

# The Dover Road



*CHARLES S. HARPER.*



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THE DOVER ROAD

# HISTORIES OF THE ROADS

— BY —

CHARLES G. HARPER.

THE BRIGHTON ROAD: The Classic Highway to the South.

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD: London to York.

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD: York to Edinburgh.

THE DOVER ROAD: Annals of an Ancient Turnpike.

THE BATH ROAD: History, Fashion and Frivolity on an old Highway.

THE MANCHESTER AND GLASGOW ROAD: London to Manchester.

THE MANCHESTER ROAD: Manchester to Glasgow.

THE HOLYHEAD ROAD: London to Birmingham.

THE HOLYHEAD ROAD: Birmingham to Holyhead.

THE HASTINGS ROAD: And The "Happy Springs of Tunbridge."

THE OXFORD, GLOUCESTER AND MILFORD HAVEN ROAD: London to Gloucester.

THE OXFORD, GLOUCESTER AND MILFORD HAVEN ROAD: Gloucester to Milford Haven.

THE NORWICH ROAD An East Anglian Highway.

THE NEWMARKET, BURY, THETFORD AND CROMER ROAD.

THE EXETER ROAD: The West of England Highway.

THE PORTSMOUTH ROAD.

THE CAMBRIDGE, KING'S LYNN AND ELY ROAD.





MERCERY LANE, CANTERBURY.

*The*  
**DOVER ROAD**

Annals of an Ancient Turnpike

By CHARLES G. HARPER

*Illustrated by the Author and from Old Prints  
and Portraits*



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THE  
MILLER



# PREFACE

*IT has been said, by whom I know not, that “prefaces to books are like signs to public-houses; they are intended to give one an idea of the kind of entertainment to be found within.” But this preface is not to be like those; for it would require an essay in itself to give a comprehensive idea of the Dover Road, in all its implications. A road is not merely so many miles of highway, more or less well-maintained. It is not only something in the surveyor’s way; but history as well. It is life, touched at every point.*

*The Dover Road—the highway between London and that most significant of approaches to the Continent of*

## PREFACE

*Europe—would have been something much more in its mere name had it not been for the accident of London : one of the greatest accidents. It would have been considered a part of the great road to Chester and to Holyhead : the route diagonally across England, from sea to sea, which really in the first instance it was.*

*For the Dover Road is actually the initial limb of the Watling Street : that prehistoric British trackway adopted by the Romans and by them engineered into a road ; and it would seem that those Roman engineers, instructed by the Imperial authorities, considered rather the military and strategic needs of those times than those of LONDINIUM ; for London was not on the direct road they made ; and it was only at a later date, when it was grown commercially, they constructed an alternative route that served it.*

*It would be rash to declare that more history has been enacted on this road than on any other, although we may suspect it ; but certainly history is more spectacular along these miles. Those pageants and glittering processions are of the past : they ended in 1840, when railways were about to supplant the road ; when the last distinguished traveller along these miles, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, came up by carriage to wed Queen Victoria.*

CHARLES G. HARPER.

FEBRUARY, 1922.



## THE ROAD TO DOVER

London Bridge (Surrey side) to—

	MILES
Borough (St. George's Church) . . . . .	½
Kent Street . . . . .	¾
Newington (" Bricklayers' Arms ") . . . . .	1
New Cross . . . . .	3¼
Deptford . . . . .	4¼
Blackheath. . . . .	5
Shooter's Hill . . . . .	8¼
Shoulder of Mutton Green . . . . .	9¼
Belle Grove . . . . .	9½
Welling . . . . .	10¼
Crook Log . . . . .	10¾
Bexley Heath . . . . .	11¼
Crayford (Cross River Cray) . . . . .	13¼
Dartford (Cross River Darent) . . . . .	15
John's Hole . . . . .	16¼
Horn's Cross . . . . .	17
Greenhithe . . . . .	18
Northfleet . . . . .	20¼
Gravesend (Jubilee Tower) . . . . .	22
Milton . . . . .	23
Chalk Street . . . . .	23½
Gad's Hill (" Falstaff " Inn) . . . . .	26¼
Strood (Cross River Medway) . . . . .	28¼
Rochester (Guildhall) . . . . .	29
Chatham (Town Pier) . . . . .	30
Rainham . . . . .	34

## THE DOVER ROAD

London Bridge (Surrey Side) to—

	MILES
Moor Street . . . . .	34 $\frac{1}{4}$
Newington . . . . .	36 $\frac{3}{4}$
Key Street . . . . .	38
Chalk Well . . . . .	39
Sittingbourne (Parish Church) . . . . .	40
Bapchild . . . . .	41 $\frac{1}{4}$
Radfield . . . . .	41 $\frac{3}{4}$
Green Street . . . . .	42 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ospringe . . . . .	45 $\frac{1}{2}$
Preston . . . . .	46 $\frac{1}{2}$
Boughton-under-Blean. . . . .	49
Boughton Hill . . . . .	50
Dunkirk . . . . .	51 $\frac{1}{4}$
Harbledown . . . . .	54
Canterbury (Cross River Stour) . . . . .	55 $\frac{1}{4}$
Gutteridge Gate . . . . .	57
Bridge (Cross River Stour) . . . . .	58 $\frac{1}{4}$
Halfway House . . . . .	62 $\frac{3}{4}$
Lydden . . . . .	65 $\frac{3}{4}$
Temple Ewell . . . . .	67 $\frac{1}{2}$
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Dover . . . . .	70 $\frac{3}{4}$

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## I

OF all the historic highways of England, the story of the old Road to Dover is the most difficult to tell. No other road in all Christendom (or Pagandom either, for that matter) has so long and continuous a history, nor one so crowded in every age with incident and associations. The writer, therefore, who has the telling of that story to accomplish is weighted with a heavy sense of responsibility, and though (like a village boy marching fearfully through a midnight churchyard) he whistles to keep his courage warm, yet, for all his outward show of indifference, he keeps an awed glance upon the shadows that beset his path, and is prepared to take to his heels at any moment.

And see what portentous shadows crowd the long reaches of the Dover Road, and demand attention! Cæsar's presence haunts the weird plateau of Barham Downs, and the alert imagination hears the tramp of the legionaries along Watling Street on moonlit

nights. Shades of Britons, Saxons, Danes, and Normans people the streets of the old towns through which the highway takes its course, or crowd in warlike array upon the hillsides. Kings and queens, nobles, saints of different degrees of sanctity, great blackguards of every degree of blackguardism, and ecclesiastics holy, haughty, proud, or pitiful, rise up before one and terrify with thoughts of the space the record of their doings would occupy; in fine, the wraiths and phantoms of nigh upon two thousand years combine to intimidate the historian.

How rich, then, the road in material, and how embarrassing the accumulated wealth of twenty centuries, and how impossible, too, to do it the barest justice in this one volume! Many volumes and bulky should go toward the telling of this story; and for the proper presentation of its pageantry, for the due setting forth of the lives of high and low, rich or poor, upon these seventy miles of highway, the rugged-wrought periods of Carlyle, the fateful march of Thomas Hardy's rustic tragedies, the sly humour and the felicitous phrases of a Stevenson, should be added to the whimsical drolleries of Tom Ingoldsby. To these add the lucid arrangement of a Macaulay shorn of rhetorical redundancies, and, with space to command one might hope to give a glowing word-portraiture of the Dover Road; while, with the aid of pictorial genius like that possessed by those masters of their art, Morland and Rowlandson, illustrations might be fashioned that would shadow forth the life and scenery of the wayside to the admiration of all. Without these gifts of the gods, who shall say he has done all this subject demands, nor how sufficiently narrate within the compass of these covers the doings of sixty generations?

The Dover Road, then, to make a beginning with our journey, is measured from the south side of London Bridge, and is seventy and three-quarters of a mile long.

## II

IF we had wished, in the first year of the reign of Queen Victoria, to proceed to Dover with the utmost expedition and despatch consistent with coach-travelling, we should have booked seats in Mr. Benjamin Worthy Horne's "Foreign Mail," which left the General Post-Office in Saint Martin's-le-Grand every Tuesday and Friday nights, calling a few minutes later at the "Cross Keys," Wood Street, and finally arriving at Dover in time for the packets at 8.15 the following morning; thus beating by half an hour the time of any other coach then running on this road.

If, on the other hand, we objected to night travel, we should have had to sacrifice that half-hour, and go by either the "Express," which, starting from the "Golden Cross," Charing Cross, at 10 a.m. every morning, did the journey in nine hours; or else by the "Union" coach, which, travelling at an equal speed, left the "White Bear," Piccadilly, at 9 a.m. Not that these were the only choice. Coaches in plenty left town for Dover; the "Eagle," the "Phoenix," Worthington's Safety Coaches, the "Telegraph," the "Defiance," the "Royal Mail," and the "Union Night Coach," starting from all parts of London. The famous "Tally-ho Coach," too, between London and Canterbury, left town every afternoon, and did the fifty-four miles in the twinkling of an eye—that is to say (with greater particularity and less vague figure of speech) in five hours and a half; while Stanbury and Rutley's fly-vans and wagons conveyed goods and passengers who could not afford the fares of the swifter coaches between the "George," Aldermanbury, and Dover at the rate of six miles an hour.

Besides these methods of conveyance, numerous coaches, vans, omnibuses and carriers'-carts plied between the Borough and Chatham, Rochester and

Strood; or served the villages between London and Gravesend. Indeed, at this period, we find the crack coaches, the long-distance mails, starting from London city, leaving to the historic inns of Southwark only the goods-wagons, the short-stages, and the carriers'-carts. In 1837, also, you could vary the order of your going to Dover by taking boat from London to Gravesend, Whitstable, or Herne Bay, and at any of those places waiting for the coach. The voyage to Herne Bay took six hours, and the coach journey from thence to Dover occupied another four, the whole costing but ten shillings; which, considering that you could get horribly sea-sick in the six hours between London and Herne Bay, and had four hours of jolting in which to recover, was decidedly cheap, and not to be matched nowadays.

The traveller of this time would probably select the "Express" from the "Golden Cross," because this was a convenient and central starting-point from which that excellent coach started at an hour when the day was well-aired. The coachman of that time was the ultimate product of the coaching age, and we who travel by train do not see anything like him. He owed something to heredity, for in those days son succeeded to father in all kinds of trades and professions much more frequently than now; for the rest of his somewhat alarming appearance he was indebted partly to the rigours of the weather and partly to the rum-and-milk for which he called at every tavern where the coach stopped—and at a good many where it had no business to stop at all. As a result of these several causes, he generally had cheeks like pulpit cushions, puffy, and of an apoplectic hue, and a plum-coloured nose with red spots on it; he was, in fact, what Shakespeare would call a "purple-hued malt-worm." He shaved scrupulously. A rugged beaver hat with a curly brim and a coat of many capes would have identified him as a coachman, even if the evidence of his face had failed, and his talk, which consisted of



“*Gee-hups*,” biting repartees administered to passing Jehus, and contemptuous references to the railways, which were just beginning to be spoken of, was solely professional.

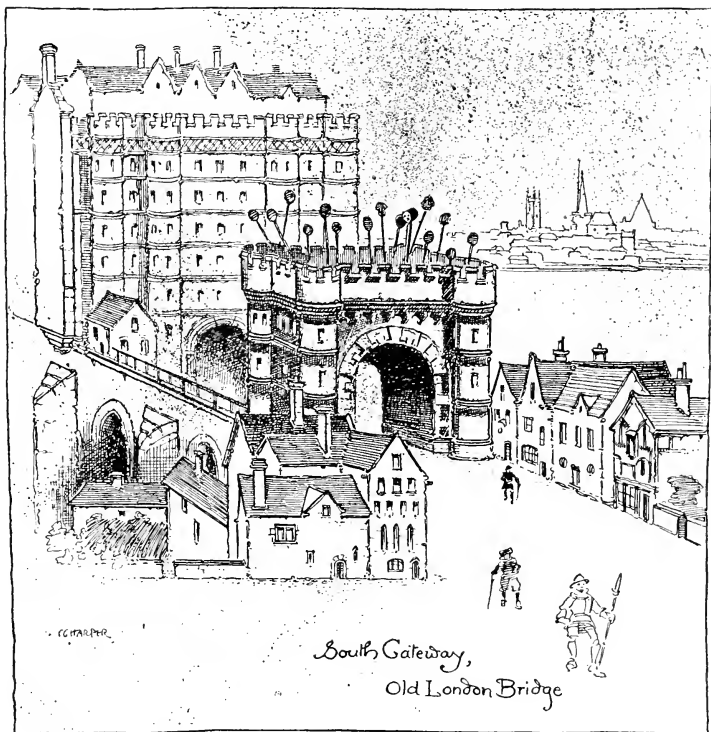
Some of these latter-day coaches went direct from the West End, over Westminster Bridge, and so to the Old Kent Road, but others had to call at various inns on the way to the City, and so came over London Bridge in the approved fashion.

### III

AND the London Bridge by which they would cross in 1837 was a very different structure from that driven over by their forbears of twenty years previously.

So late as 1831, Old London Bridge remained that, built in 1176, had thus for nearly seven hundred years borne the traffic to and from London, and had stood firmly centuries of storms and floods, and all the attacks of rebels from Norman to late Tudor times. Its career was closed on the 1st of August, 1831, when the new bridge, that had taken seven years in the building, was opened. The old bridge crossed the Thames at a point about a hundred feet to the eastward of the present one; the city approach leading steeply down a narrow street by Monument Yard, and passing close under the projecting clock of Saint Magnus the Martyr. The view was eminently picturesque, with the many and irregular pointed arches of the bridge; the rush of water in foaming cascades through the narrow openings; the weathered stonework, and the curious old oil-lamps; and the soaring Monument with the fantastic spire of St. Magnus, seen from Southwark, in the background. This was the aspect of Old London Bridge at any time between 1750, when the houses that had been for centuries standing on it were removed, and 1831, when the bridge itself

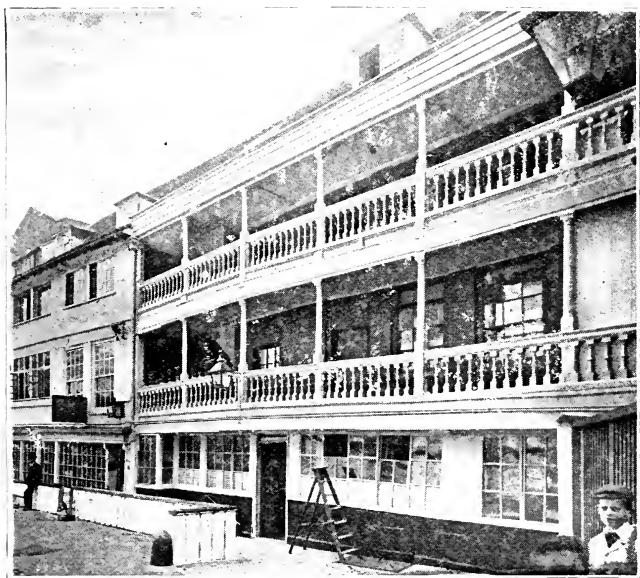
was destroyed with pick and shovel. In previous ages there were gates both at the London and the Southwark ends, and on these fortified gateways



were stuck the heads of many traitors to the State and martyrs to religious opinions. The heads of Sir William Wallace, Jack Cade, Bishop Fisher of Rochester, Sir Thomas More, and of many another, were once to be seen here; and in Queen Elizabeth's time, when John Visscher made a drawing of London

Bridge, so many were the rotting skulls that the Southwark gate-house wore not so much the appearance of an entry into the capital of a civilised kingdom as that of a doorway to some Giant Blunderbore's bloodstained castle.

"Bridge Foot" was the name of the Southwark



THE "GEORGE."

end of London Bridge. It was a narrow lane leading to Southwark High Street, paved with knobbly stones and walled in with tall houses. Bridge Foot is a thing of the past, and London Bridge Station stands on the site of it. "High Street, Borough," too, is very different from not only mediæval days, but even from coaching times. The many old inns that used to front toward the street, dating their prosperity

back to the twelfth century, and their fabric to some time subsequently to the fire of 1676, are nearly all either utterly demolished, or are put to use as railway receiving offices. The "Queen's Head" is gone; the "George," most interesting of all that remain here, is threatened; the "Spur" is left, little changed; the "Half Moon" is still the house for a good chop or steak and a tankard of ale; but the "White Hart," where is it? Where the "Tabard," the "King's Head," the "Catherine Wheel," the "Boar's Head," the "Old Pick my Toe," or the "Three Widows"? In vain will the curious who pay pilgrimage to Southwark seek them. There still are many cavernous doorways, stone-flagged passages, and great courtyards; but nothing more romantic than railway vans is to be seen in the most of them, and the yard where Sam Weller was first introduced to an admiring public is quite gone.

The most romantically named of the Southwark inns now left is undoubtedly the "Blue Eyed Maid," so named, possibly, in connection with Tamplin's "Blue Eyed Maid" coach that used to run between Southwark and Rochester in the twenties. The building, though, does not share the romanticism of its name. Near it, let into the seventeenth-century brick frontage of No. 71, High Street, is the old sign of the "Hare and Sun," the trade-mark of Nicholas Hare; and this, together with the stone half-moon sign in the yard of the "Half Moon Inn," is the sole relic of the many devices that once decorated the street. The hop trade has taken almost undivided possession of the place nowadays. The Hop Exchange is over the way, and hop-factors are as frequently to be met with here as diamond-merchants in Hatton Garden; and with their coming the old-fashioned appearance of Southwark High Street is gone.

Even when Hogarth painted his "Southwark Fair," in 1733, the street was suburban, and in the distance, seen between the crowds gathered round old St.

George's Church, are the hills and dales of Kent. The church was pulled down in the following year, and the present building put up in its place. The fair was suppressed in 1762.

At that time, Kent Street was the only way to the Dover Road, and, even then, the dirt and overcrowding in that notorious thoroughfare were phenomenal. Englishmen were ashamed of this disgraceful entrance into London, and one whose duty lay in bringing a representative foreigner from Dover to London craftily contrived that he should enter the Metropolis at night, when the dirty tenements of Kent Street, by which their carriage would pass, would be hidden in darkness. When Newington Causeway was made, and direct access gained to the Old Kent Road, the horrors of Kent Street were no longer to be braved by travellers. The street is here still, but somewhat civilised, and now called "Tabard Street"; but to "give a bit of Kent Street" is yet understood to mean language for which Billingsgate has also been long renowned.

A singular structure standing in Tooley Street, and visible for a very great distance up or down the river, was the so-called "Telegraph Tower," which was burned down in the great fire of August, 1843. It had at one time been a shot-tower, and had always completely dwarfed its next-door neighbour, St. Olave's Church. It was very ugly, and so its loss was a distinct gain; but with its disappearance went all recollection of the old system of signalling that had no rival before the electric telegraph was introduced in 1838.

This system was introduced in 1795, at the suggestion of the Rev. Lord George Murray, afterwards Bishop of Saint David's. He proposed to the Admiralty to erect signal-posts or towers on the heights between London and the coast, and upon experiments being made, it was found easily practicable to send messages in this way to our ships in the Downs. That year,

then, witnessed the establishment of a line of telegraph-towers between the Admiralty and Deal, with a branch



OLD TELEGRAPH TOWER, TOOLEY STREET.

to Sheerness. The original apparatus of revolving shutters was in use until 1816, when it was changed

for a semaphore system, resembling very closely that in use upon railways at the present day, the chief peculiarity being that, instead of only two movements of the semaphore arms, each one could be made to assume six different positions. Some old prints of the Admiralty buildings in Whitehall show a telegraph-station of this kind upon the roof, with the little wooden cabin in which were stationed the men (generally four) whose duty it was to read through telescopes the signals from the nearest station, and to work the shutters or semaphores above their own. One of these stations has given the name of "Telegraph Hill" to that knoll at Hatcham, by New Cross, which was opened as a public park so recently as April, 1895. From hence was signalled news of Nelson and Trafalgar, of Wellington and Waterloo; here worked the arms that carried orders from the Admiralty to the admirals in the Downs to sail east or west; to proceed home or fare forth to foreign stations; to summon Courts Martial, and to put the sentences of those stern drum-head tribunals into execution.

## IV

THE Southwark of Chaucer's time was a very different place. For one thing, it was a great deal smaller. The year in which his Canterbury Pilgrims were supposed to set out has generally been fixed at 1383, and at that time the whole country had only recently been smitten with three great pestilences, which had carried off nearly half the population of England. London numbered probably no more than thirty thousand inhabitants. Southwark was comparatively a village; a village, too, not with the odious surroundings of later years, but a pleasant spot over the water from the City, where great prelates had their palaces, and whence a short walk of five minutes

or so would bring you into the open country, and among the fragrant hedgerows of the Kent Road. No picture exists of Southwark as Chaucer saw it, but when an ingenious Dutchman—one Antony van der Wyngreerde—made a drawing of Southwark and London Bridge, in 1546, this historic part of the “Surrey side” was still distinctly rural. Orchards and pleasant gardens are seen clustering round St. George’s Church, and stretching away to the site of the present Kent Street, and bosky woods flourished where the tall wharves of Bankside are crowded together. Where are those orchards, woods, and gardens now? Where is Winchester House, the grand palace of the Bishops of Winchester, that looked upon the river? Where its neighbour, Rochester House? Where, too, is Suffolk House, the princely residence of the Dukes of Suffolk? Gone, all of them, like the morning dew; and the only recognisable object in Van Wyngreerde’s drawing is the tower of St. Mary Overie’s Church that still, as “St. Saviour’s,” rears its four pinnacles above the Southwark of to-day.

The most famous of all the inns of Southwark was the “Tabard,” famous not only as an ordinary house of good cheer, but as a hostelry immediately under the protection of the Church, whereto resorted many good folk bent on pilgrimage. The Abbot of Hyde Monastery at Winchester was the owner of the ground upon which the original “Tabard” was built, and he built here not only an inn (which it is to be supposed he let out) but also a guest-house for the brethren of Hyde, and all others of the clergy who resorted to London to wait on the Bishop of Winchester, whose grand palace stood close by. In 1307 did the Abbot of Hyde build the “Tabard,” and Chaucer gave it immortality in 1383. At that time the landlord was the Harry Bailly of the “Canterbury Tales”; a real person, probably an intimate friend of Chaucer’s, and Chaucer’s description of him is most likely to be a careful



portraiture of the man, his appearance, his speech, and his ways of thought.

He was a considerable person, this host. He was a Member of Parliament, and his name is an index of his importance, for Bailiff of Southwark his ancestor, Henry Tite, or Martin, had been made in 1231, and himself held the position through so long a line of grandfathers and great-grandfathers that their name had become merged in that of his civic office. So Chaucer's description we know to be very truth, so far as his worth and position are concerned :—

A seemly man our hostè was withal  
 For to have been a marshal in a hall.  
 A largè man was he, with eyen steep,  
 A fairer burgess is there none in Chepe ;  
 Bold of his speech, and wise, and well taught ;  
 And of manhood lackèd righte nought,  
 Eke thereto he was right a merry man.

This explains the host's sitting at supper with his guests, even with such gentlefolk as the knight and his son, the squire, and with the Lady Abbess. Thus is he able to take charge of and assume leadership over his party on the road to Canterbury, and to reprove or praise each and all, according to his mind.

The "Tabard" is, of course, only a memory now, and, indeed, so often had it been patched and repaired, that but little of the original could have been standing when the great fire of Southwark, in 1676, swept away many of the old inns. But the "Talbot," as it was called in later times, stood until 1870 on the site of the older building, and was itself so venerable that many good folks were used to believe it to have been the veritable house where those old-time pilgrims lay before setting out on their journey.

To that shrine of St. Thomas crowds of pilgrims flocked from every part of the Christian world. Rich and poor, high and low alike, left court and camp, palace or hovel. The knight left his castle, the lady her bower ; the merchant his goods, the sailor his ship ; and the ploughman forsook his tillage to partake

in the blessings that radiated from Becket's resting-place in Canterbury Cathedral. From such varied ranks of society are Chaucer's pilgrims drawn. A knight whose manhood had been spent in battle at home or in Palestine is at their head. He had been present at the taking of Alexandria; had fought with the Germans against Russia, and had campaigned in Granada against the Moors. Yet his is a meek and Christian-like deportment, and he is in truth a very perfect, gentle knight. With him is his son, the squire, a boy of twenty, who had already made one campaign against the French, and had borne himself well, both in battle and in the tourney. Love deprives him of his sleep, and for love he writes sonnets and attires himself in smart clothes, broidered over with flowers like a May meadow. In attendance on this love-lorn swain is a yeoman clad in Lincoln green and bristling with arms. Sword and buckler, a dagger in his belt, with bow and arrows complete his equipment. Following upon these comes firstly Madame Eglantine, a lady prioress whose noble birth is seen both in her appearance and in the nicety with which she eats and drinks. With a sweet, if rather nasal, tone she chants portions of the Liturgy, and speaks French by preference; but it is the French, not of Paris, but of "Stratford-atte-Bow." So high-strung is her sensibility that she would weep if she was shown a mouse in a trap, or if her little dog was beaten with a stick. She wears—somewhat inconsistently, considering her religious profession—a brooch bearing the inscription, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Next this dainty lady comes a fat monk of the Benedictine Order, whose shaven crown and red cheeks are as smooth as glass, and whose eyes shine like burning coals, both by reason of lust and good living. He is dressed in a fashion no holy monk should affect, for the sleeves of his robe are trimmed with the finest fur, and a golden love-knot pin holds his hood in place. Clearly ring the bells on his horse's bridle; hare-hunting and a feast off a fat swan are



THE "SPUR" INN.



more to him than the rule of St. Benedict and all the holy books in his cell. Beside this disgrace to his religious profession is a mendicant friar who is no whit better than his fellow, for he can sing tender songs to his harp, treats the country-folk in the taverns, and knows well how to please the women with timely gifts of needles and knives. Follow these a merchant and two learned men. Well does the merchant know the rate of exchange, and better still does he know how to secure his own interest. Not so the clerk of Oxenford, hollow-cheeked and lean, dressed in threadbare clothes and riding a bare-ribbed horse. As yet he is unbeneficed; but his books are his only joy. His fellow is a law serjeant in good practice, and at his heels comes the Franklin, a representative of a very large class who held land of their own, but were not of gentle birth.

A lower social stratum is represented by a haberdasher, a carpenter, a weaver, a dyer, and a tapster; all of consideration in their own grade, and likely to become aldermen some day. As wealthy as any is the miller, a big-bodied fellow, with a spade beard, red, like a fox, and as cunning. He well knows how to take a share of the corn his customers bring him to grind. He wears a white coat and a blue hood; plays on the bagpipes, and tells stories fitted to make the young and innocent blush. The wife of Bath is every whit as indelicate. She has been married five times, and of love, says Chaucer, "she knew the oldè dance." Therefore she is privileged. A shipman from Dartmouth has with him a bottle of Burgundy stolen from his captain's cabin, from which he thinks it no sin to drink when on pious pilgrimage. A doctor of physic, a cook, a poor parson, a ploughman, a reeve, or estate agent, a manciple, and two disgraceful characters—a summoner and a pardoner—make up the total of the company. The summoner has a fiery face, which nothing but abstinence from drink will assuage; and the pardoner is totally without conscience or morals of any kind. He makes a good living by

selling pardons from the Pope, and gets more by the sale of relics in one day than the parson can earn in two months.

When these pilgrims rode forth on that April morning—nine and twenty of them—from the “Tabard,” to seek Becket’s shrine, they started from the ultimate suburb of London. Picture that, Londoners of to-day, who find streets unceasing until Blackheath is gained, and no true roadside country this side of Gravesend! The thymy air then blew in at the casements of the many inns of Southwark, and the views thence extended over fields and meadows where countless chimneys now pollute the sky. Some way down the Kent Road ran a little stream across the highway—“Saint Thomas à Watering” the ford was called, and here the pilgrims made their first halt—

And forth we riden a litel more than pas,  
Unto the watering of Saint Thomas,  
And then our host began his hors arrest.

Saint Thomas’s Road marks the site of this stream, and the “Thomas à Becket” inn perpetuates a house of call for wayfarers; but the fame of all these things—of the heretics, the cutpurses, the varied thieves and beggars who were executed here, with their quarters stuck on poles by the ford by way of warning, is lost in the latter-day commonplace of the Old Kent Road.

Yet, at this place, which was something more than a mere water-splash, and the Golgotha of this road out of London, many met their end through being born a little in advance of their time. This was, and is yet, a criminal offence; but it is no longer capital. If, for example, the unfortunate John Penry, Welsh scholar and graduate alike of Oxford and Cambridge, religious reformer and prime mover in the “Martin Marprelate” tracts, directed against the Episcopal bench, had but been born fifty years later, he would have been honoured, instead of meeting here an ignominious end. He was hanged at St. Thomas à Watering, May 29, 1593,

and was a victim to the vengeance of my lords spiritual in general, and of Archbishop Whitgift in particular.

## V

THERE are milestones on the Dover Road. Of course. Mr. F's aunt, in *Little Dorrit*, knew something about them, but not much. Her knowledge was general, not particular. We read in Chapter XXIII :—

“ A diversion was occasioned here by Mr. F.'s aunt, making the following inexorable and awful statement : ‘ There's milestones on the Dover Road.’ Clennam was disconcerted by this. ‘ Let him deny it if he can,’ continued the venomous old lady. He could not deny it. There are milestones on the Dover Road.”

We will not grow excited about this incontrovertible fact. But not many people can say where the first milestone from London on this highway is to be found. Although, in fact, it is at the end of the first mile from the south side of London Bridge, no one in these days would suspect such a relic of surviving in London streets. It stands where the Old Kent Road begins, on the left-hand side as you go south, with an iron plate on it, proclaiming this to be “ 1 mile from London Bridge.” The stone, greatly battered, stands prominently, on an elevated kerb. Just because we associate milestones with country roads and hedgerows, we look upon this, standing in that crowded urban region, as curious ; but when it was first set up, this was on the very verge of the country.

We have heard much of the Old Kent Road in recent years. People who never so much as suspected the existence of it, grew familiar with its name, in the refrain of a comic song dealing with costermongers. The music-halls in 1891 reverberated with the name.

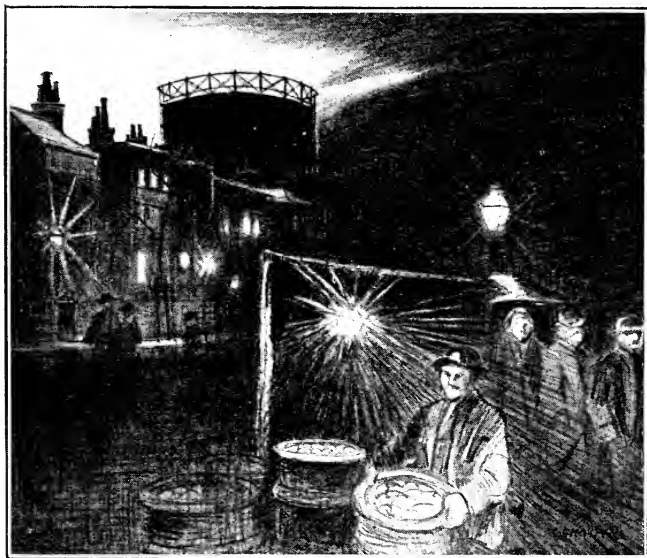
But that is all done with. The Old Kent Road is not to be described in a phrase, nor thought of as the coster's paradise. It is in fact a road of many aspects.

But how to catalogue the kinds of them that dwell here? It cannot well be done. Shopkeepers of every kind and degree; private residents of a more than average decent respectability; publicans, the landlords of public-houses of a prodigious bigness; family doctors—these are the more salient classes of the Old Kent Road. The coster? you ask. Nay, but he does not “inhabit” here. He (shall I phrase it thus?) pervades the road—the “road,” *bien entendu*, not the houses that line the road—and it is only on Saturday nights, when frugal housewives fare forth, cheapening necessary provisions, that you who seek shall find him, with his booths and shallows, his barrows and crazy trestles; his naphtha-lamps flaring gustily, his voice raucous, his goods striking both eye and nose in no uncertain manner. At such times the kennel becomes a busy mart, where you may purchase most articles of daily food at a price much below the current quotations in shops. Here a shilling possesses the purchasing power of a half-crown expended in the West End, and at this *bon marché* the artisan's table is fully furnished forth for a sum which would give the dwellers in mid-London pause.

I have said that the Old Kent Road is eminently respectable; and so it is. But it is also (the natural sequence of respectability) not less eminently dull. It is only when Saturday evening comes, with its street-market commencing as the light dies out of the sky, that this long road becomes really interesting. Then it takes on an aspect of mystery, and is filled with flickering lights and shadows from the yellow gas-lamps and the gusty naphtha-flares that illuminate the dealings of Mr. 'Enery 'Awkins with his clients; and I am quite sure that, if Rembrandt was living now, he would choose such a time and place as the best subject for a picture in all London. One spot in



especial he would select. Taking a tramear from the "Elephant and Castle," he would ask the conductor to set him down by the bridge that crosses the Grand Surrey Canal, where the great gasometers of the South London Gas Company rear themselves high in



SATURDAY NIGHT IN THE OLD KENT ROAD.

air above mean houses and third-rate shops. Arrived here, he would select, as the best point of view, the broad entrance of a large public-house, outside of which the omnibuses stop in their career between the Borough and New Cross; and it is very likely that the thing which happened to me while sketching here would also befall him; that is to say, some short-sighted or dull-witted old lady would probably dig him in the ribs with the ferrule of her umbrella, and say, "Young

man, how long before your 'bus starts ? ” And, after all, I suppose one must not be satirical at the expense of that very worthy person the British matron ; for, to a superficial glance, a sketch-block may be not unlike an omnibus way-bill ; and who but a mad impressionist would see sketchable material in an ugly gasometer ? And who other than a reckless Bohemian would be so far indifferent to public opinion as to sketch outside a gin-palace ?

The Old Kent Road of from seventy to eighty years ago presented a very different aspect from that with which those are familiar who travel nowadays up and down its great length in tramcars. It was distinctly rural. The few houses that were to be seen here in coaching days were chiefly inns, with swinging signs creaking, and horse-troughs lining the roadside, and the “ Kentish Drovers,” that now wears much the same appearance as any other London public-house, was a veritable rustic house of call for countrymen driving their sheep and cattle to London markets. “ The Bricklayers’ Arms ” (a 'scutcheon, needless to say, unknown to heraldry), “ The World Turned Upside Down,” the “ Thomas à Becket,” and the “ Golden Cross,” at New Cross, were scarcely less rural. It was at the “ Golden Cross ” that Pitt and Dundas, overtaken on the road from Dover to London by bad weather, put up for the night, and drank seven bottles of port before they went to bed.

Imagine, though, the condition of the roads, and locomotion upon them, when two Cabinet Ministers could think it not only convenient, but merely prudent, to halt for the night when so near London as New Cross ! The Londoner who can take 'bus, tram, or train, and reach the City in less than half-an-hour, can scarce picture the necessity which faced those distinguished travellers.

## VI

WHEN the old coachmen had got through New Cross Gate, which stood where the "Marquis of Granby" occupies the junction of the Deptford and Lewisham roads, they found themselves in the country, with Deptford, a busy but small and compact place, yet some distance ahead. Also, they had entered the county of Kent. Nowadays, it is difficult for the uninstructed to tell where New Cross ends or Deptford begins, for there is never a break in the houses all the way, while the street presents no attractions whatever; and even though the "good view of part of the Greenwich Railway, the carriages of which may be seen in motion to and fro" (a view which the local guide-book, published in 1837, considered worthy a visit from London), remains to this day, together with several other railways to keep it company, one does not find crowds of visitors hanging on the delirious delights of the several New Cross stations.

The Deptford of to-day is no place for the pilgrim. Instead of reminiscences of *Kenilworth* and Queen Elizabeth, of Drake and Peter the Great, it is rich in "stores" and "emporiums." A workhouse stands where Sayes Court afforded shelter under its roof, and amusement in its gardens, for the Czar; the Trinity House of Deptford Strond has been removed to Tower Hill; and perhaps the most remarkable thing in modern Deptford is the Foreign Cattle Market. And yet here Elizabeth knighted Francis Drake, in 1581, on that good ship the *Golden Hind*, in which he had "compassed the world"; and here, on a site now occupied by cattle and by business premises, was the greatest dockyard in England at the most interesting period of English naval history.

