close under the house in which

Mr. Cobden lived, and which was presented to him by the Anti-Corn-Law League. It is a common-place looking house, such as one may see scattered all over the suburbs of London, but it stands in a beautiful situation, and close to fine woods, through part of which a stream flows gently, apparently affording good promise for the angler. At the end of a deep lane is an obelisk to Mr. Cobden's memory, and to the right of that is another path across fields, which ultimately comes out on the high road to Midhurst. The views are very fine in all directions, especially towards the Downs, where Butser Hill stands out prominently, with a cleft between it and War Down through which the Portsmouth road passes. Midhurst was farther off than I thought, but as the Spanish proverb says, "He who goes on, gets there," and I went on, and did "get there," and found tolerable accommodation at the "Angel Inn." Moreover, I had an opportunity of hearing politics discussed, and many curious views expressed which observers of the "signs of the times" might have been induced to ponder over—but to a tired man bed is more attractive than politics, and by nine o'clock I had taken myself beyond reach of all controversy concerning Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield. The distance traversed during the day was about seventeen miles.



Ruins at Cowdray.

## CHAPTER III.

### MIDHURST TO AMBERLEY.

South Down Inns.—Poor Accommodation.—The Road to Graftham.—A Village Churchyard.—Lavington Park and Church—An English Scene.—The Bishop's Grave.—Birds and Flowers.—Duncton Beacon—Magnificent Views.—Sutton and the "White Horse."—The Wren.—An Old Cottage.—A Roman House under the Downs.—Making Home comfortable 1,900 years ago.—The Woods and Hills.—Duncton to Amberley.—Off by Train.

It will be gathered from the last Chapter that there is some difficulty in making a leisurely exploration of the Downs between Petersfield and Amberley. The distance is too great to be accomplished in one day, unless by a professional "walkist," who goes along see-







ing nothing, and thinking only of how many miles he has got through in the course of a certain number of hours. That method of spinning through a country would be to die a punishment and not a pleasure, for surely half one's enjoyment when out for a day consists in feeling that one is not pressed for time, but can linger as long as inclination or opportunity may suggest. Now if the traveller who wishes to go from Farnham to Amberley, and who has no other main route he must take a circuitous route, and then get out on the hills. In the first place he must arrange matters for stopping at the inn at Farnham, and then the hills, and passing the inn at Farnham a little further from the hills, and then the inn at the foot of the hills. The Downs are a fine country, and the night comes on as the traveller is passing the inn at the foot of the hills, and he must find a bed. Thus it was with me, and I did not want to go to Midhurst, but I was obliged to do so as a place of entertainment, and I must push on, and many tourists who travel this road will find themselves in the same predicament. But should they never have gone to Midhurst before, they will not regret spending a few hours there, for it adjoins one of the most beautiful parks in England, adorned with some picturesque ruins—the park and ruins of Cowdray.\* Nowhere in the county of Sussex will the traveller find a more



\* Described in the article "Folk-lore and Green Fields," Chapter IX.





ing nothing, and thinking only of how many miles he can get through in the course of a certain number of hours. That method of spinning through a country would be to me a punishment and not a pleasure, for surely half one's enjoyment when out for a day consists in feeling that one is not pressed for time, but can loiter as long as inclination or opportunity may suggest. Now if the traveller is determined to go from Petersfield to Amberley without diverging from his main route he must take a supply of provisions with him, and camp out on the hills. In the absence of suitable arrangements for such a cruise, he must come down from the hills, and perhaps find himself driven to go a little further from them than he desires, for the villages at the foot of the Downs can offer no accommodation. The Downs are very pleasant by daylight, but when night comes on and the north-east wind sets in, the weaknesses of humanity cry aloud for supper and a bed. Thus it was with me on the preceding day—I did not want to go to Midhurst, but the collapse of Cocking as a place of entertainment obliged me to push on, and most tourists who travel this road will find themselves in the same predicament. But should they never have been to Midhurst before, they will not regret spending a few hours there, for it adjoins one of the most beautiful parks in England, adorned with some picturesque ruins—the park and ruins of Cowdray.\* Nowhere in the county of Sussex will the traveller find finer trees or

\* Described in the author's "Field Paths and Green Lanes," Chapter IX.

more beautiful glades. The country all round Midhurst is charming, and hence the stranger will lose nothing by making that his resting-place, even should he resolve to cry a halt for more than one night.

In the morning I was out betimes, and on my way to Graffham, where I proposed to regain the hills once more. Should anyone else follow this route, he may advantageously shorten the turnpike-road part of the journey by taking a trap as far as Graffham, which he may do at a cost of four or five shillings. It is always desirable to get over the hard road with as little waste of time and the freshness of the morning as possible. There is nothing particularly interesting between Midhurst and Graffham—the road runs through Selham, a round-about, meandering, narrow road, and then goes over Graffham Common between fir-trees and heath towards the hills. The Downs are not so bare as they are in most places; here and there they are well wooded to the very top, the chief trees which adorn them being beeches and firs. Graffham is a very small village, which the traveller will remember chiefly for the singularly neat appearance of its churchyard. There are few graves with tombstones over them, but each one is carefully turfed over, and kept green and free from weeds. A little beyond this garden of the dead, we enter Lavington park, and see the spire of Petworth church in the distance to the left, and a great stretch of country beyond. The park does not appear to be extensive, but it is in the midst of lovely scenery, and one may suppose that the owners of the place have

appreciated the beauties which are unfolded on every side, since seats are placed at intervals under the trees for the tranquil enjoyment of the view. And no doubt this conjecture is just, for the park was once the home of a very eminent churchman—Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester.

The park road goes close under the house—a square, ugly house, of whitish-yellow brick, all unworthy of so charming a spot. At the back of it, on the main public road, is a small but most picturesque church, nestled close under the Downs, which here are covered with delightful trees. Still more ancient and beautiful trees surround the churchyard, and throw their shadows over the green mounds where the villagers have been laid to rest. On many of these graves bunches of daffodils and primroses were lying, and the blackbirds and thrushes were piping their sweetest lays, while just over one grave under a wall the robin was adding his song to the “celestial choir.” Beneath this grave rests the great Bishop, whose name no doubt will be famous for many generations, as, in a different way, will be the name of another eminent man who was formerly connected with this little church—Cardinal Manning. It was in the church here that Dr. Manning preached his last sermon to a Protestant congregation, for he was incumbent of Wool Lavington when he went over to Rome. There is a small, low stone at the head of the Bishop’s grave, and on each side of it are two other graves marked by precisely similar stones—those of the Bishop’s wife and eldest son. The inscriptions on these stones, especially

on that of the Bishop's wife, are getting gradually filled up, and there were some words which I could not possibly decipher. The graves lie close under ivy and yew-trees, from which there is a perpetual drip in rainy weather, very destructive to soft stone, such as that of which these plain and simple memorials have been constructed. Two other graves close by, but beyond the drip of the trees, are marked by iron crosses which look as fresh as the day they were placed there, and yet they were erected in 1841 and 1847. They are the graves of Dr. Wilberforce's children. A small nosegay of spring flowers lay upon the Bishop's grave. The church door was open, and I went inside—a very small but pretty church, with a new altar screen, and a bishop's pastoral staff fixed to the wall. This was the staff used by Dr. Wilberforce when he was Bishop of Oxford. Near it are some brasses to the memory of himself and his kinsfolk. No church could stand in a more beautiful spot—it recalls what Shelley said, in his preface to "Adonaïs," of Keats's grave in the cemetery at Rome: "It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place." The trees, the fields, the beautiful hills, the exquisite landscape in the distance, all complete a picture which will long dwell in the memory of even the most heedless of travellers. The Bishop's garden almost touched the place where he sleeps the last sleep—such a spot as Wordsworth describes in his exquisite sonnet:—

“ Where holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,  
Is marked by no distinguishable line ;



The turf unites, the pathways intertwine ;  
And wheresoe'er the stealing footstep tends,  
Garden, and that Domain where kindred, friends,  
And neighbours rest together, here confound  
Their several features, mingled like the sound  
Of many waters, or as evening blends  
With shady night."

A little way down the road are some cottages with pretty old-fashioned gardens, and a fine yew-hedge, and then another ancient cottage, and a pond sparkling in the sunshine, and meadows covered with primroses and violets—a more thoroughly characteristic English scene it would be hard to find.

I now bent my steps towards the mound on the top of the hill to the left of the churchyard, which marks the spot known as Duncton Beacon. The track from Duncton goes back a little, slanting up the hill, but it is a good path through woods, and commands some lovely glimpses of the country. On emerging from the wood, I crossed a road which runs to Chichester, and mounted the hill in front, and soon reached Duncton Beacon, from whence there is another of the magnificent views that so frequently reward the traveller on the South Downs. The heaths and commons of Surrey, the fine cape of Hindhead, the woods which still remain as relics of the ancient forests of Sussex, the hills of Kent—all may be traced as clearly as upon a map. To the eastward the view seems absolutely without end, for the eye grows weary of endeavouring to trace it to its farthest limit. On this particular day there was no sunshine, but the air was clear, though somewhat gloomy.

Sunshine is all essential to the South Down scenery, and the stranger in that region is doubly grateful for it, for everybody knows how its inspiriting influence will cheer a man on a lonely path, and keep him going in good spirits for hours together. A dark sky and a cold wind, on the other hand, will make every mile as long as two, and hide half the cunning work which Nature has done to beautify her solitary places.

I kept the brow of Duncton Hill, east by south, with a wood on the left hand. The Downs now take a wide sweep in a southerly direction, and among them is a hill with a clump of trees upon it, forming a conspicuous landmark. This is Chanctonbury Ring, not far from Steyning, and just above Wiston Park. The traveller may here cross a chalk road, and keep on over the hills towards Cold Harbour—a farm on a hill side, near which the Roman road, or “Stane Street,” passes—or follow the chalk road down to Sutton. He need not be mortified if he finds that he cannot go straight to his destination, for in this part the paths on the Downs are all in a tangle, and the old Ordnance map affords no help whatever in the attempt to unravel it. The stranger must make a course for himself, and in doing so he is sure to go out of his way, for “them Downs be very deceivin’,” as a man said to me at Duncton, and although there are places where a green track runs straight forward, so that you cannot well make a mistake, it will be vain to search for one between Duncton and Amberley. As I was anxious to see Bignor, I followed the chalk road down to Sutton, which turned out to be all com-

prised in one little street, with a roadside-inn at the end of it—the “White Horse.”

This, again, would be a convenient point at which to break a long and systematic exploration of the Downs, but the accommodation obtainable is of the poorest kind. I asked the landlord if he could put up anybody for the night, and he told me that he could if he received notice beforehand—not without. He had only one room to spare, and that he generally wanted himself; an Irish innkeeper could not have described it better. He wanted all his rooms for his own family. What was the good of keeping a room vacant? It might be six weeks before anybody came by to ask for it. I fear, therefore, that the chance traveller cannot depend upon finding quarters for the night at Sutton. Some labourers were boozing in the tap-room, and I was glad to get out of doors again on the way to Bignor. Close by the house a beautiful wren hopped out of the hedge on to the branch of a tree, and sang its song through twice over, to my great admiration and delight. The wren, for so small a bird, has a very sweet, full song, although Shakespeare did not think well of it, for he speaks of the “chirping” of the wren, and makes Portia say:—

“The nightingale, if she should sing by day,  
When every goose is cackling, would be thought  
No better a musician than the wren.”

But Portia was in the wrong altogether, for the nightingale does sing by day, and has no difficulty in holding its own in competition with the wren.

A little way down the road beyond the “White

Horse," is a small pollarded oak in a patch of grass. I bore round to the right, up a hill, and came upon a church with two old yews in front. Beyond the church, close to the road, I saw so ancient a cottage that I could not bear to pass it; and after surveying the outside for some time, I saw that some articles were placed in one of the windows for sale. It was evidently a village shop. Now there is no harm in going into a shop, and I went in, determined if necessary to drive a hard bargain with the proprietor for a few "brandy-balls" or a hank of twine. But the shopkeeper did not expect me to buy anything, and offered to show me the house, which he said was between three and four hundred years old—and assuredly it looks its age, every day of it. Beams of great thickness, evidently hewn out of the tree with the adze long before the days of planes, supported the rooms, and formed the rude rafters of the roof, which was open to the thatch. A finer specimen of the old English cottage I have seldom seen.

"There used to be rich people live here," said the shopkeeper, "and the house was considered a very good one. I believe it was the farm. At any rate, they were rich people."

"You must find it a trifle dull here?"

"Dull? Oh, no. I have plenty of occupation. Bignor is a small village, as you see, but there are many farmers round about, and I have plenty to do. Never dull, sir."

No—a man cannot be dull anywhere if he can find work to do and is willing to do it. Past the cottage, at



the bottom of the road, is the farm-house where the keys are kept of the "Roman Pavement," which is the wonder of Bignor. There I knocked at the door, and the farmer's wife told me her daughter should go with me to the field. Presently the young lady came forth, and we walked up the road demurely together, and reached the Roman villa without disagreement or misunderstanding of any kind.

The mosaic pavement and other relics of the house which some wealthy Roman built here, are carefully preserved in sheds, well thatched, and prudently kept locked. I shall not attempt to give any account of the relics—the reader desirous of antiquarian information would naturally look elsewhere for that; but I may briefly state that the villa was discovered in 1811, and my guide told me that they had come upon traces of fifty-two rooms at various times, many of them very large. In ploughing the land some fragments of Roman pavement were cast up, and further search was instituted, and discoveries were made which soon became famous all the world over. Much of the mosaic work is in excellent preservation, for luckily the farm on which the remains stand has been held by the same family since 1811, and great care has been taken of every fragment discovered. There is a fine head of Juno, with a peacock on each side of it, a head of Medusa, figures of gladiators, and many other most curious and interesting pieces of Roman work. The visitor will be struck by the traces of comfort and luxury which are still visible in the various apartments—the hot-air pipes, the space

for a fountain, the bath-room, and other contrivances which in these "enlightened days" would scarcely find a place in the designs of an ordinary architect. Suppose an Englishman, even a rich Englishman, were to build a house here, would he dream of putting up a fountain and running hot-air pipes all through the building? It is not quite certain that room would be found even for a sumptuous bath. Evidently the Roman gentleman who made his home here on the road to Regnum, which we call Chichester—the station at the tenth mile-stone, "Ad Decimum," as *Murray* reminds us—did everything that was in his power to render his exile tolerable. He brought into a savage country the household appliances of civilization, and must often have wished that he could also have brought the blue skies of his native land—for very dark and sunless must the winters have seemed, to say nothing of too many of the summers! In one of the rooms there was a figure of Winter, still quite fresh and clear—the figure and face of an old man with a bare bough over his shoulder. He stands staring frigidly at the stranger, when the window is opened upon him, just as he did upon the luxurious owner of the villa nearly two thousand years ago. And this house was at least six hundred feet in length, for the remains of it extend over two fields at least, and it is doubtful whether all of it has been discovered. What a spot in which to have built a palace, amid a horde of barbarians!

Not a little impressed with these relics, I made once more for the hills, across the fields in front of the

“villa,” and through a wood, which in the old Roman’s day was a thick forest infested with wild beasts. Here, doubtless, he often came hunting; here too, it may be, were wont to come his daughters, wandering about the margin of the wood at this very time of the year, picking violets and primroses. Whether these flowers then adorned the woods or not may perhaps be doubtful, but they grow there abundantly now, and the deep combe above was dotted over with cowslips. A little path wanders round the combe, and at the top of the hill there runs a green track, from which the landscape may be surveyed for many a mile. To the right are the woods of Arundel Park, and far beyond is the sea. Northwards there extends a vast plain, with the river Arun winding through it. The town of Amberley stands near the river, and a mile or so from it is the railroad station, under some white chalk gaps in the Downs across the valley. It does not take very long to find one’s way through the woods and over the hills to a main road leading to Houghton, and thence to Amberley station, where for the present I suspended my journey—the east wind having set in for a steady blow, and the sunshine having taken its departure, perhaps for days to come. Amberley is another place which provides but sorry accommodation for the traveller, but fortunately the train is at hand to help him on his way to better quarters, and he may please himself whether he will turn his face towards London or Brighton, in either of which haunts of men he will find better lodgings than at Amberley.



Steyning.

## CHAPTER IV.

### STEYNING TO WISTON AND AMBERLEY.

A Sussex Town—Taking Life leisurely.—The Sign-Painter.—A Child's Tribute to the Dead.—The Road to Wiston.—An ancient Park.—Views of the Downs.—A Picture from a Drawing-room Window.—Owners of Wiston.—The Entrance Hall.—Carvings and Pictures.—Wiston Church.—Sussex Lanes.—Chanctonbury Ring.—Views of the Surrey Hills.—Characteristic English Scenery.—Muntham Firs.—Over the Hills to Amberley.

STEYNING is a very good example of a Sussex town—clean, neat, and old-fashioned, but sunk into a sleep as profound as that which fell upon the hero of the Kaatskill Mountains, after he had drank freely from the













mysterious keg of liquor. A shop or two may be seen here and there, but the wares exhibited in the windows are such as have long gone out of date. Occasionally one of the inhabitants may be seen in the streets, moving with great deliberation, pausing long at a favourable corner, and looking wistfully round to see if he can find any neighbour with whom he may exchange a few musty ideas. Should he be disappointed in his quest, he will return with slow and hesitating steps to his occupation, which most probably consists in staring vacantly at nothing out of his window. One almost expects to see a fine green moss all over an inhabitant of Steypning. One day as I passed through the town I saw a man painting a new sign over a shop, a proceeding which so aroused my curiosity that I stood for a minute or two to look on. The painter filled in one letter, gave a huge yawn, looked up and down two or three times as if he had lost something, and finally descended from his perch and disappeared. Five weeks later I passed that way again, and it is a fact that the same man was at work on the same sign. Perhaps when the reader takes the walk I am about to recommend to his attention—a walk which comprises some of the finest scenery in Sussex—that sign will be finished, and the accomplished artist will have begun another; but I doubt it. There is plenty of time for everything in Steypning.

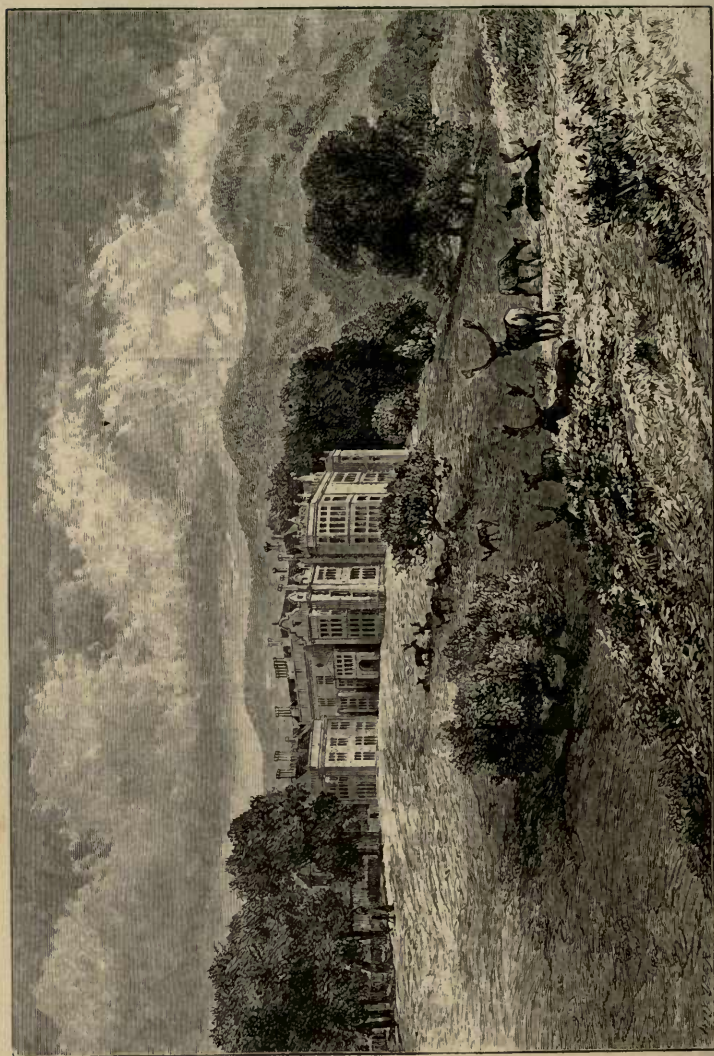
Some old cottages in or around the town are curious and interesting, and the church—dating back, as archæologists say, to the time of Henry the First—cannot be

passed unseen, for it stands close by the high road. Within the building are some ancient monuments, but in the churchyard I saw no token of grief or love so pathetic as that which lay upon a humble newly-made grave. The turf had not long been replaced over the spot where some poor man or woman had found a last resting place, and on the grave were two small, common earthenware mugs, such as children use, with a little bunch of grasses in each, tied loosely with a piece of wool. In one of the bunches was a sprig of southernwood, the "old man" of the cottagers; but with that exception the long, wild grasses of the meadows were all that the children could bring to decorate their father's or mother's grave. For it was evidently a child's offering; the homely pot, the bit of wool, the grass such as children love to pluck when it comes into ear, told the story. From some fireside a well-known friend had been taken away, and the little ones had followed the sorely missed parent here, with their simple gift from the fields, wondering, perhaps, how long it would be ere father or mother came home to them again. How just an emblem had they unconsciously chosen of all life! "As for man, his days are as grass; the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more."