It was at Deptford, they say, in 1593, that Christopher Marlowe, that bright particular star of poesy, was slain, while yet in his thirtieth year. We

know too little of him, and no portraiture has come down to show us what manner of man this was who wrote divinely and lived (if we may believe the scribes) sottishly, after the manner, indeed, of the fraternity of his fellow-dramatists. It should seem, by some contemporary accounts, that he was killed by a rival in the affections of some saucy baggage; but there were not wanting those who asserted that the poet was assassinated by some myrmidon of the Church, whose priests he lost no opportunity of reviling. To lend some colour to this, there remains a pamphlet, printed in 1618, entitled—*what* a title!—"The Thunderbolt of God's Wrath Against Hard-hearted and Stiff-necked Sinners." It says, "We read of one Marlowe, a Cambridge Scholler, who was a poet and a filthy play-maker; this wretch accounted that meeke servant of God, Moses, to be but a conjuror, and our Sweet Saviour to be but a seducer and deceiver of the people. But harken, ye brain-sicke and prophane poets and players, that bewitch idle eares with foolish vanities, what fell upon this prophane wretch; having a quarrell against one whom he met in the street in London, and would have stab'd him; but the partie perceiving his villany prevented him with catching his hands, and turning his own dagger into his braines; and so blaspheming and cursing he yeilded up his stinking breath. Marke this, ye players that live by making fools laugh at sinne and wickedness."

## VII

LEAVING "dirty Deptford," that being the contumelious conjunction by which the place has generally been known, any time these last hundred years or so (and far be it from me to deprive any place of its well-merited title, whether good or ill), the road ascends steeply to Blackheath, past some fine old

mansions which, having been built in the days of Queen Anne and the earlier Georges, and having long housed the aristocracy who at one time frequented the place, became afterwards the homes of rich City merchants. Finally, when the "schools for young ladies" are gone which now occupy them, and give so distinct a scholastic air to this suburb, they will doubtless disappear amid a cloud of dust and the clinking of trowels, while on their sites will rise the unchanging pattern of suburban shops!

Blackheath is one of the finest suburbs of London; a town girt round with many particularly beautiful outskirts. Strange to say, it has not been spoiled, and though thickly surrounded with houses, remains as breezy and healthful as ever; perhaps, indeed, since highwayman and footpad have disappeared, and now that duels are unknown, Blackheath may be regarded as even more healthy a spot than it was a hundred years ago.

The air which gave Bleak Heath its original name, and nipped the ears and made red the noses of the "outsides" who journeyed across it on their way to Dover in the winter months, is healthful and bracing, and is not so bleak as balmy in the days of June, when the sun shines brilliantly, and makes a generous heat to radiate from the old mellow brick wall of Greenwich Park that skirts the heath on its northern side. Outside the gate of that steepest of all parks stood Montagu House, whence the Earl of Chesterfield wrote those famous letters to his son—letters whose precepts, if carefully and consistently followed, would have infallibly sent their recipient to the Devil. Montagu House is gone now, pulled down long ago, and the site where the worldly Dormer wrote, pointing out to his son the way to perdition, is now a part of the Heath. Gone, too, is the garden where the phenomenally vulgar and undignified Princess Caroline of Wales, who lived here from 1797 to 1814, might have been seen, and *was* seen one morning, sitting in

the grounds in a gorgeous dress, looped up to the knees, to show the stars with which her petticoats were spangled: with silver wings on her shoulders, and drinking from a pewter pot of porter, after the use and wont, between the acts, of the pantomime fairies of Drury Lane.

With this *Princesse au café chantant* disappears the last vestige of royalty hereabouts, and Greenwich, lying down beyond the Park, has only dim memories of Henry the Eighth, and Queen Elizabeth, who was born in the palace of Placentia beside the Thames.



GREENWICH OBSERVATORY.

If you venture into the Park, and stand upon Observatory Hill, you can at once glimpse London and gain an idea of how plebeian Greenwich has become. But its history is not yet done, and on this very spot, in 1893, a chapter of it was made by a foreign Anarchist who blew himself up in the making; and when the park keepers came and gleaned little pieces of him from

the November boughs, the incident shaped more picturesquely than any other happening on this spot that I can think of.

As for Blackheath, it seems that when, in older days, people had assignations on the Dover Road, they generally selected this place for the purpose ; whether they were kings and emperors that met ; or ambassadors, archbishops, rebels, or rival pretenders to the crown, they each and all came here to shake hands and interchange courtesies, or to speak with their enemies in the gate. It is very impressive to find Blackheath thus and so frequently honoured by the great ones of the earth ; but it is also not a little embarrassing to the historian who wants to be getting along down the road, and yet desires to tell of all the pageants that here befell, and how the high contending parties variously saluted or sliced one another, as the case might be. Indeed, to write the history of Blackheath would be to despair of ever seeing Dover, and so, instead of beginning with Aulus Plautius, or any of the masterful Roman generals who doubtless had something to say to those cerulean Britons on this spot, I will skip the centuries, and only note the more outstanding and interesting occasions on which the heath has figured largely. Hie we then from the first to the fourteenth century, when, in 1381, Wat, the Tiler of Dartford, encamped here as leader of a hundred thousand insurgents. The fount and origin of this famous rebellion has ever been popularly sought in the historic incident of Dartford, in which the tax-gatherer lost his life ; but a discontent had long been smouldering among the people, which needed only an eloquent happening of this nature to be fanned into a flame. The Poll Tax was one of the greatest grievances of the time, and the high rent of land was even more burdensome. The price of land might, perhaps, have been borne with, for it was of gradual growth, and regulated more or less by the law of supply and demand, but the Poll Tax

was a new burden, and one exacted harshly from the people by the nobles among whom the Government had farmed it. Then, too, the state of serfdom in which the *villeins* existed was odious to them at this lapse of time, when men began to aspire to something better than to be the mere pawns of kings and nobles, sent to fight for feudalism on foreign battlefields, or in fratricidal conflicts at home. The days were drawing to a close when it was possible for kings to issue prescriptions for the seizing of artisans to be set to work on the building of royal palaces and castles : documents couched in this wise : “To our trusty and well-beloved Richard, Earl of Essex : Know ye that it is our pleasure that you do take and seize as many masons, carpenters, braziers, and all kinds of artificers necessary to the reparation of our Castle of Windsor, and that this shall be your warrant for detaining them so long as may be necessary to the completion of the work.”

With grievances old and new, it wanted but little to set the home counties in revolt, and so we find the cause of the Dartford tiler to have been warmly taken up, not only throughout his native Kent, but also, across the river, in Essex. The tiler's neighbours swore they would protect him from punishment, and, marching to Maidstone, appointed him leader of the commons in Kent. The Canterbury citizens, less enthusiastic, were overawed by the number of the rebels, and several of them slain ; five hundred joining in the march to London, while a dissolute itinerant priest, that famous demagogue John Ball, was enlarged from prison and appointed preacher to the throng, rousing them to fury by the rough eloquence and apt illustration with which he enlarged upon his text—

When Adam delved, and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman ?

From Blackheath to London marched this great



rabble. The king, with his cousin Henry, Earl of Derby; the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a hundred knights and sergeants were retired for safety to the Tower, whence they issued by boat to receive the petitions of the insurgents. Ten thousand of them waited at Rotherhithe, and by their fierce yells and threatening appearance so terrified the king's attendants that, instead of permitting him to land, they took advantage of the tide, and returned. This behaviour disappointed Tyler, who saw no hope of concessions from the king's advisers. He and his men burst into London, and, joined by the discontented host from Essex and Hertfordshire, under the leadership of one John Rakestraw (who has come down to us through the ages as Jack Straw, and whose camping-ground on Hampstead Heath bears to this day the old inn known as "Jack Straw's Castle"), plundered the town, burning the Palace of the Savoy and all the buildings and records of the Temple. Fear eventually led the Court party to grant the four chief demands of the people: the abolition of slavery; the reduction of the rent of land to fourpence an acre; free liberty of buying and selling in all fairs and markets; and a general pardon for past offences. Had Tyler and Rakestraw been content with these concessions, it is probable that all would have been well; but their ambition had grown with success, and they trusted to further violence for greater advantage. Rushing into the Tower at the head of four hundred men, they murdered there the Archbishop of Canterbury and five others, and, retaining no less than twenty thousand followers in the City, intercepted the king as he rode out the following morning attended only by sixty horsemen. With boorish insolence, Tyler lay hold of the king's bridle, when Walworth, Lord Mayor of London, stabbed him in the throat. Falling from his horse, the rebel leader was despatched by an esquire. The courage and tact of the young king are historical, and the way in which he quelled the hostility of the

insurgents, and drew their sympathies to himself, is well known; but the revocation of the charters of emancipation was a piece of faithlessness which makes the inquirer doubtful of the sincerity in which they were first granted, and the less inclined to blame Wat the Tiler for his excesses.

Thus tamely ended this, at one time, most formidable rebellion. The south gateway of London Bridge received its leader's head, and the lieges who fared by that frowning archway, together with those others who felt no loyalty, were invited to look upon the head of a traitor. But some day Wat the Tiler of Dartford will have his monument, and, truly, there are few figures in our history that so well deserve one, for he was one of the first to stir a hand for the English people against the exactions of a largely alien nobility.

Blackheath witnessed no other warlike gathering for the matter of seventy years; but it was in the meanwhile the scene of many peaceful displays.

## VIII

AND here (says Stowe) came, in 1415, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, with four hundred citizens in scarlet, and with white and red hoods, to receive Henry the Fifth on his return from the victories in France, of which that of Agincourt was the greatest. "The gates and streets of the City were garnished and apparelled with precious cloths of arras, containing the history, triumphs, and princely acts of the kings of England, his progenitors, which was done to the end that the king might understand what remembrance the people would hand to their posterity of these his great victories and triumphs. The conduits in the City ran none other but good sweet wines, and that abundantly. There were also made in the streets many towers and stages, richly adorned, and on the height of them sat

small children, apparelled in semblance of angels, with sweet-tuned voices, singing praises and lauds unto God : for the victorious king would not suffer ditties to be made and sung of his history, for that he would wholly have the praise given unto God ; neither would he suffer to be carried before him, nor showed unto the people, his helmet, whereupon his crown of gold was broke and deposed in the field by the violence of the enemy, and great strokes he had received, nor his other armour that in that cruel battle was so sore broke.”

But perhaps the most remarkable meeting on Blackheath was that which assembled to escort the cardinal's hat, designed for Wolsey. When that particularly haughty prelate learnt that the insignia of his promotion was on its way from Rome in charge only of an ordinary messenger, he deemed it essential to his importance that a more imposing method of conveyance should be provided. Previously, therefore, to the arrival of the Pope's messenger on our shores, Wolsey caused him to be met and decked out with robes and trappings suitable to so important an occasion. That glorified pursuivant of Papal authority was, therefore, brought along the road from Dover to Blackheath with the greatest show of deference and consideration, and here, on this waste, the *hat* was met by great numbers of the clergy and nobility, who conducted it to London and to Westminster Abbey in great triumph.

Wolsey's hat, however, comes out of chronological sequence. Let us then put back the clock of history again to the year 1450, when Jack Cade's rebellion peopled Blackheath with a menacing host. These were the early days of the quarrels of the rival Roses. England was losing—whether by bad generalship or by trend of unavoidable circumstances it matters not—the provinces of France won by Henry the Fifth whose feeble son now reigned ; the kinghead around whose ill-balanced kingship raged the quarrels and

family jealousies of the Dukes of York, Suffolk, Somerset, and Buckingham. The king was unpopular with half his subjects, and all of them raged with wounded pride and grief at the loss of France. The name of Mortimer was a power in the land, and the head of that ancient family was the Duke of York, who had probably the greatest following of feudatory tenants in England. To take advantage both of the prevailing discontent and of the Mortimer prestige came Jack Cade, an Irish adventurer, at the head of twenty thousand followers, and encamped on Blackheath. Cade was undoubtedly the Duke of York's catspaw, but his sudden success in gaining adherents is something of a mystery; for, although he proclaimed himself a cousin of the duke, he was an obviously ignorant clown, a fact seized upon by Shakespeare with grand effect in *Henry VI*, part i, act 4, where he makes Cade's companions to be Dick the Butcher, Smith the Weaver, and others of a like humble estate, whose asides upon Cade's proclaiming himself a Mortimer and his wife a descendant of the Lacies are very amusing. "My father was a Mortimer," says Cade, to which Dick the Butcher rejoins, whispering behind his hand, that "he was an honest man, and a good bricklayer;" while as to his wife's descent from the Lacies, he remarks that "she was, indeed, a pedlar's daughter, and sold many laces"—a punning speech that, were it the work of a modern dramatist, would be received with a howl of execration.

Cade retired from Blackheath to Sevenoaks on an equal force being sent to oppose him, but there turned at bay upon his pursuers, and the Royal army dispersed, leaving London at the mercy of this rabblement. There the fickle mob wavered and Cade fled, presently to suffer the fate that befell so many in those bloody days.

The last occasion on which Blackheath has figured largely was really romantic. The date 1660, the occasion the Restoration of His Gracious Majesty

King Charles the Second to the throne of his ancestors. Romantic it was because of the home-coming of the interesting exile who had fled, years before, for his life ; and was now come, greatly daring, to meet, not only his loyal citizen-subjects here, but to stand again face to face with the veteran regiments of the army which had finally crushed the Royalist hopes at Worcester Fight. No one knew how they would behave. Commanded by Loyalist officers, they were drawn up here to meet the king, but, amid all the rejoicings of the people, that Puritan soldiery looked on, scowling, and not all the personal charm of the king, nor the enthusiasm of the people, could chase away the sadness with which they looked upon the undoing of that work in which they had gained their scars. Charles and his brothers of York and Gloucester moved about, unarmed, graciously acknowledging the shouts of " Long live King Charles ! " and receiving old supporters who saw this glorious Restoration with tears of joy running down their cheeks ; and their gay demeanour showed their courage, for little was wanting to make the Ironsides declare for the Commonwealth, and, spurring their horses, change this scene of rejoicing to one of blood and dismay. But the moments of suspense were safely passed ; the king pressed on to London, and the Restoration was accomplished. It is in the pleasant pages of Woodstock that one reads how the old cavalier, Sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley, " having a complacent smile on his face and a tear swelling to his eye, as he saw the banners wave on in interminable succession," came here to witness the return of his sovereign. Here, too, came Colonel Everard, and Alice, his wife ; Joceline Joliffe, who wielded quarterstaff so well, and with him Mistress Joceline ; Wildrake, from Squattlesea-mere, and Beavis, old and feeble, a shadow of the great wolf-hound he had been. To this little company came Charles, and, dismounting, asked for the old knight's blessing, who, having witnessed this day, was content to die.

And England was "merry England" again. The maypole reappeared upon the village green, ginger was hot i' the mouth once more, cakes and ale disappeared down hungry and thirsty throats, and none declared eating and drinking to be carnal sins; folks sang songs and danced where had been only the singing of psalms in nasal tones and walking circumspectly; close-cropped polls grew love-locks again, and sad raiment gave place to the revived glories of ancient doublet and hose whose colours mocked the sun for splendour. For ten years had the people gone in a penitential gait that allowed neither gaiety nor enjoyment of any kind to pass unreprieved, and now that all England was rejoicing that a pharisaical Puritanism had been overthrown, what wonder that young men and maidens who were too young to recollect the old England that existed before the Commonwealth plunged now into the wildest excesses, aided and abetted by old and middle-aged alike. The pendulum had swung back, and from whining religiosity the people turned to the extreme of licentiousness.

And so at last to leave the historic aspect of Blackheath, which I had begun to fear would detain me until a volume had been made of it. Leaving the heath by the Dover Road, which still follows the old Watling Street, the way is bordered by apparently endless rows of villas, and the outskirts of Kidbrook and Charlton village are passed before one comes to where the fields, bordered by hedgerows, first come in sight, and even these are disfigured by great boards, offering land to be let for building-plots. This is, indeed, a neighbourhood where the incautious stranger takes a villa overlooking meadows, for the sake of the view, and finds, on waking up one fine morning, the builders putting in the foundations of a new house which will eventually hide his prospect; or where, having taken a month's holiday, he returns, to find a new street round the corner, with a brand new public-

house, and a piano-organ playing the latest comic song, where (*eheu, fugaces!*) meads and orchards gladdened his eyes a few short weeks before.

## IX

As one proceeds through Charlton village, past an oddly-named public-house, "The Sun in the Sands," and the uncharted wilderness of Kidbrook, Shooter's Hill comes into view, and the long line of "villas" ends. Just beyond the seventh milestone from London is another little public-house, the "Fox under the Hill," followed shortly by the "Earl of Moira," overlooked by the great buildings of the new Fever Hospital which the London County Council has set up here, to the disgust of all the dwellers round about. Next to this come the great dismal buildings of the Military Hospital, where soldier-invalids crawl about the courtyards, or, happily convalescent, lean over the balconies, smoking and chatting the hours away. Funerals go frequently hence, for here are always many poor fellows struggling with death, invalided home from the cruel heats of India, and many are the sad little processions that go with slow step and rumbling of gun-carriages to the God's Acres of East Wickham and Plumstead.

But up among the young oak coppices, the lush grass, and the perennial springs of Shooter's Hill, all is peaceful and pleasant. You can hear the Woolwich bugles sing softly through the summer air; birds twitter overhead, the robustious crowings of arrogant cocks, the sharp ring of jerry-builders' trowels comes up from below, the winds whisper among the oaks and rustle like the frou-frou of silk through the foliage of the silver-becches—while London toils and moils beyond. Distant smoke drives before the wind in earnest of those metropolitan labours, and kindly

obscures many vulgar details ; but if you cannot see Jerusalem or Madagascar from here, nor even Saint Paul's, you can at least view that most commanding object in the landscape near by, Beckton Gasworks, and on another quarter of the horizon shines the Crystal Palace, glittering afar off like a City of the Blest, which indeed it is not, nor anything like it. Directly in front, the sky-line is formed by the elevated table-land of Blackheath, while in mid-distance the few remaining fields of Charlton are seen to be making a gallant stand before the advances of villadom.

Shooter's Hill was not always a place whereon one could rest in safety. Indeed, it bore for long years a particularly bad name as being the lurking-place of ferocious footpads, cutpurses, highwaymen, cut-throats, and gentry of allied professions who rushed out from these leafy coverts and took liberal toll from wayfarers. Six men were hanged hereabouts, in times not so very remote, for robbery with murder upon the highway ; the remains of four of them decorated the summit of the hill, while two others swung gracefully from gibbets beside the Eltham Road. The " Bull " inn, standing at the top of the hill, was in coaching days the first post-house at which travellers stopped and changed horses on their way from London to Dover. The " Bull " has been rebuilt in recent years, but tradition says (and tradition is not always such a liar as some folks would have us believe) that Dick Turpin frequented the road, and that it was at this old house he held the landlady over the fire in order to make her confess where she had hoarded her money. The incident borrows a certain picturesqueness from lapse of time, but, on the whole, it is not to be regretted that the days of barbecued landladies are past.

Our old friend Pepys has something to say of what he did or what was done to him on Shooter's Hill, under date of April 11, 1661 ; but it was, at any rate, not a happening of any great note, and moreover, Mr. Pepys' prattle sometimes becomes tiresome, and



so we will pass him by for once in a way. His fellow diarist, Evelyn, was here in 1699, for he writes, under August, "I drank the Shooter's Hill waters." A very much more important person, Queen Anne, to wit (who, alas ! is dead), is also said to have partaken of the mineral spring which made Shooter's Hill a minor spa long years ago. The spring is still here, and it is this which makes the summit of Shooter's Hill so graciously green and refreshing. People no longer come to drink the waters, but he who thirsts by the wayside and sports the blue ribbon, may, an he please, instead of calling at the "Bull," or the "Red Lion," across the road, quench his thirst at a drinking-fountain, which is something between a lich-gate and a Swiss ch<sup>^</sup>let, erected here in recent years.

So long ago as 1767 a project was set afoot for building a town on the summit of Shooter's Hill, but it came to nothing, which is not at all strange when one considers how constantly the dwellers there would have been obliged to run the gauntlet of the gentlemen whom Americans happily call "road-agents." And here is a sample of what would happen now and again, taken, not from the romantic pages of "Don Juan," nor from Dickens' "Tale of Two Cities," but from the sober and truthful columns of a London paper, under date of 1773. "On Sunday night," we read, "about ten o'clock, Colonel Craige and his servant were attacked near Shooter's Hill by two highwaymen, well mounted, who, on the colonel's declaring he would not be robbed, immediately fired and shot the servant's horse in the shoulder. On this the footman discharged a pistol, and the assailants rode off with great precipitation." That they rode off with nothing else shows how effectually the colonel and his servant, by firmly grasping the nettle danger, plucked the flower safety.

It was by similarly bold conduct that Don Juan put to flight no fewer than four assailants on this very spot. Arrived thus far from Dover, he had

alighted, and was meditatively pacing along the road behind his carriage when—— But there! It had best be read in Byron's verse, and let no one cry out upon me for quoting "Don Juan," and say the thing is nothing new, lest I, in turn, call fire upon him for an undue acquaintance with that "wicked" poem—

. . . Juan now was borne,  
Just as the day began to wane and darken,  
O'er the high hill which looks, with pride or scorn,  
Toward the great city. Ye who have a spark in  
Your veins of Cockney spirit, smile or mourn,  
According as you take things well or ill;  
Bold Britons, we are now on Shooter's Hill!

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping  
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye  
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping  
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry  
Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping  
On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy;  
A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap crown  
On a fool's head—and there is London Town!

Don Juan had got out on Shooter's Hill:  
Sunset the time, the place the same declivity  
Which looks along that vale of good and ill  
Where London streets ferment in full activity;  
While everything around was calm and still,  
Except the creak of wheels, which on their pivot he  
Heard; and that bee-like, bubbling, busy hum  
Of cities, that boil over with their scum.

I say Don Juan, wrapt in contemplation,  
Walk'd on behind his carriage, o'er the summit,  
And lost in wonder of so great a nation,  
Gave way to it, since he could not o'ercome it.  
"And here," he cried, "is Freedom's chosen station;  
Here peals the people's voice, nor can entomb it  
Racks, prisons, inquisitions; resurrection  
Awaits it, each new meeting or election.

"Here are chaste wives, pure lives; here people pay  
But what they please; and, if that things be dear,  
'Tis only that they love to throw away  
Their cash, to show how much they have a year.  
Here laws are all inviolate; none lay  
Traps for the traveller; every highway's clear:  
Here"—here he was interrupted by a knife,  
With,—"Damn your eyes! Your money or your life!"

These freeborn sounds proceeded from four pads,  
In ambush laid, who had perceived him loiter  
Behind his carriage; and, like handy lads,  
Had seized the lucky hour to reconnoitre,  
In which the heedless gentleman who gads  
Upon the road, unless he prove a fighter,  
May find himself, within that isle of riches,  
Exposed to lose his life as well as breeches.

Juan did not understand a word  
 Of English, save their shibboleth, "God damn!"  
 And even that he had so rarely heard,  
 He sometimes thought 'twas only their "Salaam,"  
 Or "God be with you!" and 't's not absurd  
 To think so; for, half English as I am  
 (To my misfortune), never can I say  
 I heard them wish "God with you," save that way.

But if he failed to understand their speech, he interpreted their actions accurately enough, and, drawing a pocket-pistol, shot the foremost in the stomach, who, writhing in agony on the ground, and unable to discriminate between Continental nationalities, called out that "the bloody Frenchman" had killed him. His three companions did not wait to discover that it was not a Frenchman, but a Spaniard. No, they promptly ran away, and left their fellow to die, which he presently did, and Don Juan, after an interview with the coroner, proceeded on his road in wonderment. "Perhaps," he thought, "it is the country's wont to welcome foreigners in this way."

Shooter's Hill is pictured excellently well in *A Tale of Two Cities*; the time, "a Friday night, late in November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five," the occasion the passing of the Dover Mail. The coachman was "laying on" to the horses like another Macduff, and the near leader of the tired team was shaking its head and everything upon it, as though denying that the coach could be got up the hill at all; while the passengers, having been turned out to walk up the road and ease the horses, splashed miserably in the slush. The time was "ten minutes, good, past eleven," and the coachman had but just finished addressing the horses in such strange exclamations as "Tst! Yah! Get on with you! My blood!" and other picturesque, not to say lurid, phrases, when sounds were heard along the highway. Sounds of any sort on the road could not at this hour be aught than ominous, and so the passengers, who were just upon the point of re-entering the coach, shivered and

wondered if their purses and watches were quite safe which were lying snugly *perdu* in their boots.

"Tst! Joe!" calls the coachman, from his box, warningly to the guard.

"What do you say, Tom?"

"I say a horse at a canter coming up," replies Tom.

"I say a horse at a gallop, Tom," rejoins the guard, entrenching himself behind his seat, and cocking his blunderbuss, calling out to the passengers at the same time, "Gentlemen, in the King's name, all of you!"

The mail stopped. The hearts of the passengers within thumped audibly, and if one could not see how they blanched, it was only owing to the obscurity of the mildewy inside of the old Mail. There they sat, in anxious expectancy, amid the disagreeable smell arising from the damp and dirty straw, and the relief they experienced when it was not a highwayman who rode up to them, but only a messenger for Mr. Jarvis Lorry, who sat shivering among the rest, may (in the words of a certain class of novelists) "be better imagined than described."

There is but one criticism I have to make of this; but it is a serious point. There was no Dover Mail coach in 1775, for the earliest of all mail coaches, that between Bristol and London, was not established before 1784. The mails until then were carried by post-boys on horse-back.

Of Severndroog Castle, built on the crest of Shooter's Hill during the last century, I shall say nothing, because, for one thing, it is of little interest, and, for another, whatever has to be said about it belongs to the province of the Guide Books, upon whose territory I do not propose to infringe. I want to give a modicum of information with the maximum of amusement, with which declaration of policy I will proceed along the road to Dover.

Directly one comes to the crest of the hill there opens a wide view over the Kentish Weald. Reaches of the Thames are seen, peeping through foliage;

distant houses and whitewashed cottages shine clearly miles away, and the spire of Bexley Church closes the view in front, where the road ends dustily. Along this road comes daily and all day a varied procession of tramps. The traveller looks down upon them from this eyrie with wonderment and dismay ; the cottagers, the householders and gardeners hereabouts, see them pass with less surprise and additional misgivings, for their gardens, their hen-roosts, clothes-lines and orchards pay tribute to these Ishmaelites to whom the rights of property are but imperfectly known. This is why the gates and doors along the Dover Road are so uniformly and resolutely barred, bolted, chained, and padlocked ; for these reasons ferocious dogs roam amid the suburban pleasancess, and turn red eyes and foaming mouths toward one who leans across garden-gates to admire the flowers with which the fertile soil of Kent has so liberally spangled every cultivated spot ; and to them is due the murderous-looking garnishment of jagged and broken glass with which every wall-top is armed. " Peace must lie down armed " on the Dover Road ; the citizen must lock, bolt, and bar his house o' nights, and does well to exhibit warning placards, " Beware of the Dog ! " He does better to tip the policeman occasionally to keep an especially vigilant look-out, and it is not an excess of precaution that so frequently covers the flower-beds with wire-netting.

## X

THERE is, indeed, no road to equal the Dover Road for thieves, tramps, cadgers, and miscellaneous vagrants, either for number or depravity. Throughout the year they infest alike the highways and byways of Kent, but the most constant procession of them is to be seen on the great main road between London and the sea. A great deal of begging, some petty pilfering,

and a modicum of work in the fruit season and during the hop-harvest suffice to keep them going for the greater part of the year, while the winter months are fleeted in progresses from one casual ward to another in the numerous unions along the road. Phenomenally ragged, bronzed by the sun, unshaven, unshorn, they are met, men, women, and children alike, at every turn, for many miles, especially between Southwark and Canterbury. The sixteen miles' stretch of road between Canterbury and Dover is comparatively unfrequented by them; but Gravesend, Dartford, Crayford, and Bexley Heath are centres of the most disgraceful mendicancy. "Lodgings for travellers" at fourpence a night, or two shillings a week, are a feature of these places, and how prominent a feature cannot be guessed by any one who has not been there. Whole families on the tramp are to be met with between these places, and long vistas of them are gained along any particularly straight piece of road. They are everything that is dirty and horrible, but they are perfectly happy and quite irreclaimable, many of them being hereditary tramps.

Philanthropic societies inquire into the tramp; classify him, endeavour to cleanse him and restore him to some place in society, but all to no purpose. He is quite satisfied with himself; he likes dirt, and dislikes nothing so much as either moral or physical cleansing. That is one reason why he seeks the shelter of the casual ward only as a last resource. He has to undergo a bath there, and feels as chilly when his top-dressing of grime is removed as you and I would be were we turned naked into the streets. To reform your tramp it would be essential to snare him at a very early age indeed, and, even then, I am not sure but that his natural traits would break out suddenly, like those of any other wild beast kept in captivity.

The truth is, tramping is a very old profession, and hereditary in a degree very few good people imagine.

Unlettered, but highly organised, trampdom has a *lingua franca* of its own, and its signs are to be read, chalked on the fences and gateposts of the Dover Road, as surely as one could read a French novel.

The *argot* and the sign-language of the road are not difficult to acquire by those who have observant eyes and ears to hearken, but, like all languages, they are ever changing, and the accepted signs of yesteryear are constantly superseded by newer symbols. Little do the country-folk understand the significance of the chalk-marks on their gates and walls. Does the portly yeoman suspect that the  $\lambda$  on his gatepost means "no good"? And how mixed would be the feelings of many a worthy lady were the inner meaning of  $\oplus$  revealed to her—"Religious, but good on the whole." Were the eloquence of that mark discovered to her, she would know at once how it was that the poor men, with their ragged beards and their toes peeping through their boots, were so unfailingly pious and thankful for the cold scran and the threepenny-piece with which she relieved their needs, asking a blessing on her and hers until they were out of sight, when they "stowed" the piety and threw the provisions into the nearest ditch, calling in at the next roadside pub to take the edge off their thirst with that threepenny-piece. It may safely be said that the tramp is not grateful. He is, indeed, altruistic, but his altruism he saves for his kind, and he exhibits it in the danger-signals he chalks up in places the brotherhood wot of. There are degrees of danger, as of luck. Some good-hearted people become soured by many calls on their generosity, and one can readily understand even the mildest-mannered of elderly ladies becoming restive when the sixth tramp appears at the close of the day. Other people, too, lose their generosity with the bedding-out plants which one of the fraternity has "sneaked" from the front garden under cover of night. In the first instance, the sign  $\triangle$  (which means "Spoilt by too many callers") is likely to be found somewhere

handy, and in the second that innocent-looking triangle is apt to become  $\square$ , the English of which is "Likely to have you taken up," even if it does not become  $\odot$  = "Dangerous. Sure of being quodded."

## XI

PASSING many of these undesirable wayfarers, one comes, in a mile—fields and hedgerows and market-gardens on either side—to Shoulder of Mutton Green, a scrubby piece of common-ground shaped like South America—but smaller. Hence the peculiar eloquence of its name. The Kent County Council has set up a large and imposing notice-board at the corner of the green which bears its name and a portentous number of bye-laws, and when the sun is low and shadows slant (the board is so large and the green so small), the shade of it falls across the green and into the next field.

And now comes Belle Grove, spelled, as one may see on the stuccoed cottages by the wayside, with a pleasing diversity, Belle Grove, Bell Grove, and Belgrove; and one would pin one's faith on the correct form being the second variety, because the place is not beautiful, nor ever could have been.

To Bell Grove, then, succeeds Welling, and Welling is a quite uninteresting and shabby hamlet fringing the road, ten-and-a-quarter miles from London Bridge. The new suburban railway from London to Bexley Heath crosses the road, and has a station—a waste of sand, stones, and white palings—here. The place, says Hasted, in his "History of Kent," was called Well End, from the safe arrival of the traveller at it, after having escaped the danger of robbers through the hazardous road from Shooter's Hill," which derivation, though regarded as a happy effort of the imagination, is considerably below the dignified level of a county historian. Indeed, I seem to see in this the



irresponsible frivolity of the guards and coachmen of the Dover Mail. Why, the thing reeks of coaching wit, and how Hasted, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, could have included in his monumental work (which took him forty years to write) so obvious a witticism, is beyond my comprehension. Shall I be considered pedantic if I point out that the place-name, with its termination *ing*, carries with it evidence of being as old as Saxon times, and denotes that here was the settlement of an ancient tribe, or patriarchial family, the Wellings? I will dare the deed and record the fact, remarking, meanwhile, that if other county historians were as little learned as Hasted, and equally speculative, they would seem more human, and their deadly tomes become much more entertaining.

But, after this, it would not beseem me to do else than record the fact that the new suburban district springing up beside the road, half a mile past Welling, is called "Crook Log." Why "Crook Log," and whence came that singular name, are things "rop in mistry," and I will run no risks of becoming fogged in rash endeavours to elucidate the origin of this place-name.

Half a mile onward, and then begins Bexley Heath. "Once upon a time," that is to say, before an Act of Parliament was obtained in 1817 for enclosing what was then a wide, wild tract of desolate heath-land, Bexley Heath was entirely innocent of buildings.

The old village of Bexley lies a mile and a half to the right of the road, and is as rural, peaceful, and pleasant as Bexley Heath is mean and wretched. Between here and the village lies Hall Place, a Tudor mansion of great size and stately architecture, largely distinguished for its chequer-board patterning of flint and stone. The property was once that of the family called "At-hall," from their residence here, in an earlier mansion. The Tudor flint-and-stone building we now see was built by Sir Justinian Champneis, a Lord Mayor of London, towards the middle of the sixteenth century. In less than a hundred years the Champneis

were succeeded by the Austens, who made alterations, until 1772, when it passed to Sir Francis Dashwood, in whose family it yet remains.

In the neighbourhood of Bexley Heath, and also at Crayford and places beside the Thames near Dartford are some singular shafts of unknown age or purpose, sunk into the soil, frequently to a depth of a hundred feet, through the chalk of which this district chiefly consists. "Danes' Holes," the country-folk call them, and they are traditionally supposed to have been constructed as hiding-places to which the old inhabitants of these parts could retire when the Northmen's piratical fleets appeared in the estuary of the Thames. Antiquaries have a theory that these singular pits were sunk by our neolithic forbears in search of flints. The antiquaries, however, are most probably wrong, because flints were to be found readily enough by the men of the Stone Age, without going to the trouble of mining for them; and no one has yet arisen to show that neolithic man was more likely than we, his descendants, to give himself unnecessary labour.

We will, therefore, assume that the legendary name of "Danes' Holes" shadows forth the purpose of these shafts a great deal more correctly than the ingenious theories of antiquaries, made to fit personal predilections; the more especially as legendary history is generally found to square with facts much more frequently than scientific pundits would have us believe.

These remarkable pits commence with a trumpet-shaped orifice which immediately contracts into a narrow shaft, broadening at the bottom into a bulb-like chamber, not unremotely resembling in shape the tube and bulb of a thermometer. "By a curious coincidence," says one who has long been familiar with these strange survivals, "the shape of the Bexley shafts is exactly that of a local beer-measure which is held in great estimation. In several houses may be seen an advertisement that "beer is sold by the yard."

## XII

LEAVING Bexley Heath, the road becomes suddenly beautiful, where it loses the last of the mean shops—the eats'-meat vendors, the tinkers, the marine stores—that give so distinct and unwholesome a *cachet* to its long-drawn-out street. The highway goes down a hill overhung with tall trees, with chestnuts and hawthorns, whose blossoms fill the air in spring with sweet and heavy scents ; but, in the hollow, gasworks contend with them, and generally, it is sad to say, come off easy victors. Follows then a nondescript bend of the road which brings one presently into Crayford, fifteen miles from London.

Antiquaries are divided in opinion over the ancient history of Crayford. While some incline to the belief that it is the site of the Roman *Noviomagus*, others are prone to select *Keston Common* as the locality of that shadowy camp and city. The question will probably never be settled beyond a doubt, but the weight of evidence is strong in favour of *Keston Common*, eight miles away to the south-west. Here still exist the traces of great earthworks, covering a space of a hundred acres, while numerous finds of Roman coins and pottery have been made from time to time. At Crayford, on the other hand, the only presumptive evidence is to be found in this having been that old Roman military way, *Watling Street*, and, in the very slender thread of allusion to the name of *Noviomagus*, supposed, on the authority of *Hasted*, to be extant in the title of the half-forgotten manor of *Newbury*.

But, however vague may be the connection between *Noviomagus* and Crayford, certain it is that here, in 457, was fought that tremendous battle between the Saxons under *Hengist*, and the Britons commanded by *Vortigern*, a conflict in which four thousand of the Romanised Britons were slain. It was in 449 that

Hengist and Horsa, brother-chiefs\* of the Jutish-Saxons, landed at Ebbsfleet, in Thanet, at the invitation of Vortigern, who sought their aid against the Piets and the Sea-rovers. They came in three ships, and their original force could scarcely have numbered more than five hundred men. But, having warred for the Britons, and fought side by side with them against the Scots, they soon perceived how defenceless was the land. "They sent," says the Anglo-Saxon chronicler, "to the Angles, and bade them be told of the worthlessness of the Britons, and the richness of the land." In response to this invitation, there came from over sea the men of the Old Saxons, the Jutes, and the Angles; and, six years after the landing of the two brothers, these treacherous allies, strengthened in number, felt strong enough to attempt the seizure of Kent. Pretexts for a quarrel were readily found, and, through the mists that hang about the scanty records of that time, we hear first of the Battle of Aylesford, fought in 455, in which the Britons experienced their first great defeat. Here, though, Horsa was slain, and to Hengist, with his son Ese, was left the foundation of the Saxon kingdom of Kent. The Battle of Crayford for a time left all this fertile corner of England to the Saxons. "The Britons," says the chronicler, "forsook the land of Kent, and in great consternation fled to London." But, though enervated by long years of luxury, and so greatly demoralised by defeats, the Britons had yet some force left. Vortigern, "the betrayer of Britain," as he has come down to us in the pages of history, was overthrown by another enemy, a rival British prince, that doughty Romanised

\* The real names of these two brothers are unknown. They took the names by which they are known in history from the banners under which their men fought; banners which bore the cognizance of a white horse: Hengist and Horsa being merely the Jutish-Saxon words for "horse" and "mare." The Danish, indeed, still use the word "hors" for mare, and a survival of the old badge of these fierce pagans is still to be met with in the familiar white horse of Brunswick-Hanover. The prancing steed that remains to this day the Kentish device, with its dauntless motto "Invicta," is also a survival from the days when Hengist and Horsa founded the first Saxon kingdom in Britain.

chieftain, Aurelius Ambrosianus, who, after defeating that weak king, gathered up the scattered patriots, and fell upon the Saxons with such fury that they were driven back to that Isle of Thanet which had originally been given them for their services against the Scots of Strathelyde. "Falchions drank blood that day; the buzzard buried his horny beak in the carcases of the slain; the eagles feasted royally on the flesh of them that fell; and the whitening bones of the Northmen long afterwards strewed the fair land of Kent."

Eight years later, the work of Aurelius began to be undone, and in another eight years the veteran Hengist and his son had completed the foundation of their kingdom.

Crayford, it will thus be seen, is a town of considerable historic interest; but, apart from this claim upon one's attention, it has, I fear, no attraction whatever.

But here is Crayford church, in whose yard is one of the quaintest epitaphs imaginable:—

"Here lies the body of Peter Isnell, thirty years clerk of this parish. He lived respected as a pious and mirthful man, and died on his way to church, to assist at a wedding, on the 31st of March, 1811, aged 70. The inhabitants of Crayford have raised this stone to his cheerful memory, and as a token of his long and faithful services.

The life of this Clerk was just three-score and ten,  
 Nearly half of which time he chaunted Amen.  
 In his youth he was married, like other young men;  
 But his wife died one day, so he chaunted Amen.  
 A second he married—she departed—what then?  
 He married and buried a third, with Amen.  
 Thus, his joys and his sorrows were treble; but then  
 His voice was deep bass as he sung out Amen.  
 On the horn he could blow, as well as most men  
 So his horn was exalted in sounding Amen.  
 But he lost all his wind after three-score and ten  
 And here, with three wives, he waits, till again  
 The trumpet shall rouse him to sing out Amen.

The distance between Crayford and Dartford is but two miles, past White Hill; and all the way are fruit

gardens, tramps, and odious little terraces of brick cottages with tiny gardens in front, whose brilliant, old-fashioned flowers—sweet-williams, marigolds, and polyanthuses—put to shame these wretched efforts of the builder. There is, half a mile from Crayford, beside the road, an iron post with the City of London arms and the legend, “Act 24 & 25 Vict. cap. 42,” in relief. This wayside pillar marks at once the limits of the London Police District, and the boundary of the area affected by the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Act of 1861. The City of London has been entitled from time immemorial to levy dues on all coal entering the metropolis, and this privilege, regulated from time to time, was abolished only in 1889. Two separate duties of twelve pence and one penny per ton were confirmed by this act and authorised to be levied upon coals, culm, and cinders; while the acts dating from 1694, imposing a tax of four shillings per tun on all kinds of wine were at the same time confirmed and renewed, and the radius made identical with the London police jurisdiction, instead of the former limit of twenty miles. These boundary marks were ordered to be set up on turnpike and public roads, beside canals, inland navigations, and railways, and are frequently encountered by the cyclist and pedestrian, to whom their purpose is not a little mysterious.

The duty on coals entering London amounted in 1885 to no less than £449,343, and on wines to £8,488. By far the greater part of these amounts was, of course, collected on the railways and in the port of London. Originally imposed for the maintenance of London orphans, the wine dues became, like the coal duties, great sources of income, by which many notable London improvements, among them the Victoria Embankment, have been carried out.

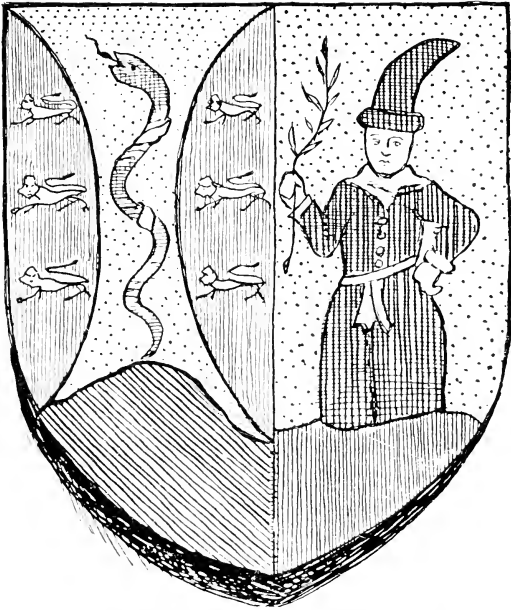
## XIII

DARTFORD, to which we now come, is a queer little town, planted in a profound hollow, through which runs its wealth-giving Darent. Mills and factories meet the eye at every turn. Not smoking, grimy factories of the kinds that blast the Midland counties, but cleanly-looking boarded structures for the most part, own brothers to flour-mills in outward aspect; places where paper is manufactured, and nowadays drugs and chemicals. Dartford is industrial to-day, but there are old-fashioned nooks, and some of the street-names are intriguing: "Bullace Lane" and "Overy Street," for example. Few people nowadays know what is a "bullace," It is, or was, a small wild plum, of the damson kind.

And here is the traditional home of paper-making in England, for it was in Dartford, in the reign of Good Queen Bess, that John Spielman (majesty, in the person of Gloriana's successor, James the First, knighted him for it in 1605) introduced the art of paper-making to these shores. What induced that man of gold and jewels and precious stones (he was jeweller to Her Majesty) to take up paper-making, I do not know; but he made a very good thing of it, commercially speaking, and no wonder, when he had sole license during ten years for collecting rags for making his paper withal. Besides introducing the manufacture of paper, Sir John Spielman added the lime-tree to our parks and gardens, for he brought over with him from his native place, Lindau, in Germany, two slips from some *unter den linden* or another, and planted them in front of his Dartford home, where they flourished and became the progenitors of all the limes in England.

If you step into the quaint old church of Dartford, you will see, as soon as your eyes become accustomed to the gloom, the tomb of Sir John Spielman and his

wife, with their effigies, properly carved, painted and gilt, while in various parts of the church may be found what is said to be his crest, the fool's cap, which



ARMS OF SPIELMAN AND HIS FIRST WIFE.

he used as a water-mark on a particular size of paper. "Foolscap" paper derives its name from that water-mark; and thus, though the term now indicates a size, it was originally a trade-mark. The mark may have been derived, not from any crest, but from the long cap worn by the figure on his wife's shield of arms; although it was greatly changed in the process. At the same time, it is to be noted that the fool's cap water-mark occurred on paper made in Germany in 1472.



The presence of the badge in the church shows that the paper-maker had a good deal to do with the reparation of the building.

In 1858 an association styling themselves the "Legal Society of Paper Makers," of whom I know nothing, restored Spielman's tomb. The strange heraldic coat-of-arms of Spielman will be noticed. It is, and looks, German, and is of an extravagant nature that would utterly discompose an English herald. Spielman's coat exhibits a blue serpent with a red crest, standing on his tail on a gold background, between six golden lions on a red field, the whole of this singular device based on a green mount. His wife's arms, impaled with his own, are a man clothed in a long black gown, with a long cap, holding in his hand an olive branch, and standing on a red mount inverted. The crest is: a savage, wreathed about the temples and loins with ivy. Motto: *Arte et fortuna*. The epitaph is in German. Spielman's first wife died in 1607. In 1609 he married again, and deceased in 1626, leaving by the second wife three sons and one daughter.

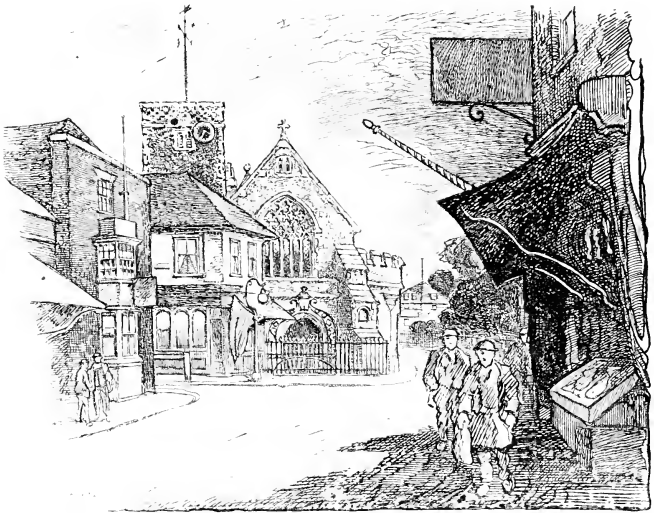
The fortunes of the Spielmans were short-lived. His second wife was living in 1646, but seems to have had little interest in the business, which about 1686 was in possession of a Mr. Blackwell. Meanwhile the Spielman family had declined to poverty, and in 1690 "goody Spielman," widow of his grandson George, was in receipt of 1s. 6d. weekly relief; and in 1696 the wife of a John Spielman was receiving 2s. The Spielman paper mill stood where the gas-mantle factory of Curtis and Harvey is now found.

There is a curious sundial actually in the church; oddly placed on a stone foundation on the splayed sill of the south-east window. It is dated 1820, and records the hours only from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

A brass to John Donkin (1782-1846) shows him with head and shoulders. The inscription states it was placed here because it was not considered proper that one

who had placed ancient men and times on record should himself be forgotten.

We may be thankful that Spielman did no more to the church, for, had he rebuilt it, we should have lost one of the finest and most picturesque churches on the



DARTFORD CHURCH.

Dover Road, whose tall tower, severely unornamental, with clock oddly placed on one side, is such a prominent feature of Dartford. Gundulf, that famous architect-bishop of Rochester, to whom Rochester Keep, Dover Castle, the White Tower of the Tower of London, portions of Rochester Cathedral, and a number of other buildings, civil, ecclesiastical and military, are ascribed with more or less show of authority, is supposed to have built Dartford tower, not so much for religious as for defensive uses. For hereby runs the Darent across the road, and no bridge spanned the ford when Gundulf's tower was first built. It therefore guarded

the passage until the neighbouring hermit, who lived in a fine damp cell by the riverside, succeeded in collecting enough money wherewith to build a bridge whose successor forms an excellent leaning-stock on Sundays to the British workman waiting anxiously for the public-houses to open.

There is in the church a small thirteenth century lancet window in the west end wall of the north aisle, which is pointed out as the window of the cell occupied by the hermit who tended the ford. It commanded the road; and no doubt the hermit was often knocked up at night by travellers desiring to be guided over the river. In 1903 a charming picture in stained glass was added, "The Hermit of the Ford," showing a bearded and hooded man holding up a lantern. The ford was not superseded until 1461, when the first bridge was built. This remained until the present bridge replaced it, in 1754. On that occasion, the churchyard on the south side of the church was curtailed, for widening the road, and an angle of the church itself was in 1792 shaved off for the footpath, as can be seen to this day.

The old inns of Dartford are very numerous. Most of them, unfortunately, have been cut up into small beer-houses and tenements since the coaches were run off the road by steam, but one fine old galleried inn, the "Bull," remains to show what the coaching inns of long ago were like. The courtyard is now roofed-in with glass, and the little bedrooms behind the carved balusters of the gallery are largely given up to spiders and lumber. But, fortunately for those who care to see what an old galleried inn was like, the changes here have consisted only of additions instead, as is only too usual, of destruction. There is a curious detail, too, about the "Bull," and that is the whimsical position of its sign in a place where ninety out of a hundred people never see it. The "bull in a china-shop" is proverbial, but a bull among the chimney-pots is something quite out of the common. It is here, though, that the effigy of a great black bull may be seen, reared up

aloft in a place between the constellations and the beasts of the field.

There is one modern incident in connection with the "Bull" at Dartford which shows how inflamed were the passions of the working class in favour of George the Fourth's silly and indiscreet wife, and this



THE "BULL" INN, DARTFORD.

incident happened while the monarch was changing horses here. It was a journeyman currier who showed his sympathy with Queen Caroline, and he did so by thrusting his head in at the carriage window, and roaring in the face of startled majesty, "You are a murderer!" which can be taken neither as a compliment nor a statement of fact—unless, indeed, we agree with that mathematically inclined cynic who held that a "fact" was a lie and a half.

Pastor Moritz, in his account of a seven weeks' tour

in England, tells us how he passed through Dartford. He was by no means a distinguished person, but what he has to say of his travels is interesting, as contributing to show how others see us. He came into England by way of the Thames, May 31, 1782, and landed (he says) just below Dartford—probably at Greenhithe—to which place he walked in company with some others, and there breakfasted. He was fresh from the dreary, sandy Mark of Brandenburg, and this fair county of Kent delighted him hugely. At Dartford he saw, for the first time, an English soldier. That robust Tommy struck him with admiration, both for the sake of his red coat and his martial bearing. “Here, too, I first saw” (says he) (“what I deemed a true English sight) two boys boxing in the street.” The party separated at Dartford, and, taking two post-chaises at the “Bull,” drove to London, the Pastor “stunned,” as it were, by a constant rapid succession of interesting objects, arriving at Greenwich nearly in a state of stupefaction.

Dartford will ever live in history as being the starting-point of Wat the Tyler’s rebellion of 1381. Tradition places the scene of Wat’s murderous attack on the tax-gatherer opposite the “Bull,” where once was Dartford Green. The Green has long since gone, but the story never stales of how the Tyler dashed out the tax-gatherer’s brains with his hammer. It is, for one thing, a tale that appeals strongly to an over-taxed community, sinking under burdens imposed chiefly for the support of imperial and local bureaucracy; and I fear that if some modern tax-collector met a similar fate, many worthy people, not ordinarily bloodthirsty, would say, “Serve him right!”

The particular impost which caused the trouble five hundred years ago was the odious Poll-tax, a hateful burden that had already caused wide discontent throughout England, and needed only a more than usually unpleasant incident to cause ill feelings to break out in ill deeds. That incident was not lacking.

At Dartford, one of the collectors had demanded the tax for a young girl, daughter of he who is known to history as Wat Tyler. Her mother maintained that she was under the age required by the statute. The tax-collector grew insolent and overbearing, and, it seems, was proceeding to a delicate investigation—like that which procured Mr. W. T. Stead three months' imprisonment some years ago—when the Tyler, who had just returned from work, killed him with a stroke from his hammer.

How Wat the Tyler was appointed by popular acclamation leader of the Commons in Kent; how, at the head of a hundred thousand insurgents, he marched to Blackheath, are matters rather for the history of England than for this *causerie* along the Dover Road.

#### XIV

THE old coachmen had an exciting time of it when either entering or leaving Dartford. They skidded down West Hill, when coming from London, to the imminent danger of their necks and those of their passengers, and they painfully climbed the East Hill, on their way out of the town toward Dover. When several accidents had occurred to prove how hazardous to life and property were these roads, the turnpike-trustmongers reduced their steepness by cutting through the hill-tops. This was about 1820. Although the roads were thus lowered, they still have a remarkably abrupt rise and fall, and the traveller in leaving the town for Dover can gain from halfway up the slope of the East Hill quite an extended view over Dartford roof-tops. He, however, remains to sketch at peril of some inconvenience, for the tramps who frequent Dartford take a quite embarrassing interest in art.

Somewhere at this end of the town stood the Chantry

of St. Edmund the Martyr, a halting-place at which pilgrims on their way to Canterbury stopped to pray and to kiss the usual relics. The site was probably where the Dartford Cemetery now stands beside the road, on the border of what is now called Dartford Brent, a wide expanse of common land known in other times as Brent, or Burnt Heath. This place came very near to being the site of a battle between



DARTFORD BRIDGE.

the Yorkists and the Lancastrians, for here it was that the rival armies first confronted one another; but, instead of coming to blows, their leaders held a parley; and so, fair words on their lips, but with deceit in their hearts, they went up to London. Many years later, on July 19, 1555, to be precise, Dartford Brent reappears in history as the place on which three Protestant martyrs, Christopher Wade, Margaret Pollen, and Nicholas Hall, were burnt at the stake, and since then the annals of the place have been quite uninteresting. The gilt-crested spire of the memorial to them peers up on the skyline of the road-cutting, on

the way up to the Brent. It stands in the old cemetery, on the left.

Donkin, the historian of Dartford, wrote in 1844 :—  
 “ On the Brent are the outlines of the ‘ Deserter’s Grave,’ cut in the turf, formerly frequented by the scholars of Hall Place School : the sod of which is still continued to be cut away by the country people in memory of the unknown, traditionally said to have been shot in the adjoining pit.”

Some light on this tradition is shed by an item in the churchwardens’ accounts :—

1679. Payed the coroner for setting on a soldier				
that hanged himself	...	...	...	13s. 0d.
Payd for a stake to drive through him	...	...	...	0s. 6d.
Drink for the Jury	...	...	...	1s 6d.

Here the road branches—the Dover Road to the left, the Roman Watling Street to the right ; although, the Roman road being older and itself based on an immeasurably more ancient British trackway, it would be more fitting to say that it is the existing Dover Road which branches off from the parent trunk road. From this point of departure on the Heath, until at the north end of Strood High Street the ways again come to a meeting, over eleven miles of the original route have been abandoned for what in mediæval times proved to be the more convenient route round by the waterside at Greenhithe and Gravesend.

But although not for many centuries have these eleven miles or so of abandoned Roman way been in use as a through route, they are not all lost. The first three miles across the Heath form a good local road, which then turns off to the right, leaving the Watling Street to climb the hill of Swanscombe, steeply up, as a tangled lane amid the dense woods. It is a very considerable elevation. Here and there the footpath deviates from the original Roman line, and the ridges, banks and hollows of it can occasionally be glimpsed amid the undergrowth ; but in any case it seems evident that the Watling Street in these eleven miles



was not straight, but re-aligned in some four limbs or individually straight stretches, partly to avoid going over the extreme crest of Swanscombe Hill. On the shoulder of that hill there was at the time of the road being made or remodelled by the Romans a British village, established inland here away from the Thames estuary probably as being a safer place than any settlement by the riverside.

Here, on the slope of the hill, the Watling Street is cut through by the vastly deep and broad excavation in the chalk made by the activities of the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers. The construction of it may even thus be studied in section.

Below, in the levels of Springhead, where a lane takes up the line of the ancient road, there may have been that Roman station called *Vagniacæ*; although it may possibly have been by the waterside at Northfleet or Southfleet, for it is by no means certain that the Romans themselves had no lesser riverside route along the line of the present Dover Road. However, to lay down a dogma upon so uncertain a matter as the Roman road-system in Britain proves to be would not commend itself to those best qualified by study to judge.

From Springhead the Watling Street continued through Cobham Park, and so at length to a junction with the Dover Road, as already noted, at Strood.

Meanwhile, the more or less modern highway goes on through a dusty district where the builder is contending with the country, and, judging from appearances, he seems likely to get the best of it. All around are glimpses of the Heath, and problematical-looking settlements of houses and institutions are grouped together on the sky-line, with weird, bottle-like towers, extravagantly grotesque, like the architecture of a nightmare, or "Alice in Wonderland." The City of London Lunatic Asylum is here beside the road; penitentiaries and their like are grouped about; a huge black windmill stands awfully on the Brent;

while everywhere are puddles, bricks, old boots, old hats, and fragments of umbrellas. Dartford Brent is a singular place.

At the old hamlet of John's Hole, just past here, called often in coaching days, "Jack-in-the-Hole," was one of the Dover Road turnpikes. The old toll-house still remains beside the way. To this succeeds, at a distance of three quarters of a mile, the melancholy roadside settlement of Horns Cross, where a post-office, two inns, and a blasted oak look from one side of the road, across great fields of barley, to the broad Thames, crowded with shipping, below.

Stone Church, one of the most beautiful and interesting in Kent, stands on a hill-top, a short distance from the left-hand side of the road, and commands a wide view of the Thames. To architects and lovers of architecture it is remarkable on account of the striking similarity its rich details bear to those of Westminster Abbey, and it is generally considered that the architect of the one designed the other. This is the more remarkable since the Abbey, with this exception of Stone Church, stands alone in England as a beautiful and peculiarly personal example of Gothic thirteenth-century architecture as practised in France. The architect of Westminster Abbey must have been of French nationality ; and so curiously similar, in little, are not only the details of both church and Abbey, but also the varieties of stone of which they are built, that they are most unlikely to have been the work of different men.

Greenhithe lies off the road to the left hand, and fronts on to the Thames. The road, all the way hence to Northfleet, is enclosed by high walls with tall factory-chimneys on either side ; or passes between long rows of recent cottages alternating with cabbage-fields in the last stage of agricultural exhaustion. Docks ; huge and ancient chalk-pits ; great tanks of lime and whitening, and brickfields are everywhere about, for Greenhithe and Northfleet are, and have

been for many years, the chief places of a great export trade in flints, chalk, and lime. The flints are sent into Derbyshire, and even to China, where they are used in the making of porcelain; and many thousands of tons are shipped annually. The excavation of chalk and flints during so long a period has left its mark—a very deep and inefaceable mark, too—upon this part of the road, and, to a stranger, the appearance presented by the scarred and deeply quarried countryside is wild and wonderful. Spaces of many acres have been quarried to a depth, in some places, of over a hundred and fifty feet, and many of these great pits have been abandoned for centuries, accumulating in that time a large and luxuriant growth of trees and bushes. Others are still being extended, and present a busy scene with men in white duck, corduroy, or canvas working clothes cutting away the chalk or loading it into the long lines of trucks that run on tramways down to the water's edge. Not the least remarkable things in these busy places are the great bluffs of chalk left islanded amid the deepest quarries, and reaching to the original level of the land. They rise abruptly from the quarry floors, are generally quite inaccessible, and have been left thus by the quarrymen, as containing an inferior quality of chalk, mixed with sand and gravel, which is not worth their while to remove.

In midst of scenery of this description, and surrounded by shops and modern houses, stands Northfleet Church, beside the highway. It is a large Gothic building of the Decorated period, and has been much patched and repaired at different times without having been actually "restored." There are some mildly interesting brasses in the chancel; but the massive western embattled tower is of greatest interest to the student of other times, for it was built, like many of the church towers in the Welsh marches and along the Scots borders, chiefly as a means of defence. The enemies who were thus to be guarded against at Northfleet were firstly Saxon pirates, then the fierce

and faithless Danes, and (much later) the French. This defensible tower at Northfleet was largely rebuilt in 1628, but a part of it belongs to the end of the fourteenth century, and it even retains fragments of an earlier building, contemporary with the terrible Sea-rovers who sailed up the estuary of the Thames, burning and destroying everything as they passed.

A significant sign of the quasi-military uses of this extremely interesting tower is the tall stone external staircase that runs up its northern face from the churchyard to the first-floor level. The small doorway that opens at the head of this staircase into the first floor was originally the only entrance to the tower, and before the church could be finally taken the enemy would have had to storm these stairs, exposed to a fire of cloth-yard shafts from arrow-slits, and of heavy stones cast down upon them from the roof.

## XV

NORTHFLEET adjoins, and is now continuous with, Gravesend. It is a busy place, engaged in the excavation of chalk and flints, and in ship-building. Here, too, were "Rosherville Gardens," or shortly, "Rosherville." A suburb of that name is here now, but the Rosherville of the Early and Middle Victorians is a thing of the past, and the place has been sold to an oil company.

Jeremiah Rosher was the inventor and sponsor of those once-famed Gardens. It was so far back as the 1830's that he conceived the grand idea of building a new town between Northfleet and Gravesend, on an estate he owned here, beside the Thames. The idea remained an idea only, for although a pier was built and the Gardens formed, Rosher never lived to see his "ville," in the sense of being a town. But his Gardens were a hugely-compensating success. It is not given

to many to make a success of a hole (unless the hole is a mine), and the site of that celebrated Cockney resort was, and is, nothing else ; being in fact one of the oldest and largest of the chalk-quarries, excavated to a depth of one hundred and fifty feet in some parts.

There a curious kind of rusticity was tempered with an equally curious urban flavour ; there the succulent shrimp and the modest watercress (“ Tea ninepence ; shrimps and watercreases, one shilling ”), were supplemented romantically by the strains of husky bands. There art was represented by broken-nosed plaster statues of Ceres and a variety of other heathen goddesses, some supporting gas-lamps in sawdusty bars and restaurants ; others gracing lawns and flower-beds. To those who delighted in plaster statues grown decrepit and minus a leg or an arm, like so many neo-classic Chelsea pensioners, Rosherville was ideal.

“ Where to spend a happy day,” as the advertisements used to invite—“ Rosherville.” The watercress consumed there, and at the other popular places near by, came from Springhead, which will be found in the country at the back of Gravesend. In 1907 died the last surviving daughter of the man who “ invented ” watercress as an article of food. It was about 1815 that William Bradbery, of Springhead, began to cultivate from a green weed that grew in the ditches this favourite addition to tea-tables.

He cultivated with care, and laid out extensive beds, then, when he had a marketable crop, sold it locally. It soon became a famous table dainty, and nothing would satisfy him but the patronage of London. He filled an old tea-chest with cress, and, with this on his back, trudged off to the metropolis, a score or more miles away. The sample was satisfactory, and he quickly developed a London trade.

Bradbery (it is said) when he was building up his London connection, paid a vocalist to go at night from one place of entertainment to another, singing a song in

praise of the famous brown cress from the waters of Springhead.

Be that as it may, Bradbery made a fortune by cultivating his cress on the extended area. He seized an opportunity where another man would not have seen one.

Watercress is now cultivated largely, and in numerous districts. It is known, botanically, as *nasturtium officinale*.

Electric tramcars now rush and rattle through Northfleet and Rosherville, and no one contemplates journeying to these scenes with the object of spending a "happy day." The great group of semi-ecclesiastical looking buildings on the left is "Huggens' College." Almshouses continue to be built, for the fountain of benevolence is not yet dried up. It was in 1847 that this foundation came into existence, pursuant to the will of John Huggens (born 1776), who was a barge-owner and corn-merchant of Sittingbourne. Looking upon a world rather astonishingly full of almshouses for people of humble birth, he conceived the somewhat original idea of founding what, with extreme delicacy, he termed a "College" for gentlemen reduced to poor circumstances. The establishment, strictly secluded behind enclosing walls, in well-wooded grounds, houses fifty collegians. Huggens himself, in stony effigy, is seen over the gateway, seated in a frockcoat and an uncomfortable attitude, and displaying a scroll or the charter of his "College." The bountiful gentleman is sadly weatherworn, for the factory fumes of this industrial district have wrought havoc with the Portland stone from which he is sculptured. Huggens was wise among the generation of benefactors: he founded his charity in his own lifetime, and personally supervised it. He died in 1865, and his body lies in Northfleet churchyard.

We will now proceed to Gravesend, noting that in 1787 the slip road between the "Leather Bottle" at Northfleet and the beginnings of Chalk, two miles in

length, was made. It would, in the language of to-day, applied to incandescent gas-mantle burners and to avoiding roads alike, be called a "by-pass."

Gravesend was at one time a place remarkable alike for its tilt-boats and its waterside taverns. The one involved the other, for the boats brought travellers here from London, and here, in the days of bad roads and worse conveyances, they judged it prudent to stay overnight, commencing their journey to Rochester the following morning. To the town of Gravesend belonged the monopoly of conveying passengers to and from London by water, and it was not until steamboats began to ply up and down the reaches of the Thames that this privilege became obsolete. Thus it will be seen that, besides being a place of call for ships, either outward bound or proceeding home, Gravesend was in receipt of much local traffic. The railway has, naturally, taken away a large proportion of this, but has brought it back, tenfold, in the shape of holiday trippers, and the continued growth of the town is sufficient evidence of its prosperity. One first hears of Gravesend in the pages of Domesday Book, where it is called "Gravesham"; but the difficulty of distinctly pronouncing the name led, centuries ago, to the corrupted termination of "end" being adopted, first in speech, and, by insensible degrees, in writing. It has an interesting history, commencing from the time when the compilers of Domesday Book found only a "hyhte," or landing-place, here, and progressing through the centuries with records of growth, and burnings by the French; with tales of Cabot's sailing hence in 1553, followed by Frobisher in 1576, to the incorporation of the town in 1568, and the flight of James the Second, a hundred and twenty years later.

Gravesend was not, in the sixteenth century, a model town. Its inhabitants paved, lighted, and cleansed their streets, accordingly as individual preferences, industry, or laziness dictated. Spouts, pipes, and projecting eaves poured dirty water on pedestrians who

were rash enough to walk those streets in rainy weather, and people threw away out of window anything they wished to get rid of, quite regardless of who might be passing underneath ; and so, whether fine or wet, those who picked their way carefully along the unpaved thoroughfares, stood an excellent chance of being drenched with something unpleasant. An open gutter ran down the middle of the street, full of rotting refuse ; every tradesman hung out signs which sometimes fell down and killed people, and in the night, when the wind blew strong, a concert of squeaking music filled, with sounds not the most pleasant, the ears of people who wanted to go to sleep.

Things were but little less mediæval in the middle of the seventeenth century, although the trade and importance of Gravesend had greatly increased. Troubles arose then on account of the disorderly hackmen, “foreigners and strangers”—any one not a freeman or a burgess was a “foreigner”—who plied between Gravesend and Rochester, and took away the custom that belonged of right to members of Gravesend guilds. Two years later the Corporation of Gravesend was distinctly Roundhead in its sympathies, for in 1649 we find the town mace being altered, the Royal arms removed, and those of the Commonwealth substituted, at a cost of £23 10s. 0d. In 1660, things wore a very different complexion, for in that year the Gravesend people welcomed Charles the Second with every demonstration of joy. They had the mace restored to its former condition at a cost, this time, of £17 10s. 0d., and allowed the mayor and another £2 5s. 7d. for going up to London to see that the work was done properly. They paid £3 10s. 0d. for painting the king’s arms ; 14s. to one John Phettiplace for “trumpeters and wigs” ; and 5s. to Will Charley “for sounding about the country.” Having done this, they all got gloriously drunk at a total cost of £12 15s. 8d., of which sum £10 7s. 8d. was for wine, and £2 8s. 0d. for beer.





RIVERSIDE, GRAVESEND.

It was, indeed, during this latter half of the seventeenth century that Gravesend experienced one of its great periods of prosperity ; and so the loyalty was well rewarded. Of this date are many of the fine old red-brick mansions in the older part of the town, together with the Admiralty House, official residence of the Duke of York when Lord High Admiral. To Gravesend he came as James the Second, a prisoner.

Embarking from Whitehall, on December 18, 1688, he reached here as late as nine o'clock at night. The next morning he was conducted hence to Rochester in the charge of a hundred of the Prince of Orange's Dutch Guards, and a melancholy journey it must have been for him, if his memory took him back to the time when, twenty-eight years before, he came up the road with his brothers, Charles the Second and the Duke of Gloucester, happily returning from exile.

To Gravesend came Royal and distinguished travellers on their way from Dover to London, and hence they embarked for the City and Westminster, escorted, if they were sufficiently Royal or distinguished by the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and the City Guilds, and fitly conducted in a long procession of stately barges by this most impressive entrance to the capital of England. And even ordinary travellers preferred this route. For two reasons : the river-road was much more expeditious than the highway in those pre-MacAdamite days, and by taking it they escaped the too-pressing attentions that awaited them on Shooter's Hill and Blackheath at the hands of Captains Gibbet and Pick-Purse.

## XVI

MANY of these distinguished travellers on this old highway have left written accounts of their doings, and very interesting readings they make. Foremost among the " distinguished " company was Marshal de Bassompierre. He came to England in 1626, on an

Embassy from the King of France, and arrived at Dover on the 2nd of October. There he stayed to recruit, for the sea, as usual, had been unkind, until Sunday, the 4th, departing thence on that day for "Cantorbery," where he slept the night, going on the Monday as far as "Sitimborne," and on Tuesday to "Rocheter" and Gravesend, where he was met by the Queen's barge. Three months later, and he was returning home. On December 1st he began his farewells at the Court of Saint James's, and bade adieu to, amongst others, such fearful wild fowl as the Earl of Suffole and the Duke of Boukinkam; this last the dissolute "Steenie"—none other! On the 5th, imagine him at Dover with an equipage of five hundred persons shivering on the brink of the Channel, and stormbound there for fourteen days at a cost of 14,000 crowns.

This imposing company embarked at last, and, after braving winds and sea for a whole day, were compelled to put back again. When they *did* finally set off, they were five days crossing to Calais, and it was found necessary to jettison the Ambassador's two carriages *en route*, in which was, alas! 40,000 francs' worth of clothes. Also this unfortunate diplomat lost twenty-nine horses, which died of thirst on the voyage.

Another French traveller, Monsieur Jouvin de Rochefort, greatly daring, visited our shores in 1670. He took the ordinary coach for "Gravesine," in order, as he says, to embark thence for London, passing on his way from Canterbury, Arburtoon, Baten, and Asbery; Grinsrit, Sitingborn, Nieuvetoon, and Renem\* and coming to Rochester through a strange place called Schatenne, which I don't find anywhere on the map, but suppose he means Chatham. All along the road he remarked a number of high poles, on the top of which were small kettles, in which fires were lighted to warn the countryside of the robbers who would come in

\* He meant Harbledown, Boughton, and Ospringe: Green-street, Sittingbourne, Newington, and Rainham.

bands and plunder the villages, were it not for the courage of the villagers, who formed themselves into guards. These poles were about a mile distant from each other, and to every one there was a small hut for the person whose business it was to keep the beacons burning. "God be praised," though, he reached "Gravesine" safely!

Samuel de Sorbière, Historiographer Royal to the King of France, visited our shores in 1663. The normal passage from Calais was three hours, but on this occasion seven hours were consumed in crossing, and although the weather was very fair, the "usual Disorder which those who are not accustomed to the sea are subject to"—but no matter! To make matters worse, contempt and affronts were put upon him in Dover streets by some sons of Belial in the shape of boys who ran after him shouting, "a Monsieur, a Monsieur," and who, when they had retired to a safe distance, proceeded to the extremely impolite depth of calling him a "French dog," "which," says M. de Sorbière, sweepingly, "is the epithet they give us in England."

Our traveller journeyed to London by wagon, rather than take a post-chaise or even the stage-coach; an extremely undignified thing for an Historiographer Royal to do, one would think. But then, 'twas the way to note the strange customs of these English! The wagon was drawn by six horses, one before another, and beside them walked the wagoner clothed in black and appointed in all things like another Saint George. He had a brave mountero on his head, and was a merry fellow who fancied he made a figure, and seemed mightily pleased with himself. Arrived at Gravesend, our traveller, for greater expedition, took boat to London, and so an end of him, so far, at least, as these pages are concerned.