An old, deep lane, such as the people of Devonshire fancy is peculiar to their county, leads from Steyning towards Wiston; a beautiful lane, with many a wild flower on its banks, and tall trees above to shade the



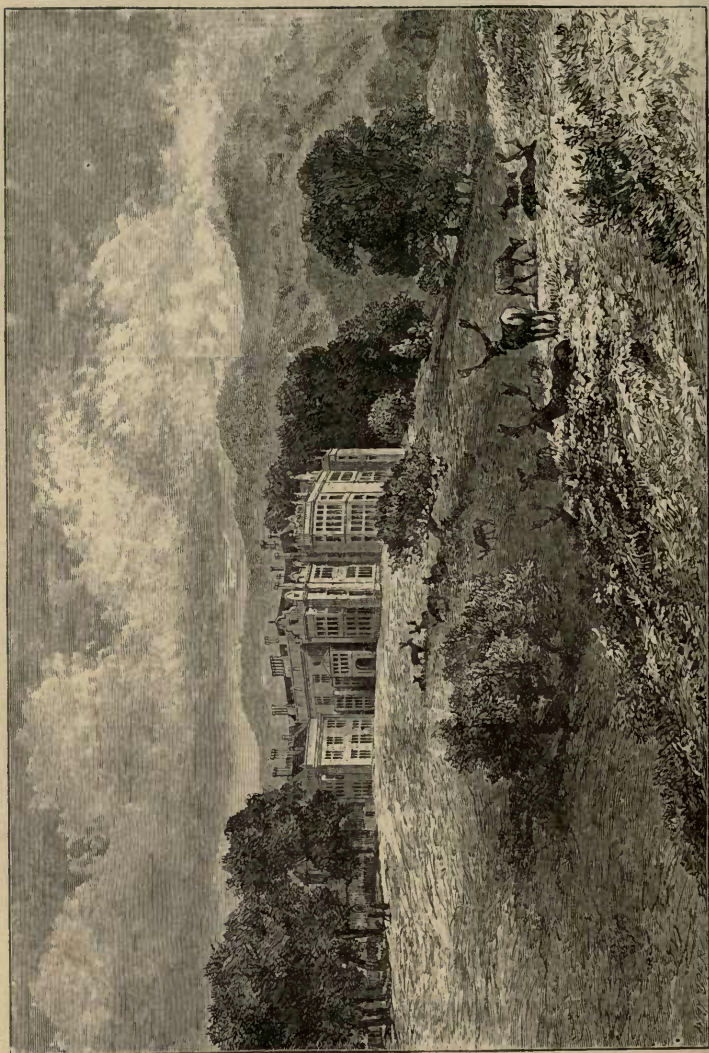


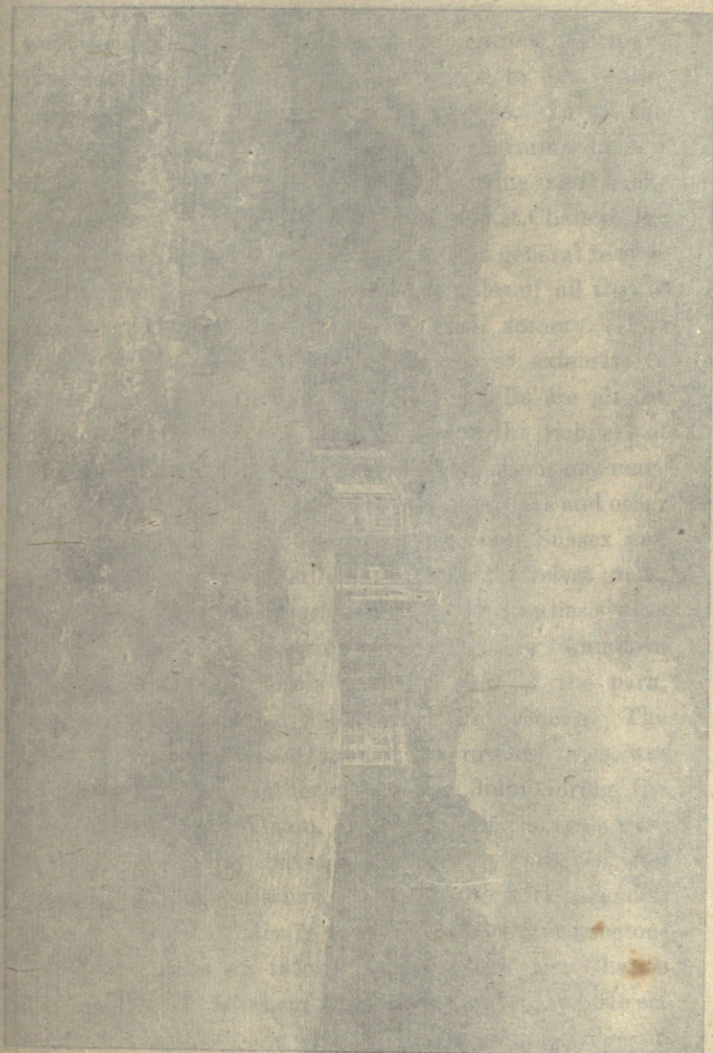


Wiston Park.



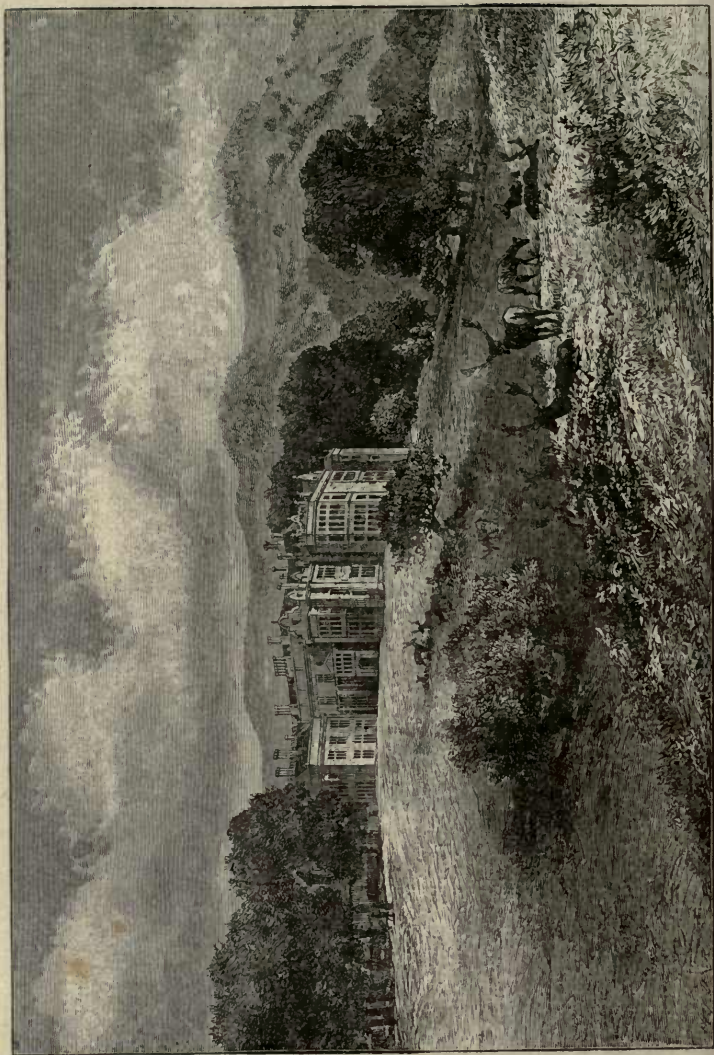






On 15th December, 1824—he addressed the following







wayfarer from the sun. Then there is a road which ere it wanders on very far brings the visitor to one of the gates of Wiston Park, close to the house. In all the South Downs tract there is no more charming domain than this. Nature has provided a setting and background for a park which are equalled only at Chatsworth, and between the two estates there is this general resemblance, that both present perfect examples of all that is fairest and most beautiful in English scenery. The woods at the back of Wiston are not so extensive as those which skirt Chatsworth, but the hills are almost as picturesque, and nothing can exceed the richness of the verdure in the park. The whole expanse is one magnificent lawn, studded with fine sycamores, oaks and other trees, and commanding exquisite views over Sussex and Surrey. Herds of deer still wander over the velvet grass, as they have done for centuries past—for Wiston has always been a deer park. The ring of trees on the summit of Chanctonbury Hill forms almost a part of the park, with all the woods and fields which lie between. The great ornament of Chanctonbury, its crown of trees, was given to it by the father of the Rev. John Goring, the present owner of Wiston, and ever since the trees were first planted they have been carefully watched and tended, and replaced when decay began to work mischief. It was an excellent idea to plant these trees on Chanctonbury, and it is an interesting fact that Mr. Charles Goring lived to see them reach their full beauty. He set them out in 1760, and sixty-eight years afterwards—on the 15th December, 1828—he addressed the following

lines to the hill on which he had placed what it is to be hoped will be a perpetual landmark:—

“ How oft around thy Ring, sweet Hill,  
 A Boy, I used to play,  
 And form my plans to plant thy top  
 On some auspicious day.  
 How oft among thy broken turf  
 With what delight I trod,  
 With what delight I placed those twigs  
 Beneath thy maiden sod.  
 And then an almost hopeless wish  
 Would creep within my breast,  
 Oh ! could I live to see thy top  
 In all its beauty dress'd !  
 That time 's arrived ; I've had my wish,  
 And lived to eighty-five ;  
 I'll thank my God who gave such grace  
 As long as e'er I live.  
 Still when the morning Sun in Spring,  
 Whilst I enjoy my sight,  
 Shall gild thy new-clothed Beech and sides,  
 I'll view thee with delight.”

From one end of the garden terrace at Wiston, there is a view of Chanctonbury over the green sward and lovely intervening woods which would have delighted the heart of Copley Fielding had he ever visited this part of the Downs ; but so far as I have been able to ascertain, he never found his way here. How it came to pass that he missed the most striking and beautiful portion of the entire range of hills it is hard to understand, but it appears to be certain that he never sketched Chanctonbury. From the windows in the drawing-room of Wiston, and from the garden terrace, there are views so

surpassingly beautiful that it will be impossible for any one who has looked upon them ever to forget them. No picture ever painted represents a tenth part of the loveliness of the landscape which shines in unrivalled glory from the window on the right-hand side of the room. To gaze upon that scene is to have it securely lodged among the treasures of the mind for ever.

The house itself is worthy of the situation which it occupies. Hundreds of years past a mansion of importance has stood here, for the estate is one of great antiquity. It belonged to the great Earl Godwin, and then passed into the hands of the powerful family of de Braose, whose history is stranger and more romantic than anything to be found in the pages of fiction. The wife and child of one of the lords were starved to death at Windsor by King John; another lord was murdered by Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, at an Easter banquet; another was killed by a fall from his horse. The estate afterwards descended to the Shirleys, a Saxon family still represented in Warwickshire, and celebrated for the adventures of the three famous brothers, one of whom married a Persian princess. From the Shirleys, Wiston passed to another family of ancient lineage, the Gorings, who have lived in Sussex for nearly six hundred years, and who to-day are among the greatest landowners in the county. During these changes, the house at Wiston has gone through many transformations, but there is still much within its walls which recalls the special features of a fine old English home. The entrance hall is lofty and imposing, and is adorned

with a beautiful open timbered roof of the Tudor period. The dining-room is another noble apartment, boasting of an old oak wainscoting of a deep rich colour, and with the date upon it of 1576. Many choice and rare relics of fine wood-carving have been gathered together for other rooms by the Rev. John Goring, who has, indeed, done much for the entire estate. Never, perhaps, was it in more careful or more appreciative hands. Among the rare paintings which adorn the walls is a very beautiful work of Paul Potter's, only to be equalled by the great example of the same master in the possession of Mr. John Walter, M.P., at Bearwood, in Berkshire. There are also original portraits of Charles the Second and his Queen, which have been in the house since the days of the "Merry Monarch," a rare portrait of General Monk, and another of Oliver Cromwell. The gardens and park are so lovely that a long summer's day would be all too short a time to spend in wandering about them. Altogether, if I were asked to send a stranger to one of the most thoroughly English homes which he could see in the compass of a day's journey, I should recommend him by all means to make a pilgrimage to Wiston. Such a house is scarcely complete without an old church near it, and in this case the church adjoins the mansion, some parts of it dating back to a very early period. The ivy-clad tower is well seen from one of the garden terraces. Within, the church is quaint and pretty, and there are brasses or other memorials to the dead, ranging to the year 1426. Whatever may be the changes impending over England



in these troubled days, let us hope that it will be long before such homes as this disappear from the land.

“Chanctonbury,” says Horsfield—the most lifeless, tedious, and inaccurate of local historians—“is about ten miles west of Steyping.” It is not more than five miles by the most roundabout road one could possibly take. This is a very fair specimen of Horsfield’s workmanship all the way through his “History of Sussex;” it is strange that so useless and stupid a book was not long ago superseded by something more worthy of the county. Dallaway’s work on Western Sussex is excellent, but it is now so scarce and dear that it is practically inaccessible to the public. Mr. M. A. Lower’s two octavo volumes are very good so far as they go, and are far better worth consulting than Horsfield’s more pretentious, but lumbering and blundering compilation.

The lanes between Wiston and Chanctonbury Hill were studded with wild flowers in the early part of May when I went through them—whole clusters of violets, cowslips, primroses, and periwinkle, the last of these being popularly known as the pennywinkle. It is one of the oldest of our English flowers, and although Shakespeare makes no mention of it, Chaucer refers to it as the “fresh Pervincke rich of hewe.” Seen on a bank of primroses and violets, its hue is, in truth, of the richest kind; and few flowers of the garden, notwithstanding all the care lavished upon them, outshine it in simple beauty. Prettier lanes could scarcely be found than those in the vicinity of Wiston. On turning round one corner into a narrow path, so dazzling an

array of flowers burst upon my sight that for a moment I felt like a fairy prince in an enchanted lane. Over all were poured forth the mellow notes of the blackbird and the thrush, which always seem to make perfect the charm and witchery of English country scenery. The hills which rise a little way back from the park are covered with fine tall firs, intermingled with beech. The climb to Chanctonbury is rather a steep one, but there is a path through the firs which takes a more gradual slope, though it comes out at some distance from the Ring. But when the summit is reached, a most beautiful view rewards the visitor, and he cannot spend half an hour to greater advantage than in studying it well from various points. To begin with, he will notice that the ring of trees, which can be seen from so many miles away, is planted on a circular mound, within an outer trench—it is, in fact, an ancient earthwork, British or Roman, no one knows which, and stands 814 feet above the sea level. There is an outer rampart of trees, which serves to some extent to shield the inner circle, consisting of larches, from the fury of the winds. Many of these outer trees are curled into all kinds of distorted shapes, and bear heavy marks of the warfare against the elements which they almost constantly have to wage. But the inner circle is formed of straight and well-grown trees, and young saplings have been planted on the west to afford them further protection. Chanctonbury Ring is much too picturesque a feature in the landscape to be allowed to perish.

Step out from this wood at any point and a marvellous

view will greet the eye—to the sea over Worthing, and far away westward beyond Portsmouth; landward, all over the fairest portions of Sussex and Surrey. Directly in front of the visitor, as he stands looking to the north, is a hill with a white scar clearly visible upon its sides. That is Box Hill and its chalk pit, and to the left of it is Leith Hill, with the tower distinctly to be seen. Then comes a gap between the hills, which in fact is a valley, and in it stands Guildford. To the left of that again is the Hog's Back, and then the line winds round southward to Blackdown and Hindhead, until still further to the left we come to the South Downs. On clear days it is said that Windsor Castle and Tunbridge Wells can be made out. A little way below are the Washington fir-trees, and beyond them the woods and park of Parham. To the right, the inn on the Devil's Dyke stands out a prominent object; the hill which extends forward into the plain is Wolstonbury. Between these high points there lie miles and miles of green fields, dotted over at intervals with old farm-houses and older churches—a prospect quite peculiar to England, both in its character and the strangely-soothing influence which it exerts upon the mind. The grander vistas which are the boast of other lands excite various emotions, but none of them calm the heart and soften the spirit, or diffuse through the whole being an indefinable sensation of peace and rest, like these green fields and woods of England, with the songs of birds rippling melodiously over them, and a look upon them as if eternal tranquillity and happiness reigned throughout

their broad extent. Let him who has a sorrowful or disturbed mind go to some such spot as this above the ancient park of Wiston, and sit down quietly, and dwell upon the scene around him. Kind mother Nature will softly come with her healing hand; the clouds will gradually be lifted; the wounds which the troubles or anxieties of life have made will cease to smart, even though they are too deep to be healed. Amid such scenes, the freshness of the mind comes back again; once more we scent the breezes from "the spice islands of youth and hope;" the interval between vanishes like a troubled dream. There is no remedy for the "o'er-fraught heart" like that which will gently come unsought to the solitary wanderer amid the fields and hills and woods.

Beyond Chanctonbury to the east there is a little valley in which stands Washington—a few cottages and an old church—and there is a beaten track from hill to hill, on which the stranger cannot go wrong. The next hill rises above Muntham Firs, and there another magnificent view presents itself, Worthing lying to the left, on the edge of a blue sea. The sea and sky were both perfectly clear, for the sun was shining, and the sun is always essential to the full enjoyment of a walk on the South Downs, for it gives the sea an azure hue, and sets the shadows chasing each other over the deep combes in the hills. It is true enough that weeks may pass over without one perfect day for scenery of this kind, for there may be too much wind or cloud, or mist may suddenly gather and hide everything but the ground beneath one's



feet. On this particular morning, the Adriatic or the Mediterranean never looked more blue than the English Channel. Beyond Muntham Firs there is another slope in the hills, not obliging one to come down, but involving the necessity of going rather a long way round, unless the traveller has kept far in from the brow. Soon we come in front of Storrington, and a little way beyond is the fine old house of Parham, with its peaked roof and gables and mullioned windows, standing in the midst of green lawns, and belted in with firs. Then the path continues over the hill to the road which leads to Amberley station, and the visitor must be difficult to please who does not acknowledge that in the course of twelve miles from station to station he has never seen more charming scenery. Of all the South Down walks, I am disposed to give the palm to the one between Steyning and Amberley. Let the reader put down this book and go forth upon it for himself—he will be dissatisfied with the writer who has so inadequately attempted to describe it, but he will thank him for suggesting the means of adding to his life at least one delightful day.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SOUTH DOWNS ROUND LEWES.

The Town of Lewes.—De Foe's Opinion.—A Good Centre for Exploration.—Southover.—Anne of Cleve's House.—A Walk on the Downs.—Mount Harry.—The Shepherd and his Sermon.—Good Descent of some Sussex Shepherds.—Ditchling Beacon.—Stanmer Village and Park.—A Dissolving View of Partridges and Mushrooms.—Cliffe Hill and Mount Caburn.—A Spot for an Afternoon Stroll.

IN less than two hours a man may transport himself from the heart of London into the heart of the South Downs, and thus may with ease and much advantage to himself exchange a murky and soot-laden air for a bright sky, invigorating breezes, and scenes of great freshness and beauty. In order to accomplish this it is only necessary to take a train to Lewes from Victoria—say at five minutes past ten in the morning. Once in that old-fashioned town it matters little in which direction the visitor launches out upon the wide ocean of adventure. His only regret will be that he cannot go three or four different ways at once. De Foe, who included Lewes in his "Tour through the whole Island of Great Britain," in 1722, describes the town "as agreeably situated in the middle of an open Champaign

country, and on the Edge of the South Downs, the pleasantest and most delightful of their kind in the Nation." White, in one of his letters from Ringmer (1770), writes:—"No doubt you are acquainted with the Sussex Downs; the prospects and rides round Lewes are most lovely." In truth, there is no better point from which anyone who happens to be a stranger to the South Downs can start out for his first expeditions. If he does not like the scenery which he will find within a few miles of Lewes, it is certain that he will never be one of the admirers of what White calls "the vast range of mountains," and again, a "chain of majestic mountains." Lewes itself can boast of a picturesque situation, of the ruins of an old castle, of more than one old church, and of a little suburb called Southover which will for ever be regarded with interest and respect by antiquarians. The church of Southover has a tower big enough for a cathedral, and there is an ancient house near it which may once have been a dwelling of considerable importance. Tradition says that it belonged to Anne of Cleves, but however that may be, it is certain that the glory of the house has long since departed. Now the stranger will find it neglected and despised, going all to rack and ruin. It gives one a pang to pass this broken-down old house, such as we might feel in seeing a white-haired gentleman in rags soliciting charity at the wayside. Even in its decay, however, it is much better worth looking at than all the "eligible villas" of the shoddy builder, and when the visitor has properly examined it,

he may find his way without difficulty to the ruins of the ancient Priory of Lewes, and finish his little tour of inspection with a visit to Southover church. He will bear in mind that the bones of William de Warenne and of Gundrada his wife, daughter of William the Conqueror, were deposited in this church, after having been dug up by the spade of a navy, who was helping to make the road close by. Of all these things I could say nothing unless I borrowed from other books, and to do that would be quite foreign to my purpose. I deal only with what I have seen or heard.

I turned from Lewes one morning in September by the street under the Castle gateway, and at the end of that street took a narrow path to the left, and made straight for the windmill in front. The path leads in a short time to the soft broad expanse of the Downs, with green tracks running off in various directions. The morning had been sombre and overcast in London—that unnatural sky which is seldom long-absent now from the overgrown Metropolis, except in the early hours of a summer's morning. But here on the South Downs there was a fine crisp autumnal air, light and inspiriting; white clouds were piled up in deep banks against the blue sky, and the larks were singing gaily both overhead and down below, where the weald lay bathed in sunshine. To the south the sea soon became clearly visible, though often it looked merely like a blue line of hills. The race-course is at first the point to make for, and surely it would be hard to find a race-course in a more beautiful situation. This course must now be kept on the left-



hand, not forgetting to notice the deep combes or hollows on the line of hills opposite. This is the range extending between Kingston and Brighton, and there is no part of the Downs where the characteristic combes can be studied to greater advantage. From this point let the visitor take a landmark for himself. Directly in front he will see a clump of ragged-looking trees, showing above the hill to the north-west. This clump is called the "Black Cap," and was planted to commemorate a celebrated event—nothing less than the battle of Mount Harry, where Henry the Third was defeated by Simon de Montfort and the Barons in May, 1264. At the end of the race-course we shall notice a sheep-pond, the second we have met with, and beyond that again a third. When this third pond is safely passed, strike off a little to the right in order to feast upon the view from the brow of the hill—a far-reaching landscape, dotted with farm-houses and churches and pleasant trees, and with green fields stretching away to the Surrey hills beyond. At one's back is the sea, with fishing-boats like black specks upon its glistening surface. Beneath our feet runs one of the steep paths up the hillside known in the South Down district as "böstalls," or borstalls, and visible many miles off as a streak of white dashed across the green turf. Never have I seen a "böstall" for the first time without endeavouring to get at it, and many a wild dance have I been led in the pursuit thereof.