But this little crowd of scribbling foreigners who visited England and wrote accounts of their travels in these islands before the locomotive was dreamed

of, had much better opportunities of catching impressions than the railway train affords. They came up this way to London, as slowly as the poet's spring; and, as a rule, they used their opportunities very well. For instance, here is the admirable M. Grosley, a kindly Frenchman who came over from Boulogne in 1765. He gives a most interesting account of his journey along the Dover Road on the 11th April. He embarked upon Captain Meriton's packet, which arrived, in company with a prodigious number of other ships, three hours before time, off Dover. Here they had to anchor for the tide to serve their landing, and the boisterous winds drove several vessels ashore, while Captain Meriton's passengers resigned themselves to death. When at length they landed, half dead, an Englishwoman with her very amiable daughter and a tall old Irishman, who pretended to be an officer (and who doubtless "had a way with him"), landed with our traveller, and contrived that he should pay part of their fare, the only trick played upon M. Grosley (I am pleased to say) during his stay in England. The customs officers looked like beggars, but treated this foreigner like a gentleman, as indeed we may suppose he was, for he belonged to the Academy.

However, a crown was levied on passing his luggage by an innkeeper who held the *droit de viscomté*. All the inns were crowded with the miserable travellers just landed, and he with whom we are particularly concerned found it necessary to go into the kitchen of his inn and take off, with his own hands, one of the *tranches de bœuf* grilling on the coals. After this exploit, he cautiously went to bed at six o'clock in the afternoon, for there were not enough beds to go round, and possession was ever nine points of the law! At three in the morning he was called upon to turn out in favour of a new arrival; but, notwithstanding all the rout they made, he held to his four-poster until five, when he was turned out and the game of Box and Cox commenced.

The sole inhabitants of Dover (says our traveller) were sailors, ships' captains, and innkeepers. The height of the triumphal arches, on which the vast signboards of the inns spanned the narrow streets, and the ridiculous magnificence of the ornaments that headed them, were wonderful as compared with the little post-boys, children of twelve and thirteen years of age, who were starting every minute in sole charge of post-chaises. The great multitude of travellers with which Dover was crowded afforded a reason for dispensing with a police regulation which forbade public conveyances to travel on Sundays, and on that day he set out with seven other passengers in two carriages called ("called," you notice, like that street in Jerusalem that was "called" straight) "flying machines." There were six horses to a machine, and they covered the distance to London in one day for one guinea each person; passengers' servants carried outside at half-price. The coachmen, who were most kindly disposed towards their horses, carried whips, certainly, but they were no more in their hands than the fan is in winter in the hand of a lady; they only served to make a show with, for their horses scarcely ever felt them, so great was the tenderness of the English coachman with his cattle.

But see the peculiar advantages of travelling on Sunday. There were no excisemen anywhere on duty, and even the highwaymen had ceased their labours during the night. The only knights of the road our travellers encountered were dangling from gibbets by the wayside in all the glories of periwigs and full-skirted coats. Unfortunately, the pace was marred by the frequent stoppages made to unload the brandy-kegs at the roadside inns from the boots of the coaches, where they had been stowed away in the absence of the gaugers.

Upon their way to Canterbury, the travellers, and our foreigner in particular, had for some time perceived that they were no longer in France, and when at length

they reached that bourne of pilgrims they were still further impressed with that fact by observing a fat man, who was just arisen from bed, standing at a bay window during the whole time the flying machines changed their Pegasuses ; and, as they were unexpected the delay was considerable. But all this while the fat man stood there in his night-shirt, with a velvet cap on his head, contemplating them with folded arms and knitted brow, and with an expression which (in France) was to be seen only on the faces of them that had just buried their dearest friends. Also, the "young persons" of both sexes stood and stared—not to mince matters—like stuck pigs.

The country which they travelled through from Dover to London was (so our traveller thought) in general a bad mixture of sand and chalk. They skirted some lovely woods as well furnished as the best-stocked forests of France—alas ! where are those woods now ?—and presently passed over commons covered with heath and stray broom, very high and flourishing all the year round. Those wild shrubs were left to the use of the poor of the several different parishes, but their vigour and thickness gave reason to conjecture that there were but few poor people in those parishes. The best lands were then, as now, laid out in hop-gardens.

The wayside inns appealed strongly to our traveller. They were given, whether in town or country, to the making of large accounts, but then see how rich was the English lord who, as a class, frequented them. Anyway, they were possessed of a cleanliness far beyond that to be found in the majority of the best private houses in France. There was only one inn on the road from Paris to Boulogne to be mentioned in the same breath with the English houses, and that was one at Montreuil, frequented by English travellers.

Between Canterbury and Rochester the coaches encountered an obstacle which savours rather of Don

Quixote's adventures than of Sunday travelling in this unromantic country. This was nothing less than a windmill which the country-folk, taking advantage of that usually coachless day, were moving entire. Less fiery than the Don, the travellers outflanked the gigantic obstacle by dragging the coaches into the field beside the road. And of that road, M. Grosley has to say that it was excellent; covered with powdered flints, and well kept, in spite of the exemption from forced labour which the countrymen enjoyed; and here he quotes what Aurelius Victor has to say of the Emperor Vespasian's vast roadworks in Britain.

The roadways had not long been in this enviable condition; only, indeed, so recently as the days of George the Second had they been rescued from the bad state into which they had been suffered to fall during the civil wars, and, generally speaking, the English knew little or nothing of the art of road-making.

The repairing of the high-roads was at the expense of them that used them. Neither rank nor dignity was exempted from the payment of tolls; the king himself was subject to them, and the turnpike would have been shut against his equipage if none of his officers paid the money before passing by.

These high-roads had all along them a little raised bank, two or three feet broad, with a row of wooden posts whose tops were whitewashed so that the coachmen should see them at night. This was for the conveniency of foot-passengers. In places where the road was too narrow to admit of this arrangement, the proprietors of lands adjoining were obliged to give passage through their fields, which were all enclosed with tall hedges or with strong hurdles about four feet high, over which passengers leapt or climbed. Custom had so habituated the village girls to this exercise that they acquitted themselves in it with a peculiar grace and agility. The great attention of



the English to the conveniency of foot-passengers had several causes. Firstly, they set the highest value upon the lives of their fellow-creatures, and in that peculiar circumstance they sacrificed to pleasure and conveniency. Secondly, their laws were not exclusively made and executed by persons who rode in their chariots. Thirdly, as the English carriages moved as swiftly in the country as slowly in the town, the meeting with persons who were so foolish or so ill-géared as to walk a-foot would have been disastrous to those wayfarers; and in so democratic a country as this the chariot-riders would have had a bad time in store for them for so small a matter as playing, as it were, the secular Juggernaut with pedestrians.

Eventually this moralising Frenchman reached London through Rochester, which place was one long street inhabited solely by ships' carpenters and dockyard men. At Greenwich, the shores of Thames loomed upon his enraptured gaze, agreeably confounded with long lines of trees and the masts of ships, and then came delightful London, and that haven where he would be—ah! you guess it, do you not? It was Leicester Fields, *le Squarr de Leicesterre* of a later generation of Frenchmen.

## XVII

HAVING thus disposed of this company of scribbling foreigners, I will get on to Milton-next-Gravesend, which immediately adjoins the town; especially will I do so because, when the old waterside lanes have been explored, little remains to see besides Gordon's statue and the little cottage where he used to live. The high-road is not at all interesting, unless indeed a Jubilee clock-tower and a number of private houses of the Regent's Park order of architecture

may be considered to lend a charm to it. Just beyond these houses comes Milton: a school, a church, and a public-house standing next one another. The church belongs to the Decorated period, and has a tower built of flints, stone, and chalk. During the last century the churchwardens had the repairing of the nave roof under consideration, and, in order to save twenty pounds on an estimate, they decided to remove the battlements, and to have a slated roof, spanning nave and aisles, and ending in eaves. The thing was done, against the wish of the Vicar and with the approval of the then Bishop of Rochester, and all who pass this way can see how barbarous was the deed. It had not even the merit of economy, for, by the time the work was completed, it had cost the churchwardens several hundreds of pounds more than had been anticipated.

“Trifle not, your time’s but short,” says a very elaborate and complicated sundial over the south porch, looking down upon the road; and, taking the hint, we will proceed at once from Milton Church to the public-house next door. But not for carnal joys; oh no! Only in the interests of this book will we make such a sudden diversion; for, at the rear of the house, on the old bowling-green, is an interesting memorial of one of the jolly fellows who once upon a time gathered here on summer evenings and played a game of bowls when business in the neighbouring town of Gravesend was done for the day.

TO THE MEMORY

OF MR. ALDERMAN NYNN,

An honest Man, and an Excellent Bowler.

*Cuique est sua Fama.*

Full forty long Years was the ALDERMAN feen,  
 The delight of each Bowler, and King of this Greene.  
 As long he remember’d his Art and his Name,  
 Whose hand was unerring, unrival’d whose Fame.  
 His Bias was good, and he always was found  
 To go the right way and to take enough ground,  
 The JACK to the uttermost verge he would fend  
 For the ALDERMAN lov’d a full length at each End.

Now mourn ev'ry Eye that hath feen him difplay  
The Arts of the Game, and the Wiles of his play :  
For the great Bowler, DEATH, at one critical Cast  
Has ended his length, and clofe rubb'd him at laft.

F. W. pofuit, MDCCCLXXVI.

And having duly noted this elegy of a truly admirable man, we may leave Milton, pausing but to look down upon the estuary of the Thames, where the great liners pass to and fro the most distant parts of the world, and also to consider the humours of a hundred years ago, when, as now, Milton was in the corporate jurisdiction of Gravesend, and when it sufficed both to employ one watchman between them. This watchman was also Common Crier, and was supported, not by a salary, but (like a hospital) by voluntary contributions. And he did not do badly by the grateful Gravesenders, for he collected, one year with another, £60, which, added to the market-gardening business he also carried on, must have made quite a comfortable income.

A little way beyond Milton, where the road curves round to the right, there will be seen on the left an eighteenth-century mansion, standing in extensive grounds. Immediately within the lodge-gates is what looks like a small church, surrounded by trees. It is older and far more interesting than it seems to be. Until 1901 it was, in fact, a roofless ruin ; but it was then restored by Mr. George M. Arnold, who then owned Denton Court, the name of the house. The church, now used as a private chapel by the owner of Denton Court, was in fact Denton Chapel, the place of worship of the parish of Denton, which was ecclesiastically separate from Milton until 1879. Denton is a place so small that few maps condescend to notice it, but it is an ancient place, first named in A.D. 950, as "Denetune," when the manor was given by one Byrhtic to the Priory of St. Andrew at Rochester, which built this chapel of St. Mary. It was on the dissolution of the monasteries in the time of Henry the Eighth that it fell into ruin.

The chapel is of literary interest, for it is the original of Barham's "Ingoldsby Abbey." In travelling between Canterbury and London by coach, Barham noticed the ruined walls standing up, silhouetted against the sky, and looking far more important than



DENTON CHAPEL.

intrinsically they were; for this was then a cleared space, the new road near by having in 1787 been cut actually through the little churchyard.

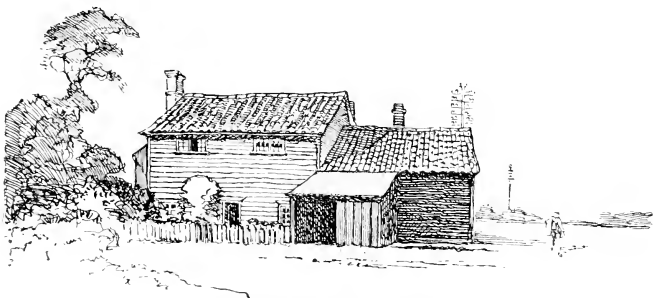
Commentators in various editions of the *Ingoldsby Legends* have stated sceptically "the remains of Ingoldsby Abbey will be found—if found at all—among the 'Châteaux en Espagne.'" That is not so; for here it is. Barham himself, in a note to the legend "The Ingoldsby Penance," remarks the ruins are "still to be seen by the side of the high Dover road, about a mile and a half below the town of Gravesend."

. . . near

The great gate Father Thames rolls sun-bright and clear,  
Cobham woods to the right—on the opposite shore  
Laindon Hills in the distance, ten miles off, or more;  
Then you've Milton and Gravesend behind—and before  
You can see almost all the way down to the Nore.

In Domesday Book Denton is written "Danitune," and it is generally held that the name comes from the raiding Danes, who certainly troubled this estuary; but it is probably "Dene-town," the place in the vale; perhaps in contradistinction to Higham, which is not far off.

Chalk is the next place on the road, and Chalk is quite the smallest and most scattered of villages, beginning at the summit of the hill leading out of Milton and ending at Chalk church, which stands on a hillock retired behind a clump of trees nearly a mile

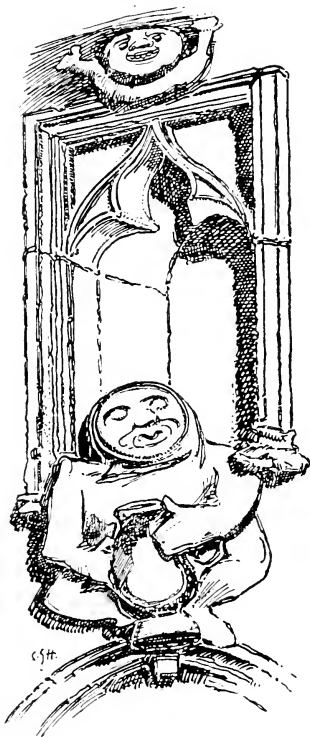


JOE GARGER Y'S FORGE.

down the road, and far away from any house. All the way the road commands long reaches of the Thames and the Essex marshes, and on summer days the singing of the larks high in air above the open fields can be heard.

At Chalk, in 1836, Charles Dickens rented a honeymoon cottage, on his marriage with Catherine Hogarth. Great controversies arose some years ago, following upon what is said to be a wrong identification of the place with a residence called the "Manor House"; and it was stated that the real dwelling in question was the weather-boarded and much humbler cottage at the fork of the old and new roads between Gravesend and Northfleet, still standing, and with a commemorative tablet on it. Opposite is "Joe Gargery's Forge."

Chalk church is a very much unrestored building of flint and rubble, dating from the thirteenth century. Its south aisle was pulled down at some remote period.



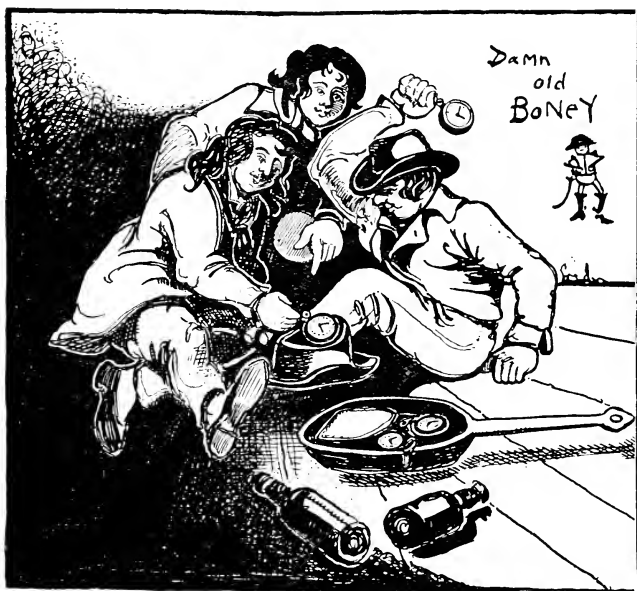
ANCIENT CARVING—CHALK.

There still remains, and in very good preservation, too, a singular Early English carving over the western door representing a grinning countryman holding an immense flagon in his two hands and gazing upward towards a whimsically-contorted figure that seems to be nearly all head and teeth. Between the two is an empty tabernacle which at one time before the destruction of "idoltrous statues" would have held a figure of the Virgin. The two remaining figures probably illustrate the celebration of "Church ales," a yearly festival formerly common to all English villages, and held on the day sacred to the particular saint to whom the church was dedicated. On these occasions there was used to be general jollity; feasting and drinking; manly sports, such as boxing, wrestling,

and games at quarter-staff, would be indulged in, and the day was held as a fair, to which came jugglers and players of interludes and itinerant vendors from far and near. The Church, of course, being the original occasion of the merry-making, looked benignly upon it, and provided the funds for the malt

from which the so-called "Church ales" were brewed.

There is one other item of interest at Chalk, and that is an old wayside tavern, the "Lord Nelson," one of those old houses that occupied, during last century, and the first quarter of the nineteenth, a



SAILORS' FOLLY. (After Julius Cæsar Ibbetson).

position between the coaching inn and the mere beer-house. This type of tavern is still very largely represented along the Dover Road, although the sailors who chiefly supported them are no longer seen tramping the highways between the seaports. They have, most of them, little harbours and trim gardens with skittle- and bowling-alleys, and here the sailor would sit and drink, spin yarns, or play at bowls; swearing

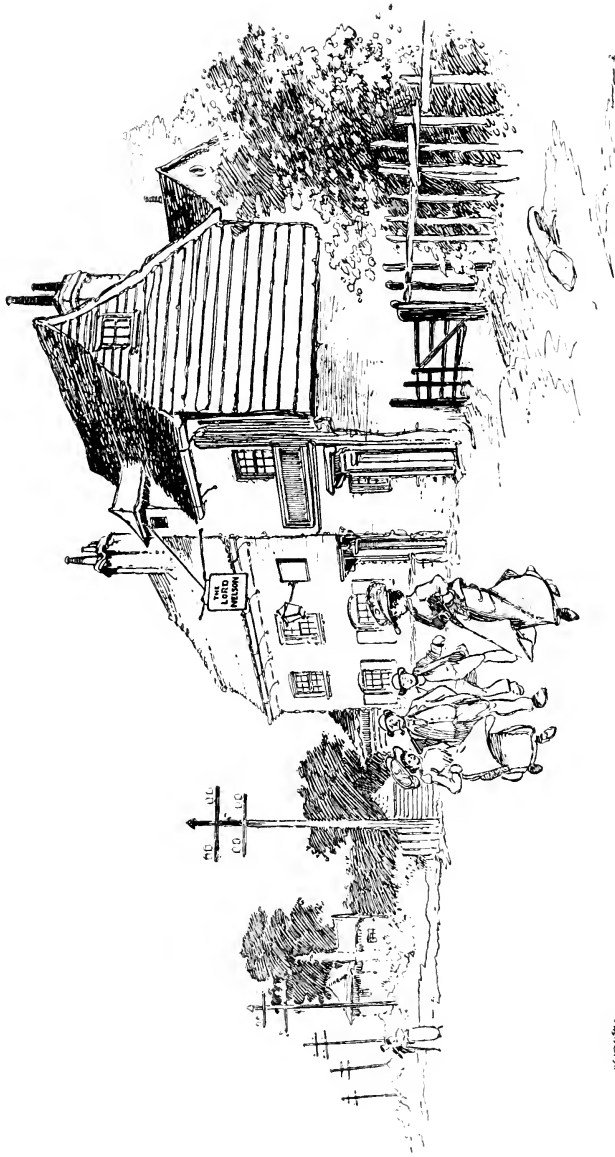
strange oaths, and telling of many a hard-fought fight. If he had kindred company, there would be, I promise you, a riotous time ; for no schoolboy so frolicsome as Jack ashore, and hard-won wages and prize-money, got at the cost of blood and wounds, he spent like water. Nothing was too expensive for him, nor, indeed, expensive enough, and if he was sufficiently fortunate to leave his landing-place with any money at all, he would very likely post up to town with the best on the road,



JACK COME HOME AGAIN.

holding, very rightly, that life without experiences was not worth the having. And of experiences he had plenty. He lived like a lord so long as his money lasted, and when he went afloat again he was shipped in a lordly state of drunkenness ; but once the anchor was weighed his was a slave's existence. Not that any word of his hardships escaped him ; he took them as inseparable from a seaman's life ; and, indeed, once the first rapture of his home-coming was over, the sea unfailingly claimed him again. And when ashore all his talk was of battles and storms ; he damned Bonaparte, believed that one Englishman could thrash three "darned parleyvoos," despised land-lubbers,





THE LIGHT FANTASTIC. BANK HOLIDAY AT CHALK.

CGMORRIS  
LONDON  
CHALK

and sang "Hearts of Oak" with an unction that was truly admirable. His failings were only those of a free and noble nature, and it is very largely owing to his qualities of courage and tenacity that England stands where she is to-day. Let us not, however, deery, either directly or by implication, the sailors who now man our ships. They live in more peaceful times, and have neither the discomforts nor the hard knocks that were distributed so largely years ago; but they have approved themselves no whit less stalwart than their ancestors who wore pigtails, fought like devils; talked of Rodney, Nelson, Trafalgar, and the Nile, and finally disappeared somewhere about the time of the Battle of Navarino.

It was for the delight and to secure the custom of these very full-blooded heroes that these old taverns with signs so nautical and bowling-greens so enticing were planted so frequently on this very sea-salty road, and now that the humblest traveller finds it cheaper to pay a railway-fare than to walk, they look, many of them, not a little forlorn. As for the "Lord Nelson," at Chalk, I fear it lies too near London suburbs to last much longer. Already, on Bank Holidays, when the Coekney comes to Gravesend, literally in his thousands, riotous parties adventure thus far, and dance in the dusty highway to sounds of concertina and penny whistle. Their custom will doubtless enrich the place, and presently a gin-palace will be made of what is now a very romantic and unusual inn, grey and time-stained; its red roof-tiles thickly overgrown with moss and house-leek, and its gables bent and bowed with years.

## XVIII

THERE is little to see or remark upon in the three miles between Chalk and Gad's Hill. Two old roadside

inns, each claiming to be a "half-way house"; a lane that leads off to the right, towards the village of Shorne; a windmill, without its sails, standing on the brow of a singular hill; these, together with the great numbers of men and women working in the fields, are all the noticeable features of the road until one comes up the long, gradual ascent to the top of Gad's Hill.

Gad's Hill is at first distinctly disappointing; perhaps all places of pilgrimage must on acquaintance be necessarily less satisfactory than a lively fancy has painted them. How very often, indeed, does not one exclaim on standing before world-famed sites, "Is this all?"

The stranger comes unawares upon Gad's Hill. The ascent is so gradual that he is quite unprepared for the shock that awaits him when he comes in sight of a house and two spreading cedars that can scarce be other than Charles Dickens' home. He has seen them pictured so often that there can surely be no mistake; and yet— He feels cheated. Is this, then, the famous hill where travellers were wont to be robbed? Is this the place referred to by that seventeenth-century robber turned *littérateur*, John Clavell, who, in his "Recantation of an Ill-led Life," speaks so magniloquently of—

Gad's Hill, and those  
Red tops of mountains, where good people lose  
Their ill kept purses.

Was it here, then, upon this paltry pimple of a hill that Falstaff and Prince Hal, Poins and the rest of them, robbed the merchants, the franklins, and the flea-bitten carriers, who, Charles's Wain being over the chimneys of their inn at Rochester, set out early in the morning for London? Was this the spot where Falstaff, brave amid so many confederates, added insult to injury of those travellers by calling them "gorbellied knaves" and "caterpillars," and

where Prince Henry, in his turn, alluded to the knight as "fat guts"? Yes, this is the place, but how changed from then! To see Gad's Hill as it was in those times it would be necessary to sweep away the rows of mean cottages that form quite a hamlet here, together with Gad's Hill Place, the hedges and enclosures, and to clothe the hillsides with dense woodlands, coming close up to, and overshadowing the highway, which should be full of ruts and sloughs of mud. Then we should have some sort of an idea how terrible the hill could be o' nights when the rogues\* who lurked in the shadow of the trees pounced upon rich travellers, and, tricked out in

vizards, hoods, disguise,  
Masks, muzzles, mufflers, patches on their eyes;  
Those beards, those heads of hair, and that great wen  
Which is not natural,

relieved them of their gold.

And not only rogues of low estate, but others of birth and education, pursued this hazardous industry, so that Shakespeare, when he made the Prince of Wales and Sir John Falstaff appear as highwaymen on this scene, was not altogether drawing upon his imagination. Thus, when the Danish Ambassador was set upon and plundered here in 1656, they were not poor illiterates who sent him a letter the next day in which they took occasion to assure him that "the same necessity that enforc't ye Tartars to breake ye wall of China compelled them to wait on him at Gad's Hill." But travellers did not always tamely submit to be robbed and cudgelled, as you shall see in these extracts from Gravesend registers—"1586, September 29th daye, was a thiefe yt was slayne, buryed;" and, again, "1590, Marche, the 17th daie, was a thiefe yt was at Gad'shill wounded to deathe, called Robert Writs, buried."

Gad's Hill is not only memorable for the robberies

\* "Gad's," *i.e.* "rogues," Hill.

committed on its miry ways. Its story rises to tragic heights with the murder, on the night of October 15, 1661, of no less a person than a foreign Prince, Cossuma Albertus, Prince of Transylvania. This unfortunate Prince, who was on a visit to England to seek aid from Charles the Second against the Germans, was approaching Rochester, apparently on his return to the Continent, when his coach stuck fast in the October mud of Gad's Hill. He had already experienced the villainous nature of our highways, and so, knowing that it would be impossible to proceed further that evening, he resigned himself to sleeping a night on the road. Having wrapped himself up as warmly as possible, he fell off to sleep, whereupon his coachman, one Isaac Jacob, a Jew, took his sword and stabbed him to the heart, and, calling upon the footman, this precious pair completed the tragedy by dragging the body out of the coach, and, cutting off the head, flinging the mutilated remains in a neighbouring ditch.

The first tidings of this inhuman murder were brought to a Rochester physician, who, riding past the spot some days afterwards, was horrified by his dog bringing him a human arm in his mouth. Meanwhile the murderers had possessed themselves of the Prince's clothes, together with a large sum of money he had with him, and, dragging the coach out of the ruts, had driven back to Greenhithe, where they left coach and horses to be called for. Not long afterwards, they were arrested in London, and, being brought before the Lord Mayor, the footman made a full confession. The trial took place at Maidstone, where Isaac Jacob, coachman, and Casimirus Karsagi, footman, were sentenced to death, the first being hanged in chains at the scene of the crime. The body of the ill-fated Prince of Transylvania was buried in the nave of Rochester Cathedral.

Sixteen years later, we come to the exploits of that ingenious highwayman, Master Nicks, who, one

morning in 1676, so early as four o'clock, committed a robbery on this essentially "bad eminence," upon the person of a gentleman, who, from some unexplained reason, was crossing the hill at that unearthly hour. This, by the way, seems to disprove the wisdom of the early worm, who, to be caught, must of necessity be up still earlier than that ornithological Solon, the early bird. 'Tis a nice point.

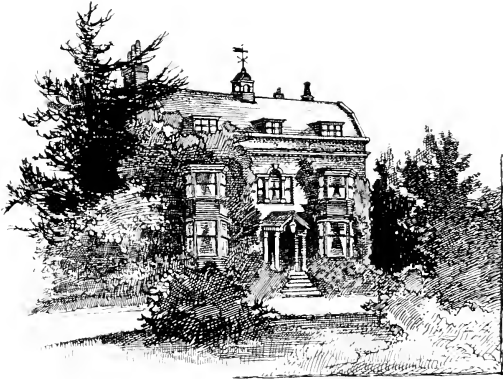
However, Master Nicks, who was mounted on a bay mare, effectually despoiled the traveller and rode away, reaching York on the afternoon of the same day. Dismounting there at an inn, he changed his riding-clothes and repaired to the bowling-green, where he found the Lord Mayor of York playing bowls with several other tradesmen. The artful rogue, in order to fix himself, the date, and the hour in that magistrate's memory, made a bet with him upon the game, took an opportunity to ask him the time, and by some means contrived to give him occasion to bear in mind the day of the month, in case he should chance to be arrested on suspicion of the affair. Sure enough, he was apprehended some time later, and when put upon his trial the jury acquitted him, as they held it impossible for a man to be at two places so remote in one day. After his acquittal, all danger being past, he confessed the truth of the matter to the judge, already doubtful of the jury's wisdom, and the affair coming to the knowledge of Charles the Second, his Majesty ekenamed this speedy road-agent "Swiftnicks." This name conceals the identity of John, or William, Nevison, who was executed on Kravesmire, York, in 1685. His exploit in thus riding from near Rochester to York is the original of the later, inferior and wholly fictitious story of Dick Turpin's ride from London to York, on Black Bess; an exploit never performed by him.

One presently becomes more tolerant of Gad's Hill, for, coming to Charles Dickens' house and the old "Falstaff" inn, almost opposite, there opens a view

over the surrounding country that is really fine, and the road goes down, too, towards Strood, in a manner eminently picturesque. The story is well known of how, even when but a "queer small boy," Dickens always had a great desire to, some day, be the owner of the place, and how his father, who would take him past here on country walks from Chatham, told him that if he "were to be very persevering, and were to work hard," he might some day come to live in it; but it is not equally a matter of common knowledge that the house had been also the object of an equal affection, years before, to the Reverend Mr. Lynn, father of Mrs. Lynn Linton, who tells us how her early years were spent here, and how, when her father died, it was she who sold the estate to the novelist. She gives also a most picturesque account of Gad's Hill in those times. The coaches were still running when Mrs. Lynn Linton, as a girl, lived here.

"Gad's Hill House stands a little way back from the road. The grand highway between London and Dover, not to speak of between Gravesend and Rochester, it was as gay as an approach to a metropolis. Ninety-two public coaches and pleasure-vans used to pass in the day, not counting the private carriages of the grandees posting luxuriously to Dover for Paris and the grand tour. Soldiers marching or riding to or from Chatham and Gravesend, to embark for India, or on their return journey home; ships' companies paid off that morning, and cruising past the gates, shouting and singing and comporting themselves in a generally terrifying manner, being, for the most part, half-seas over, and a trifle beyond; gipsies and travelling tinkers; sturdy beggars with stumps and crutches; savoyards with white mice, and organ-men with a wonderful wax doll, two-headed and superbly dressed, in front of their machines; chimney-sweepers, with a couple of shivering, little, half-naked climbing boys carrying their bags and brushes; and costermongers, whose small, flat carts were drawn by big dogs, were

also among the accidents and circumstances of the time. . . . Old Mr. Weller\* was a real person, and we knew him. He was 'Old Chumley' in the flesh, and drove the stage daily from Rochester to London, and back again."



GAD'S HILL PLACE. RESIDENCE OF CHARLES DICKENS.

It was here, then, that Dickens lived from 1856 to his death, on June 9, 1870, and thus Gad's Hill is, for many, doubly a place of pilgrimage. And, truly, the whole course of the Dover Road is rich in memories of him and of the characters he drew with such a flow of sentimentality; and sentiment is more to the Englishman than is generally supposed. Hence that amazing popularity which is only just now being critically inquired into, weighed and appraised. Dickens was a man of commanding genius. His observation was acute, and he reproduced with so photographic a fidelity the life and times of his early years that the "manners and customs of the English," during the first third of the nineteenth century, find no such

\* One of the many originals of "Samivel's father" put forward. One was supposed to have been at Bath, another at Dorking; and others still have claims to have originated this humorous character.



luminous exponent as he. When, if indeed ever, the *Pickwick Papers* cease to amuse, they will still afford by far the most valuable evidence that could possibly exist as to the ways and thoughts, the social life and the conditions of travel, that immediately preceded the railway era. Superficial critics may hold that the most humorous book of the century is but a succession of scenes, with little real sequence and no plot; they may also say that Mr. Pickwick, Messrs. Tupman, Snodgrass, Winkle, and the rest of that glorious company, were "idiots," but for genuine fun and frolic that book is still pre-eminent, and none of the "new humorists," with their theories and criticisms of the "old humour," have approached within a continent or so of it. Not that Dickens' methods were irreproachable. It was his pleasure in all his books to give his characters allusive names by which you were supposed to recognise their attributes at once. It is thus upon the stage, in pantomime or farce, that the clown's painted grin and the low-comedian's ill-fitting clothes, red hair, and redder nose, proclaim their qualities before a word is spoken, and when Dickens calls a pompous fraud "Pecksniff," a vulgar Cockney clerk "Guppy," or a shifty, irresponsible, resourceful person "Swiveller," we know at once, before we read any further, pretty much what their characters will be like. This, of course, is not art; it is an entirely indefeasible attempt to claim your sympathies or excite your aversions at the outset, independently of the greater or less success with which the author portrays their habits afterwards. We must, however, do Dickens the justice both to allow that he needed no such adventitious aids to the understanding of his characters, and to recognise that this kind of nomenclature was not peculiarly his own, but very largely the literary fashion of his time.

The pranks of Falstaff and Prince Hal, whose doings were to be "argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for ever," are commemorated, in a

fashion, by a large roadside inn, the "Falstaff," standing nearly opposite Gad's Hill Place, the successor, built in the time of Queen Anne, of a lonely beerhouse, the resort of characters more than questionable; more than kin to highwaymen, and much less than kind to unprotected wayfarers.



THE "FALSTAFF," GAD'S HILL.

From here the road goes steeply all the way to Strood, over Coach and Horses' Hill, and through a deep cutting made by the Highway Board about 1830, in order to ease the heavy pull up from Rochester; a cutting known at that time as "Davies' Straits," from the name of the chairman of the Board, the Rev. George Davies. The view here, over house-tops toward the Medway, framed in on either side by this hollow road, is particularly fine, and I think I cannot come through Strood into Rochester without quoting a certain lieutenant who, with a captain and an "ancient" (by which last we understand "ensign" to be meant), travelled in these parts in 1635. "I am

to passe," says he, "to Rochester, and in the midway I fear'd no robbing, although I passed that woody, and high old robbing Hill (Gadds Hill), on which I alighted, and tooke a sweet and delightfull prospect of that faire streame, with her pleasant meads she glides through." The lieutenant's description is delightful, and if he drew the sword to such good purpose as he wielded the pen, why, I think he must have been a warrior of no little distinction. He says nothing of Strood; and, indeed, I think Strood has through the centuries been entreated in quite a shabby and inadequate manner. The reason of this, of course, is that Strood is over the water and suburban to Rochester; a kind of poor relation so to speak, and treated accordingly.

But the place is old and historic, and celebrated not only for the great fight which the barons made in the thirteenth century against the king, when they fought their way across the bridge, and, taking possession of Rochester, sacked town, castle, and cathedral, but also for that exploit of the townsfolk who cut off the tail of one of Becket's sumpter-mules, whereupon that wrathful prelate cursed them, and caused them and their descendants to go with tails for ever. Thus the story which accounts for the county nickname of "Kentish long-tails," but I do not perceive that the Strood folks are so unusually decorated. Perhaps they are at pains to hide their shame.

## XIX

STROOD, too, deserves some notice. The place-name has been thought to derive from *strata*, "the street," standing as it does on that ancient way, the Roman Watling Street. But, in the recent advance in the study of place-names, it is held to be from the Anglo-Saxon "strode": a marshy region.

The original meaning of "Watling Street" is never

likely to be determined to the satisfaction of all antiquaries, and its age is equally a contested point. But that a street or a trackway of some kind, of an identical route with the present highway, ran between London and Dover long before Cæsar landed can scarce be matter for doubt. That the Britons were barbaric and unused to commerce or intercourse with the Continent can scarcely be supposed, for Britain was the Sacred Island of the Druidical religion, and to it came the youth of Gaul for instruction at the hands of those high priests whose Holy of Holies lay, across the land, in remote Anglesey. Those priests were the instructors, both in religion and secular knowledge, of the Gaulish youth; and, outside the civilisations of Greece and Rome, Britain was even then the best place to acquire a "liberal education." Up the rugged trackway of the Sarn Gwyddelin = the Foreigners' Road, from Dover to London, and diagonally across the island, came these youths; and down it, to voyage across the Channel, and to take part with their Gaulish friends in any fighting that might be going, went those tall British warriors whose strength and fierceness surprised Cæsar in his Gallic War.

Imports and exports, too, passed along this rough way; skins and gold, British hunting-dogs and slaves were shipped to Gaul and Rome by merchants who, to keep the trade unspoiled, magnified the dangers of the sea-crossing and the fierceness of the people. Pottery, glass-beads, and cutlery they imported in return; and this primitive "road" must have presented a busy scene long before it could have deserved the actual name.

When Cæsar, eager for spoil and conquest, marched across country from Deal, and first saw the Sarn Gwyddelin from the summit of Barham Downs, it could have been but a track, never *built*, but gradually brought into existence by the tramping of students and fighting-men, and widened by the commerce of those exclusive merchants. Thus it remained for

at least ninety-eight years longer ; rough, full of holes, mires, and swamps, and crossed by many streams. Cæsar came and went ; and not until Aulus Plautius and Claudius had overrun Britain, and probably not before many successive Roman governors had served here, and reduced this province of Britannia Prima to the condition of a settled and prosperous colony, was the Foreigners' Road made a *viâ strata*, a paved Roman Military Way.

Its date might be anything from the landing of Aulus Plautius, in A.D. 45, to the time of Hadrian, the greatest of all road-builders, A.D. 120. Then it became a true " street," made in the thorough manner described by Vitruvius, and paved throughout with stone blocks ; the "*strata*" from which the word " street " is derived.

Engineered with all that road-making science which, not less than their victories, has rendered the Romans famous for all time, the Watling Street, as the Romans left it, stretched from sea to sea. Starting from their three great harbour fortresses on the Kentish coast—from *Rutupiæ*, *Portus dubris*, and *Lemanis*, Englished now as Richborough, Dover, and Lympne—it converged in three branches upon their first inland camp and city of *Durovernum*, where Canterbury now stands. Proceeding thenceforward on the lines of the present Dover Road, the Roman road came to their next station of *Durolevum*, whose site no antiquary has fixed convincingly, but which might have been at either Sittingbourne, Ospringe, Davington, or Key Street. Thence it reached *Durobrivæ*, which was certainly on the site of Rochester. Crossing the Medway by a *trajectus*, or perhaps even by a bridge of either stone or wood, the road passed through Strood, and branched off through Cobham, coming again to the modern highway at Dartford Brent. Perhaps it even had two branches here, one touching the river at *Vagniacæ*, probably both Northfleet and Southfleet ; and the other keeping, as we have seen, inland until a

junction was effected near Dartford. But with its proximity to London, the story and the geography of Watling Street grow not a little confused. Where, for instance, the succeeding station of *Noviomagus* was situated no one can say with certainty. It might have been at Keston ; it probably was at Crayford ; or there *might* have been two branches again, as some antiquaries suggest. Through London, the Watling Street went across England, past St. Albans and Wroxeter, and finally to *Segontium*, or the hither side of the Menai Straits, throwing off a branch to *Deva*, Chester.

This and other great roads grew gradually to perfection throughout the country for four hundred years. Towns and military stations dotted them at intervals, and in between the abodes of men the way was lined, after the custom of the Roman people, with tombs and cemeteries. This explains the many "finds" of sepulchral urns and various relics beside the road.

When the Saxons came, they could not pronounce the name by which the half-Roman people called this road, and so "Gwyddelin" became "watling" on their tongues, while "strata" was corrupted to "street." No new roads were made now, and, indeed, not until the Turnpike Acts of George the Third's time and the era of MacAdam was the art of road-making practised again in England. For ages the "roads" of this country were a byword and a reproach to us. By the middle of the twelfth century the Roman roads that had been made and kept in repair for hundreds of years fell into ruin, and the detritus and miscellaneous accumulations of twenty-five generations now cover the greater portion of them. At a depth varying from five to fourteen, and even eighteen, feet, excavators have come upon the hard surface of the original Roman road, and mosaic pavements of villas found at that extreme depth attest how the surface of a country may be altered only by the gradual deposit of vegetable matter. The thickest deposits are found in low-lying

situations, where the flow of streams or rain-water has brought liquid earth to settle upon the deserted sites of an ancient civilisation. This has occurred notably at such places as Dartford, Rochester, and Canterbury, all situated in deep valleys, where springs and storms have united to bring mud, sand, and gravel down from the hillsides, and thus to equalise in some measure the ancient irregularities of the scenery. While the hollows have thus been rendered less profound, the hill-tops and table-lands have remained very much as they were, and it is in these elevated situations that the line of Watling Street can most readily be traced, or *could* have been had not the stone pavings that composed the road been long ages ago abstracted.

This long neglect of the roads made country journeys exceedingly difficult and dangerous. Travellers' tales in England during six or seven centuries are concerned with two great evils; highway robbery and the shocking state of the roads; and so deep and dangerous were some of the quagmires that, rather than attempt to cross them, coachmen would drive through wayside fields, and thus make a road for themselves. It was in this way that ancient highways became diverted, and the pedestrian who finds the route between two towns to be extraordinarily circuitous must often look to these circumstances for an explanation. The southern counties bore a bad reputation for impassable roads until about seventy years ago, and Kentish miles were long linked with Essex stiles and Norfolk wiles as prime causes of beguilement; while the fertility of Kentish soil is joined with the muddy character of Kentish roads in two old county proverbs. Thus, "Bad for the rider, good for the abider," expressed truths obvious enough to those who came this way a hundred years ago; and "There is good land where there is foul way" would have said much for the excellence of Kent, where all the ways were foul. But if the traveller was not a landed gentleman,

except in the sense that he was generally covered with mud from head to foot, the reflection that the county through which he waded deep in slush must be singularly fertile could scarce have afforded him much consolation for lost time and spoiled clothes. Here is a tale of an unfortunate horseman bogged on these miscalled "roads" which is quite eloquent of what old-time wayfaring was like. He comes to a suspicious-looking slough and hesitates. "Is there a good bottom here, my man?" he asks of a country joskin regarding him with a wide smile. "Oo-ah! yes, there's a good bottom to un," replies the countryman, and the traveller urges on his way until, within a yard or so, his horse sinks to the girth in liquid mud. "I thought you said there was a good bottom to this road," shouts the traveller. "Yes," rejoins the rustic, "soo there ees, but you a'n't coom to un yit, master."

## XX

STROOD is one long street of miscellaneous houses, with fields and meadows running up to the backyards; with engine-shops, mills, wheelwrights, and a variety of other noisy trades clanging and clattering in the rear, and an old church on the hillside to the left, appropriately dedicated to that patron of thieves and sailor-men, Saint Nicholas. But whether or no "Saint Nicholas' clerks" looked in here to pray the saint to send them "rick franklins and great oneyers" across that "high old robbing hill," I should not like to say; having though, the while, a shrewd suspicion that their piety was somewhat to seek, and that the shrine of the saint profited but little, if at all, from their ill-gotten gains upon the road.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the old houses here and at Rochester, and, indeed, along a great portion of the Dover Road, is the great use



of weather-boarding, chiefly on the upper storeys. An instance of this is seen at Strood at an inn, the “Crispin and Crispianus,” standing in the main street. A still more interesting point about this old house is its pictorial swinging sign, overhanging the pathway—a representation of the two shoemaker brothers, Crispin and Crispian, at work, cobbling boots. The brothers were Christian martyrs who suffered death at Soissons, A.D. 287. How they came to serve as the sign of an inn is quite unknown. It has been suggested that, as Agincourt was fought on Saint Crispin’s Day, this old sign is of the warlike and patriotic order to which belong the Waterloo, Wellington, Nelson, Alma, and Trafalgar signs that are so plentiful on this road; but it is a great deal more likely that it is a relic of the days when men made pilgrimages to Becket’s shrine, when innkeepers found their account to lie in calling their houses after some popular saint or another.

A curious incident in connection with the “Crispin and Crispianus” must be noted before we pass on. It happened in 1830. One night in September of that year, a doctor who had only just then commenced practice in Strood was called in to see a man lying at the point of death in an upper room of the old inn. He hastened to the place, and found a man lying in bed who told him that, although he was known only as an ostler, he was really the Earl of Coleraine, nephew of that notorious Colonel Hanger who is chiefly known as the riotous boon-companion of the Prince Regent in the early days of Brighton and the Pavilion. Colonel Hanger was the fourth earl, and succeeded his brother in the title, which he never assumed. He died, childless, in 1824, and the earldom became extinct. As Colonel Hanger was the youngest son of his father, and as no mention has ever been made of any of his elder brothers leaving sons, the matter is not a little mysterious, especially as the colonel’s right to the title, had he chosen to use it, was not disputed.

However, the strange man who died on September 20, 1830, at the "Crispin and Crispianus" apparently satisfied Doctor Humphrey Wickham of the truth of his story, and that his real name was Charles Parrott Hanger, instead of "Charley Roberts," by which he had been known at Strood and the neighbourhood for twenty years. During this time he had acted as ostler at the coaching inns of Rochester and Chatham; had tramped the country, selling laces, thread, tape, and other small wares; and on Sundays shaved labourers. He had deserted his wife years before. She was long dead, and he had a son apprenticed to a firm of ironmongers at Birmingham. To this son he left all he was possessed of, making the doctor his executor. It will not be imagined that this ex-ostler, dying in a room of the "Crispin and Crispianus," where he was lodged by the landlady out of charity, had anything to bequeath; but the doctor paid over, as executor, the sum of £1000 to Charles Henry Hanger, the son of this eccentric.

## XXI

AND so, as Mr. Samuel Pepys might say, into Rochester.

Rochester was to Dickens variously "Mudfog," "Great Winglebury," "Dullborough," and "Cloisterham." It cannot be said that any of these names form anything like an adequate word-picture of the place. As names, they vary from good to indifferent, and very bad, but none of them shadow forth the real Rochester, which is rather a busy place than otherwise: none, for instance, are so happily descriptive as that under which a waggish fellow introduced a wealthy distiller to an assemblage of Polish notables—as "Count Caskowisky." I might pluck a feather from Dickens' wing with which to furnish forth a wounding

shaft, and say of Rochester, under any of those pseudonyms, as Trabbs' boy said in another connection (and yet not deserve the title of "unlimited miscreant,") "Don't know yah!"

The somnolent place which Dickens drew—its High Street a narrow lane, its houses abodes of gloom and mystery—has not much existence in fact. It is, of course, heresy to say so (but it is none the less true), that although no other place was probably so well known to Dickens, and that from his youth upward, yet he never caught the true note of Rochester. That he loved the place seems obvious enough, but his was not the Gothic, mediæval temperament that could really appreciate it aright. The test of this is found in the fact that although Dickens has written many glowing pages on Rochester, and apparently yielded to none in his admiration for the old city, yet its appearance is far more beautiful to the stranger learned in Dickens-lore than anything he is prepared to see.

Busy, beautiful Rochester, and none the less beautiful because busy. The traveller who first sees the old place, its castle and cathedral and the turbid Medway, from Strood, is fortunate in his approach, and will never forget the grand picture it makes. To his right stretches away for miles the broad valley of the Medway, with bold hills crowned with windmills, above, and the stream, diminishing in long perspective, below; with jutting promontories where the factory-chimneys of Borstal and Wouldham stand up, clustered like the stalks of monstrous vegetables, and the red-sailed barges that drop down with wind and tide. Before him rise the great keep, the cathedral, and the clustered red roofs of the city, with a glimpse of the High Street, the Town Hall and its great vane—a full-rigged ship—at the other end of the bridge. And all the while to his left is the shrieking and the screaming of the trains, rolling in thunder over the two railway bridges that absolutely shut out and ruin the view down the stream. The bustle, roar, and rattle of

the trains, the busy, yet silent, traffic of the river, the smoke rising in wreaths from those distant chimneys of Wouldham and Borstal, all bespeak labour and commerce, and all these rumours of a busy community blend finely with the shattered majesty of that ancient Castle, the solemnity of the Cathedral, and the noisy, yet restful, cawing of the raucous rooks who circle round about those lofty battlements, their outcry mingled with the sobbing, moaning voices of the pigeons, and the shrill piping of querulous sea-birds.

The bridge over which Mr. Pickwick leaned and meditated while waiting for breakfast has gone the way of many another old building referred to in that book which will presently have a quite unique archæological value, so changed are the varied haunts of the Pickwickians. Necessity, they say, the call of progress, demanded the removal of the fine stone bridge of eleven arches that had spanned the Medway so efficiently for five centuries, and it *was* removed in 1856; but how cruel the necessity, and how heavy a toll we pay for our progression perhaps only those who had stood upon the ancient ways can tell. The masonry was so strong that it was found necessary to blow it up.

Meanwhile, we must clear our minds from a very reasonable prejudice, and acknowledge that, as an example of modern engineering, the new Rochester Bridge is very fine. It is of iron, broad and graceful as its iron construction will allow, and it spans the river in three great arches. It cost £160,000, exclusive of approaches, to build, and was opened in 1856. The old bridge had a protecting balustrade which more or less effectually saved the lieges from being blown by furious winds into the water. Before the balustrade there were high iron railings, which were fixed according to the French Ambassador, the Duc de Nivernais, "so that drunkards, not uncommon here, may not mix water with their wine."

That the balustrade was not very greatly to be relied

upon, and that Mr. Pickwick, bulky man as he was, ran a considerable risk when he leaned over the parapet, may be gathered when we read that on a night in 1836 a storm demolished a great stretch of it, and that the Princess Victoria, who was coming up the road from Dover, was content to be advised to stay overnight at the "Bull," rather than attempt to cross over to Strood. The riverside wore a somewhat different aspect then. Low and broken cliffs picturesquely shelved down to the water's edge where a neat embankment now runs, and the balustrades of the old bridge serve their old purpose on this new river-wall. The embankment is an improvement from an utilitarian point of view, but its long straight line hurts the artistic sense.

The stranger should come into Rochester preferably on the evening of a summer's day, and, as first impressions must ever remain the most distinct, he should walk in over the bridge. At such times a golden haze spreads over the city and the river, and renders both a dream of beauty. The gilt ship on the Town Hall blazes like molten metal; the "moon-faced clock" of the Corn Exchange is correspondingly calm, and the wide entrance-halls of the older inns begin to glow with light. You should have walked a good fifteen miles or more on the day of your first coming into Rochester, and then you will appreciate aright the mellow comforts of its old inns. But not at once will the connoisseur of antiquity and first impressions who thus enters the old city repair him to his inn. He will turn into the Cathedral precincts underneath the archway of Chertsey's Gate, and I hope he will not already have read *Edwin Drood*, because an acquaintance with that tale quite spoils one's Rochester, and leaves an ineffaceable mark of a modern sordid tragedy upon the hoary stones of Cathedral, Castle, and Close. It is as though one had come to the place after reading the unrelieved brutality of a newspaper report. Rochester demands a romance

of the Ivanhoe type ; chivalry or necessities of State should have ennobled slaughter here, but a tale of secret murder for private ends vulgarises and tarnishes the place, especially when it is told with all Dickens' wealth of local allusion. He had no comprehension of tragedy and romance other than those of the street and the police-court ; which is to say that he had better have left Rochester alone, so far as the *Mystery of Edwin Drood* is concerned.

If my imaginary traveller comes to Rochester without having read that tale he will be singularly fortunate. Otherwise he will have an uneasy feeling as he stands and gazes a moment upon the west front of the Cathedral, or peeps into the nave, that it ought to be re-consecrated. This, of course, is a tribute to Dickens' descriptive and narrative powers that clothe the doings of his characters with so great an air of reality ; but how unfortunate for those who like their murders to be decently old and historical that he should have brought the atmosphere of the police-court into the grave and reverend air of this ancient city.

My traveller, happily unversed in all this, will gaze upon the Cathedral and the Castle Keep, where the rooks are circling to rest, and, coming again into the High Street, will turn to his inn, where appetite, sharpened by pedestrianism and fresh air, may be appeased as well now as in those days of heavy drinking and no less heavy eating, when seventy-two coaches passed through Rochester daily and the trains that thunder across the Medway were undreamt of.

The inns of Rochester receive, as may well be supposed, many pilgrims who for love of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dickens, come hither, not alone from all parts of England, but from America, and even from foreign-speaking countries, and the visitors' books testify not only to their opinions of the place but also of each other. Thus at one inn I read the signatures of a party of Germans, to which some

prejudiced Briton, after sundry offensive remarks about foreigners in general and Germans in particular, adds, "They are everywhere, d——n them!" But I must confess that the following surprised me, even after a long acquaintance with the inanities of visitors' books. Some one had remarked "How like Rochester Cathedral was to a Catholic Church," whereupon some other idiot adds, "Of course it is Catholic, but not Roman Catholic." Really one scarcely knows whom to pity most.

The "Bull" inn (how remarkably like its frontage is to that other "Bull" at Dartford) is much the same now as when Dickens wrote of it; only there are portraits of Dickens hanging on the staircase now, and the ball-room, with its "elevated den," is a place of solitude. They still show you the rooms where Winkle and Mr. Pickwick slept, as though they were real people, and so great an affection do the members of the Pickwick Club command, that, while pointing out where Tracy Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass danced, the rooms occupied by the Princess Victoria are clean forgotten. So literature scores a success for once; but I wish a too earnest loyalty had not altered the sign from the "Bull Inn" to the "Victoria and Bull Hotel"! The hall is still "a very grove of dead game and dangling joints of mutton," and the "illustrious larder, with glass doors, developing cold fowls and noble joints and tarts, wherein the raspberry jam coyly withdraws itself, as such a precious creature should, behind a lattice-work of pastry," still whets the appetites of incoming guests, just as though England stood where she did, and as if our trades were not ruined by foreign competition, our industries decayed, the army gone to the dogs, the navy to Davy Jones, the farmer to the workhouse, and the shopkeeper to the Bankruptcy Court, as we are told they have. No doubt all these things have happened, or are in course of fulfilment, and I suppose the hotel-keepers keep up

their licences merely for the love of licensed victualling, while the "commercial" still travel the roads for old acquaintance's sake rather than for any business that may be doing. How disinterested of them!

## XXII

I NOTICE that there is a great tendency among those who have to describe Rochester Cathedral to dismiss it with the remarks that it is quite small, and that it was "restored" in 1825 and 1875. These, of course, are the merest ineptitudes of criticism, and if we allowed praise or censure to be awarded according to the bulk, then that hideous elephantine conventicle, Jezreel's Temple, on the summit of Chatham Hill, would easily bear away the bell.

But size has little to do with a right appreciation of architecture. Chasteness of proportion, the degree of artistry shown alike in details and in the execution of the whole, are the sole considerations that shall weigh with those who take any sort of an intelligent interest in the architecture of cathedrals; and the admiration of a thing that "licks creation" in the matter of measurement is senseless if it is not wedded to a proper perception of the justness of the parts that go to make its bulk.

The Cathedral of Saint Andrew at Rochester is at least equally interesting with that of Canterbury; and that this should be so is only natural, for one is the complement of the other. Canterbury was the earliest Cathedral in England; the See of Rochester was established immediately afterwards, and was for many years not only intimately associated with that great metropolitan church, but was actually dependent upon it. Then, the early Norman Archbishops and Priors of Canterbury and the Bishops and Priors of Rochester were often intimate personal friends who



had come over together from Normandy to England ; and the close relations thus established lasted for many years. The See of Rochester was founded by Saint Augustine about A.D. 600, and by him the first Bishop was consecrated, four years later.

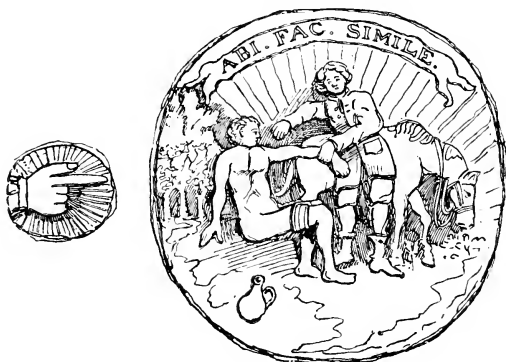
But when the Norman Conquest brought a new era of church building into England, Rochester Cathedral was rebuilt. Gundulf, the second Norman Bishop, the friend of Anselm and Lanfranc, the greatest military and ecclesiastical architect of his time, prepared to erect a new and grander edifice on the ruins of the Saxon church. The number and extent of this great architect's works are simply prodigious. How he could have packed into even *his* lengthy life the duties of a Churchman, which we are told by those who knew him he never missed for a single day ; the cares of statecraft which also fell to his lot ; and the building, not only of his Cathedral, but also of the Tower of London, Rochester Keep, Dartford Church, Malling Abbey, and minor works, we are at a loss to conceive. He was consecrated in 1077 and died in 1108, before he had completed his work here. Ernulf, Prior of Canterbury, succeeded him, and finished the building, which was consecrated in 1130, in the same year that witnessed the completion and consecration of Ernulf's and Conrad's new Cathedral at Canterbury. Here, then, we see at once the close connection between the architectural history of these two neighbouring churches. Ernulf had a hand in both ; a very large share of the crypt, the west front, and a part of the nave of Rochester was his ; while at Canterbury the crypt and the choir were built in collaboration with Prior Conrad. These facts partly explain the unusual and beautiful feature of a choir raised many feet above the level of the nave, which is characteristic both of Canterbury and Rochester Cathedrals, and seen nowhere else in England. And not only in these most prominent features of their architectural con-

struction are the two buildings alike ; their stories run curiously parallel, both in their building and in their destruction. Less than fifty years after their simultaneous consecration, both churches were partly destroyed by fire, and their ruined portions rebuilt in the Transitional Norman and Early English styles, by those two architects who are supposed to be one and the same person—William de Hoo, Bishop of Rochester, and that “ William the Englishman ” who succeeded French William of Sens in rebuilding the choir of Canterbury. At that time, allowing for the great difference in their relative sizes, the two Cathedrals must have borne a strong likeness to one another ; and when we look upon Ernulf’s nave here, we look upon the likeness of the nave at Canterbury until that period, between 1390 and 1421, when Prior Chillendon replaced Lanfranc’s work with the light and lofty, but exceedingly uninteresting, Perpendicular nave that now forms the western end of the Primate’s Metropolitan Church.

Fortunately for ourselves, who think Norman work not the flower of ecclesiastical architecture, but the most interesting and æsthetically satisfying next to the incomparable grace of the Early English period, Rochester was too poor a See to be able to embark on extensive schemes of rebuilding, and we are spared the rather vulgar ostentation of skill and wealth to which the Perpendicular style lends itself. Little could be added to the dignity and solemn majesty, the right proportions and impressive simplicity, of this massive Norman nave. Here came Cromwell, whose soldiers quartered their horses in the aisles, leaving the building so desecrated that a saw-pit sunk afterwards in the pavements seemed a scarcely worse use of the House of God. Here also eighteenth-century monumental masons have contrived monuments bad enough, even for the surroundings of classic architecture, but no less than an affront in this place ; while the half-learnt Gothic restorations of Cottingham, whose puerilities

of seventy years ago were seen in the choir, are a sorrow to behold.

A long line of tombs and effigies, from Bishops down to a Good Samaritan in seventeenth-century costume, carved grotesquely and all out of drawing, on the pavement of the Lady Chapel, claim attention, and easily first among them is the beautiful coloured effigy of Bishop John de Sheppey, discovered, built up in his recess, in 1825. The plain tomb of Gundulf is shown, and the resting-place of Bishop Walter de



A GOOD SAMARITAN.

Merton, drowned while crossing the Medway in a boat, 1277. The authorities of Merton College have restored and beautified the tomb of their founder, and it lies, painted and decorated, near the grave of St. William.

Saint William of Perth was for long the chief glory and principal source of income to the Priory and monks of Rochester. He was a wealthy Scottish baker who, having amassed a fortune, probably both by overcharging for his bread and in the giving of short weight, determined to go on pilgrimage. He must have been a superlative rogue and cheat, for

nothing less than a pilgrimage to Jerusalem would serve his purpose. However, he never reached the Holy City ; for, having arrived at Rochester in 1201, and having contributed magnificently to the shrines there, he was murdered by his guide while journeying hence to Canterbury. At least, so runs the story, but I believe the monks themselves did the deed. They were exceedingly poor, having by some unexplained excesses squandered the wealth which the once highly venerated bones of Saint Paulinus had brought them, and they had already melted down the silver shrine of that Saint to pay their way withal. The competition of Canterbury, too, was killing, and the fame of Paulinus paled before that of Becket ; and so they probably conceived the idea of murdering the rich pilgrim in order to obtain at once a remunerative martyr of their own, and to put themselves in funds with the wealth he carried about with him. If the Dean and Chapter of Rochester could in after years wilfully appropriate to their own uses an annual income of several thousands of pounds intended for educational purposes, and become thus common thieves and speculators, what scruples could be supposed to hinder the monks of the dark ages from becoming murderers ?

The south-east transept has a curious mural monument to Richard Watts ; with a coloured and very life-like portrait-bust “ starting out of it like a ship’s figure-head,” and underneath is a brass to the memory of Charles Dickens. On the eastern wall is a medallion profile of Joseph Maas, the singer, vulgar and amateurish beyond the power of words to tell.

Rochester Cathedral is not rich in decorative carvings, but its two enriched doorways are famous. One is the beautiful Norman west door, of five receding arches, carved over with a profusion of characteristic Norman scrolls ; interlacing patterns ; semi-human and half-supernatural figures of appalling build and ferocious expression ; and flanked by two statues supposed to represent Henry the First and Queen

Matilda. The other is the unsurpassed Decorated doorway of the Chapter House, whose sculptured emblematic figures of the Church, and of angels, priests and bishops are at the other, and more beautiful, end of decorative art.

Having seen all these things, the verger who has hitherto shepherded his flock of visitors through these upper regions, takes them down a flight of stone stairs and unlocks the door of the crypt. An ancient and mouldy smell rushes up from the dark labyrinth of pillars and indistinct arches, and the ladies of the party pretend to be terrified. But they might just as well be afraid of a coal-cellar, which is generally darker and dirtier, for neither bones nor coffins, nor anything more awful than a few shattered fragments of architectural carvings are to be seen. The usual legends current in most old places would have us believe that a subterraneous passage runs between Castle and Cathedral, and certainly they are sufficiently near one another for such a communication to have been made ; but these legends have never been resolved into fact. Near neighbours they are, and the Cathedral has suffered not a little at different times from this close proximity. For when Rufus besieged the Castle, and when, in 1215 and 1264, it was closely invested for respectively three months and a week, the Cathedral had its share of the violent doings that resulted in the Keep being undermined and the wooden bridge of Rochester burned. Gundulf's Tower had not been completed when that mighty master-builder died, and although it is generally ascribed to him, it seems really to have been finished under the supervision of an inexperienced architect employed by that Archbishop William de Corbeil to whom and his successors of Canterbury Henry the Second granted "the perpetual charge and constableness of the Castle of Rochester." This prelate died in 1139, and the irony of circumstances decreed that only one other of the Archbishops to whom the "perpetual constableness" was granted

should ever exercise the rights and privileges of the gift. This was Stephen Langton. The Castle was found to be too important in those times for it to be held by any other than the King, and so to the Crown it reverted. Now that it is ruined and open to the sky the Mayors of Rochester are *ex officio* constables, and they wear a sword on grand occasions as an outward and visible sign of their dignity.

Rochester Keep rises to a height of a hundred and twenty-five feet. Walls ranging from ten to twelve feet in thickness attest its old-time strength, and the ornamentation both of the State apartments, and of the Chapel on the third floor, betokens a considerable display made in those far-off times. But although one of the loftiest Norman keeps extant; though strong and internally ornate, it seems to have been built by a copyist of Gundulf who perhaps had neither his resources nor his love of a neat and workmanlike finish. Whatever the cause, certain it is that here we miss the close-jointed external ashlar that we are accustomed to see in such grand contemporary Norman keeps as those of Castle Hedingham and Scarborough. Ashlaring has been only sparingly used for quoins and dressings of door- and window-openings, and the exterior of this keep chiefly shows a broad expanse of roughly set Kentish rag-stone. The result, although it does not commend itself architecturally, is at least bold and rugged and altogether satisfying to the artist.

There is, according to a legend of unknown age, a vast treasure buried beneath the ground here; concealed in some mysterious crypt whose door may only by rarest chance be found. From this door hangs a Hand of Glory, and not until the Hand is extinguished, finger by finger, can it be forced open. Absolute silence is to be observed by the adventurer while extinguishing the Blazing Hand, or the mystic power is broken. There was once, says a sequel to the foregoing legend, a bold and fortunate spirit who

had by some means discovered this hidden door. He extinguished the guardian Hand, all but the thumb ; and, proceeding to snuff this out also, he uttered an incautious exclamation of triumph. The fingers instantly burst into flame again, and the man was dashed senseless to the ground ; nor was he ever again so fortunate as to recover the spot.

## XXIII

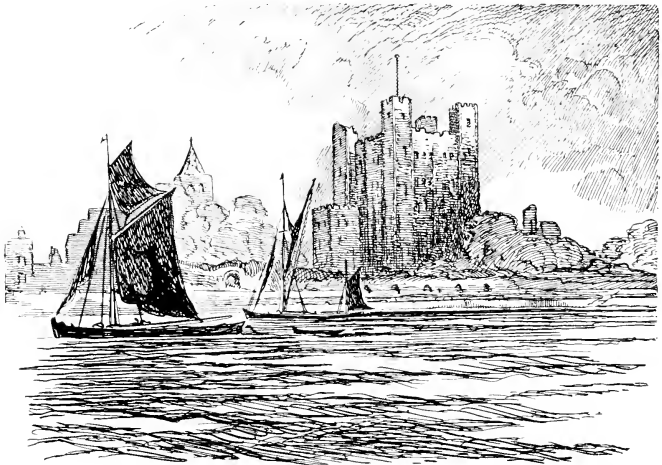
ROCHESTER has had many Royal and distinguished visitors, and many of them have left traces of their sojourn in more or less quaint, instructive, and amusing accounts. When Edward the First came here in 1300, he gave seven shillings to the Priory for the shrine of Saint William, and twelve shillings compensation to one Richard Lamberd whose horse, hired for the King's service, was blown over Rochester Bridge into the Medway and drowned. On his return from Canterbury, nine days later, the King flung his shillings about in quite a reckless manner ; giving seven shillings each for the shrines of Saints Ithamar and Paulinus ; while bang went twenty-one other shillings at Chatham, offered to the image of the Blessed Mary by the King, the Queen, and the Prince of Wales.

The Bridge at Rochester, over which that unfortunate horse was blown, was at this time a crazy structure of wood, and so dangerous that most folks preferred crossing the Medway by boat. One unfortunate minstrel was blown into the water just as he reached the middle, and he went floating down the stream harping the praises of Our Lady upon his harp, and calling out for her help at the same time *in English*, as the chronicler remarks—and this was his English :—

Help usvyf, help usvyf,  
Oiyer me—I forga mi lyf.

By “usvyf” he meant “wife.” “Help us, wife,” which strikes us as being extremely familiar.

The Holy Mother, notwithstanding this horrid jargon, was pleased to save him, and this pious “Harpur a Roucestre” landed about a league below the city, making his way forthwith to a church to offer up thanks, and followed by an immense crowd who had been watching the proceedings without attempting to save him, which is ever the way of crowds.



ROCHESTER CASTLE AND THE MEDWAY.

Fourteen years later, the Queen of Robert Bruce was a State prisoner in Rochester Castle, with her sister and daughter, and here they remained until Bannockburn altered the complexion of affairs. King John of France, too, appears here, and in a grateful mood, for he was going back to his kingdom, and so, to please the saints, made an offering of forty crowns (valued at £6 13s. 4d.) at the Cathedral,



departing for "Stiborne," and resting the night at Ospringe. Sigismund, Emperor of Germany, passed through "Rotschetter" in 1416, with a retinue of a thousand knights, on a visit to Henry the Fifth, and Henry the Seventh was here in 1492, 1494, and 1498, crossing over from Strood in a ferry-boat for which he paid £2, an expense which would have been quite unnecessary had the authorities kept the Bridge (then of stone, and about a century old) in decent repair. A few months later than his last visit, the King sent the Mayor of the town £5 toward its restoration, for funds were low, and the indulgences—to say nothing of the forty days' remittances from Purgatory for all manner of sins—offered by Archbishop Morton to any one who would give towards the work, were but little in request.

Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, was the next considerable personage here, and of how great a consideration he was may be gathered from the fact that he came up the road from Dover with a train of two thousand attendants. He and Henry the Eighth, who had gone down to Dover to meet him, stayed at Rochester on the night of Sunday, June 1, 1522, and went on to Gravesend the following day. Eighteen years later, the King, already a much-married man, came here to have a private view of his new matrimonial venture.

Two accounts are given of this meeting of Henry the Eighth and Anne of Cleves. They agree neither with themselves nor with that other account in which the King is made to call her a "Flanders mare":—"As she passed toward Rochester," writes Hall, the Chronicler, "on New Yeres Even, on Reynam Down, met her the Duke of Norffolke, and the Lord Dacre of the South, and the Lord Mountjoye, with a gret company of Knyghtes and Esquiers of Norffolke and Suffolke, and the Barons of thxchequer, (*sic*) all in coates of velvet with chaynes of golde, which brought her to Rochester, where she lay in the Palace all

New Yeres Day. On which day the Kyng, which sore desyred to see her Grace, accompanied with no more than viii persons of his prevy chaumbre, and both he and thei all aparelled in marble coates, prevely came to Rochester, and sodainly came to her presence, which therwith was sumwhat astonied; but after he had spoken and welcomed her, she with most gracious and lovyng countenance and behavior him received and welcomed on her knees, whom he gently toke up and kyssed; and all that afternoone commoned and devised with her " (whatever that may mean), " and that night supped with her, and the next day he departed to Grenewich and she came to Dartford." Now hear how different a complexion Stow puts upon this meeting, and then tell me what you think of the difficulties of history-writing:—

"The King being ascertained of her arivall and approach, was wonderfull desirous to see her, of whom hee had heard so great commendations, and thereupon hee came very privately to Rochester, where hee tooke the first view of her; and when he had well beheld her, hee was so marvelously astonished that hee knew not well what to doe or say. Hee brought with him divers things, which hee meant to present her with his owne hands, that is to say, a partlet, a muller " (Indian shawls had not yet been introduced), " a cup, and other things; but being sodainly quite discouraged and amazed with her presence, his mind changed, and hee delivered them unto Sir Anthony Browne to give them unto her, but with as small show of Kingly kindness as might be. The King being sore vexed with the sight of her, began to utter his heart's griefe unto divers: amongst whom hee said unto the Lord Admirall, 'How like you this woman? Doe you think her so personable, faire, and beautifull as report hath beene made unto mee of her—I pray you tell me true?'"

Whereupon the Lord Admiral discreetly replied no word of dispraise, because people with opinions had

in those days an excellent chance of losing their heads ; merely remarking that she appeared to have a brown complexion rather than the fair one that had been represented to his Majesty.

“ Alas ! ” replied the King, “ whom shall men—to say nothing of kings—trust ? I promise you I see no such thing in her as hath been shewed to me of her, either by pictures or report, and am ashamed that men have praised her as they have done ; and I like her not.” Which, of course, was final.

Queen Elizabeth, of course, was here, not once but thrice, and on her first visit she stayed at the “ Crown ” inn, “ which,” says Francis Thynne, “ is the only place to intertaine Princes comming thither.” It was, indeed, the place where her father stayed, and where, according to one account, Anne of Cleves lodged ; and was the scene of the inimitable colloquy between the carriers in *Henry the Fourth*, just previous to the robbery on Gad’s Hill. The “ Crown,” of course, is gone now, and an ugly building, bearing the same sign, but dating only from 1863, stands on its site.

On the last day of her visit, the queen was entertained by “ that charitable man but withal most determined enemy to Rogues and Proctors,” Master Richard Watts, whose almshouse for the lodgment of six poor travellers bears still upon its front the evidence of his aversions. Controversy has long raged around the term “ proctor,” and the victory seems to rest with those who declare that the class thus excluded from the benefits of Master Watts’ charity was that of the “ procurators ” who were licensed by the Pope to go through the country collecting “ Peter’s pence ” ; but I have my own idea on that point, and I believe that the “ proctors ” referred to were not papists, but either “ proctors that go up and downe with counterfeit licences, cosiners, and suche as go about the countrey using unlawfull games ” ; or the “ proctors ” especially and particularly mentioned in the Statute Edw. VI. c. 3, s. 19, licensed to collect alms for the lepers who at that

time were still numerous in England. These privileged beggars were deprived of their immunity from arrest by the "Act for Punishment of Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdie Beggars" (39 Eliz. c. 4), wherein "all persons that be, or utter themselves to be *Proctors*, procurers, patent gatherers, or collectors for gaols, prisons, or hospitals"\* are, together with "all Fencers, Bearewards, common players of Interludes, and Minstrels" to be adjudged Rogues and Vagabonds. Now it is sufficiently remarkable that this Act was passed (perhaps with the strenuous help of Master Watts, who was a Member of Parliament, and who we see hated proctors so ardently) at about the time when the "Six Poor Travellers" was built, and the reasons for refusing admission either to a true Proctor of a lazaret-house, or to a pretended one, must be sufficiently obvious.