I was now not far from the point for which I was aiming, Ditchling Beacon, the highest point of the South Downs, and a hill of no mean elevation, since it

stands 858 feet above the level of the sea. From this height, as the county historians all assure us, the Isle of Wight may be seen "rising like a blue cloud from the bosom of the ocean." I did not see the cloud, though the bosom was in sight; but one could not much regret missing the Isle of Wight while the hills of Surrey and Hampshire stood out so clearly before the eye. Near the Beacon, I came up with a shepherd, having his crook on his shoulder, and followed by his dog. His sheep were grazing a few hundred yards away.

By way of getting into conversation I asked him for a direction or two, which he gave with tolerable clearness, and with the Sussex dialect in full force, for he pronounced "the" *de*, and "that" *dat*, just as if he had been a coloured citizen of the Southern States.

"Dat road," said he, "leads to Ditchling, and back theer goes to Brighton. It be clear enough now, but sometimes it be a' so misty up here that you would be in a mizmaze."

"Have you been a shepherd long?"

"Not very long—a few year."

"I used to know one who had been here forty years."

"They be all gone now, sir, they old ones; the zame as we shall be."

"The same as we shall be"—go where one will, the burden never changes—

"Whether at Naishapur or Babylon,  
Whether the cup with sweet or bitter run,  
The wine of life keeps oozing drop by drop,  
The leaves of life keep falling one by one."

My shepherd friend who had sounded the old note was a fine tall man, with long black hair, somewhat grizzled by age, hanging down to the collar of his coat—a long dark blue coat, half-cloak, such as one may see in the old Derby figures of the shepherd and his dog. He had a rather handsome and intelligent face, and a Roman nose into the bargain, and looked altogether as if he were descended from some prouder race than that which in these days bears the crook. And it might well have been that he was so, for the representative of more than one old Sussex family must now be looked for, not in ancient hall or grange, but on these lonely hills, tending sheep. The Tuppins and the Scrases, once the owners of broad domains, are gone from the records of the gentry, but are still to be found in the cottages of the peasantry. Tuppin, or Tupyn, is a well-known shepherd name, and one of the family with whom I have a slight acquaintance would instantly attract attention in any drawing-room by his manly appearance and bearing. I see him in all weathers plodding up the hills after his master's flock, often bearing the tired young lambs in his arms, the model of a faithful shepherd, and looking like one of the pictures out of an old Bible.

The earth-work near the edge of Ditchling Beacon is said to be of Roman origin, and might very easily be made serviceable again, so good is its state of preservation, should means of defence ever be required in such a position. One can walk upon the bank here and there, and from this additional elevation gain clearer views

over the surrounding country. The village and church of Ditchling lie below—a village in which a Jew pedlar once upon a time murdered an innkeeper, his wife, and their servant, and was for these crimes hanged upon a scaffold hard by. A piece of the gibbet, as the local histories bear witness, was long considered a certain cure for the toothache. From this point it is a pretty walk through Ditchling and Keymer to Hassocks Gate Station.

A little beyond the summit of the hill, a green path turns to the left (southward), and if the visitor will follow it, as I did, he will come presently to a brick wall, running round a plantation. This wall extends for some distance, completely shutting out the view on that side. In the other direction, however, one can see Chanctonbury Ring, and look far beyond it towards Chichester. The wall encloses Stanmer Park, and at the end of it there is a gate which leads into the park itself. The road to Brighton runs off to the right, the distance from hence to the city by the sea being about three miles. This will be the best route for the visitor to pursue. But I preferred to go through the park to Falmer rather than push on for Brighton, and soon I reached the one street of Stanmer, where all the cottages have pretty gardens in front, and a kitchen-garden at the back—quite a little estate. A pleasanter sight could not be met with in a day's march. These cottages are on the property of the Earl of Chichester, and they seem to indicate that it cannot be a very bad thing to have him for a landlord. The church, the



trees, the undulating hills, the green lanes, the rookery where the inhabitants were having a consultation of much pith and moment—all had a very cheerful and homelike appearance. The leaves were beginning to put on their autumnal tints, and in the afternoon there came up that haze in the air which denotes the approach of the season of the year—

“ When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.”

I reached Falmer station in time to catch the train to Lewes, the distance walked having been a moderate and comfortable one—to Ditchling Beacon from Lewes about eight miles, and from the Beacon to Falmer four-and-a-half.

Nothing would now have been easier for me than to have returned to London and its smoke and noise, in ample time for dinner, but I wished to see a little more of the Lewes Downs, and therefore I put up at the “Star Inn,” where, as the waiter impressed upon me, there was a fine old staircase, once belonging to the wealthy family of the Coverts, and brought from Slaugham Place, their ancient residence. But you cannot eat a fine old staircase, however richly carved it may be, and the repast for which I had carefully prepared turned out a Barmecide feast. On leaving the inn that morning the waiter had consulted me on the important question of dinner. Of course he suggested cutlets—what waiter in England ever suggested anything else?—and

I moved as an amendment that some fish and a bird should be added. Was there a bird to be got? Oh, yes, plenty of birds—whole coveys of birds. Then that matter was easily settled—suppose we say a partridge. “Yessir,” said the waiter. “And a boiled mackerel to begin with.” “Yessir.” “You can get them?” “Yessir.” Away I went rejoicing, and towards the after-part of the day the odour of the roast partridge and the flavour thereof were frequently present to my senses, and perhaps added not a little to my enjoyment of the scenery. No walk was ever spoiled by the knowledge that a good dinner was at the other end of it. Hungry as a hunter, I rushed into the house, and changed my clothes. While thus occupied the waiter announced himself.

“You have come to tell me dinner is ready,” said I. “So am I.” Nevertheless, a secret misgiving stole over me.

“We could not get any mackerel, sir,” said the waiter. A Sussex man always finds it easy to say “I couldn’t do it.”

“That is bad, very bad,” I replied; “but never mind; don’t let them overcook the partridge.”

“Sorry, sir, we couldn’t get a partridge.”

“Merciful powers! Not get a partridge?” I stared disconsolately into the waiter’s unruffled visage.

“No, sir; plenty to-morrow.”

To-morrow! Fancy telling a starving man he shall have a partridge to-morrow! Blank despair fell upon me. The waiter seemed quite at his ease. He had

evidently made all safe about *his* dinner long ago, and bore my disappointment with resignation.

“Then what could you get?”

“Cutlets, sir.”

Had the observant reader dropped into the coffee-room of the “Star Inn” that night he would have remarked a gloomy and downcast stranger at the table, discontentedly munching cutlets, and making little bread balls on the table-cloth, and occasionally casting dark and lowering looks of hatred in the direction of the waiter. Let us draw a veil over the sad scene.

The next morning the undaunted waiter made his appearance with a smile. He had been thinking the matter over, and saw his way clear to make amends for the dinner. “Very nice mushrooms, sir, this morning,” said he. “And a chop.” “Very well,” said I, “both. Broil the mushrooms carefully and serve them on toast. Don’t dump them into a lot of fat.” While at the fateful process of dressing the waiter came back. “Sorry, sir, no mushrooms. Frost has got at ’em.”

“Do you ever have anything that you promise, waiter?”

“Oh, yessir—’am and heggs, sir. Chop, sir. Sorry about the mushrooms, sir.”

I went down the “fine old staircase” not over pleased with mankind, but a chop is better than nothing, although not a suitable thing, in my humble opinion, for breakfast. It was not very long before I bade good morning to the imaginative waiter and the fine old staircase, and turned to the left to reach Cliffe Hill,

from the side of which an excellent view of the old town of Lewes is to be gained. At the top a green track runs to—I really do not know where, for I did not follow it, being out merely for a desultory stroll. Anyone who wishes to enjoy the South Downs must not bother himself about sticking to any track, green or white, but push out in all sorts of directions, and go wherever his fancy may guide him. By turning to the left up the brow of Cliffe Hill, a very noble view presents itself, and we soon see that we are on a kind of island, and can walk round it, and survey the whole country at our feet. The humming of a threshing-machine reached the ear from a farm several miles away, and swallows were cleaving their way through the air, while occasionally a beautiful scarlet butterfly flitted among the wild thyme and grass. I wandered leisurely round towards Mount Caburn, keeping on the brow of the hill as closely as possible. At one point there is a lovely red-brick house to be seen, old-fashioned though new, with fine trees in front of it, and standing close to the Downs. They say that if you resolve to have a house, you will get it some day, as Mr. Dickens did; therefore I resolved to have this one, and am still waiting patiently for it. And now one ought to have been rewarded by another glimpse of the sea, for Beachy Head was within eye-shot, but a touch of east had come into the wind, and who does not know what that will soon do to mar a view? On Mount Caburn there is a very perfect earthwork, with a double fosse all round it. “From his watch-tower here,” says the author of



Mr. Murray's excellent Handbook, "the archæologist may reconstruct for himself the whole panorama of ancient Sussex." It was on these hills, as one learns from the same pages, that the famous breed of South Down sheep was first pastured, and Mr. Ellman, who developed the breed, lived at Glynde just below. Now a gentleman lives there who has a more troublesome flock to manage than thousands of good, fat, well-conducted South Down sheep could ever be—Mr. Brand, the Speaker of the House of Commons.

On the south side of the hill there is a bench placed for visitors, but it is pleasanter to lie down upon the grass, and let the eye wander from the plain to the opposite range of hills, culminating in Firle Beacon. The green soft bank invites repose, and reclining there quietly the birds come quite close—a swift dashes up almost to one's face, and a starling scarcely condescends to move beyond reach. The tops of the hills look so round and clean that one might fancy they had but just been shaven, and the green winding vale, with the Ouse flowing through it, may be traced almost to the Sea.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AMONG THE DOWNS.

Glynde.—A Walk through Firle Park.—Firle Beacon and its Views.—Seaford.—Fairy Rings.—Alfriston.—Searching for Flints.—Moles.—Sheep Rot.—Farmers' Troubles.—A Sheep in Difficulties.—The River Ouse.—Southease.—A Scramble up the Downs.

THE village of Glynde lies close under Mount Caburn, which has, among other peculiarities, the traditional reputation of being a place where Druidical worship was once celebrated. "The mound of earth thrown up within the ramparts," says a learned writer, "corresponds precisely with the Gorseddâu, or sacred hillocks, from which the Druids of the higher order were accustomed to pronounce their decrees, and to deliver their orations to the people." Glynde has been made the subject of a very long paper in one of the volumes of the Sussex Archæological Society, and it is a picturesque South Down village, but there is nothing there to detain the traveller long. The best thing he can do on arriving at the station is to cross the line by the bridge, turn off to the left by some new cottages, and make for the woods of Firle Place,

which he will see at no great distance towards the south-east. He will enter Lord Gage's park by a little lodge gate, and follow the coach road till it brings him close to the house, leave it where it turns to the main entrance, and go straight on across the grass, till he sees Firle Beacon close by on his right hand. Several tracks lead to the top of the hill, and the visitor may please himself as to which he will take, provided he sets his face towards the highest point.

Firle Place is an old-fashioned, comfortable-looking house, and in the days of the eighth Henry was probably a much more imposing building than it is at present. There are the remains of a fine old avenue of trees near it, now mostly gone to decay. Almost adjoining the house stands the village of West Firle, where there is a cobbler's shop well worthy of a touch from the pencil of any artist who strolls this way. The church is approached by a long walk with a yew hedge on each side, and within there are several memorials to members of the Gage family, some of them dating back to the year 1568. In the churchyard there is an inscription to the memory of "a young man of robust constitution and exemplary steadiness of character," who notwithstanding his good character was drowned in the river Cuckmere. The entire surroundings of the village and house are pleasant and home-like. It is easy to get to Firle Beacon from almost anywhere hereabouts, and the hill is worth climbing, for the views are very beautiful, wherever the eye may wander, over sea or land. To the north one can look entirely across the Weald to the

Kentish and Surrey hills; southward a few miles off is Seaford, a watering-place which is struggling to become popular, but whose prospects are at present a little clouded by the fact that it is liable to be pounced down upon by the sea at any moment, and flooded, if not swept away. It is not uncommon for the waves to beat over the ineffectual barrier of pebbles and chalk so that the water washes up to the churchyard. A few years ago, the shingle bank was cut into to a depth of twenty feet, and the owners of property round the town have to fight against the encroachments of the waves almost as vigilantly as if they were Dutchmen living in Holland. Like Rye and Winchelsea, with which it shared the honour of being one of the Cinque Ports, Seaford has been unlucky. It was once the outlet of the river Ouse, which now finds its way to the sea near Newhaven, but even in the days of Queen Elizabeth its fortunes had sunk so low that it was described in a grant as "the decayed haven of Seaford." Like Rye, too, it suffered much from the raids of the French, in the days when the English Channel was as systematically harried by their filibusters as ever the Northumbrian border was by the moss-troopers. There is much in Seaford, in fact, to interest the antiquary, but it has no great attractions for the tourist, unless he merely goes there in order to start for a walk over the cliffs to Beachy Head. In that case he will not repent his journey, and it may be useful for him to know that he can cross the Cuckmere without wandering away from his route to the bridge by hailing the coastguardsman, who has a punt at his



disposal, and is obliging enough to ferry across any stranger who passes that way. But Seaford itself is not a place in which one would wish to spend more time than is absolutely necessary to get clean out of it. On a summer's day it can be hotter there than at any other sea-side place in all England. To induce people to resort to Seaford the local authorities must try to give them water which is fit to drink. An analysis of the water at present supplied gave the following interesting results: "The water swarmed with living animalculæ, and contained decomposing animal remains." And again: "This water must be emphatically condemned as sewage." There is a common prejudice against drinking this sort of water, and the Seaford people will do well to pay heed to it, and dispose of their sewage in the usual way.

From Firle Beacon there will plainly be discerned a second gap in the cliffs, formed by Cuckmere Haven, one of the spots around which the sportsman may find endless opportunities for the exercise of his skill during the winter months. Then there is Newhaven not far off, and by carrying the eye along the Downs to the right there will first be seen the fine line of Kingston Hill, and beyond that the barn at "Newmarket," and further off still the Grand Stand on the Brighton race-course—it is astonishing from how many distant places that Grand Stand is visible. The visitor who is tolerably well acquainted with the country can trace out for himself endless points of interest, while the stranger whose travels here are but

beginning will be so well satisfied with all that he sees around him that he will thenceforth be more than half a Sussex man himself at heart.

The top of the hill is marked at frequent intervals by those fairy rings, or "hag tracks," which are often to be met with on the Downs, and which have provoked many erudite discussions. The local folk used to believe that the fairies danced round and round these circles whenever they were sportively inclined, but doubtless the new generation has become much too wise to fancy that they have pigmy neighbours who "dance on ringlets to the whistling wind." The mysterious rings, however, are made on the Downs all the same, and what is more, they have been known to appear or disappear in the course of a single night. If the traveller walks upon them he will find them much softer, as well as greener, than the surrounding grass, and how could that effect be produced except by the influence of fairies?

It is very easy to make one's way from the Beacon, in a south-easterly direction, to Alfriston, and thence to Berwick station, where the railway may be regained. And if the visitor should not already have seen Alfriston, he ought by all means to go there, partly for its delightful situation, partly for its old church and most picturesque old inn, the "Star." There are not many such inns now left in England, and every time I visit Alfriston I am half-afraid of finding that the "Star" has disappeared, to make room for some hideous public-house where village labourers may poison

themselves with doctored beer. But thus far the "Star" has been left untouched, and is luckily in excellent hands. The carvings on the doors and windows are at the very least three hundred years old. I have long tried to find an excuse for spending a night in this ancient hostelry, but it has never been far enough from anywhere else on my small pilgrimages to afford me a fair pretext for sleeping there. Who would not prefer the clean bed in the little old low-ceilinged room to the huge feather abomination which they call a bed in more pretentious hotels, and in the unclean depths of which one passes the weary hours chasing night-mares and horrible phantoms?

In a dip of the hill I came to an old man who was cutting turf, and who had a small wheelbarrow with him, as well as a spade and a sifter, to assist his operations. He had a good deal marred the smooth outline of the spot, but not more so, perhaps, than his industrious fellow-workers, the moles, whose hillocks in some places rise to really astonishing dimensions. The mole may be, as its defenders say, an enemy to the wire worm, but the destruction it will commit if left unchecked to do its burrowing passes all belief. It annexes whole fields, and renders agricultural labour difficult, or even impossible, as may be seen in many a field bordering the South Downs. No wonder that the farmer looks upon the mole as his enemy. Lucky, then, are the people of Ireland, Orkney, and Zetland, who are not troubled with moles, St. Patrick having, perhaps, driven them out of the Emerald Isle with the serpents, although

he has never received due credit for the achievement. If St. Patrick came back to-day, it may be that he would set to work clearing out the island afresh, and a fine job there would be before him.

“It is a cold day for your work,” said I to the old man, and in truth the wind was blowing rather sharp, on a March day.

“It is, sir; and yonder you see the vessels outside Seaford waiting to get round through this change in the wind. They ha’ got out and can’t get home again, and mebbe will have to stop there a week or more. Over there at Newhaven there be a wonderful sight of men at work, as many as three hundred, some do say.”

The old man was very deaf, and with difficulty could I make him understand anything I said. But he answered everything without a misgiving.

“What are you working at?” I asked.

“Ay, ay, sir, it be cold, sure enough.”

“Getting turf?”

“It’s nothing to what it was in the winter. Lor bless me, how she did blow up here! You couldn’t keep your feet nohow.”

“How old are you?” said I.

“Yes, yes—they be for Musser Hodson; them where the pole is stuck up.”

I now pointed to the turf and the wheelbarrow, finding that words were useless.

“Yes,” said he, “the flints is very thin in some places—I’ve only got that heap you see there in a long while. I be a cuttin’ for Lord Gage.”



“And so you are getting flints,” shouted I, in tones which might have been heard at Newhaven, and which startled a shepherd half-a-mile off.

“Yes, that I be, sir; we wants 'em for mending the roads. Them over there belongs to Musser Hudson. I puts the turf back again, you see, and it grows just the same. When the flints is thin, it's poor work. You come to the chark a'most d'rectly like. Sometimes I can't get up the hill at all because of the sciaticy. She *do* blow sometimes. But I beant fit for nothing else now but to get flints,” said the old man, with a feeble grin which disclosed a plentiful lack of teeth.

A mile or so farther on a shepherd and I had a talk concerning sheep-rot, which was at this time—the spring of 1880—making terrible ravages on many of the farms round about. This was a legacy from the wet and inclement season of 1879, and worse even than the bad harvest of that year was the loss of so many thousand sheep, which fell upon the farmers just as they were beginning to hope for better luck. A worthy friend of mine lost a large part of his flock by this scourge, just as he was beginning a new and important enterprise. Had he been an Irishman he would have soon set matters straight by shooting his landlord—but being only an Englishman, of the good stout yeomanry stock, he plucked up heart and fought through his misfortune.

The shepherd told me that none of the sheep in his flock had yet been attacked by the rot. “Down there at Glynde they have lost a good many, and at Rodmill all the sheep are dead or dying. They let 'em go and

lie in the brooks all last year, and we kept ourn on the hills. None of the sheep on the hills has got the rot. It's a bad job for them below, for they has to buy sheep instead of having sheep to sell." Some of the farmers in Sussex, as elsewhere, lost thousands of pounds by this disaster, for when once rot has appeared among the sheep, nothing can be done for them. It is, as most people know, a disease of the liver, doubtless causing the afflicted sheep to take a cheerless and morbid view of life, and inducing him presently to lie down and die; after which little fish, something like plaice in shape, are found in the blood and liver.

While thinking over sheep and their troubles, I came upon a fold at the foot of the hill where I had descended in order to cross the valley. If there is one thing for which a sheep has a greater gift than another, it is for poking his head into the wrong place. I looked round the fold, enclosed within hurdles, and soon saw the gentleman I had confidently expected to find—a too-curious member of the flock who had put his head through the rails and could not get it back again. The cause of his difficulty was obvious—he had been endeavouring to reach some toothsome but forbidden food in the shape of turnips, which were growing just outside the fold. He had put his head through the broadest part of the aperture and was trying to draw it through the narrowest, and was making no progress whatever, though evidently resolved to stick to that particular spot if it took him all summer to get out. He had pulled off some of his wool during his struggles, and

part of it hung loose round his neck, like the disordered tie of some dissipated reveller who had been out all night. Every now and then he cast sheep's-eyes at me, as if to say, "Don't stand staring there amusing yourself, but come and lend me a hand out of this scrape—you may be in a similar one yourself some day. Did you never want to get your head out again, and couldn't?" Yes, I was obliged to admit that I had been so placed, but was nevertheless very curious to see how a sheep managed to accomplish a feat which is oftentimes beyond the power of man. His companions also came up and joined in the interview. There is not very much expression in the faces of sheep when you come to look at them, but there is some, and in particular there was a bright young fellow there with whom I might have been disposed to get on very friendly terms if I had been able to communicate with him. We parted in silence, but with sentiments of mutual regard, the imprisoned sheep failing in all his efforts to get clear, and turning his head on one side in mute reproach as I passed.

Below the fold I came to an old house which is called Itford Farm. It must once have been a place of greater importance than now, for there are remains of Elizabethan chimney stacks on one side of the building. Following a farm road, I came to a level-crossing over the railway, and beyond that to a bridge over the Ouse—a river which must have cost some money in its day, for it is embanked carefully on both sides, and the embankment has to be constantly kept up, or the fields for many

a mile would be flooded. An unprepossessing, sullen, foul, and dirty-looking river is the Ouse. A little way beyond the bridge is Southease, noteworthy only for a little church with a round tower—one of three churches with round towers in Sussex—very old and very forlorn in appearance. The abbots of Winchester held South-ease as far back as the year 966, when King Edgar gave it to them. It is now a dismal looking spot, and not much more attractive is Rodmill, another village with nothing particular in it to induce anybody to cry a halt. After that I betook myself to the top of the Downs again, and pushed on through long grass and furze, past deep combes, until the waning daylight admonished me to get down, after a tramp of fifteen miles, at still another village where my wanderings generally come to an end. During this entire day I had seen only two men, two hares, and a sheep with his head in the wrong place. There was nothing exciting in these adventures, but it has been my lot to spend many a day the results of which were not half so satisfactory.





... would be foolish. An unpretentious, well-kept, and busy-looking river in the Guse. A little way beyond the bridge in Southsea, not very far, a little church with a round tower—one of three churches with round towers in Hampshire—very old and very forlorn in appearance. The history of Winchester held Southsea as far back as the year 906, when King Edgar gave it to them. It is now a dismal looking spot, and not much more attractive than Roshill, another village with nothing to recommend it except its position on a hill.