Master Watts entertained the Queen at his house on Boley (? Beaulieu) Hill on the last day of her visit, and when that courtly man apologised for the "poor cottage" (he didn't mean it, but 'twas the custom so to do) Her Majesty is supposed to have graciously answered "Satis," and so Satis House it remained, and the hideous building that now stands upon its site still bears, grotesquely enough, its name.

Quite a train of miscellaneous Royalties and celebrities came here after Elizabeth's second visit in 1582; the Duke of Sully; James the First, who angered the seafaring population because he didn't care for the ships, loved hunting, and was afraid of the cannon—James the First again, with Christian the Fourth of Denmark and Prince Henry; Prince Henry by himself in 1611; Frederick, Elector Palatine of Bohemia; Charles the First on two occasions, on the second of which "the trane-bands . . . scarmished in warlike manner to His Majesties great content"; the French Ambassador, in 1641, who thought

\* Collectors for "Hospital Saturday" funds come within the meaning of this unrepealed Act.

Rochester was chiefly observable on account of its Bridge "furnished with high railings, that drunkards, not uncommon here, may not mix water with their wine"; and nineteen years later, Charles the Second, on his "glorious and never-to-be-forgotten Restoracion."

How Charles was fêted here, and how he stayed at the beautiful old place that has taken the name of "Restoration House" from this visit, these pages cannot tell; the story is too long.

And here, in the name of all that's lewd and scandal-mongering, comes old Pepys again. It is no use trying to keep him out of one's pages: suppress him at one place, and he recurs unfailingly at another, with a worse record than before. I discreetly "sat on" him at Deptford, but here he is at Rochester, "goin' on hawful," to quote one of Dickens' characters (I forget which, and the society of so many Kings and Queens on the Dover Road is so fatiguing that I have neither sufficient time nor energy to inquire).

Well then, it was in 1667\* that Mr. Samuel Pepys came here, and, putting up at the "White Hart," strolled into the Cathedral, more intent upon the architecture than the doctrine, it would seem; for when service began he walked out into the fields, and there "saw Sir F. Clark's pretty seat." And so "into the Cherry Garden, and here he met with a young, plain, silly shopkeeper and his wife, a pretty young woman, and I did kiss her!" And after this they dined, and walked in the fields together till dark, "and so to bed," without the usual "God forgive me!" which, considering how he had shirked the Cathedral service, and how questionable had been his conduct in the Cherry Garden, was more needful than ever, one would think.

Twenty-one years after this date came James the Second on two hurried visits to Rochester within a few

\* He was here also in 1661, giving a very amusing account of how he was entertained, and how he kissed and sang and danced: it is too long, though, for quotation here. But look it up.

days of one another. If he had had time, and had been in a sufficiently calm frame of mind, he might have reflected on the vicissitudes of Kings in general,



HIGH STREET, ROCHESTER: EASTGATE HOUSE.

and of his own Royal House in particular; but being shockingly upset, and in a mortal terror lest he should lose his head as thoroughly in a physical sense as he had already done in a figurative way of speaking, he lost that opportunity of coolly reviewing his position which, had it but been seized, would have led him to return to London and stay there. It is not a little sad to reflect that, had the gloomy and morose James not been a coward, the House of Stuart might still have ruled England. At any rate, men did not love the taciturn Prince of Orange and his Dutchmen so well but what they would have gladly done without him and have taken back their King, if that King had only shown a



JACK IN HIS GLORY.

*From a painting by Julius Caesar Hbbelsson.*





little more spirit and a little less of religious bigotry. William could not but perceive that his principles and not his person were acclaimed, and when he gave the King leave to retire to Rochester, he both knew that James desired an opportunity to escape from the kingdom, and hoped he would use it. And he did use the chance so gladly given him, secretly departing from Rochester in the small hours of a December morning, and making for Ambleteuse on the French coast in a fishing-smack.

## XXIV

THIS was the last romantic event that befell at Rochester, and it fitly closed a stirring history.

But Chatham and Rochester, although outward romance had departed, did not cease to be interested in naval and military affairs. Indeed, they have grown continually greater on them.

It was in 1756 that the plates of *England* and *France* were published by Hogarth. We were suffering then from one of those panic fears of invasion by the French to which this country has been periodically subject, and these efforts were consequently calculated to have a large sale. Hogarth, of course, after his arrest for sketching at Calais, was morbidly, vitriolically patriotic, and his work is earnest of his feelings. The English are seen drilling in the background of the first plate, while in front of the "Duke of Cumberland" inn a recruit is being measured, and smiles at the caricature of the King of France which a grenadier is painting on the wall. A long inscription proceeds from the mouth of His Most Christian Majesty, "You take a my fine ships, you be de Pirate, you be de Teef, me send you my grand Armies, and hang you all, Morbleu," and he grasps a gibbet to emphasize the words. Meanwhile, a fifer plays "God Save the King"; a soldier in the group has placed his sword across a great

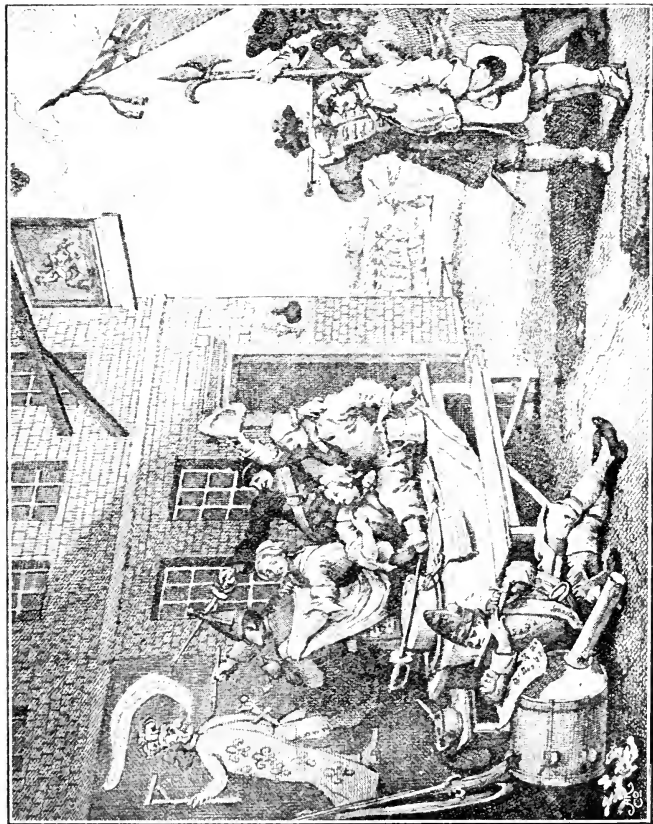
cheese ; and a sailor has guarded his tankard of beer with a pistol.

But see how different are things across the Channel. Outside the *Sabot Royal* a party of French grenadiers, lean and hungry-looking after their poor fare of *soupe maigre*, are watching one of their number cook the sprats he has spitted on his sword. A monk with a grin of satisfaction feels the edge of an axe which he has taken from a cart full of racks and other engines of torture destined towards the furnishing of a monastery at Blackfriars in London, of which a plan is seen lying upon this heap of ironmongery ; and a file of soldiers may be seen in the distance, reluctantly embarking for England, and spurred forward by the point of the sergeant's halberd. Garrick wrote the patriotic verses that went with this picture, and you may see from them how constantly Englishmen have thought the French to be a nation of lean and hungry starvelings. That is, of course, as absurd as the unfailing practice of French caricaturists to whom the typical Englishman is a creature who has red hair and protruding teeth, and says "Goddam"—

With lanthorn jaws and croaking gut,  
See how the half-starv'd Frenchmen strut,  
And call us English dogs ;  
But soon we'll teach these bragging foes,  
That beef and beer give heavier blows  
Than soup and roasted frogs.

The priests, inflam'd with righteous hopes,  
Prepare their axes, wheels, and ropes,  
To bend the stiff-neck'd sinner ;  
But, should they sink in coming over,  
Old Nick may fish 'twixt France and Dover,  
And catch a glorious dinner.

Few people, as Dickens says, can tell where Rochester ends and Chatham begins, but even now you become conscious of a gradual alteration in the character of the street as you leave Rochester High Street and come imperceptibly into Chatham ; and even though the place has grown so large, and holds so very varied a population that the military and naval sections no



THE INVASION OF ENGLAND - ENGLAND.

After Hogarth.



longer bulk so largely as they used, they still make a brave show. An inhabitant of Chatham need never wish to visit London, because the triple towns of Chatham, Strood and Rochester—to leave out all count of Gillingham and New Brompton, which are to Chatham even as Hammersmith is to our own great metropolis—contain samples of nearly all that is to be seen in the Capital of the Empire, and much else besides. There is a Dockyard at Chatham two miles in length, from which there issues every day at the dinner-hour an army of artificers of every kind and degree—many thousands of them; and in this Dockyard are ironclads, making, repairing, and refitting together with vast military and naval stores, and all kinds of relics, foremost among which there is a shed, full of old and historic figure-heads; all that is left of the wooden walls that were such efficient bulwarks of England's power. *Agamemnon*s, *Arctus*as, *Bellerophon*s are here, and many more. And all around are forts and “lines,” barracks and military hospitals; and drilling, manœuvring, marchings and counter-marchings, and all kinds of military exercises are continually going forward. The names of streets, courts, and alleys, would furnish a very Walhalla of naval heroes, and from all quarters come the sounds of riveting, the blasts of bugles, and the shouting of the captains; and when midday comes the noontide gun resounds from the heights of Fort Pitt, and all the ragged urchins who live on the pavements fall down as if they were shot, much to the terror of old ladies, strangers in these parts, who pass by.

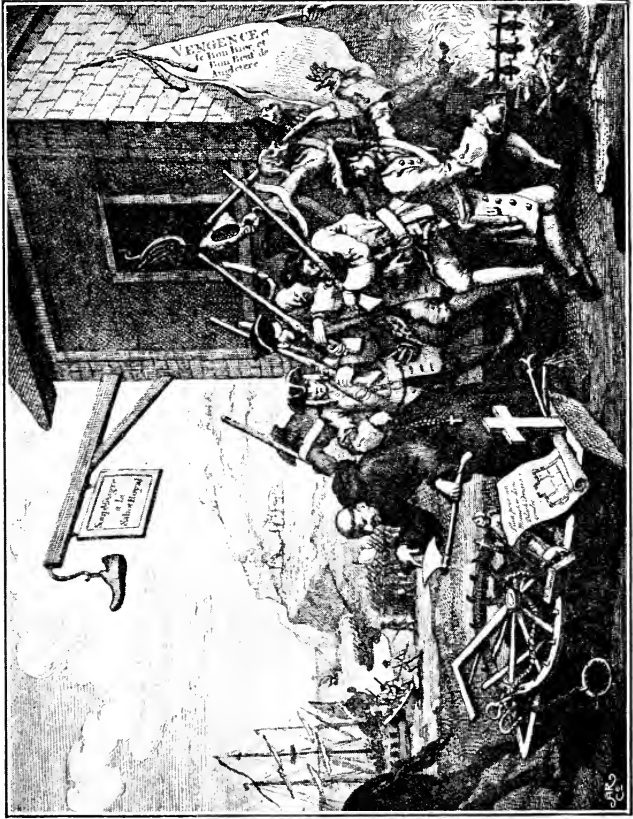
There is still a fine old-time nautical flavour hanging about Chatham. It does not lie on the surface, but requires much patient searching amid mean and disreputable streets, and it is only after passing through slums that would affright a resident of Drury Lane that one finds curiously respectable little terraces, giving upon the waterside, with masts and yards, rigging, derricks, and other strange seafaring

tackle peeping over the roof-tops ; amphibious corners where a smell of the sea, largely intermixed with odours of pitch, tar, and rope, clings about everything ; where men with a nautical lurch come swinging along the pavements, and where, if you glance in at the doorways which are nearly always open in summer, you will see full-rigged models of ships standing on sideboards, supported perhaps by a huge Family Bible, and flanked, most certainly, with strange outlandish shells, branches of coral, and other spoils of far-off lands.

But these things are not patent to he who goes only along the main road, turning to neither right nor left ; and it is only a little exploration of byways that will convince you of Mr. Pickwick's summary remaining still substantially correct. "The principal productions" of the three towns of Rochester, Strood, and Chatham, according to Mr. Pickwick, "appear to be soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers, and dockyard-men. The commodities chiefly exposed for sale in the public streets are marine-stores, hardbake, apples, flat-fish, and oysters." All of which might well have been written to-day, so closely does the description still apply ; but when he goes on to remark that "the streets present a lively and animated appearance, occasioned chiefly by the conviviality of the military," he clearly speaks of by-past times. "It is truly delightful," he says, "to a philanthropic mind to see these gallant men staggering along under the influence of an overflow, both of animal and ardent spirits." Delightful indeed ! But since those days Tommy Atkins has been evolutionized into a very different creature.

## XXV

To plunge into mediæval legends at Chatham will seem the strangest of transitions, and Chatham Parish Church will appear to most people the last place likely to have a story. Yet in demolishing the old building to



After Hogarth.

THE INVASION OF ENGLAND: FRANCE.





make way for a new, the workmen found some fragments of sculpture which had a history. Amongst these was a headless group of the Virgin and Child.

This was, in all probability, the effigy of Our Lady of Chatham, who, in pre-Reformation times, was famous for her miracles; and of whom Lambarde gives the following amusing story in his *Perambulations*: “It seems,” says he, “that the corps of a man (lost through shipwrecke belike) was cast on land in the parishe of Chatham, and being there taken up, was by some charitable persones committed to honest burial within their church-yard; which thing was no sooner done, but Our Lady of Chatham, finding herself offended therewith, arose by night and went in person to the house of the parishe clearke, whiche then was in the streete, a good distance from the church, and making a noyse at his window, awaked him. The man, at the first, as commonly it fareth with men disturbed in their rest, demanded, somewhat roughly, ‘who was there?’ But when he understoode, by her owne answer, that it was the Lady of Chatham, he changed his note, and moste mildeley asked ye cause of her comming; she tolde him, that there was lately buryed (neere to the place where she was honoured) a sinful person, which so offended her eye with his gastly grinning, that, unless he were removed, she could not but (to the great grieffe of good people) withdrawe herselfe from that place, and cease her wonted miraculous working amongst them: and therefore, she willed him to go with her, to the ende that, by his helpe, she might take him up, and caste him again into the river. The clearke obeyed, arose, and waited on her towarde the churche; but the goode ladic (not wonted to walk) waxed wearie of the labour, and therefore was enforced, for very want of breath, to sit downe in a bushe by the way, and there to rest her: and this place (forsooth) as also the whole track of their journey, remaining ever after a greene pathe, the towne dwellers were wont to shew. Now,

after a while, they go forward againe, and coming to the churcheyarde, digged up the body, and conveyed it to the waterside, where it was first found. This done, Our Lady shrancke againe into her shryne ; and the clearke peaked home, to patche up his broken sleepe ; but the corps now eftsoones floted up and down the river, as it did before ; which thing being espyed by them of Gillingham, it was once more taken up, and buryed in their churcheyarde. But see what followed upon it : not only the roode of Gillingham (say they), that a while before was busie in bestowing myraeles, was now deprived of all that his former virtue ; but also ye very earth and place where this carckase was laid, did continually, for ever after, settle and sinke downwarde."

Barham has made good use of this story, you who have read the legend of *Grey Dolphin* in the *Ingoldsby Legends* will remember. He narrates, with a joyous irreverence, how, in consequence of the miraculous interposition of the Lady of Chatham (Saint Bridget, forsooth ! " who, after leading but a so-so-life, had died in the odour of sanctity ") masses were sung, tapers kindled, bells tolled, and how everything thenceforward was wonderment and devotion ; the monks of Saint Romwold in solemn procession, the abbot at their head, the saeristan at their tail, and the holy breeches of Saint Thomas à Becket in the centre. " Father Fothergill brewed a XXX puncheon of holy water," continues Tom Ingoldsby, clerk in holy orders and minor canon of the Cathedral of Saint Paul, indulging at once his exuberant humour and his contempt of the Church of Rome, with its relies, miracles, bone-chests, and sanctified *aqua pura*. Meanwhile, the grinning sailor, " grinning more than ever," had drifted down the river, off Gillingham, and lay on the shore in all the majesty of mud, presently to be discovered by the minions of Sir Robert de Shurland, who bade them " turn out his pockets." But it was ill gleaning after the double scrutiny of Father Fothergill and the parish



PAID OFF AT CHATHAM.

*After a Painting by R. Deighton, R.A.*



clerk ; and, as Ingoldsby observes, “ there was not a single maravedi.”

From Saint Bridget to a weird, but yet not altogether unworldly, fanatic of recent years the transition would not be easy, were it not for the fact that the said fanatic’s hideous temple still crowns Chatham Hill for all men to see, as a monument of the unfathomed and unfathomable credulity of mankind. The stranger who walks or cycles his way to Dover is told that this barrack-like building is “ Jezreel’s Temple,” and that is about the extent of the information forthcoming. The unredeemed ugliness of the unfinished temple is at once repellent and exciting to curiosity, and the name of “ Jezreel ” wears such an Old Testament air that most people who pass by want very much to know who and what he was.

He was, as a matter of fact, a private soldier of the 16th Regiment, named James White, who, having been bought out of the Army by the members of a fanatical sect before whom he posed as a prophet, took the extraordinary names of “ James Jershom Jezreel,” and, with seventeen followers, founded a new sect, the New House of Israel, known by scoffers as the “ Joannas.” They were, in fact, mad enthusiasts like those whom Joanna Southcott had fooled, years before, and it is supposed that White took the name of “ Jezreel ” from the Book of Hosea, adding the other names to make a trinity of initial “ J’s,” allusive to the Prophetess Joanna and her minor prophet, John Wroe.

Not that “ Jezreel ” was mad. Not at all. To him as Prophet and Patriarch of these New Israelites was given up the whole property of those who entered the House, to be held in common ; and he made a very good thing of the infatuation of the hundreds of wealthy middle-class converts who had a fancy for this singular kind of communistic religion. It was an article of his followers’ creed that they were the first portion of the 144,000, twice told, who will receive Christ when he comes again to reign a thousand years on earth.

To support his character as leader of this House, "Jezreel" pretended to have received a communication from a messenger of God, who inspired him to write an extraordinary farrago of Biblical balderdash, without argument, beginning, or end, called the "Flying Roll." The curious may obtain three volumes of this nonsense, but the only preternatural thing in these books of *Extracts from the Flying Roll* is their gross and unapproachable stupidity which completely addles the brain of him who reads them, hoping thereby to discover the tenets of the sect or any single thread of argument that may be followed for more than a consecutive paragraph or two. The effect upon one reading those pages is the same as that which Mark Twain tells us was produced on him when Artemus Ward, having plied him with strong drink, began purposely to enter upon a preposterous conversation, having a specious air of a grave and lucid argument, but which was merely an idiotic string of meaningless sentences. Mark Twain thought himself had gone daft, and felt his few remaining senses going; and that is just what happens to any one who sits down and seriously tries to understand what "Jezreel's" *Extracts* are all about.

In 1879, "Jezreel" married Clarissa Rogers, the daughter of a New Brompton sawyer; and, assuming the name of "Queen Esther," she paid a visit, with the prophet, to America. This precious pair made an extraordinary number of converts in their preaching tours, and, returning to England, made Gillingham the headquarters of their New House of Israel. Schools and twenty acres of various buildings were built there at a cost of £100,000, and the "Temple," intended to hold 20,000 people, was commenced on Chatham Hill. But "Jezreel" died in 1885, chiefly of drink and the effects of sunstroke, before this work could be completed and the zealots, who were wont to go about with long hair tucked under purple-velvet caps, began to wake up to a sense not only of their sumptuary folly, but also

of the phenomenal simplicity which they had exhibited in giving up their property to the House. "Queen Esther" was incapable of fooling these simple folk as completely as "Jezreel" had done, and minor prophets sprang up to dispute her sovereignty over the elect. Perhaps they were jealous of the state in which this quondam sawyer's daughter drove about in a carriage and pair, attended by liveried servants. Perhaps also *they* had visions and Divine inspirations. At any rate, "Queen Esther" presently drooped, and died in 1888, in her twenty-eighth year; whereupon the sect swiftly collapsed under the rival seers who followed. Lawsuits succeeded to the fine religious frenzy in which the "Temple" was raised, and it still stands unfinished, visible on its hilltop over a great part of Chatham. It would be a pity to pull it down, or to complete it; or, indeed, to do anything at all to it, for, as it is now, it furnishes perhaps as eloquent a sermon on human wickedness and folly as could well be delivered.

The great tower, framed in steel and built of yellow brick with ornamental lines of blue Staffordshire brick, has stone panels carved with a trumpet with a scroll, "The Flying Roll," suspended from it; with the Prince of Wales feathers and the motto "I serve," and other devices. The unfinished tower itself cost £44,000. The foundation-stone was laid, as an inscription says, 19th September, 1885, "by Mrs. Emma Cave, on behalf of the 144,000. Revelations (*sic*) 7th, 4."

It was understood that Mrs. Cave, who at that time owned a large part of Tufnell Park, found the money for the tower, selling her property for the cause. The unfinished tower was seized by the building contractors for debt, and offered for sale by auctioneers, who stated it "would do for a lunatic asylum, prison, infirmary, etc." This suggestion failed, and the contractors, unable to sell the incomplete carcase, let it to the sect under a lease, which terminated in 1905. There were at that time Jezreelite workrooms and printing-offices

in the basement. An American Jezreelite then appeared, one Michael Keyfor Mills, calling himself "Prince Michael," and proposing to complete. The founder's father-in-law, Edward Rogers, who had rented the place as a wholesale grocery warehouse, opposed him and secured an injunction against members of the sect who had supported the idea. Mills died at Gillingham in January, 1922, aged sixty-five.

In 1908 a company was formed to demolish the building and sell the materials; but when the upper floors had been taken down the concern became insolvent. In 1913 it was proposed to convert the building into a "Picture Palace," but the idea came to nothing; and later, the property was offered at auction and withdrawn at £3,900.

If there be any surviving Jezreelites of the "New and Latter House of Israel," who believe that the souls of only those who have lived since Moses can be saved, they will be able to look with satisfaction on the remains of their tower, which was built largely with the idea that five thousand of the elect would gather here at the destruction of the world.

But in its present condition a good many of that number would be left outside; and there might be expected an unseemly crush to get within, only that by this time the elect of this particular brand must be a very small coterie.

## XXVI

LITTLE else is to be seen or noted in leaving Chatham for Rainham. The shop in which that singular old gentleman lived, with whom little David Copperfield made acquaintance, is not pointed out to the curious, and the identity of that apostrophizer of his lungs and liver, who exclaimed "Goroo, goroo," and tearfully asked David if he would go for fourpence, has been much disputed. "The House on the Brook," to which



the Dickens family removed when Mr. John Dickens' fortunes were low, is still to be seen, but "the Brook" has changed for the worse, and the visitor to Chatham who takes up the local papers will discover that it is pre-eminently the place where the Order of the Black Eye is conferred, on Saturday nights in especial, but more or less impartially throughout the week.

It is not before Rainham is reached that the road becomes once more the open highway. Moor Street is passed, and here the Rainham orchards and the cherry orchards of Gillingham begin to stretch away to the levels of the Upchurch marshes. "Wealth without health" begins to be the characteristic of the country, for the marsh mists hang over the levels from early evening, through the night, to almost midday; and agues, asthma, and bronchial complaints are the common lot. Many miles' length of submerged Roman pottery-works lie down in those Swale and Cooling marshes, and many have been, and are still, the "finds" of broken black "Upchurch ware" in the mud and ooze. Perfect specimens are discovered at rarer intervals. The proper method of searching for these vestiges of the Roman occupation is to equip one's self with a stout pair of sea-boots, and a "sou'wester," and to wade at low tide in the creeks, probing the slimy mud with iron rods. If the explorer is fortunate in his "pitch" he will discover pottery, broken or whole, by feeling his iron rod strike something harder than the surrounding half-liquid clay. The joy of such exquisite moments is unfortunately sometimes marred by the "find" being but a lump of half-baked clay; Roman, indeed, but not worthy of preservation. Still, when fragments of patterned ware are found, the discovery repays in interest for the time spent in mudlarking.

Rainham Church heralds the village, raising up its white and four-square battlemented walls from beside the road. A large building, with a few late brasses; a vault full of Tuftons, Earls of Thanet, of whom the

last died in 1863, unmarried; and two life-sized marble statues of Tuftons, father and son, in that curious classic convention of the late seventeenth century which found such a delight in representing distinguished folk as Roman warriors. Nicholas Tufton, the earl, and his son, who died from wounds received in battle, are those thus represented here; and the statue of the son, sculptured in a sitting position, is a really fine work of art. Beyond this, Rainham has not much to detain the explorer, and being a summer rendezvous for Chatham pleasure-parties and bean-feasters, it is apt to become dusty and riotous when the season of annual outings is at hand.

The church seen some distance to the left of the road is that of Newington. In the vestry is displayed a copy of the last will and testament of Simon Tomlin, dated November 13, 1689. In this disposition of his worldly effects are gifts to relatives and to the poor; and to his brother-in-law, William Plawe of Stockbury, he leaves "my best beaver hatt and the sum of £15, lawful money of England." It is to be hoped that the legatee got his hat, but, as many provisions of the will do not appear to have been complied with, it seems doubtful.

There was a priory of nuns established at Newington in early Norman times, but all that is now left of it is a striking legend which proves that when these pious ladies retired from the world they brought some of the world's worst characteristics with them. What they quarrelled about one night will never now be known, but when the morning dawned the Prioress was found strang'ed in her bed; which goes to prove that the veil no more goes to make the nun than orders black, white, or grey furnish a monk fully forth in true monastic attributes. A chalk pit, about a mile south of the church, called significantly "Nun-pit," is shown as the place where those less holy than homicidal sisters were afterwards buried alive. Other accounts say that these nuns were removed to Minster, in Sheppey.

However that may be, Henry the Second would have no more nuns here. He placed seven priests in the Priory as secular canons, and gave them the manor, hoping that this religious house would in future have a less lurid career. But things, instead of improving, grew worse. One of the canons was found murdered in his bed, and four of the brethren were convicted of the crime.

From these queer stories we come, appropriately enough, to a tale in which the Enemy bears a brave part. When Newington Church was being built, "ever so long ago," as the tale of gramarye has it, and the time came for the bells to be hung, the Devil, who, it is well known, hates the sound of church bells, conceived the grand plan of pushing the tower over, so that the builders would give up the idea. Accordingly, he ventured down the lane one night, and, standing in the churchyard—as he could well do, because the place was not yet consecrated—placed his back against the tower, and, putting his feet against a wall on the other side of the road, pushed. No one knows what was the result, but as there is a tower here to this day—and a very fine one it is, too—it may be presumed that either Satan had altogether overrated his strength, or that the builders had built better than they knew. But if the Enemy failed in this, he at least succeeded in leaving his mark. Accordingly, here is the wall, and in it is a stone, and in that stone is a hole made by his toes; while on another stone is the print of a very fine and large boot-sole—valuable evidence, because it not only proves the truth of the story but also shows us that the Devil wore a Blucher boot on one foot and let the other go unshod. If you ask me how it came about that the Devil could come here in the fourteenth century wearing a nineteenth-century boot, I must quote the showman who exhibited a wax model of Daniel in the lions' den. Daniel was seen to be reading the *Times*, and some one in the crowd pointed out the incongruous circumstance, to which the

showman replied that Daniel, being a prophet, read the *Times* by anticipation ! And if a saint could anticipate the nineteenth century in newspapers, why should not the Fiend do the same in boots ?

Peaceful cherry orchards stretch along the narrow valley, and the railway runs through them, giving glimpses to passengers of long rows of cherry trees with emerald grass flecked with sunlight and flocks of sheep feeding under the boughs ; and picturesque farmsteads standing in midst of fertile meads.

## XXVII

THE village of Newington stands on either side of the old Dover Road, which is here identical with the famous Roman military *viâ* of Watling Street. It is situated in the centre of a district covered thickly with Roman remains, and the village itself dates from Saxon times, when it really *was* a "new town" as distinguished from the adjacent ruins of the ancient Roman station of Durolevum. All the ingenuity of archæologists has been insufficient to determine at what particular spot this military post was established. Judde Hill, Sittingbourne, and Bapchild have been selected as probable sites of Durolevum, and certainly Bapchild and Sittingbourne are likely places for the original military post mentioned in the *Itinerary* of Antoninus. Both are situated within an easy distance of the measurements given by the itinerist, and at either place there was anciently a stream of water crossing the road, sufficient, perhaps, to warrant the prefix of "Duro," which, almost without exception, distinguishes the Roman military place-names on the Dover Road. That prefix was the Latinized form of the Celtic "dour," signifying a stream, and it is met with at :—

Dubris = Dover.

Durovernum = Canterbury.

Durolevum = ? Bapchild, Sittingbourne, or Ospringe.

Durobrivæ = Rochester.

A military expedition would naturally be encamped beside a stream, where the cavalry could water their horses, in preference to a waterless district; and therefore, Newington and Judde Hill, which both stand beyond an easy reach of flowing water, cannot have such good claims to have been the site of Durolevum as either Sittingbourne, or Bapchild, whose name, indeed, is a corruption of the Saxon Beccanceald, "the pool of the springs." The flow of water throughout the country must in those remote times have been much greater than now, for dense forests then covered a great part of the island, and induced rains and moisture. In fact, the Dover Road was until recent years remarkable for the number of considerable streams and trickling rills that flowed across it, either under bridges or across fords, and it is not so long since those that crossed the highway at Sittingbourne and Bapchild were diverted or dried up. They must have been broad streams when Cæsar led his legionaries up the rough British trackway in pursuit of the Cantii, and the still very considerable brook that crosses the road at Osprunge would have then attained the dimensions of a river. It might be well to look to Osprunge for the original Durolevum, for the situation must have been admirable from a military point of view; and, moreover, it was near, if not then actually on, the head of a navigable creek leading directly to the sea, where Faversham now stands.

But when archæologists leave the consideration of Cæsar's and his successors' military station and seek the site of Durolevum town or city, they unaccountably lose sight of the fact that this Roman province of Britannia Prima was obviously very populous, and that Durolevum, instead of being a small isolated town, must needs have been the centre of a thickly populated district of smaller towns, hamlets, and outlying villas, stretching for miles along the now solitary reaches of the Dover Road, and reaching down to the Upchurch marshes.

The era of the Roman colonization of Britain is so remote that few antiquaries even ever stop awhile to consider how long those hardy aliens occupied this island, or how effective that occupation was, either in a military or social sense. Four hundred years just measure the length of time the Romans were with us ; and what can not be done in so lengthy a period ! Four hundred years would suffice to create a high state of civilization from mere savagery, and that is what the Romans accomplished here in that space of time. They not only conquered, but they eventually pacified, the fierce and fearless Britons ; and they established export and import trades that rendered Britain the most prosperous colony of the Roman Empire, and the Romano-British merchants and people the wealthiest colonists of those times. Stately villas beyond the towns, but sufficiently near them to invoke, if needs were, the protection of the cohorts, rose up on all sides, where the rich traders in British produce took their ease or engaged themselves in cultivating the cherry and sweet-chestnut trees which they had introduced from the sunny hillsides of Italy. There is to this day a manor at Milton-next-Sittingbourne called "Northwood Chasteners," so called from an ancient grove of chestnuts (*castaneas*), the descendants of the first chestnut trees introduced by the Romans. Vast Roman potteries had their being in the lowlands beside the Medway ; Upchurch, Faversham, and Richborough furnished the tables of Roman Emperors and epicures with the "native" oysters that were even then famous and the cause of an immense trade ; while manufactures poured in from Rome to suit the British taste.

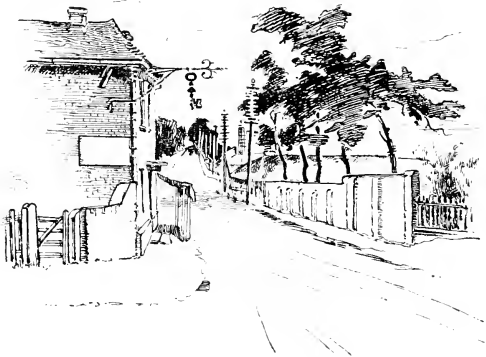
Durolevum must, then, be sought amid the potsherds of a hundred settlements, any one of which might have been a suburb of that forgotten station ; but the site where the present village of Newington stands was probably fresh ground when the Saxons came and drove out with ruthless slaughter the luxurious and enervated

Romanized British, who speedily fell a prey to barbarians when once the Roman garrison was withdrawn. Archæologists have remarked that the Saxons generally occupied the Roman towns that were left after the Romano-British fled from them; but although they sometimes did so, there are many instances where they established towns on new sites closely adjoining the old, but carefully separated from them. Such was the case at Wroxeter, where the Saxons built an entirely new town, adjoining, but not actually on, the ruined and deserted city of Uriconium. Probably the Saxons found Durolevum wrecked in the internal struggles that rent Britain asunder after the legionaries were withdrawn; and, being a Pagan and superstitious people, they shunned the almost deserted heap of ruins as being the abode of evil spirits. The stagnant and fetid wreck of a great city, whose fallen houses covered the bodies of many slaughtered citizens, and whose site was very likely overflowed with choked drains and freshets from the swollen streams, was not exactly the place to appeal to strangers, even though uncivilized, as a suitable site for dwelling upon; and, indeed, it may readily be imagined that these rotting remains of a dead civilization would be infinitely more awe-inspiring to a barbaric race than to the few remaining Britons who had seen the place in all the pride and circumstance of better days. And, indeed, the black, polluted earth of a long-inhabited town, and the will-o'-wisps and phosphorescent bubbles bred from the corruption below, that would float at night upon the surface of the water, would have frightened most people of those superstitious times.

Newington stands on elevated ground, away from such chances, but in its immediate neighbourhood have been found many Roman relics, and all around, the fields, the meadows, and the hillsides are rich in legends and broken pottery. Standard Hill is so called from a tradition that the Roman eagle was there displayed, and a field adjoining is known as Crockfield, from the

great number of Roman pots and fragments of pottery turned up there by the plough. The name of Keycol Hill, too, is said to have had a Roman origin, and Hasted derives it from *Caii Collis*, or Caius Julius Cæsar's Hill. Finally, the modern roadside hamlet of Key Street, between Newington and Sittingbourne, is said to owe its name to *Caii Stratum*, or Caius Street.

The inn at Key Street, now called the "Key," was previously to 1733 known as the "Ship." It stands near the hill-top where Key Street commences, and commands a long, straight dip of the road towards



KEY STREET.

Sittingbourne, whose outlying houses are just beyond the farthest clump of trees.

The chance wayfarer little thinks how abundant are the vestiges of antiquity here, both in fragments of pottery, and in the time-honoured names of manors, fields, and meadows. Such things are only to be brought to light by the painstaking local historian who has access to Court Rolls and ancient estate maps. It is little known or considered by the dwellers in populous towns that almost every meadow, field, croft, pasture, down, or woodland has its name, as distinct



and as well-known locally as that of any London street included in the Directory. More than this, these names are often the survivals of a state of things existing a thousand years ago. They are frequently rendered obscure by the corruption and evolution of languages, and by the physical changes that have come over the face of the country during so long a period; but with research, and linguistic scholarship, and a knowledge both of local history and the ancient history of the country in general, much that seems at first obscure, or even utterly inexplicable, may be finally resolved into meaning. The study of these place-names has all the attraction of original exploration, and leads on inexhaustibly. But while the tracking of apparently meaningless names to their origin has all the fascination of sport, it gives rise to many hazardous conjectures and lame conclusions, and names that do not yield their secrets to patient inquiry are too often thrust into some ill-fitting category from which they are rescued, to the shame and derision of those who placed them there. In fine, "cock-sureness" is nowhere more out of place than in these inquiries, and in nothing else is the mental effort of "jumping to conclusions" met with such ludicrous accidents. It has, for instance, long been a commonplace in these inquiries to refer the names of towns, villages, or hamlets ending in "ing" to the settlements of Saxon patriarchal tribes; and the Hallings, Coolings, Bobbings, Detlings, and Wellings are set down as having been originally the homes of Teutonic clans taking their names from chieftains named Halla, Coela, Bobba, and so forth.

But while this rule may generally hold good, it must not be applied automatically, and the "learning" that has given this origin to the names of Sittingbourne, Newington, and Ospringe must be regarded as a grotesque exercise of imagination, creating previously unheard-of clans, the Scëdingas, the Newingas, and the Osprings, who are not only new to archæology, but

probably have never existed. Of course, in the utter absence of all evidence, save that of the places themselves so named, no statement can be *proved* correct; but these mystic Sœdingas may almost certainly be dismissed to the realm of fairy-tales, and if there ever was a tribe of Newingas, they *took* their name *from* the village which they built and where they lived, instead of *giving* it *to* the place. Where others have come to grief, it would be rash to seek new derivations; but it seems evident that Ospringe derives its name from the stream flowing through the village, and that the name of Sittingbourne is nothing other than "seething burn," or "the bubbling brook," a poetic name which the place no longer merits. Place-names of Roman origin may be sought in the several *Vigos* that exist, some now the names of fields, marshes, roadsides, and commons where there is not a house to be seen, but which were originally the sites of Roman villages, the name of "Vigo"—the Latin *vicus*—having been traditionally handed down to the present day many centuries after the last traces of those settlements have disappeared.

Many fields, too, here and in different parts of the country, are named "Whitehall." How did they get that name? The answer is sought in the Roman word "*aula*," the residence of a magistrate or a chief man in authority. When the Saxons came, they found these grand *aulas*, built of stone, dotted about the country, some ruined, others tolerably perfect; and they must have made a strong impression upon these barbaric Pagans, used at that early period of their history only to wooden dwellings of the rudest construction. They would have demanded the names of these places from the Romano-British, who would tell them they were *aulas*; and they would have called them "hwit *aulas*," from the stone of which they were built. It was thus that the many villages called "Whitechurch" got their name, from the stone (or "white") churches that were so remarkable as

compared with the dark-hued temples and churches of wood to which the Saxons were accustomed.

But if this origin of the "Whitehalls" does not satisfy, there is another which may be even more likely. They were, possibly, at one time the sites of village Witan-halls, where the wise men of the Saxon villages assembled their local Parliaments, the "witans" or "witenagemots," those remote fore-runners of the village- and parish-councils which statesmen of the late nineteenth century have established, as items in a more or less admirable scheme for restoring the Heptarchy. There are "Whitehalls" in the immediate outlying fields of Sittingbourne, and there is one within the Roman encampment overhanging the railway cutting at Harbledown; but at none of these places are there any traces of buildings above ground. Excavation might reveal ancient foundations.

## XXVIII

As mediæval travellers approached Sittingbourne from the direction of London, the first objects they perceived were the chapel and hermitage of Schamel, dedicated to Saint Thomas à Becket, and standing on the south side of the road. They are gone now, and a wayside public-house—"The Volunteers"—stands on, or near their site; but the hermitage was, from the time of King John to the impious days of Henry the Eighth, a resting-place for those devout pilgrims who sought the shrine of the "holy blissful martyr" at Canterbury. In the reign, however, of that "Defender of the Faith"—when it suited him—the chapel and the hermitage were scattered to the winds, and the hermit thrust out into a world that had grown tired of making pilgrimages. But, while it lasted, the Hermitage of Schamel did a very thriving

business ; so thriving, indeed, as to excite the jealousy of the Sittingbourne people, who conceived themselves injured by the intercepting of pilgrims before they could reach and fertilize the town with streams of gold. Rich pilgrims were a source of wealth to many towns and villages on the Dover Road, and hermits, bishops, priors, and abbots contended for them like 'busmen for passengers before the introduction of the bell-punch and the ticket system.

We first hear of Schamel Hermitage in the time of a priest named Samuel, whose duties consisted in saying mass daily, in wearing a hair-shirt, refraining from soap and water, and in attending upon those pilgrims and travellers who did not mind the apostolic dirt in which he wallowed ; and by whose alms he supported himself and the chapel. Samuel died and was gathered to his fathers, and the building presently fell into decay, to be rebuilt by an Augustinian monk, during whose lifetime the annals of the Hermitage are too placid for recounting in this place. His successor was one Walter de Hermestone, who was appointed by the Queen about 1271. Imagine his disgust, though, when he came here and found the place a wreck, the work of the Vicar and the townsfolk of Sittingbourne. This estimable clergyman, whose name was Simon de Shordich, and who seems to have brought the manners and customs of his native place with him, had carried off the Hermitage bell and altar as prizes to his own church, and the men of Sittingbourne had left both the Hermitage and the Chapel in the likeness of a Babylonian ruin. History does not record what became of Walter de Hermestone, but it seems likely that he departed for some more peaceful spot. Meanwhile, Simon de Shordich died, perhaps from the effects of the eremitical curses which the disappointed incumbent of the ruined place doubtless showered on him ; and he was followed, both in his Vicarage and his evil courses, by a certain Boniface, who carted away the ruins and sold them.

Sixteen years later an inquiry was held on these matters, at the instance of the Queen, who, holding the manor of Milton-next-Sittingbourne, was patron of the chapel. There seems to have been a hamlet of Schamel at this time, for a certain William the Weaver, and others who gave evidence before the commission, are located here. It must have been about this era that the chapel was rebuilt, but little is heard of it until June, 1358, when the Queen of Edward the Third passed by, and gave 20*s.* in alms. Friar Richard de Lexeden was then in possession. Two years later, King John of France passed, on his way home, and gave twenty nobles, a sum equal to no less than £120 of our money; and that is the last we hear of the Hermitage until it was for ever destroyed in 1542-43.

Meanwhile, the chapel of Swanstree, at the east end of the town, was as much upheld and cared for by the Sittingbourne people as the Schamel chapel was robbed and injured. Wealthy tradespeople left money in their wills to its altars and for the repair of the roads thither, and the Vicars of Sittingbourne approved of it, because it not only did not take away from them, but gleaned anything that the pilgrims had to spare after they left Sittingbourne, and before they came to the next town. But although so favoured, this chapel has gone the way of the other, and not a vestige of it remains. It stood on the grounds of the present Murston Rectory.

Sittingbourne was not a large place in the days that ended with the advent of railway times, but it had an astonishing number of hotels, inns, and beer-houses. People had not at that time begun to see that the royal road to fortune lay in the making of bricks and tiles, and so they amassed riches by plundering the travellers whose evil stars sent them down the road to Canterbury and Dover; and in the lulls of business when no travellers were forthcoming, they probably "kept their hands in" by overcharging one another. I believe Sittingbourne must have been a town of inns,

and but little else, and that the population lived in hotels and drank wines, beer, and spirits all day long and a great part of the night, just for the fun of the thing.

Not that mine host of the "Red Lion" was at all extortionate when he entertained Henry the Fifth in 1415, on his return from Agincourt. On the contrary, the bill was decidedly reasonable, amounting only to nine-and-sixpence, including wine. You cannot, unhappily, dine conquering heroes of any sort—much less kings—so reasonably nowadays, and I suspect that, even a century or more ago, when the First and Second Georges were used to put up at the "George," on their way to or from Hanover, prices must have ruled much higher. The "Red Lion" was undoubtedly the chief inn at Sittingbourne from a very early time, and it kept its good repute for centuries; for here it was that Henry the Eighth stayed when "progressing" along the Dover Road in 1541, and here he held what in those autocratic times answered to our present Cabinet Councils. If I were a licensed victualler I could wish those days back again. Beside the "Red Lion" and the "George," there were at this time the scarcely less inferior hostelries of the "Horn," the "Saracen's Head," the "Bull," and the "White Hart"; and, what with Emperors, Kings, Archbishops, Cardinals, and other dignitaries, with trains of attendants numbering anything from two thousand down to fifty, they must all have been needed. In the sixteenth century, then, Emperors and Kings were the usual guests of the "Red Lion." The landlord at that time sniffed at Princes and Archbishops, and turned away such riff-raff as Dukes and Earls. So soon, however, as 1610, we find a mere untitled traveller received at the "Red Lion"; one Justus Zinzerling, a German, who came posting up the road from Canterbury. We know from his own account that posting was not in those days very expensive.

He paid three shillings for riding these fifteen miles, and alighting at the "Red Lion," put up for the night, glad to get here, past the body of a robber who had been hanged from a roadside tree for murdering a messenger. The body was so surrounded with chains and rings that Herr Zinzerling was of the opinion it would last a long time for the due reading of a much-needed moral to others. He found the landlord of the "Red Lion" to be a Scotchman who knew Latin, and on this common ground of good-fellowship they drank to one another and quoted the classics until drink tied their tongues and deposited their bodies under the table.

I have already had occasion to mention six first-class inns that flourished here three hundred years ago; but in the middle of last century there were a great many more. The "George," the "Rose," and the "Red Lion" seem to have been the chiefest of them about this time; and, if we may believe Hasted (and there is no reason why we shouldn't), the "Rose" was "the most superb of any throughout the kingdom, and the entertainment afforded in it equally so." But where is the "Rose Hotel" now? Gone, alas! with the snows of yester-year. Where, also, the "George," which at the time of Waterloo kept forty pairs of post-horses? and where the "Red Lion"? It would, I fancy, puzzle most folks to say, for although they still stand, the change that came over the spirit of their dream about 1840 has caused them to be cut up into separate houses and tenements.

We can, however, by intensive observation, identify the "Rose." It is a handsome red brick building on the left-hand side, now occupied by a firm of grocers. The identification is from a beautifully-carved rose in a red brick panel on the first floor, with the initials "R. I." and the date 1708. The building is large, and has eight windows in a row. But the "George" has nine, and the "Lion" twelve.

About this time, too, the people seem to have given

up living in hotels and inns, and to have taken to private houses. Also, they drank tea instead of beer; and so presently we find the inns disappearing that at one time stood next to one another, in a long line on both sides of the High Street, and even in the branch thoroughfares. Here was the "White Hart," large enough in 1815 to have eighteen soldiers quartered in it daily. It is now divided between a Bank and a Brewery. Here, also, was the "Gun," which, aptly enough, had as many vicissitudes as the fortunes of war, for it was turned into the Parish Workhouse, opened again in 1752 as the "Globe," and presently became the workhouse again, with, probably, the landlord as its first inmate! But it was no greater a success as what our grandfathers with an ironical humour termed a "House of Industry" than as a hostelry, and so it was not long before the paupers were marched out and another phase of its strange eventful history commenced. This time it became a coachmaker's workshop, and there we will leave it.

Sittingbourne innkeepers had an inordinate fancy for changing their signs, and some of their houses have borne as many aliases as an old and hardened swindler. Thus the "Seven Stars" became in turn the "Cherry Tree," the "Union Flag," and finally the "Volunteers"; while the present "Plough Inn" (only they may have changed its name again already) in East Street has been successively the "King Henry the Eighth," and the "Royal Oak." Other houses were the "Bull," the "Adam and Eve," the "Walnut Tree," the "King's Head," "Six Bells," "Black Boy," "Boatswain's Call," "Ship," "Chequer," "Three Post Boys," "Crown," "Bird in Hand," "Lamb," "Three Kings," "Angel," "Portobello," "Bell," "Duke's Head," and "Cross Keys"; to name but a selection, but age has withered, and want of custom staled, the most of them, and, instead of entertaining travellers, the inhabitants of Sitting-



bourne poison them with the appalling smells that arise from the numberless brick-kilns round about.

For the making of bricks and tiles is the chief industry of Sittingbourne nowadays, and a very large and flourishing industry it is; so much so, indeed, that there will be presently nothing of Sittingbourne left at all; because, like maggots that live *in* cheeses—and *on* them—the Sittingbourne brickmakers find their sustenance in the ground on which they live, and have carted away nearly all the surrounding country. When they have worked down to the chalk and the bed-rock, I don't know what they *will* do. Already all the hills have vanished and have been distributed over England in the shape of bricks, and when folks return who have known Sittingbourne in their youth, they don't recognize the place, and go away wondering whether curses will fall upon it because its people have thus removed the old landmarks.

Changed, indeed, it is, not only from those days when the great ones of the earth sojourned here, but also from those comparatively recent times when the traveller's only choice was the road. Then three parts of the population were engaged in hotel-keeping, licensed-victualling, or coach-building; innkeepers, job-masters, hostlers, post-boys, chamber-maids, and boots, were their styles and titles, and if you are curious enough to turn the pages of Sittingbourne registers you will find such entries as these to be the chiefest of their contents: "John Slater, innholder, of the White Hart, was buried, 22nd Feby, 170 $\frac{8}{9}$ "; or "Joseph, ostler at the Crowne, buried Oct. 23, 1708."

When the railway came, ruin, swift and terrible, fell upon this busy community. Grass grew in the stable-yards; the old high-hung yellow chariots and the light post-chaises rotted to pieces that were used to be hired by travellers who did not care so much about the price as the pace they went; the price of horses fell; the vast interiors of the hotels with their numberless bedrooms, and one-time cosy coffee-

rooms, echoed to the casual tread of some unfrequent guest, uncomfortable and half-frightened at the solitary state in which he sat; hostlers, grooms, and washers lounged miserably about the mouldy harness-rooms in company with dejected post-boys; chambermaids departed to other scenes and occupations; and "boots" gradually lost the encyclopædic knowledge for which he was renowned, and forgot alike the number of miles to the next post-town and the proper way to clean a pair of Bluchers.

The last post-boy is dead now, and the chaises and the chariots are represented—like so many other obsolete things—at the South Kensington Museum; and the typical innkeeper of that day should be also, for his like is no more seen on earth. He was a burly man with a red, good-humoured, clean-shaven face. He wore, frequently, knee-breeches and sleeved yellow waistcoats with black stripes that made him look, to the youthful imagination, like a great wasp or bumble-bee. He wore short white aprons, too, and high collars encircling his thick red neck, so that one gazed upon him in constant dread of his falling down in an apoplectic fit; he wore—but enough! Let it be said, though, that he resembled a Blue-coat boy in one respect, for he was never known to wear a hat.

All this is changed. Sittingbourne had grown into importance because its situation was convenient for travellers to stay here to change horses at, and when the roads became deserted the place would have fallen back into its original obscurity had it not been for bricks, hops, and cherries. Bricks, and the surrounding fruit country have prospered it anew, and have made it what it is; a dusty, thickly populated, dirty town whose old aspect has been altered from a broad and roomy street to crowded lanes and a High Street filled with frowzy alleys, and many Dissenting conventicles of different degrees of ugliness.

Of late years, paper has been added to the interests of

Sittingbourne. Outside the town, on Milton Creek, leading muddily to the Swale, there you will find paper in its crude wood-pulp stage, as imported from the mills in Norway and Sweden. Closely viewed, it is not attractive. Slabs of wood-pulp, stacked forty or fifty feet high, with a narrow-gauge railway running between cliff-like accumulations of this merchandise, present a scene made squalid by the torn and bedraggled fragments of paper packing that the winds sport with. But, seen from the Swale, or indeed from a distance on land, these towering stocks of the raw material for newspapers have a peculiarly romantic appearance; looking indeed like a reminiscence of the temples of the East.

The village of Milton itself, properly "Milton Regis," is full of queer old corners. The church stands aloof, dignified, on a remote country road. In its churchyard is a stone mentioning a woman who had six husbands:—

"Here lyeth interred the Body of Abraham Washiton (*sic*), late husband of Alise Washinton now liveing in Milton, whome had in all six Husbands: John Ailes, John Ricard, Thomas Gill, John Jeeffre, Alexander Flet. Anno 1601."

It will be observed that this lady who collected husbands is described as "now liveing." Possibly the sixth was not the last; but by that time the men of Milton must have grown rather timid.

In any case, the history of Mrs. Washinton was evidently considered remarkable, to be detailed on this stone, either by herself or by the admiring or astonished neighbourhood.

Sittingbourne parish church, and some remaining walls of the more ancient inns, are all that need detain the stranger. The massive square tower of the church, which is a prominent feature of the High Street, is the oldest part; the body of the building dates only from the Perpendicular period. To this time belongs a singular monumental effigy of a lady,

placed in a niche of the north chancel wall; a mysterious figure, represented with an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes lying across its wasted breast. No inscription remains to tell its story. The church fronts on to the highway, and in days of pilgrimage



YARD OF THE "LION" INN, SITTINGBOURNE.

(and even so lately as 1830) the bourne to which Sittingbourne owes its name, which comes from the Anglo-Saxon "Sæthingbourne," the seething, or bubbling, brook, trickled and welled up in the likeness

of a spring across the road. Through it splashed the mounted pilgrims, while the weary-footed palmers crossed by stepping-stones, or cooled their feet in the water. Many halted to cross themselves, to kneel and pray before the figure of Our Lady which filled the niche still remaining in the buttress of the Chilton Chapel, and was called thence "Saint Mary of the Butterasse." This little shrine was defaced in 1540, and now the running stream is enclosed in pipes that discharge the water into Milton Creek.

The village of Murston, which at one time skirted the road at some distance from Sittingbourne, and was in receipt of the town's leavings, is now quite undistinguishable by a stranger from the town itself, so greatly has the population grown of late years. It is quite uninteresting, save for the memory of the affray by which the rector, the Reverend Richard Tray, was ejected from his living in 1641. A stone let into the Rectory wall preserves the record of the affair:—

*Si Natura negat facit Indignatio Versem.*

The Barne which stood where this now  
Stands was bvrnt down by the Rebel's hands  
in December 1659  
This Barne which stands where tother stood  
By Richard Tray is now made good,  
in July 1662  
All things yov bvrn,  
Or overtvrn,  
Bvt bvild vp novght : pray tell  
Is this the Fire of Zeale or Hell ?  
Yet yov doe all  
By the 'Spirits call  
As yov pretend : bvt pray  
What Spirit is't ? A *bad one* I dare say.

## XXIX

FIVE miles and a half down the road from Sittingbourne, the pilgrims who had prayed so devoutly at the shrine of Our Lady of the Buttress (and it is to be hoped had not forgotten the claims of Swanstree Hermitage) came to Ospringe, where they usually found a profuse

hospitality waiting for them at the Maison Dieu. Not that there was any lack of religious houses on the way. Far from it, indeed. They had not proceeded much farther than a mile when they came in those times to the Hermitage of Bapchild, with the hermit standing on the doorstep, scratching himself with one hand, holding out a scollop shell for alms in the other, and conjuring them by the blessed Thomas and all the hierarchy of saints to spare something for his altar. The parish church of Bapchild, which was built in early Norman times, before any one dreamed of Canterbury becoming a place of pilgrimage, or the high-road crowded with a varied concourse of miserable sinners anxious to compound for their ill-deeds by visiting the scene of the martyrdom, is situated beside a lane at some distance from the road, and so was quite out of the track of that alms-giving crowd. It grieved the Vicar of Bapchild to see these free-handed folks going by, with never a mark or even a silver penny coming his way, and so he contrived to set up some sort of a cell and chapel with a few exceedingly dubious bones in it, supposed to be the reliques of saints; but probably grubbed up from his own churchyard. It did not matter much whose reliques they were called, for that was a credulous age, and so long as there were not two skulls of Saint Paulinus on view, or more than a gross of Saint Alphege's teeth to be seen at the numberless shrines between London and Canterbury, the pilgrims were not generally disposed to be critical. It was only when Saint Frideswyde appeared, from the osseous evidence of these shrines, to have as many arms as Vishnu, or when Saint Antholin appeared, from equally untrustworthy evidence, to have been in this life a Double-headed Nightingale or a kind of Siamese Twins, that men on pilgrimage became sceptical. But, after all, if saints could perform one kind of a miracle, why not another, and why should not Saint Alphege cause his teeth to be increased, until a peck of them could be gathered from the monasteries of Europe, or Saint

Antholin not have his skulls miraculously multiplied if they had a mind to it; and if Saint Frideswyde could be proved to have been possessed of half a dozen arms, was it not for the good, if not of the church, at least of the clergy, that it should be so? And so, it is to be hoped that the Vicar and the Hermit, between them, did well; and also it is to be hoped that the Hermit took more advantage, for washing purposes, of the little stream which here also flowed across the roadway than his brethren were wont to do.

The road between Ospringe and Sittingbourne was in those days very lonely, and lonely it still remains, for the settlements of Bapchild, Radfield, and Greenstreet are but dull and dishevelled collections of tiny shops and cottages, with here and there a slumberous old inn or whitewashed farmhouse. The railway to Dover runs on the left hand, within sight of the highway, through the beautiful cherry-orchards and the hop-gardens, and the land slopes gently down to the levels of Teynham and the fertile though ague-stricken marshes of the Swale; that part of Kent where, according to the old local saying, there is "wealth without health"; significantly alluded to in the rhyme—

He that would not live long,  
Let him live at Murston, Teynham, or Tong.

Tong Castle, where Rowena "drank hael" to King Vortigern and captivated that very susceptible but unpatriotic monarch; the scene also of the treacherous murder by Hengist and his men of three hundred British nobles, is represented now only by a grassy mound. Here we are in the centre of the hop-growing districts, and the road begins to be bordered with hop-gardens, bare in autumn and winter, except for the great stacks of poles; but beautiful in spring and summer with the climbing bine, planted in long alleys in which women and children work in the long summer days, weeding and tying up the hops, and hanging up the wind-screens called "lews." For the

hop-vine is a delicate plant that requires as much cossetting and constant attention as an invalid, and if it is not carefully tended and trained up in the way it should go, it presently droops and dies or becomes too weak to climb up the long twelve- and fifteen-foot poles which it is expected to surmount. And so it is jealously shielded from all draughts and boisterous breezes by long pieces of canvas or string netting, stretched from pole to pole at that side of the gardens whence come the prevailing winds; while every hop-pole is tied so scrupulously and elaborately to its fellow that a June hop-garden is a very maze of string.

To these gardens come in August and September hundreds of men, women, and children from London slums; some by train, many more by road. Whole families of them, with their clothing, their pots and pans and sooty kettles, slung over their shoulders, come tramping down the weary miles, and fill the air with ribaldry, strange oaths, and horrible blasphemy. The villagers keep them at arm's length, if not, indeed, at a greater distance than that, and keep their children at home; going round their gardens and orchards at night, to see that gates are locked; and, bolting doors and latching windows securely, go to bed and dream dreams in which evil-looking hoppers are stealing their fruit and making away with the occupants of their hen-roosts. Sometimes they wake up and find the crashing of branches, the screaming and clucking of cocks and hens, which have formed the subjects of their dreams, to have foundation in fact, and hurriedly dashing out of bed, arrive, barefooted and armed only with a poker, in their gardens just in time to see mysterious figures vanish over the wall and to hear the protests of their stolen fowls grow small by degrees and beautifully less in the distance. Next day the bereaved villager is heard to execute fruitless variations of "Tell me, shepherd's, have you seen my Flora pass this way?" and some enterprising emigrants from Whitechapel feast royally on poultry.



Just where the hilltop rises and looks down in the direction of Ospringe, the wisdom of the Faversham authorities has planted a Hospital for infectious diseases. It fronts the road, and has a very large door with "Isolation Hospital" painted on it in very small letters. Tramps and beggars passing by see a large house where possibly something may be begged or stolen. They go up to the door, and, after reading the legend painted there, may be seen to proceed hurriedly on their way. Without standing on the order of their going, they go at once. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*: they don't know what "isolation" means, but they hurry off, lest they should catch isolation and die of it. And so they come, stricken with a mortal fear, into Ospringe, down a dusty hill. A Maison Dieu that stood here in olden times would perhaps have received them then, but to-day the few fragments of it that remain are part of the "Red Lion" inn, and tramps find no encouragement there.

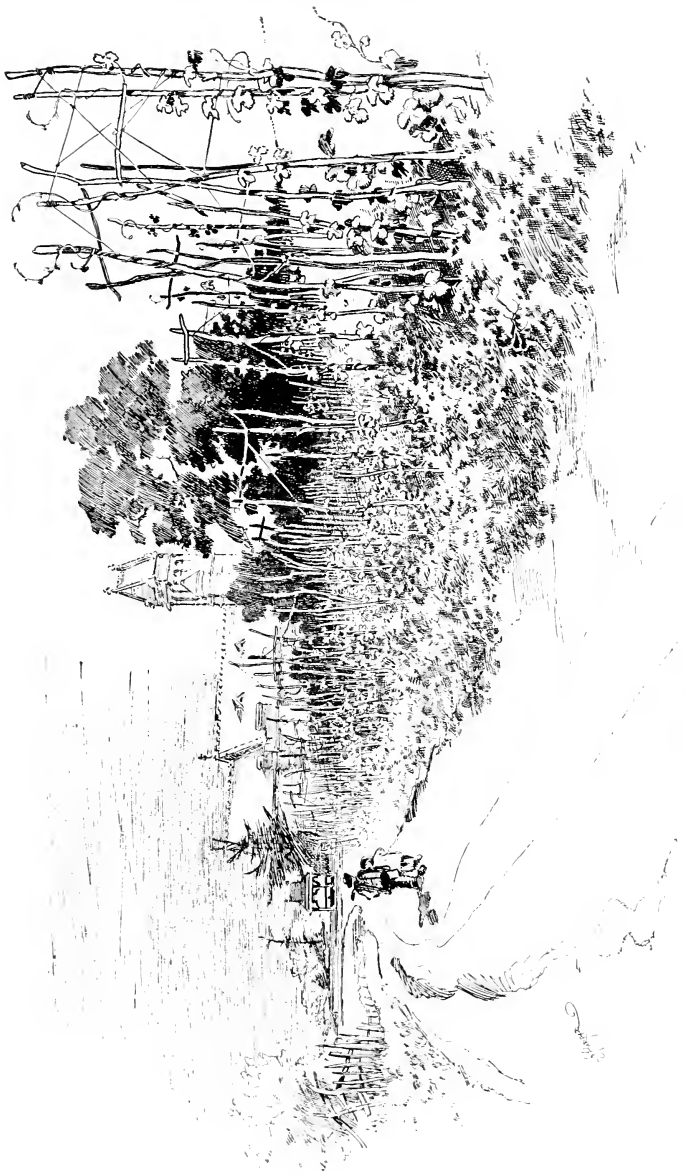
The Knights Templar and the Brethren of the Holy Ghost held this Hospital for travellers for many years, from the time of Henry the Second, and they exercised a lavish hospitality, extended to all, from the King downwards. King John had a room here—a *camera regis*—and other monarchs frequently made this a halting-place on their way to or from Dover. Very few records are left of the feastings and jollifications that took place in this semi-religious, semi-secular retreat, and Ospringe has no longer any Royal visitors. The village consists of a long street beside the highway at the foot of Judd's Hill, and of a shorter street, called Water Lane, that runs off at right angles where the remains of the Maison Dieu stand beside the stream to which Ospringe owes its rather pretty name. At one time this stream flowed openly across the roadway, but it is bridged now, and Water Lane, which had a raised footpath on either side, while the lane itself was occupied by the stream, through which horses and carts splashed, has now been drained dry.

The "Anchor Hotel" was once a posting-house and a stopping-place on the route of local coaches between Chatham and Herne Bay, but this traffic has of course been long discontinued. The modern pilgrim should not fail, before leaving Ospringe, to explore Water Lane and the country road for half a mile beyond. The place abounds in old cottages, picturesque windmills, and old timbered houses of some pretensions. Of these, Queen Hall is probably the most interesting. Beyond it is the parish church, a very large building with a tower of grand design and unusual type. The edifice has been thoroughly and unusually well restored, with an exquisite taste unfortunately too rare in country districts, and may be instanced as an example of what "restoration" should be. The approach to the church by the road is past hop-gardens which group beautifully, and form an excellent motive for a sketch.

### XXX

FAVERSHAM town, lying a mile distant, between Faversham Creek and the turnpike road, will doubtless in the course of a few years adjoin Ospringe, and convert the village into a mere suburb. Preston, the old suburb of Faversham, is distant something over a mile, but in between there have lately been built very many new streets of cottages and villas, evidences of Faversham's prosperity, doubtless, but not pleasing to the tourist. That prosperity is due to its situation upon a navigable creek, along which are pursued the trades of brick and tile making, and the manufacture of gunpowder; and the oyster fishery, which adds such a great proportion of wealth to this flourishing county of Kent, is largely centred here.

The surrounding country, too, is probably the very richest and most suitable district for the growing of



OSPRINGE: A JUNE HOP-GARDEN.

cherries, gooseberries, currants, and strawberries ; and the frequency and perfection of the market-gardens, orchards, and hop-gardens strike the pedestrian with admiration and amazement. A visit in early spring, when the orchards are in blossom, and others in the cherry- and hop-picking seasons, convince the sceptical that Kent is, in sober truth, the " garden of England." The stranger needs but to spend a week between this and Canterbury ; to tramp the high-road and the bye-lanes in the direction of Herne Hill and Whitstable, and he will see abundant evidences of how important is the fruit-growing industry, not only in the fields and gardens, where he may see the fruit growing, but also in the great barns and outhouses bursting with many thousands of bushel-baskets only awaiting the ripening of the cherries and currants to be filled and put upon the rails at Faversham Junction, whence numerous special trains are daily run during the season to London and the Borough Market. Somewhat earlier in the year—generally in mid-June—other evidences of the magnitude of the fruit interest are seen in the auctioneers' sale bills posted on every available board and fence, announcing that the growing crops are presently to be sold by auction.

But, in spite of the fertility of Kentish orchards, the countryman will not forego his privilege of grumbling. Singularly enough, he never thinks of eating any of the fruit he grows, and the more plentiful the crops, the less pleased he professes himself to be. Not that, should you come upon him at a season when plenty is less marked, he will be any the more gratified. Hold the peasant proprietor of an orchard in conversation during the fruit season, and you will think him one of the most miserable and unfortunate men in the country.

" Good day to you," you say.

(Hodge nods his head, and mumbles, " Mor'n'n.")

" Splendid crops you have down here. I should think things must be going pretty well in these parts ? "

“Ay, goin’ to the Devil fast enow, I’se warrand.”

“Oh! how d’you make that out?”

“Make it out, is it? Why, look a-here at them there turmuts; d’you iver see sich poor things; ay, an’ *all* the root crops is bad’s can be.”

“Yes; but *you’re* all right with your fruit; cherries and apples.”

“M’yes, there’s a dale o’ fruit this year: darned sight too much ter please me.”

“But you can’t very well have too much of a good thing, can you?”

“Can’t you just, though; look at the price; down ter nothing, as you might say. Get it for the asking.”

“But *I* didn’t get cherries for the asking; *I* had to pay eightpence a pound for some I bought at Chatham.”

“Oh! I dessay. Wish *I* e’d git a penny a pound. But that’s jist like them ’ere starv’em, rob’em, and cheat’em folks. Wouldn’t give ’ee so much’s the parings o’ their finger-nails if they e’d help it.”

“Then why don’t you make preserves of some of your fruit?”

“Preserves? what’s that, mister?”

“Why, jam, you know. Besides, surely you eat some of your own fruit, don’t you?”

“Fruit’s to sell, not to heat!”

“Well, then, if you can’t sell it, don’t preserve it, and won’t eat any of it, *what* do you do with it?”

“Give it ter the pigs, in coorse!”

“Yes, but why not eat some of it yourself?”

“Heat it! D’yer take me for a bloomin’ Nebuchadnezzar? Besides, it’s that there ondergestuble——!”

“But Nebuchadnezzar didn’t eat fruit. He hadn’t got the chance, poor fellow. He could only find grass to eat.”

“Grass ’ood’n’t be so ondergestuble as fruit, I reckon. Blame me if you town folks don’t think a man can live on nothink. Now, a pound or two o’ steak, a few rashers o’ fat bacon, an’ a few heggs for bre’kfuss

—that's more my line. Hexpeck a Christian man to heat fruit—— ! ”

“ But you expect people to buy yours, don't you ? ”

“ Naw, I don't hexpeck nothin'.”

“ Then why do you grow it ? ”

“ Bekause I suppose I'm a fool ; that's about the size of it. Good day t'ye, mister.”

### XXXI

THE history of Faversham town is extremely long and interesting, but as it does not lie on the direct road to Dover, it will not be necessary to go into a very detailed account of it. It is a curious, half-maritime borough whose Mayor wears a chain of office decorated with badges of oars and rudders ; a town whose records include such events as the burial of King Stephen, his Queen, and his son Eustace ; and at a very much later date, the attempted escape of James the Second. Faversham fishermen recognized the fugitive King as he crouched, shivering in the hoy at Shellness on that bitter December morning of 1688, and, robbing him of his watch and chain and his money, they brought him a prisoner to the Mayor's house, where he was detained two days, guarded by a mob of countrymen, on whom his terror-stricken appeals to be allowed to escape had no effect.

“ He who is not with me is against me,” exclaimed the frantic bigot. “ My blood will be upon your heads if I fall a martyr.” But the dignity of a martyr was not to be his. A troop of Life-guards was sent to effect his release from the ignorant mob, who only refrained from stealing his diamond shoe-buckles because they thought them to be pieces of glass. James's terror of the Faversham fishers is reflected in his manifesto issued years afterwards, in which he offers an amnesty to his “ rebel subjects,” but expressly

excepts such arch-traitors as Churchill, Danby, and the poor oyster-dredgers of Faversham.

Saints Crispin and Crispianus, who have a public-house dedicated to them at Strood, had an altar here in the Abbey Church, and were supposed to have lived a while at Preston, earning their living as cobblers in a cottage that stood where the "Swan" inn is now. Long after the Reformation had done sway with the shrine of Saint Thomas, pious bootmakers made pilgrimages to the place; and St. Crispin's Day was for centuries the principal holiday in Faversham. I would rather make pilgrimage to the place where they earned their living than to the shrines of all the sanctified humbugs who contended for pride of place in this world, and becoming worsted in the struggle for supremacy, received their Canonization as a matter of course.

Faversham in the fifteenth century was not less well-furnished with religious cranks than the holy road to Canterbury. There was an anchorite in one corner of Faversham churchyard, and an anchoress in another, and in their cells they sat and sulked their lives away, and never did any work. William Thornbury was rector here for twenty-two years, when he resigned his living especially to become an *inclusus*; and for eight years he occupied a damp and most uncomfortable cell amid the tombs, until he died, most likely of rheumatic fever, in 1481. There is a most beautiful brass to him in the church, with a long Latin verse, recounting how he was one of the elect, and how for long years he sat lonely in his cell. Why he should have lived such a life is a question which we, who are so far removed from that age, both by lapse of time and in change of thought, cannot readily answer. That he was a man of good birth, good position, and considerable wealth, would appear from his will, and these circumstances make his reclusion only the more extraordinary. He probably suffered either from religious mania, or else from a guilty conscience which

led him thus to compound with Heaven for some undiscovered crime that made his life a misery.

But the traveller who keeps strictly to his Dover Road only passes through Faversham suburbs. Preston is the oldest of them, and lies directly on the road. To the left rises Faversham's fantastic spire, conspicuous above the flats ; immediately in front goes the railway in a cutting underneath the road ; and straight ahead, in the far distance, rises up a long thin white line amid hillsides clothed heavily with forests. It is long before the stranger discovers what is that singular white streak upon the dark trees, but it reveals itself, as he goes, as the famous Boughton Hill, and the woodlands as the extensive remains of Blean Forest.

It was at " Boughton-under-the-Blee " that Chaucer's Canon and Yeoman overtook the pilgrims. The Canon's hat hung down his back by a lace, for he had ridden as though he were mad. Under his hood he had placed a burdock-leaf to cool his head, but yet his forehead dropped like a still that was full of plantain and wallflower. The Canon's Yeoman tells the pilgrims how pleased his master would be of their company as far as Canterbury ; and the Host makes him welcome, asking if his master can please the party with a merry story. " A story ? " asks the Yeoman ; " that is nothing to what the Canon can do. He is an Alchemist, and so clever that—

" all this ground on which we be riding,  
Till that we come to Canterbury town,  
He could all cleanè turnen up so down,  
And pave it all of silver and of gold."

" Ah ! " says Harry Bailly, the Host, " that's all very well, you know, but how is it that this wonderful master of yours wears such a threadbare coat ? " To this query, the Yeoman is bound to answer that his master is too clever by half, or not clever enough, and that he has, for all his alchemy, only wasted his substance and that of many more. The Canon hears something of this, and bidding his servant hold his



tongue, makes off for very shame, while the Yeoman tells the story that brings the party to Harbledown.

## XXXII

BOUGHTON-UNDER-BLEAN is perhaps the neatest, quietest, longest, and most cheerfully picturesque village on the Dover Road. It lies near the foot of the hill. Half-way up is the church.

In the churchyard of Boughton there is a great yew-tree whose girth at three feet from the ground was taken by the vicar in 1894. It was then 9 ft. 9 in. The age of this tree is exactly known, for a seventeenth century vicar, the Reverend John Johnson, recorded, "the little yew-tree by the south doer was sett in 1695." The yew, therefore, expands one foot in sixty-one years.