... it may be a day or two, but it is not a day the people of Southsea have had a satisfactory...









Kingston.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SOUTH DOWN VILLAGES.

A Walk from Shoreham.—Godwits and Redshanks.—To Poynings over the Downs.—The Devil's Dyke.—A Village out-at-elbows.—The British "Harry" out for a Holiday.—"No Quality" in Poynings.—A Suitable Field for Judge Lynch.—The Source of the Stream.—The Village of Ringmer.—Gilbert White's Rookery.—New Commandments.—Ovingdean Grange.—A Contrast to Poyning's Church.—A Walk over the Hills.—The Village of Kingston.—Haunted Fields and Lanes.—Down Scenery and Characteristics.—Baldsdean.—A Delicate Question.—The Dog and the Adder.—Jugg's Lane.—"Move On."—Performing Bears.—A "Personally Conducted" Party.

POYNINGS is one of the numerous villages in Sussex which have seen their best days, and seem destined henceforth to be found on the downward road. Yet there are few places which are more beautifully situated; almost the whole of the Weald of Sussex may be seen from the windows of its houses, and it stands at the foot of one of the most picturesque hills

in the whole range of the South Downs. Great and powerful families once held the manor, but now it is in the hands of the Crown, and there is no one to take any interest in the property, beyond that of extracting from it as much revenue as possible—getting everything out of it, and putting nothing back, on the system which a bad farmer pursues with his land. The consequence is that despite the romantic scenery which surrounds it, Poynings is a somewhat melancholy place, and the people who live in it declare, and perhaps with truth, that they would rather live anywhere else. But all this need not pass across the field of the stranger's vision, unless he should enter the church, when he will instantly perceive that something is wrong.

There is a pleasant walk to Poynings from Shoreham, a town which can boast of a cathedral-like church, such as no one would dream of building in so small a place at the present day. The sportsman, who may care little for churches, will find something to occupy him at the proper season of the year on the flats about Shoreham, for wild duck abound, and naturalists may find the godwit, the ring dotterel, the turnstone plover, the red shank, and many other birds which are rare elsewhere. Sam Maple, who keeps an oyster shop in Shoreham, once shot fifty-two godwit in one day, and four or five of them may be seen in a glass-case behind his counter. Bewick tells us that the "godwit is much esteemed by epicures as a great delicacy, and sells very high," and Yarrell quotes testimony of the same kind from a much older authority—Sir Thomas Browne, who says, "god-

wits are taken chiefly in marshland, though other parts are not without them; they are accounted the daintiest dish in England." But I have never had the good fortune to be present anywhere when this dainty dish was served up.

At the end of the road and the private grounds on the north side of the railway, the visitor may make his way across fields towards the hills, and by continuing a north-easterly course he cannot fail to strike the Devil's Dyke. He will have to come down from the first range of hills, and will then descry a cart-track running from the left of a barn in the hollow. This, with occasional breaks, leads to Poynings. But it is often lost in ploughed fields, over or round which (according to the time of year) the tourist must make his way as best he can. There are also several cross roads, but whenever a turning is to be made, take the one which branches at an angle to the right. The large earthwork at the top of the Devil's Dyke can be distinguished so many miles away, that directions for reaching it are scarcely necessary. The distance from Shoreham, making allowance for having to go round occasionally, is under six miles. On the western side of the earthwork there is a green track leading downwards, and this falls into a smaller path, and ultimately comes out alongside of the "Poor Man's Wall," which the enemy of mankind is supposed to have been digging to let the sea into the Weald, when he was interrupted by an old woman. But there were still five good substantial miles of tough hill to be dug

out, so that the old woman might as well have left the "poor man" to his harmless amusement.

The view from the Devil's Dyke is no finer than can be obtained from many other points on the Downs, and is not so fine as that from Wolstonbury Hill or Chanctonbury Ring; but it is a favourite place of resort from Brighton, and has been invested with a sort of tea-gardens popularity. People go there to shoot at targets for nuts, and then they give the nuts to their sweethearts to crack with their teeth, and afterwards look through an instrument which shows everything and everybody upside-down, which must be much more interesting than seeing them the right side up. It is the only spot in all the South Downs which has been thoroughly "Cockneyfied." The excursionist has cut his interesting initials all over the turf, and left his mark in still more inappropriate places, as we shall presently see.

The view from the foot of the hill is quite as striking as that from above, where excursion "wans," "cockshies," and tom-boys, male and female, at their not too innocent sports, are sometimes apt to disturb a peaceful contemplation of the scene. From the "Poor Man's Wall" there is a grand vista of the westward line of the Downs, with the ancient borstalls cut over them out of the white chalk, and the green combes which seem almost to have been modelled by the touch, so beautifully rounded are they in form. A wide extent of blue landscape is also commanded from the field above Poynings, and there the attraction of the spot almost ceases. For Poynings is not by any means a pretty little village



—the remains of old houses are few, and those which exist are so disguised or hidden beneath layers of stucco that it is almost impossible to recognize them. The fine massive tower and lofty roof of the church strike the eye afar off, but within the building the sight which is presented is not in any way satisfactory. Large patches of green mould disfigure the walls, and the lath and plaster of the ceiling drop in great lumps on the floor. “I was obliged to sweep a lot up to-day,” said an old woman who was cleaning for Sunday, “and every week it keeps falling down.” Pointing out to her one very bad place, she said, “That’s the Government, sir. They’ve got to do that. That part of the church is the Government’s.” It is to be hoped that the “Government” will set to work without much further delay. So rich a proprietor ought not to leave a beautiful church in so deplorable a state. The old high pews—not very high—still remain, rude, broken, going to pieces with dry-rot and neglect. On some of them are painted names and dates—as, for instance, “J. Lansdale, 1756.” There is an indescribably bare and sorrowful appearance about the church, not to be attributed to the carelessness of the rector, who has written an exhaustive account of the edifice and the neighbourhood round about,\* but to the absence of adequate means for putting so large a building in decent order. It has been much ill-used from time to time—pillaged even by common thieves ; and now it would require a large sum

\* Sussex Archaeological Collections, Vol. XV.

to restore it properly. In the south transept, "the very graves had been violated by midnight marauders, and the floor left in broken masses." Tombstones were torn away, brasses carried off, stained glass destroyed. If we wonder what kind of men they were who could find it in their hearts to commit these outrages, we have only to look at the church porch and entrance door, which are covered with the names and initials of the British "Harry" out for a holiday. The very vestibule of God's house is covered with these inscriptions, one of the latest of them being the following:—"R. Smith, also J. M. Swane, 14/3/80." Why these persons should have been so anxious to excite the disgust and contempt of every decent man or woman who enters the building it is hard to say, but to the best of my belief England is the only country in the world in which people go about deliberately desecrating their churches. Noticing that some of the plaster in the porch had been purposely chipped off, I asked the woman who was cleaning why it was taken away. She hesitated a moment, and then said, "Because they write all sorts of ridiculous things there, sir."

"Do you mean indecent things?"

"Oh, yes, sir—very often. We ha' tried to stop it, but can't."

Need we be very much surprised that the church was desecrated a couple of hundred years ago when we see abominable profanation committed in it even now, and find people insensible to the disgrace of associating their names with acts from which savages would revolt?

The altar, like the rest of the church, has a mean and poverty-stricken appearance. The rude old table is not even covered, and I asked the woman if there was no altar-cloth.

“No, sir,” said she; “the old un’s wore out, and we ain’t got ne’er another.”

“How is that?”

“I don’t know, but we are all very poor. There ain’t no *quality* living about here. Very few people come to the church. Are these pews all full a Sundays? Deary me, no. Nearly all of ’em be empty. This is what they call the *Pinings* one,” said she, as we walked into the Poynings chapel or transept, all battered and mouldering.

I was secretly wishing that the law, or even Judge Lynch, could be brought to operate upon “R. Smith, also J. M. Swane” for the improvement of their manners and morals, when I noticed two men at the foot of the little hill on which the church stands. They were filling a water-cart from a pool in the road, evidently for the purpose of distributing the water from house to house.

“What, are you obliged to drink such water as that?” said I.

“Lor bless you, sir, why it only comes from the hill just above there. It’s the best water as you could find anywhere. We use nothing else.”

“How is it you let your church get in so disgraceful a state?” I asked.

“We are all poor about here.”

“But you need not be rich to prevent people writing their names, and all sorts of other things, inside your church doors.”

The men looked down, and at last one said, “It be too bad, sir, but what can a body do?”

“Well, by way of a beginning, why not catch one of these scribblers, and put his head into that pool? It would not spoil the water, and would do his head a world of good.”

“’T’would serve ’em right, sure enough,” said the man.

“Well, will you do it?”

“We never catches ’em, sir, else we might;” and it is to be hoped that they have plucked up resolution enough to duck some one before this.

Wishing to see the spot where the water comes out of the hill, I followed the stream up a little ravine, and found that it emerged from three or four different places. Then I walked up the gorge between the hills, where the turf is soft and green, and where there are two large barrows, fit graves for chieftains or gallant soldiers; and so on to the “Dyke Inn,” where the visitor may generally count on getting a seat in some sort of conveyance returning to Brighton. Or he may go from Poynings to Hassocks Gate Station, over Wolstonbury Hill and through Danny Park, the total distance from Shoreham being between fifteen and sixteen hilly miles.

Another of the South Down villages to which a pleasant little trip may be made is that of Ringmer,



about three miles from Lewes. Ringmer is interesting because of the fact that Gilbert White dated several of his letters from there, and it is worth a visit for the sake of the views which are gained from the road. There are several cottages in the village which look very old, and a carpenter's shop, with two yews before it, deserves to be sketched for some future illustrated edition of White's "Selborne." It ought not to be forgotten that Ringmer was for some time the abode of the tortoise which White describes, and which he ultimately carried off to Selborne, "eighty miles in post-chaises." He tells us that "the rattle and hurry of the journey so perfectly roused it that, when I turned it out on a border, it walked twice down to the bottom of my garden." It lived fourteen years in Selborne, and died in 1794. An interesting relic of White's day is to be seen in the rookery close to the church, which he more than once mentions, and which is still resorted to by a numerous colony. The church stands a little way to the back of the village—a strange old building, with a little wooden tower at one end of it, something like a pigeon-cote. Some old elms at the entrance of the churchyard have been pollarded, for "they were very dangerous," as the clerk's wife assured me; "we used to be afraid to walk under them." Close to the church is the rectory, an ivy-covered house, with a pretty garden round it. The porch of the church is evidently ancient, but all the old pews inside have been taken away, and my guide informed me that the villagers had been favoured with a set of "new com-

mandments." On looking over them I could detect no material difference between them and the "old commandments" to which we are all so well accustomed. On Sundays there is a choir in the church of twelve men and six boys, which must represent no small proportion of the male population of Ringmer. Some old monuments or tablets still remain in the church—among them a brass plate inscribed with the name of Richard Mascall, who died in 1631—"for whose pious memorie his lovinge wife made this memoriall, too little to expresse his desert or her affection." There is also a kneeling figure representing Herbert Springett, who died in 1620, and of whom the inscription tells us—

"Redresse he did the wrongs of many a wight,  
Fatherlesse and widdowes by him possesse their right."

The figure is coloured, and represents a middle-aged gentleman, with black hair, a round face, and a ruddy complexion. Beyond the church is a pleasant village green, and adjoining it are the grounds of the house where Gilbert White used to visit. "Here is a large rookery round this house," he writes, "the inhabitants of which seem to get their living very easily." And so it remains to this day, and doubtless will be found there for many a year to come.

Still another village may be visited conveniently from Brighton—a village familiar enough by name to readers of Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's novel, "Ovingdean Grange." In the midst of old barns and rickyards the stranger

will find a stucco-fronted house, modelled in awkward imitation of blocks of stone, and having three false windows at the top. This is Ovingdean Grange, once, it may be, a fine old house, but a disappointing place to look at now. To the left of this is the church—a very different church from that at Poynings, not so large, but much more agreeable to visit—a lovely English church, well cared-for within and without, its old graves and monuments and carvings respected, its altar-place not left in bareness and dirt, but treated with becoming reverence. It is a church such as artists love to paint, and such as Englishmen think of with a tender heart when they are far away from their own land—for at such times we forget all about the British Harry and his singular manners and customs. Ovingdean has not even a little village shop in it, but consists entirely of two or three cottages and some barns, with the church and the “Grange.” It stands in a hollow, embosomed among the grand old Downs, and from any of the hills at the back a view of the sea is quickly to be gained.

On the last day of January, 1880, I started off for a walk from this village, with a bright sunshine and a light southerly wind to help me onwards. This same month of January began and ended, as many people may remember, with spring-like days, but a long and dreary interval of Arctic weather came between, making the earth little better than a “sterile promontory,” driving people with weak lungs to despair or the grave, and killing off multitudes of our native birds. But on this January day the starlings, thrushes, and larks

were sufficiently thawed-out to re-appear, and one could almost fancy that the face of Spring had already vouchsafed to show itself.

At the top of the first range of hills beyond Ovingdean, in a north-easterly direction, the tower of Falmer church will be seen to the left, and a few yards further a track will be discovered running to the right through some furze, skirting chiefly the brow of the hill. There is now a beautiful walk before the visitor—a walk of which no one who cares for fine hill scenery and delightful air can well grow weary. To wander towards the right, away from the beaten track, is the best course to take—among furze bushes, and past two sheep-ponds, and again skirting the top of the hill—when all at once you will see several hundred feet below you an ancient Sussex village, with a quaint, rambling house, partly ivy-clad, in the midst of an old-world garden, and then a comfortable farm, a church with a low tower, and one street of red-tiled and thatched cottages. Looking back, you may descry the sea sparkling in the sun, just beyond Rottingdean, and again it makes itself visible on the south-east by Seaford and the “Seven Sisters,” the line of which can be distinctly traced. The green rounded tops of the hills stretch away far and near in all directions, and straight in front is Lewes, with a wide and varied landscape expanding beyond it. From the farms beneath comes the tinkle of the sheep-bell, wondrously soft and melodious when heard at a distance. Get near to that bell, and it is only the cracked tinkling of a common bit of iron. A mile or two off its tone is of



silver, bringing with it many a recollection of "fields invested with purpureal gleams," the happy fields of life's golden age, shining once more in all their beauty in the fair county of Sussex.

The little collection of old houses below is the village of Kingston, to which, no doubt, the prior and monks of Lewes frequently resorted, for they held the manor down to the year 1348. The church was given by William de Warrenne to "God and St. Pancras," and it is referred to in a charter of about the year 1200. Time and neglect had done their usual work upon it, and it might have fallen to utter ruin but for the care and liberality of the lord of the manor, the Rev. John Goring, of Wiston. Now the building is bright and comely, as beseems the house of God; and the stranger who perchance visits it on a Sunday will find the service well and devoutly read by a good clergyman who has laboured in this corner of the Downs, and at Iford not far off, for several years, and whose words lose none of their effect from being uttered beneath a roof where prayers and thanksgivings have been offered up for five hundred years and more.

Kingston, though but a small place, has a long history behind it, and need not be ashamed to have its name called in the roll of English villages. Then, too, it has its legends—among others of a goblin charcoal spinner, doomed to expiate some nameless crime by spinning charcoal, of all things in the world, in the likeness of a black calf; surely a fearful thing to meet on a dark night. A lonely spot half a mile or so from the village

is haunted by a certain "Nan Kemp," who murdered her child, killed herself, and was buried at the cross-ways, doubtless with the proper legal stake thrust through her, and other rites appropriate to such occasions. That the place is haunted I cannot of my own knowledge attest, but on a dark or stormy night superstition could scarcely find a more fitting home. Yet it is a corner singularly loved by birds, and it must be a very exceptional day in the year when some sweet singer may not be heard there, even though it be only the robin in the dark days of December. Before January is over, the thrush and the blackbird begin to pour forth their delicious music over the grave of poor Nan Kemp, and birds of many kinds soon build in the trees which overshadow the narrow lane.

Better, however, than all the history and traditions clinging to this old village is the delightful scenery which surrounds it, the noble Downs making almost a part and parcel of it, and the perfume of their wild thyme and sea breath hanging over it, like the fragrance of some celestial clime. The steep combs are deserted at all times of the year, save by some casual shepherd, and there are wild recesses where the grass never seems to have been cut for ages, and where year after year it dies off and is renewed till it resembles a patch of land in an untrodden country. The farmers do not go to these secluded hills, for the grass is rank and coarse, the sheep will not eat it, and it is too far to haul it for use as litter. In many parts of the Downs, great circles of this grass may be seen, nibbled all round by

the sheep, but not a blade of it touched. In the dead of winter the brown, thick herbage reaches over one's knee, and it is not easy to wade through it, and not desirable to try to do so after dark, for some disused chalk or flint pit may be concealed on the hillside. There are strange, long-forsaken tracks now leading nowhere, but once going to farms or homesteads of which not a vestige remains. Even the hare, startled from its form by an unaccustomed rustling, can scarcely make its way through the long, jungle-like grass. In stormy weather, a stray gull or two may often be seen in the shelter of the combes, hiding from the northern and westerly blasts which have blown it far from its accustomed haunts. The Downs descend here and there in precipitous banks towards the plains, or are cut into gulches and clefts, between which the sea may once have coursed up and down; and so strongly does the region recall coast-scenery, that at times one almost seems to hear the roaring of the waves below, especially when mist or fog hides the surrounding country, and a thick curtain is drawn over the valley and the plains. Then it is that even the practised shepherd may get confused on his homeward way, and stray far from the path which leads to his own fireside.

There is no month, scarcely even a day, when the South Downs hereabouts have not their charm, even during the gloomy reign of winter, when the east wind whips over them with thongs of steel. The varying seasons all present new pictures to the eye. On a January day, after a fall of snow, the round-topped

hills look like white rollers in the Atlantic, and one could almost fancy oneself standing on the deck of a ship, with the billows coming tumbling in on every side. At night the clouds and hills seem to blend, the difference between one and the other being perhaps indicated only by the pale light of a young crescent moon above. As summer approaches, violets and cowslips bedeck the grass, the bloom on the furze shines like a sheet of gold, and as the year advances, numberless wild flowers make the hillsides brighter than a garden. And thus the charm varies, but never ceases, for the hills never look quite the same two hours together. At night there are such effects of light upon them from moon and stars that a sense of awe steals into the mind, and when the wild winds are out, tearing over sea and land, and shrieking like the voices of the lost, one seems to be wandering in some weird land under an enchanter's wand. No wonder that the Sussex people of old used to believe in ghosts, fairies, and beings of another world, and that the midnight screech of the owl, or the sharp bark of the fox, seemed to their startled ears like the cries of the dead and gone from the old churchyard.

Straight over the top of Kingston hill there is a cart track descending into a hollow, and although this track is soon nearly lost in the green turf, yet there will be no difficulty in following it, or some sort of continuation of it, all the way to Rottingdean—about four miles off, and six from Lewes. It is an excursion wholly among the Downs, and there are places where the wayfarer gets



completely inclosed within the hills—quite silent and deserted, with no living thing to be discerned far or near, except perhaps some sheep on a distant slope. In one of the hollows through which we pass to Rottingdean lies Baldsdean Farm, once the property of the monks of Lewes. From the part of Kingston hill which stands above it a magnificent sea view is to be obtained on a clear day, while eastward the landscape extends to the foot of the Kentish hills. Baldsdean possesses no feature of interest, and in wet weather, or during the winter, the narrow road through the place is so hopelessly sunk in mud that the visitor will involuntarily stay there a little longer than he intended. There is a sticky quality in the mud of Sussex which causes the traveller to cling to its soil with great tenacity. After frost in winter, when the roads are all “rotten,” an acre or two of land seems to be hanging to the boots of the helpless pedestrian. A traveller of the last century (Dr. John Burton) asks why it is that “the oxen, the swine, the women, and all other animals, are so long-legged in Sussex?” and he suggests that it may be “from the difficulty of pulling the feet out of so much mud by the strength of the ankle,” so that “the muscles get stretched, as it were, and the bones lengthened.” Dr. Burton’s opportunities for the inspection of ankles were, perhaps, better than those of more recent observers, but it is only fair to say that his theory and the alleged facts on which it is founded are alike denied by the more interesting species of animals which he includes in his catalogue.

In the combes in this part of the Downs are sometimes to be met with the least-pleasant resident in England—the viper. One day while walking out with a dog—a fox terrier—I noticed a snake lying on the grass, but did not think it could do much harm, for it was the month of March, and I always supposed that adders at that season had not recovered from their winter's torpor. The dog went up to the snake and sniffed at it, when in a moment it started back, evidently struck, and I saw two red marks upon its nose. In less than five minutes it sat down in the field, apparently overcome with stupor, and upon my calling to it, had evidently some difficulty in rousing itself to follow me. I took it home as quickly as I could, and by the time I reached the house—about twenty minutes—the dog was scarcely able to walk, was quite dazed, and saliva flowed from its mouth. I immediately covered the bites with salad oil, and throughout the day applied oil and laudanum. The face swelled very much, but in the course of a few days the dog recovered, although I was assured that he would die unless I went and caught the viper and got some of his fat to apply to the wounds. Moreover, it appeared that a woman had been chased in that very spot by a viper only a few days before. I often go there, but he never chases me. Perhaps he likes women best, and small blame to him for it.

A very old track over the hills, long known as “Jugg’s Lane,” leads from Brighton through Southover to Lewes. Before railroads were heard of, the fishermen of Brighton, locally called “Jugs,” used to come to

Lewes with their wares by this path, and it is still used by people who know the country. Soon after leaving Southover one evening, and entering upon this old road, I saw a very strange party camped under a hedge, with a group of children round them, and a policeman ordering somebody to "Move on." There were a swarthy-looking man, with a red fez upon his head, a woman with a picturesque though ragged cloak over her, three little children, a white pony, and two bears. The man had stuck two long sticks into the ground, and put a third on the top of them, and was preparing to rig up some sort of a tent. There was a pot such as gipsies use, close under the hedge, and a bundle of sticks ready to make a fire. The man and woman were speaking together in a language which I did not understand.

"Come, get out of this," said the policeman; "you can't stay here."

Evidently the man knew not what was said. He looked blankly round at the little crowd, and pitched upon me in his despair, and spoke to me in French—a mongrel French. "What does he say?" he asked, pointing to the policeman.

"You must get away from here."

"Where am I to go?"

I put that question to the policeman, and he replied that it was no business of his'n—only he must move on. I offered to pay for a night's lodging for the party, but the constable assured me that he could not let them pass into Lewes, and even if he did, no one would take them in because of the bears.

All this I explained to the man, who was in no small perplexity. He told me he was from Bosnia, and had been travelling seven years in France. He had landed two days before at Newhaven from Dieppe. Everywhere he had been allowed to travel in France, and sleep at night by the wayside—why not here? The laws! Why should the laws interfere with him? Where was M. the Commissaire? Where was M. le Maire? What was he to do with his “trois petites,” who were hungry and footsore? People afraid of the “ours”? Bah! Let Monsieur regard them. They would not hurt a fly. Why could he not stop there? Look at the children—Monsieur would see that it was impossible for them to go on any further. And so, indeed, it seemed. The woman was thin and miserable-looking. One of the children was a girl of nine or ten, a pinched-up copy of her mother, with a weary, hungry sort of look upon her face.

“What made you come here at all?” I asked the man.

Because everybody told him this was “un meilleur pays que la France.” It had cost him a hundred francs to come from Dieppe, and he had no more money. He would do no harm to the fields. In France no one interfered with him. Why was he not allowed to sleep by the hedges here? Then he turned to the policeman and made a “last appeal.” He laid his head on his left arm, as if going to sleep, and said, “Coucher, coucher, vous savez.”

“Move on,” was the stolid and inflexible reply of the policeman.



“Perhaps he could sleep over there by the hollow,” said someone in the crowd, and the policeman seconded the suggestion, caring nothing, of course, where the party went so that they took themselves beyond his jurisdiction.

I knew where the hollow was, and was going that way. The moment I started, the man followed at my heels, as reluctant to lose sight of me as a drowning man is to let go of a straw. Quite unexpectedly I thus found myself leader of a “personally conducted” party—just behind me was the Bosnian with a bear, then his wife with another bear, then two of the petites, then the white pony with a third petite upon its back, and the tent, pot, and other things belonging to the wretched family. On our way we passed between two windmills, and it struck me that I bore at the moment a remarkable resemblance to Don Quixote.

The first bear occasionally made a sort of drive at me, but the Bosnian assured me it was nothing—“*Il joue, Monsieur, voilà tout!*” Would I explain why they let him sleep where he liked in France, and would not let him in England, which was a better country, so he was told? I did explain once more that the law was against him, and earnestly advised him to go back to France while still he was within sight of the sea. “Just over yonder hill it is,” said I, “you will be sorry if you do not return.” No, he would not do that; he would go to Brighton, which he understood was a big town, almost as big as Dieppe. There his bears would make the people laugh, and he would be able to get some money.

By and by we came to Kingston Hollow, which is in a secluded spot, far from the line of ordinary traffic. It was getting dusk, and in all probability no one would pass by that night. Therefore it seemed to me that the houseless wanderers could do no great harm there. The road was bordered with broad grassy banks and hedges, and consequently there was plenty of room. Somewhere beneath the road lies the ill-fated Nan Kemp; but she, poor wretch, would do no evil to her fellow outcasts, even if she had the power. The birds were singing their evening song; the sun had sunk beneath cloud mountains of strange shapes and hues, leaving behind it gleams of unearthly light; light which one almost fancied had come from afar, even from the land where the weariest of wanderers will at last find rest, and the heavy heart put down its burden.

The Bosnian mounted the bank, "prospected" round a minute or two, and then called out to his wife. The bears were squatted on their haunches, and the white pony began to bite at the grass on the roadside. It seemed that at last they had found a fair anchorage for the night. At that moment a loud voice was heard shouting from the hedge opposite, "Hallo, gov'nor, get out of that—none of that! Get out of here! Move on!" It was a man who hired the shooting over the field.

The dejection which fell upon the face of the Bosnian, and the heavy sigh which his wife gave as she took up one of the children to carry it, I did not soon forget. I spoke to the man in the field, but he would



By and by we came to Kingsley Hollow, which is a secluded spot, far from the line of ordinary traffic. It was getting dusk, and in all probability no one would pass by that night. Therefore it seemed to me that the homeless wanderers could do no great harm. The road was bordered with broad grassy banks and hedges, and consequently there was plenty of room



the night. At that moment a loud voice was heard shouting from the hedge opposite: "Hallo, gov'ners, get out of that road at that! Get out of here!" and on. It was a man who kicked the subject over the head.

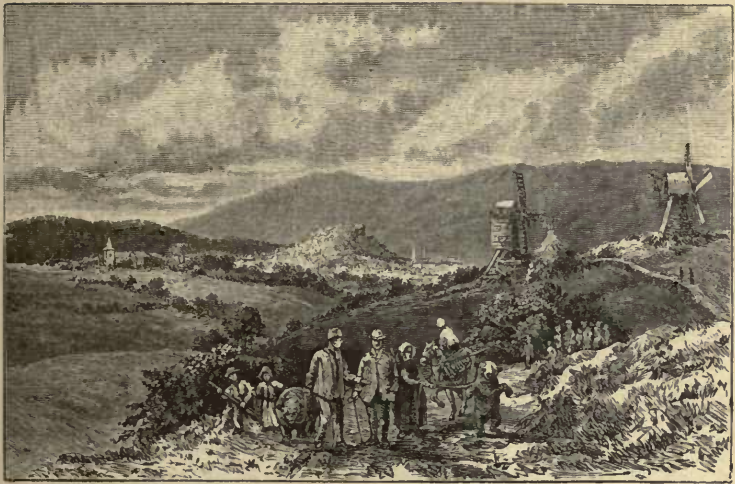
The dejection which fell upon the face of the woman and the heavy sigh which her wife gave as she took up one of the children to carry it, I did not forget. I spoke to the man in the field, but he







not hear of the party remaining there. "We can get no rabbits where they go," he said. Utterly cowed and broken-down, the wanderers "moved on" down the lane towards the Brighton road, while I was talking to the man in the field, and I saw no more of them.



A Personally Conducted Party.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OLD SOUTH DOWN HOUSES.

Attachment of Sussex People to their Homes.—Old Sussex Families.—Danny Park and House.—A “Carolina Poplar.”—Wolstonbury Hill.—Old Houses near Plumpton.—A Cool Reception in Street.—The Head Man of the Village.—Street Place and Church.—The Soldiers’ Graves.—“So it Goes.”—The “Clerk” of Ditchling.—The “Connisoor” of Rum.—Queer Guide to a Church.—“No Sense in old Houses.”—Wild Flowers.—Westmeston.—Plumpton Place.—A Dishonoured old House.

THERE are still many interesting old Sussex houses to be found, standing almost within the shadow of the Downs, some of them still reverently preserved as the homesteads of the families in whose possession they have been for generations past. The remains of ancient manor houses may occasionally be seen by the traveller as he wends his way along the crest of the hills, sometimes much shorn of their original state and splendour, but presenting even now an imposing appearance, or attracting the eye by their quaint gables and ivy-clad walls. Even the cottages are often found to retain uninjured the picturesque features which their builders gave them two or three centuries ago, for it must be remembered that Sussex people of all classes cling with



more than the ordinary fondness of Englishmen to the old home. It is not a roving population. As Mr. Lower has remarked, "It is a comparatively rare thing to find any family, gentle or simple, migrating from Sussex to other parts of England." The yeomanry have for the most part disappeared, but many of the rich or powerful families still exist. The Ashburnhams, as Mr. Shirley points out in his "Noble and Gentle Men of England," have held their estates between 700 and 800 years—from the reign of Henry the Second, "and probably from a much earlier period;" the Gorings have been landowners in Sussex since the time of Edward the Second; the Pelhams "have been a most important Sussex family" since the reign of Edward the Third; the Gages have been found at Firle ever since 1475; the Barttelots have lived at Stopham, near Pullborough, since 1420, and trace back their ancestry to Adam de Bartelott, "said to be of Norman origin." In regard to some of these families, Mr. Lower has pointed out that members of them are or were to be found in very humble circumstances. At Ringmer there used to live a rat-catcher named Thomas Pelham, said to be descended from the true stock, and the name of Shelley is still to be seen over many a shop door. Even servants, the most restless of beings, are supposed to stick longer to one place in Sussex than is commonly the case in other counties. The writer of an interesting paper in the Sussex Archæological Collections,\* tells us

\* Vol. XXIII., pp. 36—72.

that instances of thirty or forty years domestic service were not uncommon, and he says, "I have often visited at a house in the western division of the county where the cook of the family was nearly ninety, and had never lived as a servant in any other house. My estimable friend was her second master, she having lived with his uncle previously; and after he had passed his seventieth year she generally spoke of him as her young master."

One of the oldest houses in the county, still kept up in a becoming manner as a gentleman's residence, is Danny, about eight miles from Brighton and three from Hassock's Gate Station. It is not so beautiful a house as either Wiston or Parham, but its situation alone would render it well worth a visit. From the town of Hurst-Pierpoint—a dull old town consisting of one street—a lane runs by the side of the church, to some fields entered by a gate on the left-hand side of the road. Through these fields there is a pleasant walk to Danny Park, and from thence to the Downs beyond. When I was there in the spring, the little patches of wood by the side of the fields, especially near the entrance to the park, were all covered with wild anemones, violets, primroses, and the cuckoo-flower. Some of the trees in the park are very old, and there is a fine collection of elms close to the house, several of them having grown to a great height. The day was gusty, and the tallest of the trees rocked to and fro like the mast-head of a ship in a storm, to the great danger of the rook's-nests which were built at the very top. To the south of the house it seemed to me that a large tree had fallen

during the night, but on going up to it I found that it had thrown out branches all along the ground, and that from these branches elbows had sprung out, rising in some instances into good-sized trees apart from the parent trunk—much as a banyan tree grows in India. The spreading branches extend for a considerable distance round the original trunk, and those which are on the ground are covered with moss, or buried partly beneath the soil. A man who was passing by told me that it was a Carolina poplar, and that the tree grew in this way in its native country. I am unable to say whether this account is accurate or not; I only know that I never saw any such poplar in either of the Carolinas.

Nothing more noble can be wished for than the east front of the house, which apparently remains pretty much as it was built in 1595. The large window of the hall is wonderfully fine, and the entire façade is a beautiful example of Elizabethan work. On the south side an addition or alteration has been made in the Queen Anne style, and this ill-accords with the main front of the building. But let us not be too particular.

From the house a path leads through the park to Wolstonbury Hill, up the centre of which some steps have been cut or made in the turf. There are easier routes for ascending the hill, but this is the most direct. The views from the summit are superb in all directions, the line of the Surrey hills being within sight along the entire range, while westward the South Downs may be traced almost to Chichester.

This is, upon the whole, the grandest inland view to be obtained from any part of the South Downs, for nearly the whole of Sussex is commanded from it, and a large part of Surrey and Kent. From the top of the hill it is about four miles to the Devil's Dyke, and seven to Brighton. I struck off for Brighton through Piecomb, Pangdean, and Patcham, skirting the Clayton Tunnel, from the top of which there are broad chimneys at intervals for carrying off smoke. It is easy to trace the progress of a train underground by the steam which comes up through these chimneys. The road is dull and somewhat tedious, but the visitor may avoid it by going over the hills to Stanmer, and from thence to Falmer Station.

On a fine morning in March I started from Plumpton Station to visit two other old Sussex houses. At the end of the platform at the station there is a gate leading into a field, through which I went, keeping close to a wire fence, until the path came out upon a farm road. This also was shut off by a gate, with a sort of double ladder near it for the convenience of foot-passengers—a queer-looking affair, all carefully fenced in. Just past the gate is a road running to the right and left, with an ancient oak tree, completely hollow, almost in the middle of it. I now turned to the right, past some more old trees and a barn, and then continued straight on, with a hedge on the right-hand, from which primroses were peeping out, and a wire fence on the left. A place so shut in with gates and wire fences it would be hard to find elsewhere. Here the



South Downs show themselves off in a fine bold line, with several white borstalls mounting over them at various points. At no great distance I came to a blacksmith's shop, and not far from it are the church and the old house which I hoped, with moderately good luck, to be able to see.

My appearance in the little village of Street was not at first a success. I had to overcome the prejudices of the natives against a stranger, and if I may be permitted to borrow a celebrated phrase, to "educate" my fellow-citizens. After a little time, however, I managed to allay their fears, and to satisfy them that I had no burglarious or other dangerous implements concealed about me. But the casual mention of my desire to see the church soon revived popular suspicion, and I began to think I should, after all, be ridden on a rail out of the place. What could a stranger want with the church except to steal it? At this critical moment the head man of the village was called upon to give his decision, and when he fearlessly undertook to show me over the church himself, and brave the consequences, all danger of tar and feathers was over. There was nothing, however, very remarkable to be seen within the edifice, and it was not long before I crossed over from the churchyard to the fine Jacobean house known as Street Place, which may be made out without difficulty from the Brighton railroad, if the traveller knows where to look for it. This house was once the residence of the Dobell family, and is supposed to have been built in 1595. It stands on high ground, and commands some

beautiful views, but the inside is by no means worthy of the outside. Many alterations must have been made in it, for the ceiling of the large hall is of modern introduction, and its appearance is not improved by the papering of the walls in bad imitation of blocks of some imaginary marble or stone. One ancient room, and but one, is still left in it, and it is known as the "carved room." It is panelled round with oak, and over the mantelpiece are two representations of the Prince of Wales's feathers, with the motto beneath. There are also several Latin mottoes, in gilt letters—evidently restored—near the ceiling. It is conjectured that this room was the study of Walter Dobell, who died in 1625. Another member of the Dobell family, a Cavalier, is said to have escaped from a pursuing detachment of Roundheads by riding with his horse up the great chimney in the hall, and secreting himself in a private chamber above. Moreover, it is believed that the place was once haunted, but surely no well-regulated spectre would continue to patronise a house which has been so disfigured by the white-washer and the paper-hanger. A ghost of the real old stock would fly shrieking from that dreadful paper in the hall. In fact, the panelled room is now the only feature of the slightest interest inside the house, although its external appearance is still worthy of any of the great families of Sussex. The walls, moreover, are in an excellent state of preservation.\*

\* Street Place has now passed into good hands, and will be well taken care of.

My friend, the head man of Street, now induced me to go on to Ditchling, where he said there were several more old houses. He spoke in a sort of soothing way to me; apparently my love of old houses made him suspect that there was something amiss in my own upper-story, and that consequently it was desirable to coax me out of Street as quickly and quietly as he could. "At Ditchling," said he, "you will see a rare old house—they say a king and a queen once lived in it. I don't know the rights on it."

"What is the meaning of all this wire fence about here?" said I, taking no notice of his suggestion.

"Why, don't you know? It's for the coursing, to be sure—lots of coursing about here—seven or eight miles. And these fences are to keep the hares in."

Then, though not a coursing man, I remembered having heard of the Plumpton Coursing Meetings. I further asked my guide to point out Plumpton borstall, which he did—evidently by way of humouring me.

"Did you ever see the soldiers' graves on the top of the hills there?" he asked. I told him I had not.

"Well," said he, "they are all over the place. I saw some of the bones dug up not long ago—two on 'em there were, both young men I should say, for I never see such white teeth in all my life before. One of 'em had a cut in his skull as would have killed twenty men; you could put three fingers into it. Such white teeth he had! We found 'em in digging for flints." Doubtless these were indeed the remains of soldiers—some of the gallant band who fought with Simon de Montfort

more than six centuries ago, and who dragged themselves from place to place among these hills to die.

I now went over the churchyard-wall by some steps, down a road to the right, and across a field straight on towards Ditchling church, which may be seen from Street, a little over a mile away. As I was entering Ditchling, I passed by a barn, from which a man was dragging a calf out by the fore-legs. This at first seemed to be a mere punishment for misbehaviour, but seeing that the calf made no resistance the case looked more serious.

“Dead?”

“Oh, yes,” said the man as he threw the calf into the yard. “This is the third we have lost. They get diarrhœa a day or two after calving, and then get scoured like, and die. So it goes.”

“Why, what else goes so?”

“Oh, pretty nigh everything. My missus has had to kill two cows with a disease something like sheep-rot—they plaice in their livers, you know. And I don’t know where it’s to end. They may find it worse than they thought as summer comes on.” There is nothing like looking on the dark side of everything. I now began to search for the house in which the king and queen had lived, and found my way into the main street—old-fashioned and quaint in appearance, as one would naturally expect to find in a town which was a place of some note in the days of Richard the Second, and is even said to have been known, before it was a town at all, to King Alfred. There are some oldish houses here



and there, and at the doors of several of them gossips of both sexes, but chiefly of one, were holding forth with some vigour. Evidently it was not a day of hard labour in Ditchling. I was received with every sign of satisfaction, and in a few minutes my business and errand were being generally discussed.

On my part, thinking to get a little local information, I went into the "Bull Inn," and called for a bottle of ginger beer—a drink strong enough for all purposes when one is on the march. Nevertheless, it is a pity it is always made so sweet, and that somebody does not invent an equally mild but less objectionable drink for a warm day. I asked the barmaid whereabouts was the church.

"Church?" said a red-faced and jovial-looking man. "Just round the corner. I'll show it you, if you like. I'm the clerk."

I looked hard at him, but failed to see any signs of clerkship. "Clerk of *this* church, I suppose," said I, tapping the counter.

"That's about it," said the barmaid. And his face would have made a good sign for it, but upon that point I wisely held my peace.

"I know a good deal about the church, hows'ever," the man went on, "for I helped to *revise* her—*renovate* her, what do you call it? Come with me, and I'll show you what I did."

"What are you drinking there?" said I, seeing that he had a small glass before him, and curious to know with what paint he painted his face so bright a crimson.

“Rum—twopen’orth. Does it agree with me? Well, do I look like it? But then, mind you, I’m a *connissoor* at drinking. I’m sixty-two come April Fool’s Day, and never went to a doctor yet—except for accidents, mind you, for I have had as many limbs broke as most people. I never knowed nothing about it. Why, look at my grandfather!” I turned round, but did not see him. “He was eighty when he died, and never afraid of his drain. And I could drink as much rum as I could ale, and never be the worse for it. Yesterday I was out all day looking at the volunteers at Brighton. I tried the rum at two places—it was enough to kill a man. But I got back about square. This is pretty good here—why not try it, sir?”

“I never touch spirits.”

“Lor bless me! Why, I could live on ’em.”

“Are you married?”

“No. I was once, but never tried it again. Wouldn’t do, you know. Might get a *button sewed on*.” In uttering this mysterious phrase he put his finger to his nose and winked. His face, though red, was beaming with smiles, and he was the picture of good-humour. Still, I had an uneasy feeling that he was not exactly the proper guide for a church. But he finished his glass, and went out with me into the street. In a minute or two he had diffused so strong a flavour of Jamaica rum over the ancient town of Ditchling that a woman seemed to fancy a cask had been broached in the street for the public benefit—at any rate she ran eagerly out with a jug in her hand, but seeing my

guide, she went back again understanding at once what was the matter.

The church might have been seen to greater advantage with another companion, but a short inspection of it will satisfy the visitor that it is a beautiful building, placed in a charming situation, and well cared for. The arches are particularly fine, the chancel very graceful, and the entire edifice struck me as being an honour to its builders, if one only knew them. I noticed a slab in the wall dated just three hundred years ago—March, 1580. Presently—my rubicund friend having gone away—the vicar was so kind as to give me a little information about his beautiful church. I trust that he did not imagine I was in any way connected with the odour of rum which hung over the churchyard.

The “old house” stands near the church—a timbered cottage, once no doubt much larger than it is now. My guide, before he returned to his twopen’orths, strongly condemned this house. “There is,” said he, “no sense in it—I mean no *arshitectooral* sense.” The solemn and deliberate way in which he brought out the long word so amused me that I went on my road secretly laughing for half-a-mile or more.

I turned between a butcher’s shop and the “Bull Inn,” bound for Plumpton Place—an old moated house, formerly the seat of the Mascalls, another powerful Sussex family in its day. On the road I passed a wood that had been cleared, and the ground was literally covered with wild anemones, amid which a band of children were wandering happy and delighted. A little

further on, another small wood was carpeted with primroses—surely as sweet, pure, and charming a flower as grows anywhere upon this earth of ours. I have known people who never could detect the scent of a primrose, and yet it has a most fresh and spring-like perfume, recalling irresistibly the springtimes which have already gone over our heads, leaving us so much the poorer—or the richer, who knows? And then its shape and colour are so delicate, and its petals are soft and velvety as the cheek of some fair damsel just budding into beauty—but here perhaps I had better turn round, and get back to the safe hard road again.

I came to Westmeston, a hamlet in which everything seems to be old—barns, trees, and people. The road winds round close to the church, getting nearer and nearer to the South Downs, which hereabouts are of a goodly height—ranging from 700 to 858 feet. Two fine old yews impart dignity to the little churchyard of Westmeston, and caused me to hunt for notes concerning them in “Horsfield”—but I found none. He does, however, tell us that “the lordship of Westaston mews possessed by Countess Gueda in the Saxon times, and was given by the Conqueror to William de Warren.” The sweep of this same William de Warren’s net appears to have been wide and promiscuous. Beyond the hamlet we go on side by side with the Downs, and reach a finger-post which tells us that it is five-and-a-half miles to Lewes and five-and-three-quarters to Hurstpierpoint. Soon afterwards we see Plumpton Church, standing in the middle of a field all by itself, and looking



as if the main desire of its builders had been to put it down as far as possible out of everybody's way. Still a little further on the road some trees will be seen to the left, down a lane, and among these trees the instinct of a traveller accustomed to find things out, told me to go and look for Plumpton Place.

I almost wish that I had not found it, for a more depressing sight could not well be met with. Everything that can be done to degrade a house has been done to this; abject poverty has hung out its miserable sign all over it, and even the beauty which age would have lent it has been ruthlessly defaced and cast to the swine which grovel before its doors—for the pigs are almost as numerous here as they are in Ireland. Upon its poor old head a new slate roof has been clapped, as if in derision—a hideous slate roof of the commonest kind, giving the building the appearance of a workhouse. The windows have been knocked about, the doorways spoiled, and dirty little cesspools are stuck close to the once famous mansion, near the moat. Never was there a more utterly and hopelessly dishonoured old house—it could not be helped, perhaps, but it makes one wretched to look at it. For the house, to judge from the pictures of it still existing, must have been not only large, but beautiful, perhaps as noble a mansion as one could find in all Sussex. In the time of Henry the Eighth, Lennard Mascall lived here, and is said to have brought carp into England for the first time, and put them in his moat—a doubtful tale. The moat is still here, or a large part of it, covered with a thick and greasy scum

in some places, but in others running clear and bright, as it must have done three hundred years ago. Some large yew trees grow by the side of it, and look as if they were trying to hide from the water the abominations which have been put up close by. Nothing that man can do to cast shame and contempt upon a dwelling-place has been spared.

“You see, sir,” said an old woman of the neighbourhood, “the house is let out in lodgings at one-and-sixpence a-week. And a lodging-house is always the same—you cannot keep it clean and tidy.” How much better to have pulled it down, stone by stone.

“I remember the time, sir,” said the woman, “when it was all in very good order—and very stately-looking. There was tapestry in some of the rooms, and I recollect it quite well. It showed you Hisraelites in the desert, and Moses, and when you were in bed, it seemed as if they were all alive and walking about. It was beautiful.”

“It must, indeed, have been lovely,” said I; “especially for those who wanted to go to sleep.”

“Twenty pounds would have done the ’ouse up, sir, and lots of people would have taken it.” Her estimate is a little too low, I think, judging from some little experiences of my own; but if the expense of restoring the house would have been too great, there was no necessity to turn it into a dunghill.

Gladly did I turn my back upon Plumpton Place, and made all speed towards the Borstall by which I intended to reach the Downs, and which runs between a small

plantation and a chalkpit. This borstall gives one an idea of what the roads in Sussex used to be everywhere—cut to a great depth by waggon-wheels, and left in hills and dales for the seasons to work their will upon. Near a grove of beeches, but on the opposite side of the hill, a faint trace of a large cross is to be seen—doubtless a relic of the great battle fought not far off, and of the dead who were buried all along the hill-side, and it may be in specially large numbers near this cross. Then the crown of the hill is reached, and a superb view is spread before the eyes—to Brighton on one side, and all over Sussex on the other. After luxuriously feasting on this, I pushed on for Lewes over the Downs, but the reader need not pursue that course, for he may take to the hill at Ditchling, and go straight over to Brighton—a charming walk, until he gets within two or three miles of Brighton proper, when all becomes tedious and hateful.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WILMINGTON, EASTBOURNE, AND BEACHY HEAD.

A Hint for a Walk.—The Road Mender.—A Windmill broke Loose.—“Nothing but Bad Luck.”—Rabbits and “Tigs.”—Some Advice Concerning Bees.—Wilmington and Jevington.—An Inn-keeper Proud of a Church.—No Place Like Kent.—Jevington to Eastbourne.—East Dean and Friston.—Birling Gap.—Gardening under Difficulties.—Darby’s Hole.—A Reminiscence of a Lighthouse.—Beachy Head.—The Last of the South Downs.

THE last of the South Downs may best be seen in the course of a walk from Wilmington to Eastbourne, and thence to Beachy Head and Birling Gap—a line of coast which will be found full of interest, no matter at what period of the year it may be visited. The cliffs are not of great height between Beachy Head and Birling Gap, between 500 and 600 feet—but they are much higher, and altogether more striking in appearance, than other cliffs which people go longer distances to see—than the cliffs at the Land’s End, for instance, or along the coast of Cornwall generally. And the walk on the top of them is very much pleasanter than the walk from the Land’s End to the Logan Stone, for in the one case it is over turf as smooth and soft as can be found on any lawn in a garden on the Thames, while



in the other the path runs amid jagged rocks and very stony ground. In the course which I marked out, Beachy Head was reserved for the last journey, and it was not without regret that I saw the hills coming to an end. In Murray's "Handbook of Sussex," the reader is told that he "will find the South Downs less hackneyed ground, and quite as interesting, as many parts of the Continent which enjoy a far higher reputation," and it will scarcely be necessary to travel from Petersfield to Beachy Head to enable anyone to appreciate the truth of this statement. Almost any division of the Downs described in previous chapters will suffice to reveal to the visitor a thousand attractions which he would scarcely have expected to find within fifty miles of London.

Wilmington may be reached from Berwick Station, but unluckily there are three miles of turnpike road between the two places, and at Berwick no conveyance is to be had by which this unpleasant part of the journey can be disposed of without trouble. Three miles of a dusty road are apt to take the early charm and brightness out of a day, and deaden that enthusiasm which the prospect of a long ramble among the fields and hills is sure to inspire. There is, however, no way of avoiding it, and if the visitor can reconcile himself to the first part of this route, the last part will more than compensate him for his patience and trouble.

On the way to Wilmington a road-mender informed me that it was possible to get to Eastbourne over the Downs, but he did not know the road. Like all country

folks, he strongly advised me to keep to the turnpike. There is seldom any information about field-paths or similar "outlandish" tracks to be obtained from local authorities. Presently the road-mender scratched his head, reflected seriously, and then advised me to "keep over by where the windmill was burned down—Wind-over Mill as they used to ca' it."

"What, is the mill gone?" said I, with great concern, as though I had lost my oldest and dearest acquaintance.

"That er be. She run herself a-fire a twelvemonth and more ago. It was a wonderful hard night, the wind very high, and the chain broke, and of course nothing could stop her. So she run herself a-fire, and when we got up in the morning, there she was a burnin', and we couldn't do nothin'. A windmill without ere a break upon her goes wonderful fast."

"That was bad luck."

"It's been nothin' but bad luck lately, sir. Last year there was no crops, and now there's a good deal of rot a'most everywhere, but not just round here. We kept our sheep on the Downs. Them as sent 'em to the brooks will lose nearly all their flocks. Why, sir, in them low grounds the sheep never had a dry mouthful in 'em all the year, and so they got rotted. There be no rabbits anywheres—I was a shepherdin' last year, and saw the rabbits runnin' by all swelled out with the wet food. But we haven't got much rot here, although something's the matter with the *tigs*."

I am not certain of the proper orthography of this

last word, but I give it as it was pronounced. It is a word signifying young lambs.\*

Just then a bee flew humming by, and I remarked that the bees were not so numerous as usual this year.

“They’re nearly all dead through the rain and cold. Most on ’em died. I heerd tell as there was a gentleman over there (pointing across the country), who lost every bee he had, but that was his own fault.”

“How was that?”

“Why, you see, sir, he bought ’em of a person as died, and never swarmed ’em out, and anybody could have told him he was sure to lose all his bees. Not a one of ’em would live after that.”

“Why not?”

“Because when a person as keeps bees dies, none of ’em will live unless you swarm ’em out. That’s why the genelman lost all *hisn*.” In some form or other this superstition may be found nearly all over England; in general it is thought sufficient to move the hives after a death in the family.

At Wilmington I stepped aside to look at the ancient church—an old acquaintance of mine †—and then I pursued the cart track to the “Long Man,” and climbed to the top of the hill to the right of the figure—a stiffish ascent. The views are magnificent, especially northwards, where the whole country between this point and Kent can be easily traced, and to the west, where Hind-

\* In the Rev. W. D. Parish’s “Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect,” the word is entered as “tag.”

† “Field Paths and Green Lanes,” pp. 80—84.

head and the range of the Surrey hills fill all the background. I kept on towards the south and south-east, and after some time saw a village below which I assumed to be Jevington. It seemed to me that it would be a long way round to get to Eastbourne without descending this hill, and crossing the plain to another ridge of hills opposite, and therefore I made for the village, and sought for information at the place of public entertainment which stands by the roadside and has the "Eight Bells" for its sign. This house looked rather like the inns one reads of in French stories, where the guest disappears down a trap-door, for there were all sorts of strange doors and recesses about, and I noticed that the landlord went by a private staircase *upstairs* to draw a glass of ale. The inn, however, has nothing mysterious about it, but is evidently a well-kept little place, and "old-fashioned" enough to suit any taste. The landlord, a very intelligent man, told me that by no manner of means could I have got to Eastbourne by keeping on the hill, for the plain I was in separated the Wilmington hills from Eastbourne, and that I had done well to make a tack for Jevington. Nevertheless, I am confident that one could follow the hill round to Eastbourne, although it would doubtless be a long way round, longer than most people would care to walk.

"This is a curious old house," said I.

"It is very old, sir, but what is best worth seeing here is our church. Except an old church which they have found near Canterbury ours is the oldest church in England—so they do say. Quite worth your seeing, sir



—lots of people come here in the summer. Don't pass it—you can easily get the keys."

It was so novel a thing to be recommended to go to church by a publican that I could not find it in me to resist the invitation, and I therefore made my way down the village, and discovered a man who had the keys. There were some old tombstones outside the door, forming the pavement, with dates upon them ranging from 1650 to 1670. Thinking they could not have been in that exposed position over two hundred years without receiving greater injuries, I asked the man about them, and he told me they had been turned out of the church when it was restored. From this one may see how hard it is to make sure of keeping one's place in this world even after we have ceased to enter into competition for any of its prizes. In the interior of the church over the doorway is an ancient figure, found a couple of centuries ago in the belfry, and supposed to be of Anglo-Saxon origin. The views from the churchyard are pleasant, but I noticed that my guide, the man with the keys, took no interest whatever in them, or in anything else, but seemed rather bored with the scenery and with all his surroundings. I remarked to him that it was rather a pretty place.

"Ah, sir," said he, "it's not so pretty as Kent. No county like that. Ever been there, sir?"

"Lots of times—I think I have been all over it."

"Then you know Tunbridge Wells?"

"Certainly."

"That is where I came from, and they can't match

that country round here, sir. Give me Kent. I only wish I were there now," and he really looked as low-spirited about it as if he were in New Zealand, and could scarcely expect to see Tunbridge Wells again. There are no people who sigh for the place of their birth like Englishmen. They make good colonists, and wander to the most remote parts of the earth, but as Carlyle has somewhere said, all these wanderers are "home-sick to a man." The last of all the emigrants who becomes naturalized in the United States is the Englishman—and sometimes he will never go through that ceremony at all, unless vital considerations affecting his property press urgently upon him.

At the end of the village of Jevington there is a public well almost in the middle of the road, close by a grocer's shop. The grocer's window, I noticed, had scarcely anything in it but articles sent over from America—canned fruit and provisions, oysters, Lima beans, all sorts of things which one would scarcely have expected to find in an out-of-the-way English village. The Jevington shop looked like a country grocery-store on the cross-roads somewhere in New England—for it was much too neat in appearance for a Western store. Past the shop, and by the pump, the road to Eastbourne goes up-hill, south-east, leading gradually to the last of the true South Down range. The end is not unworthy of the beginning, although the character of the scenery has undergone a great change. Here there are no trees for miles together, and the hills are so round and bare that from the plain below it is easy to see even a rabbit run

over the top. In watching a hare fly up the hill, you will lose sight of him half way, but keep your eye fixed on the smooth ridge, and presently you will see him dart over, very little diminished in size by the distance. In continuing his journey from Jevington, the visitor cannot go far wrong while he keeps his face south-east. He will see some telegraph-poles towards the brow of the hill, and go under the wires, and keep somewhat to the right. Just over the brow of the hill Eastbourne becomes visible, and grand views of the sea and Downs are all around one. The whole character of the scenery from this point is very bold and striking, the undulations of the Downs being extremely varied and beautiful, and the nearness of the sea giving them a peculiar charm. The bold point of Beachy Head is plainly to be seen, and it would be easy to make straight for it from Jevington, if the traveller were particularly anxious to see everything in one day, and had no regard for distance. But it is well to economise one's pleasures, and therefore I kept on for Eastbourne, taking good care not to descend from the hill till I was well abreast of the centre of the town—for to come down too soon is to subject oneself to the penalty of floundering about dreary suburbs and streets of villas. At the Albion Hotel one is always sure of finding a good dinner and a comfortable bed, and a man can have no more at the close of a day even if he be as rich as all the Rothschilds.

The distance from Berwick Station to Eastbourne, by the route I have mentioned, is between eleven and twelve miles. The following morning I resolved to go

over the Downs to East Dean, thence round by Birling Gap to Beachy Head, and so back to Eastbourne. To accomplish this it was necessary to retrace a part of yesterday's route—through the old town and up to the crest of the hill. Then the road turns to the left, and goes almost in a straight line to East Dean. The visitor may see his way clearly before him, and mark every point he will have to pass—the village of East Dean, the telegraph-posts leading to the sea, the lighthouse to the left, the flagstaff and coast-guard's house on Beachy Head. Given a clear day, and no one can possibly go wrong, for the half-way houses and the journey's end are all in sight.

There is nothing at East Dean specially worthy of notice, and the visitor's best plan is to go on in a line with the road from Eastbourne, past the blacksmith's shop, and up the hilly lane to Friston Church. From this point there is another magnificent view of the hills and the Channel, but it cannot be said that the church will attract the traveller's eye, except by its secluded and exposed position. A windmill and two cottages are not far off, but it is a singularly desolate-looking church, a mark for all the winds that blow, and bearing many traces upon it of their rough and merciless treatment. A few dilapidated, forgotten-looking tombstones are in the churchyard, but there is no tree, unless we take account of a stunted hawthorn, all bent and distorted by the gales. On the lower or East Dean side of the churchyard there is a stile leading to a path—take the stile, but do not follow the path. Keep over the meadow



towards the hedge, so as to continue the walk on the hill instead of through the valley. Presently you will see a little wood, close by which it is necessary to keep, until an opening appears in it—then go through the remainder of the wood, which is short and open, cross over the field to the telegraph-posts, and follow them the rest of the way. On reaching the posts, it will be found that there is a double row, with numerous wires, and a green road running beneath, soft and pleasant to the tread. The wires come to an end only with the land, and at the very edge of the cliff they take a sudden dip into the ground through iron posts, and are carried across to Dieppe and Havre.

We are now at Birling Gap, which Horsfield describes as “an opening cut through the high and craggy cliff to the shore, for the convenience of fishermen, and the preservation of lives and property after shipwreck.” The cliffs, however, are neither high nor craggy at this particular point, although they rise steadily on each side of it, and soon become of grand dimensions, especially as seen from the beach. It is worth while to walk round the first two points in the direction of Beachy Head, in order to see these cliffs, but *not* worth while to go along the shore the whole distance to Eastbourne, as some people do. The way is rocky and hard, and one good view of the cliffs is precisely like all the rest. There is no opening by which the shore may be reached between Birling Gap and Beachy Head—a fact to be borne in mind by those who undertake to walk by the beach. The coast line near Birling Gap is thoroughly

characteristic of the "white cliffs of Albion," for the chalk walls rise to a great height, are very precipitous, and in colour are as white as snow. They stand out like an immense white barrier, and a fearful barrier it must be to have against one on a stormy night. Wrecks were frequent all along this bit of the coast in former days, but the erection of a light-house has rendered them happily very rare. There is a coast-guard's station at Birling Gap, and several neat cottages for the men, each with a fair-sized garden.

"But our gardens were not much good to us last summer" (1879), said a man who was on duty, "for I spent a pound in planting mine, and never got so much as a gallon of potatoes out of it."

"Because of the bad weather?"

"Why, sir, it blew a gale from the west six weeks straight off the reel, and rained every day. What's the good of such weather anyway?"

"I really don't know."

"No, nor nobody else. Darby's Hole? Just round the pint. Two or three on 'em—some gentlemen, as I've heerd say, made 'em in case anybody got shut in by the tide."

This was a much more likely story than the one printed in all the books. We read that Parson Darby built a cave or hole to enable him to hide from his wife—as if any man ever wanted to get away from his wife! No doubt the coast-guard'sman had got hold of the right end of the tale.

"Lots of ducks about here, sir," said the man, after

he had carefully swept the horizon with his telescope, and satisfied himself that no pirate was in the offing. "Plenty of good shooting and swarms of ducks. I counted over 400 with my glass right in front here one day last year. They must breed round there somewhere in Cuckmere Haven, for many of them were here in July, and of course they had bred before that. Not many people come this way shooting, so the birds don't get much disturbed."

"It's a rough bit of beach below, I see."

"Rough? You may well say so, and yet this is the smoothest bit anywhere about here. It gets much worser further on. Yet ladies take it into their heads to walk from Eastbourne sometimes—five on 'em came up here one day last summer. You see, sir, women will do anything as they've set their minds on. Did you ever notice that?"

"Never," said I, thinking it best to appear entirely innocent.

"To get their way they'd go through fire, much less water."

I looked surprised to hear this, and the coast-guardsmen brought his telescope up into the wind's-eye, and gazed through it long and earnestly. Apparently the enemy was not yet in sight, for he shut it up with a bang, tucked it under his arm, and sat down under the lee of the wall. I wished him well with his garden this year, and kept on by the path marked with white heaps of stones and chalk towards the light-house. The turf was short and soft, with blue violets peeping

out from it here and there ; the breeze was gentle, and the rays of the sun seemed to be infusing new life into everything upon the earth. Finer cliff walks than this can no doubt be found in Wales and North Devon, and I know of them, although if one wants wild and even terrible cliff scenery, cross the Irish Channel, and go to Donegal, and climb the "One-man Pass" at Slieve League ! After that, almost all coast scenery in these islands will shrink into comparative nothingness. Yet this walk by the cliffs to Beachy Head is beautiful in its way, and it is only a foolish man who cannot enjoy a fine scene because he has seen something finer.

Presently I came up to the light-house, and paused for a minute or two debating the question whether or not I should go in and see it. But there rose up in my mind the recollection of so many light-houses I had seen, and in particular of one which I did not wish to see, and hope never to see again, that I decided to pass on. This particular light-house it was my fate to be brought near one horrible night, in a wild storm, on a crazy and ill-found steamer, coming round from Charleston to New York. It was just after the great war of Secession, when all American coasting-vessels were in a dismal plight, and the one on board of which my evil stars had carried me could not have been sea-worthy for years—a mere old tub going fast to pieces. It was manned by as rough and disorderly a crew as ever found themselves afloat on the high seas ; the only part of a seaman's knowledge which they seemed to have acquired was an enormous vocabulary of foul language. The storm had

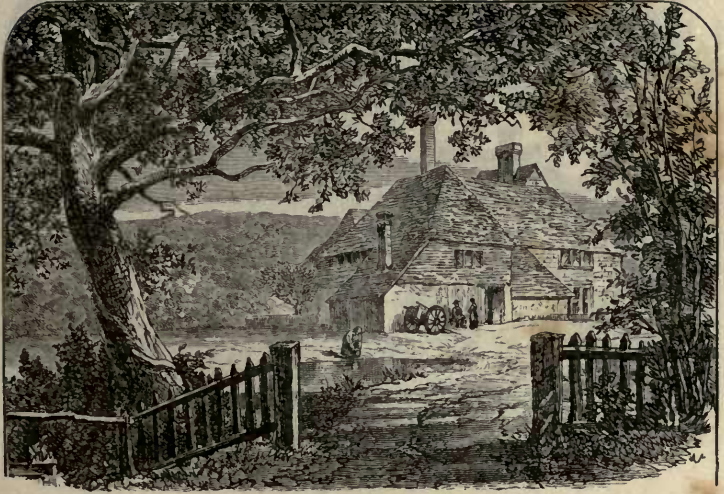


lasted a long time, and I was on deck, holding on, when in the midst of the great waves I could see a light shining a-head—the light on the fatal rocks of Cape Hatteras. On those fearful reefs, the graves of so many men, it seemed inevitable that my voyages were to terminate for good and all—but it was not so; how we got away I know not, but get away we did, and eventually put into Fortress Monroe for coal, a fortress in which at that moment Jeff. Davis was a prisoner. There I made all haste to get off that floating pandemonium, determined to be content with dry land. And so with that light-house in my mind, I passed this safe and peaceful one on the cliff near Beachy Head, and decided not to go in.

The rocks hereabouts, in the absence of trees, build in the cliffs, and have to dispute with sea-gulls for the worms. The Downs preserve some of their characteristic features to the last, for on Beachy Head itself there is a fine steep combe and a rounded hill above, and several such combes are to be seen nearer Eastbourne, while eastward the white chalk stands out grimly, like a huge castle which has been bombarded.

From the top of the cliff the visitor may frequently have the opportunity of descrying a steamer, ploughing its way heavily through the hostile waves, and tossing about hither and thither like a straw. Sometimes it rises fully to view, sometimes it takes a long dip almost out of sight, and occasionally it rolls over as though weary of fighting against wind and wave, and determined to make an end of it. Could the observer now transport

himself from the cliff to the steamer, he would behold a spectacle which would surely move him to tears or some other violent emotion—numbers of his fellow creatures reduced to utter helplessness and despair, some suffering horrible torments in silence, speech having long ago departed from them, others groaning in misery, still others lying down caring not a jot whether it should prove to be their destiny ever to rise up again or not. Who, then, are these? They are people who are expiating the crime of putting faith in glittering advertisements. Instead of crossing the sea as quickly as they could, they have thrust themselves into the jaws of the Channel at one of their widest parts, and have been crunched up without mercy for the last seven or ten hours or even more. “Pleasantest sea passage and shortest land route; there and back again before you know where you are.” It is a pretty tale. But the reality is not like it, not in the least like it. The cliffs between Beachy Head and Newhaven echo daily with the lamentations of those who have rashly gone forth on a voyage which would have made Lord Nelson, Admiral Benbow, Tom Bowling, Captain Crosstree, and all other tars of well established reputation sea-sick. Content yourself with an exciting trip to Hampton Court or a row on the Thames; go and eat shrimps at Gravesend or what they call whitebait at Greenwich; drive down to Richmond to a half cold and expensive dinner, or try an afternoon at the Crystal Palace; do any other indiscreet thing you like, but never be induced to go to France by Newhaven and Dieppe.



Barwick used the cliff to the steamer, he would behold a spectacle which would surely move him to tears or excite some violent emotion—numbers of his fellow creatures, subject to utter helplessness and despair, some suffering horrible torments in silence, speech having long departed from them, others groaning in misery, still others lying down caring not a jot whether it should

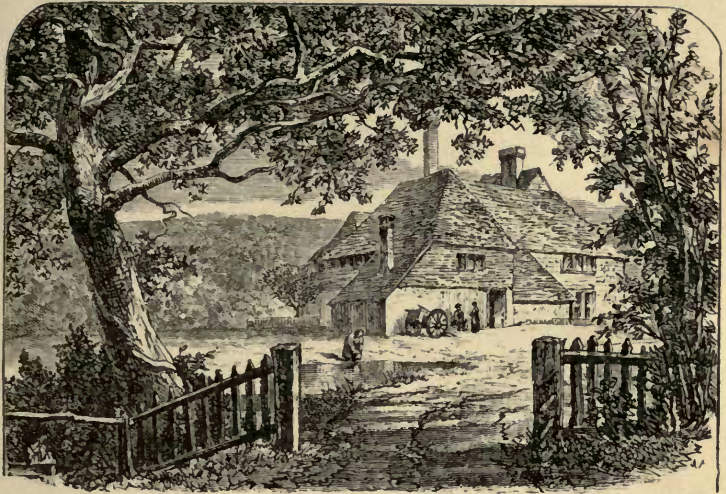


Hebony, John Downing, Captain Goodwin, and the officers of war established reputation sea-bick. Court yourself with an evening trip to Hampton Court or a row on the Thames; go and eat shrimps at Greenwich or chocolate and whitebait at Greenwich; give John to dine with him a half cold and expensive dinner, next an afternoon at the Crystal Palace; do any other necessary thing you like, but never be induced to go to France by Napoleon and Dapple.









Warbleton Priory.

## CHAPTER X.

### HEATHFIELD TO ASHBURNHAM.

The "Forest Ridge."—A Primitive Region.—Old-Fashioned Roads.—Crowborough Beacon.—The Ancient Beacon-Lights of Sussex.—Bye Lanes and Field Paths.—A Walk to Warbleton.—The Priory.—Legends of the House.—The Mysterious Skulls.—The Blood-stained Room.—Rushlake Green.—A Lively Night at the "Crown."—To Ashburnham.—The Old Iron Works.—Ashburnham Place.—The Libraries.—Relics of Charles the First.—The Church.—A Princely Estate.

AFTER the South Downs, the finest scenery in Sussex is to be found on or around the "Forest Ridge," which extends from St. Leonard's Forest, near Horsham, runs almost up to Black Down and Leith Hill, and terminates at Fairlight Down, near Hastings. In the present work, I have confined my attention almost exclusively to the



South Downs, and do not profess to deal with the Forest Ridge; but I have explored it at various times, and could find much to say about it did the limits of a single volume permit me so to do. It is an extremely interesting part of the country, with many old farm-houses and cottages scattered over it. Until recently it has been comparatively little affected by the invention of railroads, especially in the range to the east and south-east of Maresfield. The people travelled but little, and hundreds of them never went beyond the bounds of their own parishes. Once or twice a week, a carrier's-cart, such as one may see in Morland's pictures and old engravings, went from village to village, or to the more distant towns, to fetch or take parcels or merchandise; but even this was a poor trade, since the inhabitants of the district depended pretty much upon their own resources for everything. They lived upon what they could "raise," eked out with such supplies as they could easily get of a neighbour, on the primitive principle of barter. Primitive, indeed, the people were (and are) in all respects; rude of speech and manners, heavy and dull in appearance, slow of comprehension, lazy, stolid, and inert, but not, I fancy, ill-natured. The Sussex peasantry—if one may still use that word without offence—are boorish, rude, dis-obliging, and thick-witted; but not bad-hearted. But the upper part of the Forest Ridge—around Crowborough Beacon, and including Ashdown Forest—was infested till within very recent years by a most worthless, and even dangerous population, insomuch that Mr.



Lower says the word "Forester" became "almost a synonym for rogue and vagabond." Scattered woods alone mark the site of the forest now, and the inhabitants of the district have no doubt mended their morals, if not their manners.

The physical features of the country retain many of their old characteristics. Although the ancient forests of Sussex are gone, large tracts are covered with wood, without reckoning the remains of St. Leonard's and Ash-down forests. Much of the soil is of very little use to the agriculturist, for it consists of a miserable sandy loam. Darvel Wood, near Brightling, is said to cover 1100 acres, and there are large patches of similar woods to be seen from "Cross-in-Hand" or Heathfield, with broken ground between them, and a fair sprinkling of cultivated fields. The bye-roads are very bad, with ruts in them a foot and more deep. Even in May and June last (1880), after an unusually dry season, I found many of them heavy with mud. The main roads are better, but they are very trying to the patience of the traveller, for they twist and turn about like the paths in a maze. There is no end to them; you think you are there, when in reality you are still a long way off. The people have often made for themselves paths through fields and woods, but it is impossible for the stranger to find them out. There is no beaten track to be seen, and in the woods the paths are narrow and half-overgrown with trees and ferns, so that it requires a native of the locality to pilot one through them. Leatherstocking himself would not have hit upon

these trails. Throughout this part of the country, moreover, the inns, as a rule, are very bad—mere way-side beer-houses, without any of the arrangements for cleanliness or comfort which the least fastidious of travellers are accustomed to look for. The new railroad from Tunbridge Wells to Polegate Junction has opened up a large section of this country, but the line runs at some distance from the more primitive parts of the Weald, and can scarcely be said to touch the Forest Ridge at all except at Heathfield and Mayfield. The station at Heathfield is a long mile from the nearest inn.

The highest point of the Ridge is found at Crowborough Beacon, which stands 804 feet above the sea level. It may be reached from Crowborough station, on the Tunbridge Wells and Lewes line of railway, but last summer (1880) a coach from London to Brighton run through the whole district, on the way from Tunbridge Wells to Uckfield—a charming drive. Crowborough village is about a mile and a half from the railroad station, and a scattered little village it is, with a remarkably ugly church in front of the green. Half a mile further on, the road merges in one which runs to the right and left, and this is the main coach road between Lewes, Brighton, and Tunbridge Wells. If the visitor will turn to the right and go on a few hundred yards, he will come to a cottage with an odd-looking jumble of coats-of-arms and the date of 1838 upon it. A little to the left of this, on the opposite side of the road, is a field, and in that field is a low stone, and that stone marks the spot where the “Beacon” formerly stood.

On Beachy Head, Firle, Mount Caburn, Ditchling, Chanctonbury, and other lofty points of the Downs, large piles of wood and other fuel were once kept ready to be set on fire at any moment, and the arrival of the Spanish Armada off our coasts was one of the occasions when the whole line of signals was ablaze, from Land's End to Beachy Head. The last time the Sussex beacon fires were lit was on the 10th of March, 1863, in honour of the arrival of the "Sea-king's daughter from over the sea," the ever-popular Princess of Wales. From Crowborough Beacon, and more particularly from a point of the road a mile nearer to Uckfield, there is a fine view of the distant South Downs and the rolling country between, but it is not so beautiful as the view from another part of the Ridge, to which I will now invite the attention of the reader.

At the "Crown" inn, Heathfield, I took up my quarters one day last June, and having surveyed my bedroom without much pleasure, I started off for a walk to Warbleton Priory, and back by Rushlake Green to Heathfield—a round of over a dozen miles. I followed the road which runs directly in front of the inn, and turned to the left by a cottage a little way down, to another road known as Cade Street. It was on this road that Jack Cade was slain in 1450, and a sort of monument stands on the left-hand side to indicate the spot where "the notorious rebel," as the inscription says, fell. Before coming to this stone, there are a few cottages and an inn, which form part of Heathfield, for the village appears to be divided into three parts, each at

some little distance from the other. The views on the right-hand, going towards Punnell's Town (locally pronounced Punniceton), are very extensive, and extremely picturesque, and may fairly be taken as characteristic of the whole region, from Crowborough to Brightling. Brightling I have visited on other occasions, and although the view is more extensive there than from Heathfield Tower, or the upper parts of the road near Heathfield, it is not more attractive to the eye. I had luckily chosen a singularly clear day for the Warbleton expedition, and the whole country could be seen under most favourable circumstances. The Downs presented a magnificent panorama in the distance, mile after mile of them filling up all the background, and dying away in a thin, faint line. Beachy Head and the sea seemed but a few miles distant, and I could even make out the martello towers on the coast, so clear and *blue* was the day. I do not like to be very positive about it, but I believe I recognised Chanctonbury Ring from a point near the Chapel which stands on the left-hand of the road. A lover of the South Downs, especially one who has walked all over them, should not rest satisfied till he has enjoyed this striking and comprehensive picture of their fine outlines. It was probably from some spot near this that Turner took the sketch which he afterwards idealised and called the "Vale of Heathfield." The view is remarkable enough without any help whatever from the imagination. Above where I stood, and for miles beyond, the sky was quite blue, but over the distant Downs were packed dense masses of fleecy



clouds, and Turner himself could scarcely have done justice to the effects which they presented during that afternoon and evening. Such intense clearness in this part of the country is generally a sign of coming rain, and the weather-sign was fulfilled in the present instance. But no resident of Sussex, especially of the hilly parts, will ever complain of the summer of 1880, for the rainy days were remarkably few, and the South Down region enjoyed an entire immunity from the severe thunderstorms which did so much injury in other parts of England. The hills seem to divide the electric clouds and carry them off elsewhere; and Gilbert White, I find, makes a note that the same effect was produced by the hills and hangers round about Selborne. Fogs and floods are only heard of from afar in the South Downs.

At "Punnice-ton" a blacksmith undertook to send me by a field path. His directions were hopelessly confused, but I watched the pointings of his finger, and determined to be guided by his signs rather than by his words. In this resolution I was confirmed by his referring to a field covered with charlock as "that scarlet flower." The moment one gets below the hill, it is hard to make out a good course a-head, for the lanes are deep, and the country undulating, so that it is not possible to do more than look from one little hill to another. I went on, however, with an occasional glimpse of the yellow "scarlet flower" which was to be my main guide, till I met with a man mending a gate, who told me I was to go on towards a wood and across a river. The wood was not far off, but there was no path into or out of it.

After a good deal of scrambling about, I found a little brook, which doubtless was the "river" I had to cross, and then I mounted up by some fine beeches and a clover-field into a road. All this country would puzzle a stranger who tried to make his way across it by night. I now saw some cottages, and was desirous of getting another hint or two, for the longer I walked the further off seemed Warbleton Priory. But not a soul appeared. I knew that the inhabitants of the cottages had their eyes fixed upon me, for no villager ever allows a stranger to enter his territory without overhauling him thoroughly from behind his window. At last a little boy offered to show me the path, and when we had got a hundred yards beyond the cottage I looked back. The inmates, as I expected, were all out, man and woman, some of them even coming down to the middle of the road to look after us. "They think you have run off with me," said I to the little boy. "I reckon they do," said he, and presently he put me upon another side path, and after a time I saw below me a deep, sloping, red roof, some old walls, and the scattered buildings of a farm. Some of the walls were made of good, well-cut blocks of stone, others were of tile or brick, others still were of "black and white" timber and plaster; the roof of one part sloped almost to the very ground. I rapped on the door, in default of bell or knocker, and a woman opened it, of whom I craved permission to see the house. She invited me into a room where there was a huge old fireplace—a dozen persons might have sat comfortably inside it. It turned out that I was close to some "haunted"

skulls, but they said not a word to me, nor did I to them. I was now in all that remains of Warbleton Priory.

This was never a large priory, and it is now a mere broken and confused relic of the building erected in the time of Henry the Fourth. Some of that building has been turned into an oast-house, on the walls of which there are two small heads. There is also a rather good doorway inside. Other fragments lie below the ground, and much has been bodily carried off, though not to mend roads with, for there used to be nothing worth calling a road in this part, and even now there is little to be said for the narrow lane which leads to Warbleton. The house always stood in a secluded, melancholy-looking spot, and in this respect it preserves its ancient characteristics, though greatly changed in all else. Round such a place legends will inevitably gather, and many a blood-curdling story has been told at the neighbouring fire-sides about Warbleton. "There are some people," the present occupant told me, "who would not even come past here at night if you were to give them the farm for doing it." Sometimes a house makes a reputation for being haunted very easily, without having done anything to deserve it, but at Warbleton the popular belief has something visible to rest upon. In the first place there is a large stain of blood on the floor of one of the rooms, marking the spot where a murder was committed; and in the next the people of the locality tell you that there are two skulls kept in the house, and even the dull county history (Horsfield's) states that "a human skull is preserved very carefully, in consequence of a tradition

connected with it." No wonder, therefore, that "things" have been seen at Warbleton.

But in spite of its skulls and its blood-stained floor, this old house did not give me the idea of a good ghostly habitation, and made not a particle of the impression upon me which Bolsover Castle had done the moment I crossed its threshold. I saw the skulls, and stroked one gently on the top, but strange to say, nothing whatever came of it. The skulls are kept in a cupboard, one of them having been cut in half, while the other stares grimly out of its big hollow eyes, as skulls ought to do. One was dug up in the grounds, and is quite brown, I suppose with age, but I am no judge of skulls. Why are they kept in the house? I do not know—if I lived there I should bury them, or make them a present to a friend; but they say you cannot get rid of these Death's-heads at Warbleton. Many tenants of the house have tried it, and have been obliged to go and bring the unwelcome furniture back again. The moment the skulls are removed, hideous noises are heard all over the place, and cause each particular hair of the listener to stand straight on end. The noises might be put up with patiently, but at the same time the cattle sicken and die, and thus the skull is sure to win the day. It is brought back again, with a more ghastly grin than ever on its fleshless mouth. An account of Warbleton in one of the volumes of the Sussex Archæological Society says, "The tradition of the neighbourhood is that the skull belonged to a man who murdered an owner of the house, and marks of blood are pointed out on the floor of



the adjoining room, where the murder is supposed to have been committed, and which no washing will remove." The skulls are now downstairs, and the blood stains above. The stain, whatever it may be, has been scraped and washed times without number, but it will not "out." There is a very plain indentation in the floor caused by repeated scraping, but the spot is still there, and as the young woman of the house told me, "The more you wash it the plainer it gets." She told me she slept in the bed close by the stain, but "had never seen or heard anything,"—so careless are some people of their opportunities.

The walls of the priory crop up here and there all over the garden and grounds, and the immense beams which run across the rooms and support the roof attest the antiquity of the building. After I had looked at all that was to be seen, I turned from this somewhat gloomy spot towards Rushlake Green, through some more bye-paths, and found it a veritable green, with cottages all round it, an old sign-post by its side, and a flock of geese waddling all across it—like a picture in the Royal Academy, only much better done. Here I went over a stile just below the last cottage on the green, across fields, and through a wood, and so on to Warbleton Church, where I paused to admire the lovely view from the churchyard. Then I made my way across more fields, and by "Furnace Lane" and the "Wet Wood" to Heathfield Church—a track which the stranger must get some one to point out to him, for it would be as impossible to find it without help as it

was to get to Fair Rosamond's Bower without the clue. The path through the wood was so narrow that it was as much as one could do to push through it. From Heathfield Church—a large, dreary-looking building—I went up by the wall of the park to the “Crown,” and regaled myself moderately on a mutton chop. Afterwards I saw the country from Heathfield Tower—a truly wonderful prospect.

It was not gay at the “Crown Inn” that night. The inn stands by the roadside, with no other house near it; a white, staring place, totally without interest or attractions of any kind. A number of labourers were boozing in the taproom, too many of them to afford any chance of amusement, even if amusement could ever be extracted from a Sussex labourer. Painters had been at work in the house, and that never adds to one's enjoyment. My window opened upon a backyard and stables, and a very pungent odour was wafted into the bedroom. Some people profess to like the smell of stables; I wish they had slept at the “Crown” that night. Late in the evening, five persons arrived from Tunbridge in a wagonette drawn by one horse—a terrible journey, one would suppose, over such heavy roads. The horse was used up, and all through the night he made frantic efforts to escape, kicking, plunging, and dancing about, and only going to sleep as the morning began to dawn. A wet, uncomfortable morning it proved to be, and I was fain to get a lift in a pony cart as far as Wood's Corner, near Dallington, from whence I proposed to make my way through fields and woods to Ash-

burnham Park. A very pleasant walk I found it, notwithstanding the rain, for a lovelier country it would be hard to see, with charming views everywhere over hill and dale, woodland and meadows. After going some distance through pleasant woods, I came to a dingle and a few cottages, near which is a large pond covered with water lilies. This is the site of the once famous Ashburnham Furnaces, where the best iron in the world was formerly made. It would have been made many years longer, but the men got drunk, and the works were ruined. Thus, as Murray's "Handbook" says, "it was the habit of gin-drinking that brought the work to a premature close before the iron was all worked up." Half-a-mile or so further on I came to two or three other cottages, lying in a deep hollow, with a miniature cascade flowing towards them. This was the site of the forge, and the stream now running idly over the ledge used to supply the motive power for the hammers. A few yards beyond is a lodge gate leading into Ashburnham Park, one of the most beautiful estates in this or any other country. This was not my first visit to Ashburnham, but it would take days to see the park properly, so diversified is the scenery within its borders, and so broken up by picturesque undulations. The best way of approaching it is from the Battle Road, through a row of fragrant pines and fine old oaks. All at once you come out upon very high ground commanding all the country for miles—and this country, it must be remembered, includes the South Downs and the Forest Ridge, to say nothing of the fine tracts of wood which

are still scattered over the Weald. The views in this park are unlike any others that I have seen in Sussex, and yet in what they are unlike it is hard to explain. The long line of the South Downs, and the striking range of hills extending from near Fairlight to Ashdown Forest, give a peculiar charm to almost every corner of the park; and so much of the park itself is partly concealed by magnificent trees that after hours spent in wandering about it, one seems to have seen nothing of it. Say what one will, it requires a family to have lived in one spot for generations to produce a domain like this. And Ashburnham has belonged to the family which now own it for 800 years at least, for there was a Bertram de Esburnham here when William the Conqueror invaded England, and Fuller states that the writ issued to him by Harold, commanding him to "raise the 'posse comitatum' was 'lately in the possession of this family.'" (Murray). There is something about the park itself which speaks of its great antiquity, even more plainly than books or other records can tell the story. The house, which contains so many precious literary treasures, has been "refaced," but it is a fine old structure, and there is much to see within it of absorbing interest. There are two manuscripts of the fifth century, a Treatise on the Psalms of about the same period, a large collection of ancient Bibles, and a Pentateuch of the fifth century, with numerous illustrations executed by Roman artists. A copy of the Apocalypse is said by competent authorities to belong to the sixth century. These are all in what



is known as the "Manuscript Library." In the other library, I noticed in the bookcases numerous first editions of celebrated English books, many of which—such as "Paradise Lost"—were probably bought for this house at the time they were first published. I could not hope to give in these pages the slightest description of a collection so renowned among scholars throughout the world, and I must at once pass from it to devote a few lines to relics of another kind which have always been regarded with peculiar interest by visitors to Ashburnham. These are the under-clothes worn by Charles the First on the day of his execution; and the watch which he had on at the time. They are all enclosed carefully in a glass-case, and locked up in an ancient trunk, having been removed from the church close by for safer keeping. The late Lord Ashburnham has been assailed for removing these relics from the church, but he had two excellent reasons for acting as he did; one was that the articles stood in great danger of disappearing altogether, and the next was that they unquestionably belong to the Ashburnham family, and have never been "bequeathed to the public," or made away with in any other manner, as it has pleased some writers to suggest. The king's watch was pulled about at the will of every inquisitive stranger, and the case was stolen altogether. The watch would probably have followed the case some day or other if the late Lord Ashburnham had not undertaken to guard it with better care.

The garments of the ill-fated king consist of a shirt,

of very fine cambric, a pair of silk stockings and garters, and silk drawers. Beneath them, carefully folded up, is the sheet in which his body was wrapped after he was taken down from the scaffold. It is said in the county books that there are stains of blood upon the shirt, but if ever there were any they are not visible now. I believe, in fact, that the linen was washed many years ago. The wristbands of the shirt are very delicately embroidered, and it is also marked in coloured silk with the letters "C. R." and a crown. The watch is of an old-fashioned shape with an enamelled face. These articles were given to John Ashburnham, who was faithful to the king to the last. In the "small dining-room" of the house is a portrait of Charles, like, and yet unlike, the Vandyke portraits familiar to us all. All the melancholy of the king's future doom is stamped upon that sad face. In the catalogue kept in the house, it is not mentioned by whom this portrait was painted. People used to come from far and near to touch the shirt for the King's Evil, and the late lord remembered many persons going to the church for that purpose.

The church, which almost touches the house, was built by the John Ashburnham who stood so firmly by his king, and has the date over the door of 1665, with the initials "J. A." Over the Communion-table is a tablet containing the Commandments, and pictures of Moses and Aaron. There is the date of 1676 upon it. The high pews of olden days are still retained, with sconces for holding candles, and pegs for hats. On the wall near the Communion-table there are two small swords

crossed, some tattered remains of standards, old visors, gauntlets, and other insignia of knightly days. The entire aspect of the interior is antique and quaint. The gardens which adjoin the house and church are overshadowed by some fine trees, and there is a charming old green lane or drive, now disused, near which there are splendid beeches and oaks. A sheet of water, with cedars near it, stands before the house. It is five miles from here to Battle, and it is possible to walk through the park by far the greater part of the way. A more charming walk it would be very difficult to find in any part of the world.

## CHAPTER XI.

### “THE FINEST SEVEN MILES IN ENGLAND.”

A Hint from Cobbett.—Maidstone Town.—The Travelling Agent.—Maidstone Church.—The Hoppers.—Allington Castle.—A Chapter of Accidents.—Boxley Abbey.—Pennenden Heath.—The Painted Waggon.—A Loan of a “Tanner.”—The “Dumb Borsholder.”—Manners and Customs of Hoppers.—Mereworth and Peckham.—Cobbett not a good Guide.

IN turning over the pages of Cobbett's *Rural Rides* one evening, I chanced to light upon the following passage:—“From Maidstone to Merryworth is about seven miles, and these are the finest seven miles that I have ever seen in England or anywhere else” (page 258). This quickly decided me to make a slight diversion from Sussex into Kent, for surely no truly patriotic man could ever rest contented till he had seen the finest seven miles which his country had to show.

At the old “Bell Inn” at Maidstone, where Mr. Pepys tells us that in the year 1669 he had “a good dinner,” I found fair lodging and entertainment, and soon went out to see the town. Pepys, it appears, did the same, for he relates that he “walked all round the town, and found it very pretty, as most towns I ever



saw, though not very big, and people of good fashion in it." This would apply quite well to the Maidstone of the present day, for though by no means "big," it is a cheerful and bright-looking town, with no lack of people of "good fashion" in it, to say nothing of good looks. Seldom have I seen a fairer show of fresh and comely girls in any English town than in Maidstone. There are public gardens, very well laid out, and a Museum in an ancient house in St. Faith's Street, well worth a visit. Many curious objects are gathered together here, among them some fine oak chests and divers relics of the Maidstone of former days. There is also a copy of the Maidstone journal of 1737, with a leading article on Love, beginning "Love is the spring of almost all the good that happens to men." This seems a little enthusiastic, but how could any able editor who lived in Maidstone, and constantly saw crowds of pretty girls about the streets, possibly come to any other conclusion? In a stationer's shop where I went to get a photograph, I saw a man giving out some bills or programmes, and after looking at him attentively for a minute or two, I said,

"Why, here you are once more, distributing your bills as if nothing had happened."

"Yes, sir," said the man, rather puzzled.

"And how is business?"

"Good, sir, very good."

"That's well. Are you going to perform here to-night?"

“We are, sir, and I expect we shall have a full house. We shall be at the Corn Exchange.”

“All right—I hope you will do as well here as you did where I last saw you.”

“And where was that, at Tunbridge?”

“Far enough from there,” said I; “it was at Robertson Hall in Sixteenth Street.”

“Why, that must have been over in America, sir? Dear me, how strange you should know me again. We did very well there—in fact, we did very well all through the States. Might have made more if Mr. M.’s health had allowed him to continue his tour. Great country for the profession, sir, better than this.”

“It is when you are lucky.”

“And have a good thing, sir. No use going to the Yankees unless you have a good thing to offer them. Of course you will drop in and see us to-night at the Corn Exchange?”

The wiry looking little man hurried off with his bills—he was the agent of a popular performer whose “impersonations” have moved audiences to mirth in all parts of the world.

There is an immense church in Maidstone, but big as it is the whitewasher’s brush has proved more than a match for it. A whole river of whitewash seems to have been turned into it. The chancel is fine, the altar screen very old, and there are some interesting monuments to a family named Astley, dating back to 1623. “If you will believe me, sir,” said the sexton’s wife, “the church on Sundays is generally crowded to the

very doors, and we are obliged to put seats down the aisles." Close by the church are the remains of a college or hospital, dating back five hundred years or more, and a mile beyond is the village of Tovil, to which I walked for the purpose of getting a general view of Maidstone. The road was crowded with "hoppers" who had just been brought from London, and who were going along shouting, cursing, and yelling. The faces of many of the men were marked with deep cuts and scars, relics of many a drunken orgie. It was vice, and not poverty, which had planted its indelible stamp upon their countenances. The oaths and obscenities which were discharged, like a foul sewer, from the mouths of these semi-savages, men and women, made one's blood run cold, and seemed to poison the air of heaven itself.

To get beyond sight and sound of these persons, I turned back to the old bridge, and pursued my way along the towing path towards Allington, past an old wayside inn called the "Gibraltar." There were many couples walking along by the river, evidently of opinion with the old Maidstone editor that "love is the spring of almost every good." Let us hope they will continue to be of the same mind. A little way beyond the inn, a boy rowed me across the river to see the castle in which Sir Thomas Wyatt the poet was born in 1503. It is now little but a wild disordered ruin, ragged and ill kept, with an untidy woman and some surly dogs to check any enthusiasm, poetical or antiquarian, which the visitor may happen to bring with him. A church stands a little way back from the castle, and near it is

the vicarage, and almost in front of that there runs a path through a wood, which leads to Allington lock. Having crossed the locks, turn to the right, then take the first turning to the left, and go over a stile to the right up the lane. Follow the path through the meadow, and go over another stile to the road. This road goes left and right, but there is a short lane running through it, and winding round by a mill. This is the way to Boxley, and if the directions to it are rambling and confused, so is the road, and I have at least not made the way seem harder than it really is.

At the turning of the lane near the mill I overtook a poor man carrying a bundle tied up in a blue check handkerchief, and asked him the way, for it was almost impossible to make it out. I noticed that his left hand was all doubled up and distorted.

“It is the rheumatiz,” said he, seeing me looking at it, “I have had rheumatic fever, and my left side is *set*. I have been hopping—it’s about all I can do now.”

I now noticed that his right hand was in a still worse plight than his left—the thumb was entirely gone, and the fingers and knuckles seemed all in lumps, like the bosses on the trunk of an old tree.

“You have been in the wars, I see.”

“Ay, sir, that was done up here,” and he pointed back towards Allington Castle, which, however, was out of sight. “It happened nigh upon six and thirty year ago. I was working there, and one day the young master told me to take his powder horn and put it away. You see, there was a farmhouse in the castle. Well,



the horn leaked, and as I went through the brewhouse it left a train behind me without my knowing it. They were carrying some fire from one side of the brewhouse to the other, and a spark fell on the powder, and blew it all up, and would have killed me if the horn had not by that time been nearly empty. That's how my right hand got in this state."

"And made your life a hard one for you ever since, I'm afraid."

"It has indeed, sir," said the poor old man with a sigh—a very decent old man he looked, not like the rascally hopper from London, with his gin besodden and cruel face. "I live about two miles from here under the hill."

"Then you ought to know where the Pilgrim's Way is on that hill."

"I do, sir; often and often have I travelled on it. Do you see the hedge about a quarter up the hill? Well, that is the Pilgrim's Way, and you can follow it for many a mile. There are hollow yew trees in which five or six persons can sit down at one time. If you go up by Boxley Church you can get to it in ten minutes' walk."

But I had no time on this occasion to renew my acquaintance with the Pilgrim's Way, for already the sun was getting low. At the end of the road where stands the mill, there is a stile leading across some meadows up to some red-brick cottages. This is the path to take, keeping at first close to the cottages. On the right are a large old barn and the ruins of Boxley Abbey, slight and shapeless, but extending in a fragmentary manner

for some distance up the hillside. The Abbey, of which only a few low walls remain, was founded in 1146, and was a famous place in its day, boasting of a miraculous crucifix and possessing an infallible test for chastity. But quite as interesting as these associations is the fact that Tennyson lived at Boxley, and had the opening of his *Princess* suggested to him by a fête which took place in a park hereabouts.

By the side of the red cottages there is a path by a fence, leading up the hill through fields, with remains of the old wall on the right. It is about a mile by this path to Boxley village and church—a pleasant path, commanding here and there pleasant views, and getting closer and closer to the Pilgrim's Way. The village is small, and the church has been restored, but both are worth a visit. The porch of the church is thought to have served once as the village school. "We hang the surplices of the choir here now," said the old woman who had the keys. Surplices in this little village! This is indeed progress.

There is an old yew in the churchyard, and on the slopes of the hill beyond there are many similar trees visible—indeed, the place itself has taken its name from the great abundance of yews about it. From the village the road winds down by the little inn, and runs straight on till you reach Pennenden Heath, which looks, in fact, like a rather large village green. This, as *Murray* tells us, "is still, as at the time of the Conquest, and long before, the great county gathering-place—the scene of the Saxon 'shyregemot' and 'wapentakes,' and now of

all important county meetings." But the only county meeting which I saw held upon it was one between two donkeys and one old horse, all three very grave and subdued, apparently engaged in comparing notes as to the distance they had travelled that day, and the hardships of their existence. They belonged to a sour-looking man and his wife who were sitting on the grass, smoking short black pipes. Near them was a small cart, and beyond that a light covered wagon, decorated and painted in the most brilliant manner.

"A fine evening," said I to the man. No answer.

"Perhaps," continued I, nothing daunted, "you would like a cigar after you have finished your pipe. If so, this, I think, is the sort of cigar you will like." And I held one out to him.

He stretched out his hand and took it, and mumbled something which I chose to assume was a word of thanks, although it did sound as much like a curse. What I wanted to know was what the beautiful cart or wagon contained.

"You don't happen to have the pig-faced lady inside there, do you?" I asked, making a bold shot.

"I do not."

"Or the woolly horse?"

"I'm not a showman," said the man, rather sulkily.

"But surely that lovely wagon of yours contains something out of the common way?"

"Well, if you must know," said he, lighting my cigar, "I 'awks about the country."

"And live in that nice house on wheels?"

“Yes, if you calls it a nice house—me and my old woman there.”

“And what do you hawk?”

“*Brushes*,” said the man. “I carry brooms and brushes all over England. And a poor business it is just now, and a tanner would be very acceptable, guv’nor.”

“For the public-house?” said I, pointing to the old inn opposite, known as the “Bull.”

“No, sir,” said the man, becoming more civil every moment, “I promise you it shall not go there—at least not all of it. If you give us the tanner, we will spend fourpence of it in bread and cheese and twopence in ale, and the next time I meet you I will pay you back the tanner.”

“Agreed,” I said, “here is the money, and mind I shall look out for you and expect good interest.”

I have now a good many “tanners” lent out on the roads, and shall do well when they all come in, with interest duly paid.

Early the following morning I set off with a fair breeze and all sail set for Tunbridge, to see the finest seven miles in England. I found that I had gone over two miles before I came to anything on the road which was worth looking at. Hop gardens spread away for miles in all directions, looking like miniature forests with deep lanes cut through them here and there. After passing through the little village of Teston, you come to a picturesque bridge over the Medway, on the left, and a mill beyond, and an old church in the distance. A finger post points down towards the bridge as the road



to West Farleigh. The next village is Wateringbury, where the guide-book admonishes one to ask for the "dumb borsholder of Chart." I felt a not unreasonable diffidence in calling for a dumb borsholder, not knowing how the demand might be received. First I met a young woman, who looked curiously at me, and whom I determined to accost. But as she drew near I could not summon up courage enough to ask her for a dumb borsholder; it is so easy to have one's intentions misconstrued. At length I found a civil man, and ventured to put the critical question to him, and he without further ado led me into the vestry of the church, and there was the dumb borsholder itself, hanging harmlessly enough by a string to a nail. It was formerly an insignia of authority over fifteen houses in the parish. "Its origin is altogether unknown," says the best account of it I have found, in *Murray*, "though it clearly belonged to the class of symbols occurring so frequently in the proceedings of Saxon and Scandinavian law-courts, and is no doubt the type of the original staves borne by constables in early times." So much for the dumb borsholder of Chart. There are several old inscriptions in the church and churchyard, but otherwise the church has little which will induce the traveller to pause long at this stage of his journey.

A little way beyond Wateringbury is the "Duke's Head Inn," and round it were crowds of hoppers, noisy, drunk, and quarrelsome. It is not possible, indeed, to get beyond sight and sound of the hoppers in the month of September. Even when they are hidden by the thick

bines, they reveal their presence by the loud din of their gossip—all the women are talking at once, and all the children squalling. Many of the latter whom I noticed in the hop gardens or by the roadside were suffering from whooping cough, but they were turned out to take care of themselves. In some places comfortable little tents are put up for the pickers, in others they sleep where they can. Even in the commonest inns their company is unwelcome. "I can assure you, sir," said the innkeeper at Hadlow, "that if we did not well scour the chairs and tables and floor every night, we should be overrun with vermin, and most likely have a fever in the house." At this hint I got up hastily from the chair in which I had been sitting, and felt a horrible creepiness all over me. Decidedly it is a mistake to go through a hop district in picking time.

Two miles from Wateringbury is Mereworth, with nothing particular to commend it to the notice of the traveller, except a fine park. The road turns sharp round to the left by a little grocer's shop, West Peckham lying to the right. Some distance down the road, I turned off to find the church of East Peckham, and after walking half a mile or so, I was rewarded with the finest view which the journey had thus far afforded. It was the only view worth walking so far to see. The church is at the top of a lane, very solitary, with an ancient barn just below it. There was no sign of life near, nor was it possible to find anybody who could tell me how to get at the keys. The hops, from twelve to seventeen feet high, shut out a good deal of the sur-

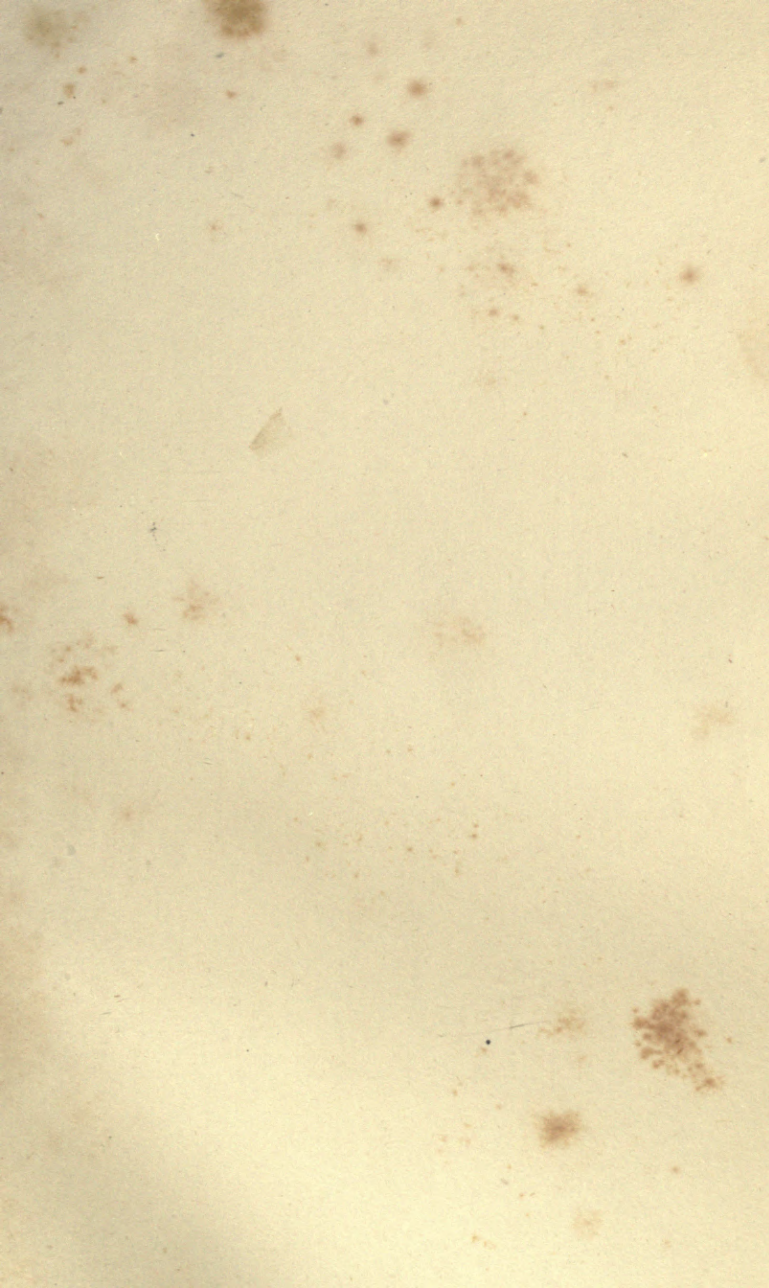
rounding country, so that a man may walk miles along a road in August and September without seeing far beyond the hedges and poles. From this side-road to East Peckham, however, there is a very delightful view of the surrounding country, and as you return to the main road, by a short cut, the ancient house known as Reydon Hall comes in sight, and compensates one for the eyesore stuck up at Hadlow some distance on, in the shape of a memorial tower which looks like a factory chimney at Rochdale, only twice as ugly.

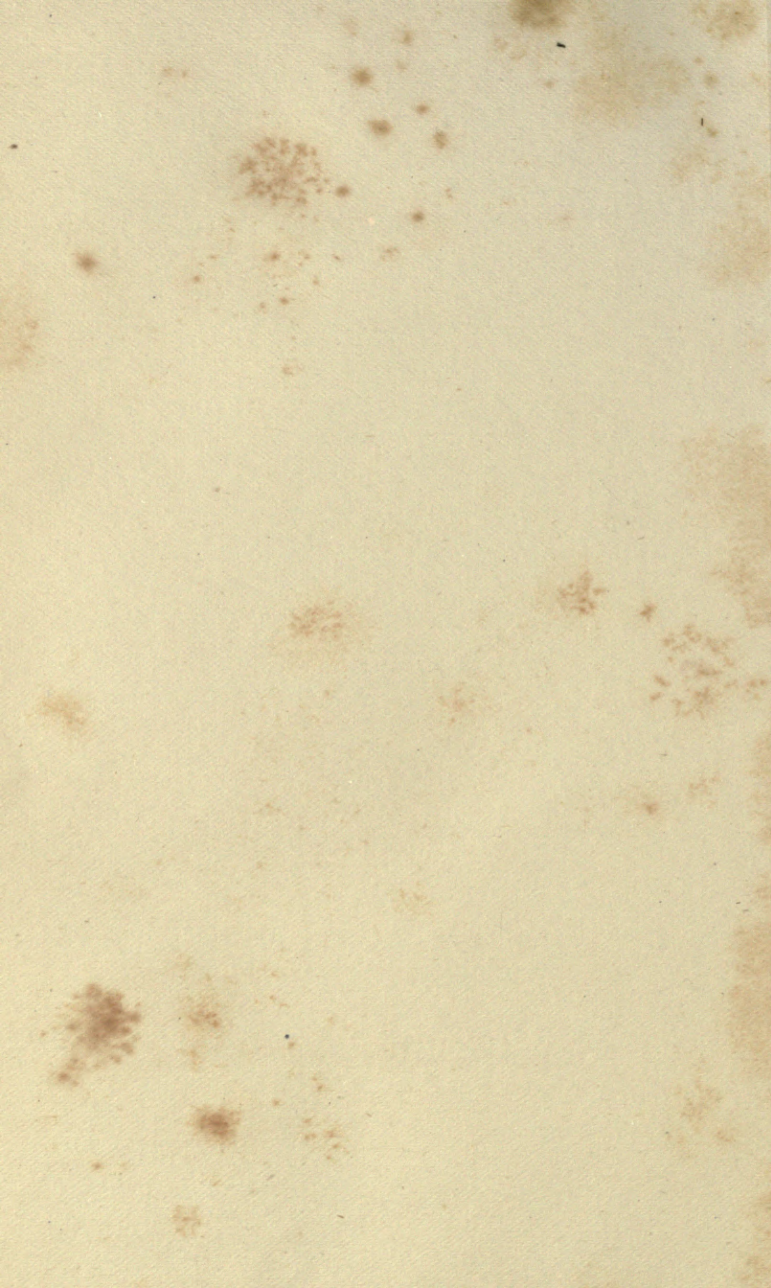
By the time I had reached Hadlow I came to the conclusion that if Cobbett spoke of all this country as the "finest in England" in a picturesque sense, he was joking. If he spoke only of the soil, I wished that he had said so, for then I would not have taken this walk. The road is fair of its kind—in places it is rather pretty; more than that cannot be said for it. There are two or three good views to be had, at some little distance from the main road. From Hadlow to Tunbridge it is four miles, and I do not mind acknowledging that they seemed very long miles—hot, weary, and dusty—and I arrived at Tunbridge with the conviction that Cobbett's "Rides" do not always make picturesque walks, and that never more would I accept him as a guide.

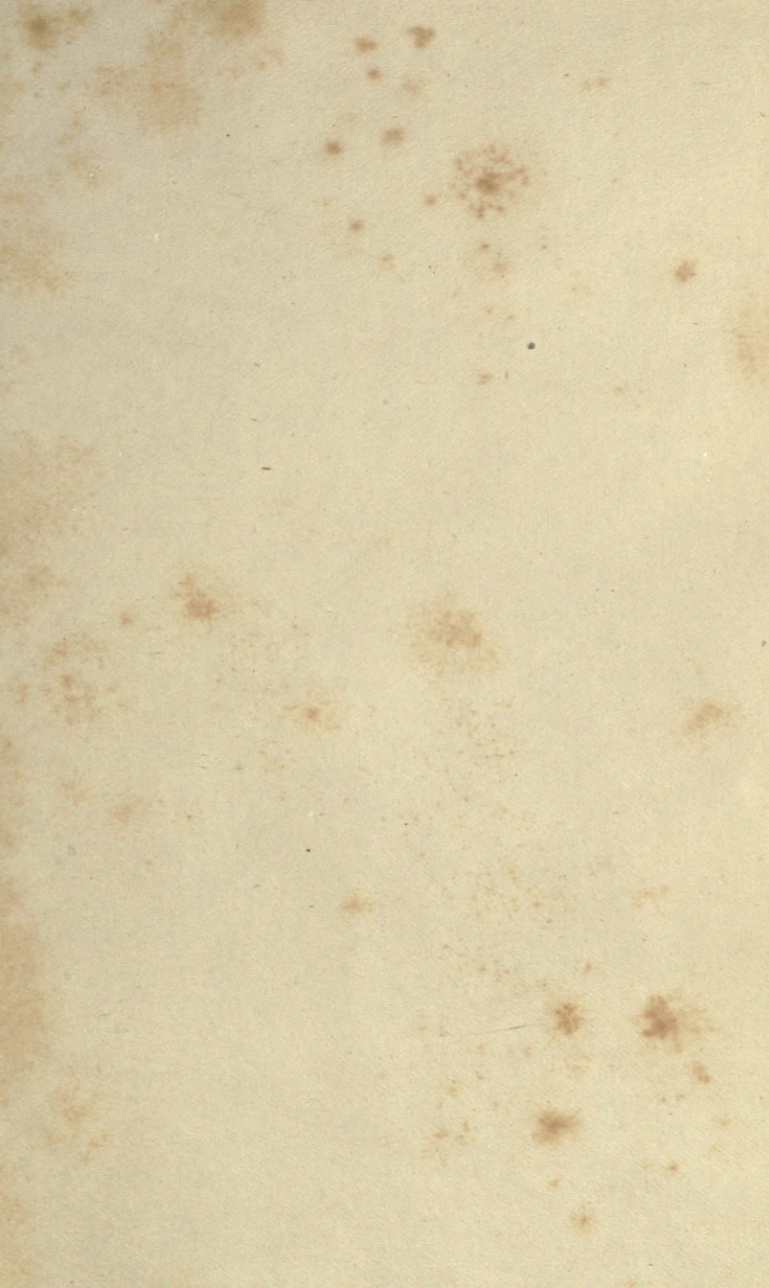
THE END.

















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AMONG  
THE  
HILLS