One or two country houses with large gardens and trimly cut hedges occupy the crest of the hill; and just beyond, on the level plateau of Dunkirk, is the church, built in 1840, as some means toward civilizing the untutored savages the villagers of this beautiful county had become under the neglect of that Christian Church whose Metropolitan Cathedral rises proudly beyond the hillside village of Harbledown, less than three miles away. God in His goodness has blessed with a boundless fertility the fair land of Kent, so that old Michael Drayton merely expressed facts when he wrote that rapturous eulogy—

O famous Kent!  
 What county hath this isle that can compare with thee?  
 That hath within thyself as much as thou canst wish;  
 Thy rabbits, venison, fruits, thy sorts of fowl and fish;  
 As what with strength compares, thy hay, thy corn,  
 Nor anything doth want that anywhere is good.

But, long after the first quarter of the nineteenth century had passed, this part of Kent was peopled with a peasantry compared with whom the Hindoos

and the Chinese, who were even then receiving the warm attention of missionary zealots, were highly civilized and enlightened. The very county in which Augustine had landed and reintroduced Christianity thirteen hundred years before was neglected and ignored by the port-drinking parsons and prebendal wine-butts who drew fat incomes from the Church and starved the souls of dwellers under its very shadow; and the kindly fruits of this fertile land, with its furred and feathered game, brought no prosperity to the people. "The earth is the Squire's and the fulness thereof" was an emendation of Holy Writ scored deeply in every yokel's brain; and here, whither a fervent piety had brought uncounted thousands of pilgrims in the by-past centuries, the country-folk lived from youth to age, Godless and unlettered. The Era of Reform had dawned on England, sweeping away much, both good and evil, but these dark districts of Kent remained the same, save for a slowly growing feeling of discontent. The New Poor Law naturally fostered this feeling in a country where every other peasant lived in old age upon Outdoor Relief—and thought it the most reasonable way of ending a life of toil. By this new dispensation it became necessary for a poor man to break up his home and go into the "Union" before relief could be afforded him; and thus the Poors' Rates were raised and the feelings of ratepayers and peasantry embittered simultaneously. A man who felt no shame in receiving his half-crown or five shillings a week from the parish, experienced bitter degradation in becoming an inmate of what is now generally known as "the House," then hateful under the current name of "the Bastille," or "Bastyle," as the English peasant pronounced the word.

To this neglected corner of England came a romantic and mysterious stranger in 1832. No one knew whence or how had come to Canterbury the picturesquely dressed man of commanding height and handsome face who, staying at the "Rose Hotel" in the High

Street, soon attracted attention by his manner and the Eastern style of dress he affected. That he was fabulously rich, and that his name was Baron Rothschild were the common reports of the then somewhat dull Cathedral city, eager to dwell upon any subject that made for gossip ; but it presently appeared, by his own accounts, that he was " Sir William Percy Honeywood Courtenay," Knight of Malta and King of Jerusalem. This extraordinary man, besides possessing the advantages of a handsome face and a fine presence, was gifted with a singularly persuasive eloquence ; and professing himself to be the friend of the people, oppressed by a selfish aristocracy and a stupid Government, he aroused the wildest enthusiasm in a political campaign upon which he presently embarked, with the object of standing as Parliamentary candidate for the City of Canterbury. His charm of manner ; the affability with which he would converse with the meanest peasant ; and the really clever political discourses he wrote for a periodical leaflet called the *Lion* which he had printed and published, created a number of partisans who flocked round him as he rode through Canterbury and the surrounding villages ; or crowded the High Street in a state of the wildest enthusiasm when he harangued them from the balcony of the " Rose." He polled over nine hundred votes in the Conservative interest at the election, and thus came within an easy distance of becoming a member of Parliament. His indiscreet championship of some fishermen, who were being prosecuted by the Revenue officials for smuggling, gave political and social enemies the looked-for opportunity to injure a man who was so dangerous to the squires of Kent. He was prosecuted in turn, on a charge of perjury, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. From the County Gaol he was transferred to a lunatic asylum, and only liberated in the spring of 1838, on the assurances of friends in the vicinity of Canterbury that they would take charge of him.

Religious mania seems to have attacked the weak brain of this excitable enthusiast while in confinement, and his conduct presently became more eccentric than before. Roaming in the country villages, preaching religious and political salvation to the small farmers, the cottagers, and poor agricultural labourers of Kent, he aroused greater enthusiasm and personal love than before. He had always represented himself to be a member of the Courtenay family, whose head, the Earl of Devon, claims descent from Palæologus, King of Jerusalem in early Crusading times; and, in addition, he announced himself as the rightful heir to a number of important estates in Kent and neighbouring counties. He let it be known that he, the noble Sir William Courtenay, Knight of Malta, and rightful King of Jerusalem, was not too proud to partake of food and shelter at the board and under the roof of the poorest. When he came in power, and claimed his rights, the oppressed should live freely on the land; the cruel New Poor Law that shut unfortunate men and women out from the world in "Bastilles," as though Poverty were a crime, and separated man and wife, whom God had declared by his handmaid, the Church, man should not put asunder, should be abrogated; and the workers should have a share in the products of their toil. The people largely responded to these advances; and poor folk, together with a number of the class who had earned themselves a small competency, and a few moneyed people, believed thoroughly in Courtenay. He was now a man whom many held to have been persecuted and imprisoned for his championship of the people, and they loved him for it, many of them with a who'souled devotion that culminated in worship. Courtenay's extraordinary facial resemblance to the traditional appearance of the Saviour, and, finally, his ultimate assumption of the character of the Messiah, led many people to believe that Christ was actually come on earth to commence His promised reign; and enter-



“SIR WILLIAM COURTENAY.” *From an old print.*



tainment, encouragement, and monetary contributions attended on their belief.

Matters came to a crisis toward the end of May. Courtenay had marched the country round with agricultural labourers and others who had left their work in the fields to follow the Lord, and the farmers who thus saw their fields remaining untilled grew anxious. One, bolder than the rest, applied to the magistrate for the detention of his men who had thus left their employment; and, with a local constable named Mears and two others, he came up with Courtenay's band on the morning of May 31st.

Ever since the 28th of that month, Courtenay had been tramping the roads and lanes with a band of about one hundred rustics. Starting from Boughton on that day, they had bought bread, and, placing half a loaf on a pole, above a blue-and-white flag bearing a lion rampant, had marched through Goodnestone, Hernhill, and Dargate Common, where they all fell down on their knees while Courtenay prayed. Then they proceeded to Bossenden Farm, where they supped and slept in a barn. Leaving Bossenden at three o'clock the next morning, their leader took them to Sittingbourne, where he procured breakfast for the whole party at a cost of 25s. The rest of the day was spent in parading the country round Boughton, and the next evening was spent again at Bossenden Farm. The following morning, Mears the constable, with his party of three, came up with them in a meadow, and demanded the surrender of the farmers' men. The men refused to leave, and Courtenay shot the constable dead on the spot. Alarmed at this, the others rode off hastily to Canterbury for military assistance, while Courtenay administered the sacrament to his men in bread-and-water. All knelt down and worshipped him, and a farmer, one Alexander Foad, kneeling, asked "should he follow him in body or in heart?" "In the body," replied Courtenay; whereupon Foad sprang up, exclaiming, "Oh! be joyful, be joyful!"

The Saviour has accepted me. Go on, go on, I'll follow thee till I drop!"

When the terrified three reached Canterbury, they secured the aid of a company of the Forty-fifth Regiment. A young officer, Lieutenant Bennett, staying with friends in the city, volunteered to go



“COURTENAY.”

*From an old print.*

with them. Coming to Bossenden, they found Courtenay and his hundred followers strongly posted amid alder-bushes in a deep and sequestered part of Bossenden Wood. Courtenay exhorted his people to behave like men. “God,” he said, “would protect him and them. Should he fall, he would infallibly rise again in greater glory than now; and wounds for his sake would be accounted for righteousness.”



Lieutenant Bennett advanced and called upon them to surrender, but Courtenay, raising his pistol, shot him dead, and his men leapt out from the woods furiously, armed only with cudgels and fanaticism, to attack the soldiers. One volley, however, stretched many dying, or bleeding from severe wounds, upon the ground, and Courtenay himself fell mortally wounded, exclaiming, "I have Jesus in my heart."

Thirteen people in all were killed in this affray: Mears the constable, Lieutenant Bennett, and Courtenay; eight "rioters" dying on the spot, and two others afterwards succumbing to their wounds. Many more were crippled for life. Twenty-three were committed to gaol: some transported across the seas, and others sentenced to short terms of imprisonment at home. Some of the men were buried in Boughton Churchyard, others at Hernhill, three miles away, overlooking the rich land that slopes towards the sea. Here Courtenay was buried, but the graves of himself and his men are unmarked by stone or mound. The fanaticism of the peasantry was not altogether extinguished by this dreadful ending, and the tale is told, on excellent authority, of a woman drawing water from a well and walking half a mile with it to moisten the lips of the dead leader, who had said that, should he fall, a drop of water applied to his mouth would restore him from death to life. The barbarous expedients of keeping his body in a shed of the "Red Lion" at Dunkirk until corruption had set in, and of omitting the resurrection clause from the Burial Service were resorted to, lest the country folk should persist in their belief of his divinity.

Thus ended the so-called "Courtenay Rebellion" of 1838. When he was dead, it became generally known that "Sir William Courtenay" was really but John Nichols Thom, the son of a Cornish innkeeper and farmer. Always a clever and handsome lad, he had grown up still more handsome, but with a religious enthusiasm and a romantic imagination inherited from

his mother. He was for a time employed at Truro, but disappeared for some years until his strange descent upon Canterbury in 1832.

The "Red Lion," where the bodies of the dead were laid out, stands by the roadside at Dunkirk, and a cart-road on the hither side of it, to the left hand, made long after this extraordinary affair, and called "Courtenay Road," leads down to the still wild and thickly grown woods of hazel, alder, and miscellaneous scrub in which Bossenden Woods are situated. A gate—"Courtenay Gate"—stands by the scene of the struggle, but the trees marked at the time by the rustics in memory of Courtenay and his men, are not now to be discovered. The villagers still bear him in memory, and truly he deserves to be kept in mind, for though as "Sir William Courtenay" he was an impostor, yet he truly loved the people, and his naturally highly-strung mental organization, completely unstrung by an unnecessary imprisonment, was responsible for his religious pretensions and his blasphemous impersonation towards the end. Worse men than he are honoured in history and in public monuments, and it seems a pity that a childish spite should have hidden his grave and the graves of the poor fellows who fell that day. The pilgrim who takes an interest in these strange events, happening in this century, and in the reign of Queen Victoria, and who happens to visit the secluded village of Hernhill, may look for the site of "Sir William Courtenay's" resting-place beside the path where a yew-tree spreads a shade over the west entrance to the village church.

His death did good. The Government ordered a Commission to sit and inquire into the state of things that produced these events, and it appeared that the district was Godless and ignorant, a fit ground for fanaticism to spring up in and flourish. Schools were built, and the church of Dunkirk owes its existence to Courtenay's Rebellion. The superstitious country-

men who say the foundations of the building gave way several times before the walls could be commenced properly, declare that his ghost haunted the place. But, whatever else these doings teach, they teach us that a spirit of selfishness, of neglect, both on the part of Church and State, brings its inevitable retribution. The punishment fell then on these ignorant hinds ; what should be the punishment in the hereafter of those who were morally responsible for the shedding of their blood ?

## XXXIII

DUNKIRK was anciently a common in the Forest of Blean, and was a veritable Alsatia, the resort of lawless men who squatted here because it was not within any known jurisdiction. Hasted, in his *History of Kent*, says houses were built here and “inhabited by low persons of suspicious character, this being a place exempt from the jurisdiction of either hundred or parish, as in a free port, which receives all who enter it, without distinction. The whole district from hence gained the name of ‘Dunkirk.’” This part of the road, being in neither hundred or parish, was neglected and left in a ruinous state until nearly the close of the eighteenth century.

At Dunkirk, on passing the “Gate” inn, with its sign of a five-barred field-gate hanging over the road, the traveller obtains his first glimpse of Canterbury Cathedral, the Bell Harry tower rising grey above the green valley of the Stour. Now the road goes downwards towards Harbledown in a succession of switchback ups and downs that, noticeable enough for remark even at this lapse of time, must have been much more marked in Chaucer’s day. Here the pilgrims would see the Cathedral faintly from the crest of a hillock, losing it for a few minutes as they rode or tramped down the succeeding declivity,

and regaining it on the next hill; until, coming to Harbledown, its majesty burst upon them in an uninterrupted view. The striking characteristics of the road here were noted by Chaucer himself, who, indeed, does not mention Harbledown by name; the description is alone sufficient to identify the place:—

Wist ye not where standeth a little toun,  
Which that yeleped is Bob-up-and-down,  
Under the Blee in Canterbury way.

Here the weary pilgrims made their last halt. The levity; the fun and frolic; the sound of songs and bagpipes ceased, and the seekers of Saint Thomas fell down upon their knees in the dusty road when they caught sight of the golden angel that then crowned the Bell Harry tower. Tears running down the cheeks of all, the pious and the indifferent alike resigned themselves to a religious ecstacy; and when they at length resumed their journey, Chaucer's company of pilgrims rode slowly into the Holy City, listening to a sermon in place of the curious tales with which they had hitherto beguiled the way.

Harbledown stood then on the borders of the great "Bosco de Blean." The "little town," now a mile-long stretch of disconnected cottages, was much smaller, clustering round the parish church on one side of the road, and the Hospital for Lepers, with its chapel and rows of cottages, on the other. Down the road, the houses of Canterbury were to be seen nestling for protection against the Castle and Cathedral, while on the other hand stretched the dark forest, with the Archbishop's gallows standing on a clearing in front. For not only did the dignified clergy point the way to the after life; they not infrequently helped their sheep on the way by means of rope or stake.

As the pilgrims passed that old Lepers' Hospital, founded by Lanfranc in 1084, on this breezy and healthful hillside, whence rose the sweet smell of the herbs for which Harbledown (= Herbal down) has

derived its name, one of the brethren of this charitable foundation would come out and sprinkle them with holy water, presenting the shoe of Saint Thomas to be kissed, and praying them for the love of God and the Blessed Martyr to give something towards the support of the poor lepers of Saint Nicholas. Rarely did the pilgrims fail to do so, and this institution must, in the course of years, have become very wealthy. Henry the Second; Richard Lion Heart, come home again from captivity; Edward the First, with Eleanor of Castile, on his return from Palestine; the Black Prince, with his captives, those trophies of Poitiers—King John of France and his son Philip—and many another must have enriched the place. John of France, on his way home, gave ten gold crowns “pour les nonnains de Harbledown,” and never, surely, before nor since, has an old shoe brought so much luck as Becket’s brought here. For centuries the devout came and pressed their lips to it, dropping coins into the wooden alms-box that is still shown, together with a mazer inscribed with the deeds of Guy of Warwick, and containing the great crystal with which the shoe was decorated. But times change and habits of thought with them, and although the scenery remains as of old, little else is left of the days of pilgrimage. How like the present aspect of the place is to the appearance it presented three hundred and eighty years ago may be seen from the writings of Disiderius Erasmus.

When Erasmus and Dean Colet were returning in 1512 from their unconventional pilgrimage to Canterbury, they came, two miles from the city, to a steep and narrow part of the road, overhung by high banks on either side. The scenery is the same as then. The selfsame banks of an equal abruptness still rise above the road; the rough and crazy flight of steps still leads up to the gateway of Lanfranc’s old Hospital for Lepers, the Hospital of Harbledown. The immemorial yews are here even now; one still flourishing, the other decayed. But the Hospital has

been rebuilt, and only the grey old Church of Saint Nicholas remains. Modern pilgrims, too, may pass without the attentions at one time bestowed on all who passed this way ; attentions which disgusted the stern and matter-of-fact Colet, and amused his somewhat cynically-humorous companion. When they came to the gateway of the Hospital, there tottered down the steps an aged bedesman, and, sprinkling plentifully with holy water both themselves and their horses, he stepped forward, presenting the upper-leather of an old shoe, bound in brass and ornamented with a great crystal, to be kissed. This was the remnant of the Holy Shoe of Thomas à Becket, one of the most revered and valued possessions of the Hospital, kissed reverently by many thousands of pilgrims of every degree, and a great aid to the flow of alms. But Colet, who had already seen too much of this combined hero- and relie-worship, could no longer restrain the wrath which had been rising ever since he had left the shrine down below, with its old bones and dirty rags. He was covered, too, with the holy water which the old man had so recklessly showered on them. "What!" he shouted to Erasmus, "Do these asses expect us to kiss the shoes of all good men that have ever lived? Why, they might as well bring us their spittle to be kissed, or other bodily excrements!" The ancient bedesman was hurt, and possibly, had he been a younger man, he would have hurt this scoffer in return. However, he said nothing, and the cynical Erasmus (for cynicism *always* goes with a really kind heart) gave him a small coin, less from piety, you may be sure, than as a salve to his wounded feelings. And then they went away.

The shoe has vanished, but the crystal is still a valued, if not valuable, possession of the institution, and may be handled by the curious who can reflect upon its having also been touched by those two pilgrims, Erasmus the learned writer, and Colet the founder of Saint Paul's School.

## XXXIV

THE entrance to Canterbury from London is one of the most impressive approaches to a city to be found in all England. The traveller passes through the suburb of Saint Dunstan, by the old parish church that holds the severed head of Sir Thomas More, coming into the city through a street of ancient houses and under the postern arch of West Gate. The great drum towers of West Gate mark the ancient limits of the mediæval city, and guard an opening in the city wall which stood on the further side of the little river Stour. A drawbridge effectually prevented the entrance of an enemy, and when the strongly-guarded gate was closed at nightfall, belated citizens had to stay outside and put up with the inconvenience as best they could, in company with such travellers and pilgrims as arrived late from too much story-telling, feasting, or praying, on the road. For the accommodation of these travellers the suburbs of Saint Dunstan and West Gate arose early without the walls of the city, and several inns—the “Star” and the “Falstaff” among them—remain to show how considerable was the belated company entertained here.

West Gate, as we now see it, is the successor of a much earlier gate, and was built by the ill-fated Simon of Sudbury. It is the only one remaining of all the seven gates of the city, and owes its preservation rather to its convenience as a prison for poor debtors, than to any love our eighteenth-century barbarians had for mediæval architecture. It is to-day a police-station, and thus carries on the frugal and utilitarian traditions which originally spared it in the destruction of much else of beauty and interest.

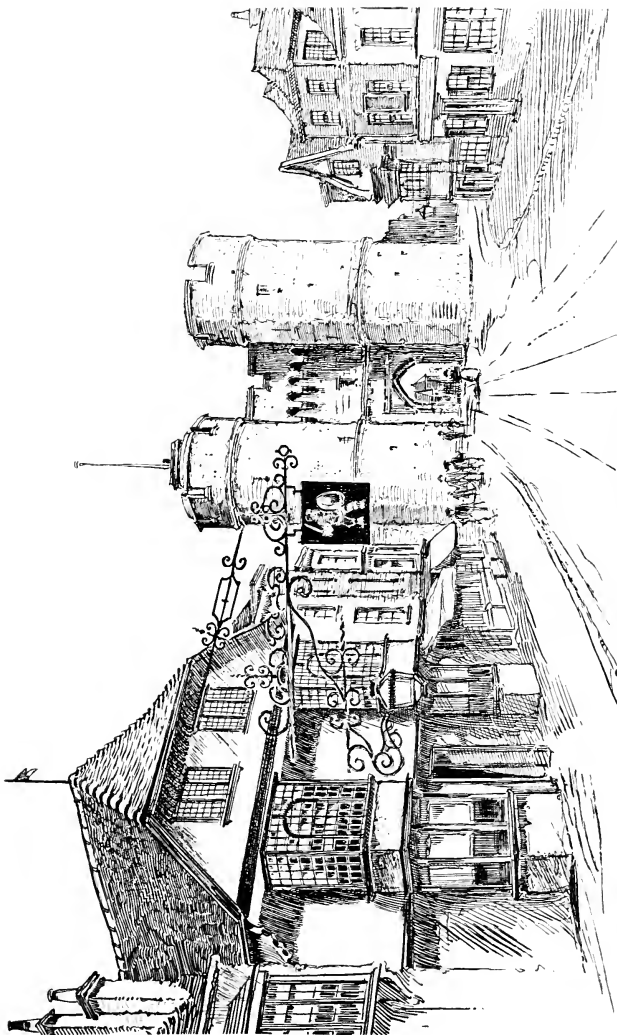
Ancient buildings are carefully preserved nowadays. Why? Can we flatter ourselves that the provincial mind is more enlightened? I am afraid not, and must sorrowfully come to the conclusion that the

ignorant authorities of our country towns would be as ready as ever to demolish their old monuments, did not their natural shrewdness teach them that, as strangers come from all quarters of the world to view their historical remains, they must be regarded in the light of a valuable asset. So far, they are undoubtedly right. Let them "restore" and tear down the remaining gates and towers and castles in the provincial towns of England, and they will prove, in the scarcity of visitors that will follow on their Vandalism, how valuable, in more senses than one, are the ancient ways.

Canterbury has seen a great deal of this senseless disregard for antiquity. Six gates, as I have said, were wantonly destroyed, but the passion for destruction did not stop here. The remains of the Norman castle were years ago converted into a coal-hole of the local gasworks, and are still put to that degradation; great stretches of the city walls, with their watch-towers, were taken down for corn-mills to be built with their materials; and, worse than all, stupidity of this kind ran riot among the Dean and Chapter in the thirties. For seven hundred and fifty years had Lanfranc's north-western tower of the Cathedral stood, while the south-western had been rebuilt nearly three hundred years before. This dissimilarity vexed those assembled holders of fat prebends and decanal loaves and fishes, who drank port and read *The Times*, and had not a single sensible idea in their meagre brain-pans, beyond a notion that one thing ought to match with another, and that as every Jack should have his Jill, so also should everything else possess a pendant. How truly British!

Well, if these western towers did not match, they must be made to; and so to find an excuse for pulling down the older one. There is always some graceless modern architect, with palm itching for five-per-cent. commissions, who would undertake or advise anything to procure a job, and the Dean and Chapter found





WESTGATE, CANTERBURY.

such a man, who conceived Lanfranc's work to have gone beyond repair. To this creature, Charles Austin, their own diocesan architect, who should have been earnest to preserve, rather than to destroy, they gave instructions for the pulling down of the Norman work and for its replacement by an exact copy of the Perpendicular tower. The thing was done in 1832. So little beyond repair and so sturdily strong was that Norman tower, that it was necessary to blow it up with gunpowder. A German invading Goth and malignant destroyer could do no more.

The work of demolition and the building of the new tower was done at a cost of £25,000. The architect pocketed £1,250 as commission, and all who care for architecture have lost one of the very few Norman Cathedral towers known in England. But then, how exactly those towers match, and how satisfied must be all good people who would sacrifice everything for the sake of uniformity!

The main thoroughfare of Canterbury, to which the old West Gate gives access, has undergone no little rebuilding since the days of gables and timber fronts, and yet it retains in the aggregate much of that old-world air for which we reasonably look in a Cathedral city. Long and narrow the street remains; quaint are many of the buildings that line it. Across it, under narrow bridges, flow two branches of the little river Stour.

An amusing incident belonged to the "Red Lion."

One of the most outstanding historical figures upon the Dover Road is that no less kindly than courtly Ambassador, the Duc de Nivernais. That cultured Frenchman was employed by his sovereign, Louis the Fifteenth, in negotiating a Treaty of Peace which should conclude that disastrous contest to France, the Seven Years' War. An exchange of Ambassadors was effected between Great Britain and France; the Duke of Bedford crossing the Channel to Calais in the early part of September, 1762, the Duc de Nivernais voyaging

to Dover, and landing there on the morning of September 11. The elements had been unkind to him, and his passage occupied no less than five hours ; but Nivernais handed over to Captain Ray, the commander of the *Princess Augusta* yacht (the vessel in which he had voyaged and suffered the most horrible pangs of sea-sickness), the sum of one hundred guineas, to be divided among the crew. Perhaps the unbounded gratitude with which he found himself again upon the shore—even though it were not his native land—accounted for the magnitude of this largesse.

The country was not eager for the peace which exhausted France desired, and looked upon Nivernais' commission rather as an attempt to curtail the glory which England and Englishmen were reaping on land and achieving by sea ; but the French Ambassador was received with a show of enthusiasm and the discharge of cannon as he landed at Dover, and a crowd of shouting countrymen cheered him as, bowing his acknowledgments of this reception, he bowled away in a coach and six horses, accompanied by a retinue of twelve persons.

Bowled, did I say ? Nay : the motion of the ill-hung equipages of that day, tumbling along over the wretched roads of those times, resembled little the smooth career of bowls gliding over trimly shaven bowling-greens. Rather should the motion be described as a series of hesitating lurches and unexpected jolts ; and this in the comparative excellence of the highways in September !

The Ambassador had started upon his journey from Dover to London as soon as possible after the early hour of the morning when he had landed from the "Chops of the Channel" ; but he arrived at Canterbury too late for further progress to be made that day. Therefore he put up in the Cathedral city, after having had the empty satisfaction, to a traveller in his exhausted condition, of being received *en grande tenue* by the garrison.

The "Red Lion" inn was at that time the proper place for a personage of his quality to lie, and so the Duke with his party stayed there the night. For that night's lodging for twelve persons, with a frugal supper in which oysters, fowls, boiled mutton, poached eggs, and fried whiting figure, the landlord of the "Red Lion" presented an account of over £44. This truly grand bill has been preserved, not, let us hope, for the emulation of other hotel-keepers, but by way of a "terrible example." Here it is :—

	£	s.	d.
Tea, coffee, and chocolate... ..	1	4	0
Supper for self and servants ... ..	15	10	0
Bread and beer ... ..	3	0	0
Fruit... ..	2	15	0
Wine and punch ... ..	10	8	8
Wax candles and charcoal ... ..	3	0	0
Broken glass and china ... ..	2	10	0
Lodging ... ..	1	7	0
Tea, coffee, and chocolate... ..	2	0	0
Chaise and horses for the next stage ... ..	2	16	0
	<hr/>		
	44	10	8

The Duke paid his account without a murmur, only remarking that innkeepers at this rate should soon grow rich; but it was, doubtless, with great relief that he left Canterbury for Rochester, where he dined the next day for three guineas.

News of this extraordinary bill was soon spread all over England. It was printed in the newspapers amid other marvels, disasters, and atrocities, and mine host of the "Red Lion," like Byron, woke up one morning to find himself famous. He would probably have preferred his native obscurity to the fierce light of publicity that beat upon him; for the country gentlemen, scandalized at his rapacity, boycotted his inn, and his brother innkeepers of Canterbury disowned him. The unfortunate man wrote to the *St. James's Chronicle*, endeavouring to justify himself, and complaining bitterly of the harm that had been wrought to his business by the constant billeting of soldiers upon him. But it was in vain to protest, and so bitter was the feeling against him that his trade fell off, and he was ruined in six months.

Meanwhile, the Duc de Nivernais was negotiating for peace at the Court of Saint James's; and, what with the difficulties of diplomacy and the rigours of



THE DUC DE NIVERNAIS.

the climate, he passed but a miserable time. "This country," he wrote, "is a cruel country for negotiation; one needs to have a body and a spirit of iron," and how little like iron was his frame may perhaps be

judged from this portraiture of him, which shows a wistful-looking, hollow-cheeked elderly man, with nose and chin and eyes unnaturally prominent. The caricaturists took a mean advantage of his phenomenal leanness, and called him the "Duke of Barebones," and a Court witling made the cruel jest that "the French had sent over the preliminaries of an ambassador to conclude the preliminaries of a peace." He eventually *did* conclude a peace, and, returning to Dover, left (how thankfully !) for France on May 22, 1763. Let us hope that, after all his trials with the English hotel-keepers and the English climate, he experienced a better passage across the Channel than when he first crossed it.

## XXXV

NOT all visitors to Canterbury were so evilly entreated as the Duc de Nivernais. Indeed, the city has been remarkable rather for its lavish and abounding hospitality than for any attempted over-reaching of the stranger. But since those strangers were chiefly Kings and Emperors, and great personages of that kind, perhaps it is little to be wondered at that the citizens, to say nothing of those greedy time-servers, the Priors and monks of Christ Church Priory and the Priory of Saint Augustine, rendered to those great ones of the earth the most abject suit and service. Almost every English sovereign has been here at some time or another, and many a foreign potentate besides. Henry the Second, it is true, walked into the city, barefoot, from Harbledown, and so to the Cathedral, doing abject penance for the murder of Becket, four years previously, and it seems to be equally true that as he proceeded to Becket's shrine he was scourged by the monks on his bare back and shoulders with knotted cords ; but I think they would have laid on harder and with a better will had the penitent not been of so

exalted a station. In short, I have little faith in the reported rigours of that punishment. A few years later came Henry's son, Richard Lion Heart, enlarged from his foreign prison. He landed at the port of Sandwich, and walked barefoot into Canterbury—so inimical was Saint Thomas to shoe-leather. Edward the First was pious enough to lay the Crown of Scotland before the Saint's shrine, and another Edward—the Black Prince—came here, in all humility, with the captive King of France. Another warrior, as brave and as ill-fated—Henry the Fifth—paid his devoirs to Becket as he came up the road, fresh from his glorious French campaigns. Another Henry, the Eighth and last of his name, bowed before the shrine in 1520, in company with the Emperor Charles the Fifth. On that occasion he was as fervent a worshipper as could well be desired, and as sincere as it is possible for a man to be who is at the same time a King and half a Welshman. No thoughts of spoliation of the Church then passed his mind. Indeed, the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the time made much of his visit, which seems to have been celebrated in a more than royal manner, if we may trust the chroniclers.

From Dover the two monarchs rode into Canterbury, preceded by Wolsey, and followed by a long procession of knights and esquires, men-at-arms and archers. The clergy, dressed in all the splendour of which the Romish Church is capable, thronged the streets to welcome the King, and knew as little about the calamities presently to befall them as fat geese suspect the significance of Michaelmas Day. Archbishop Warham welcomed the sovereigns to the Cathedral, and probably thought with a secret joy upon the ways of Providence which had removed Prince Arthur from this world to place his younger brother, Henry, upon the throne. For, had Prince Arthur lived to be King of England, the man whom we know as Henry the Eighth would have been Archbishop of Canterbury. That was the career designed for him, and, had Prince

Arthur not died, how very differently things might have been fashioned !

Archbishop Warham could, as it happened, afford to look upon the ways of Providence with approval, for these events had made him Primate, and he celebrated his accession to the Primacy with a banquet whose details seem to belong to the *Arabian Nights* rather than to sober history. Courses innumerable (and nasty, too, according to modern ideas) graced the festive board on this occasion, and the guests who partook of them made pigs of themselves over what the contemporary historian of these things calls the "subtylties" that bulked so largely at the feast. To the Duke of Buckingham, the high steward, fell the honour, or the duty, of serving the Archbishop with his own hands ; and, partly in recognition of his services, and partly, no doubt, in consideration of his being so great a gourmand, he was accorded the privilege of staying three days at the new Archbishop's nearest manor, in order that he might be bled. That seems to have been the necessary performance after partaking of too many "subtylties."

But all this while I have been keeping His Most Christian Majesty, Henry the Eighth, waiting ; and, having done so, it is well for me I am not his contemporary, for men did things so derogatory to his dignity only at the peril of losing their heads.

Well, eighteen years later, the King, who had knelt before Becket's bones, was engaged in uprooting the ancient faith, and his fury was naturally felt more acutely here, on this the most sacred spot of English soil. Becket was proclaimed a traitor, and in April, 1538, the martyr, dead three hundred and sixty-eight years, was summoned to appear in Court to show reason why his shrine should not be destroyed and his name blotted out from the records of the English Church. Thirty days were allowed "Thomas Becket" (thus the Royal Proclamation styled him, without title or handle of any sort to his name) to appear,



and when he failed to present himself, sentence was pronounced against him by default. The sentence was that his bones should be burnt and scattered to the winds; a poor and inadequate kind of revenge. More to the point, perhaps, was the spoliation of the shrine of the Blessed Thomas; for the Royal Commissioners sent to strip it, loaded twenty-six carts with the valuables that had accumulated here during all those centuries, in addition to two coffers of jewels and gold containing the ransom of kings.

The King kept some of the jewels for his own personal use. Louis the Seventh of France had, a few years after the murder of Becket, visited the Shrine of St. Thomas, and had left there a magnificent ruby. Not merely had he left it; for the ruby—the "Regale of France," it was called—left itself, so to speak. In point of fact, it had been suggested to the French king that he should present that magnificent stone to the Shrine, and he was objecting to do so, when the great ruby leapt from the ring he was wearing and affixed itself to the Saint's reliquary, where it remained "shining so brightly that it was impossible to look steadily at it."

So the visitor went away without that gorgeous stone, marvelling greatly, as we do, some seven hundred and fifty years after the event.

The ruby, indifferently described as being "as large as a hen's egg," and "as large as a man's thumb-nail," was appropriated by Henry the Eighth.

Thus did Henry repay the magnificent hospitality extended him years before at Canterbury. The city saw but little of Royalty for many years afterwards; and, indeed, it was not until Charles the First came here to be married in the Cathedral that any great State function revived its past glories. Then the display made was worthy of local traditions. Feasting and general jollity prevailed while the newly-wed King and Queen remained in the city. A few years later, when loyalty was the passion of only a minority

and the King was warring with the Parliament, the Dover Road and Canterbury witnessed a strange journey. None knew of it, for the matter was secret. It was, in fact, the smuggling out of the country of the little Princess Henrietta, away from the custody of the King's enemies. The French tutor of the Princess afterwards told the story of this escape. The Countess of Dalkeith was in charge of the little girl at Oatlands, and resolved at all hazards to restore her to her mother in France. Disguising herself, this tall and elegant body, one of the handsome Villiers family, acted the part of a poor French servant, little better than a beggar. She even fitted herself with a hump, and, carrying a bundle of linen, and with the Princess dressed in rags, set out by road for Dover, with the girl on her back, in the character of her little boy Pierre.

On the road, we are told, the Princess indignantly tried to tell everyone she was not "Pierre," but the Princess. Fortunately, no one understood, and these strange travellers arrived safely at Dover and crossed to Calais.

The adventure seems incredible when we consider that the Princess Henrietta Maria was born June 16, 1644, and that this journey to Dover is stated to have taken place towards the end of July, 1646. We have to ask ourselves, "Could a child of two years and a little over one month, understand and talk like that?" But the source of the story has been noted; and we are to recollect, as to the authentic date of the adventure, that Edmund Waller, the courtly poet, on New Year's Day, 1647, presented the Queen, then in Paris, with a poem on the subject, in which the Countess of Dalkeith's exploit is referred to:—

The faultless nymph, changing her faultless shape  
Becomes unhandsome, handsomely to 'scape.

Canterbury's rejoicings were not renewed until after the Commonwealth had come and run its course, and the Stuarts were free once more to show their curious facility for rendering their House unpopular.

And after the romantic times of that unfortunate family come the stolid annals of Dutch William, Anne, and the unimaginative Georges—a line of sovereigns for whom enthusiasm was impossible. Mean in their vices and contemptible in their virtues, they lived their lives and reigned over England, and posted along the Dover Road on their way to or from beloved Hanover; and no man's heart beat the faster for their coming, and none sorrowed overmuch for their going. All the Georges, and William the Fourth, too, were here, I believe, and in their train came the lean Keilmansseggs, the fleshly Schwellenbergs, and a variety of greasy Germans, fresh from the terrible voyage over sea; but no one cares in the least either where they went or whither they did not go.

But they all travelled with what we must now consider a snail's pace. The wealthiest, the most powerful, could go no faster than horses managed to drag them. When Sir Robert Peel was summoned in haste from Rome by William the Fourth to form a Ministry in 1834, he travelled full speed to London, and the journey took him just within a fortnight. He noted in his journal that he accomplished it in exactly the same time as the Emperor Hadrian had done seventeen hundred years before him. The means of travel at the disposal of both statesmen were identical—post horses.

Another Royal visitor (of a much later date indeed) discovered the "chops of the Channel" to be no respectors of personages. In fact, His Serene Highness Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, who was come across the water to wed his Cousin, Queen Victoria of Great Britain and Ireland ("Empress of India" was yet in the loom of the future), found his serenity as much disturbed by the roughness of his passage as falls to the lot of most bad sailors, of whatever social stratum. He was, in short, very ill, and unable to proceed any farther that day. On the morrow, Friday, February 7, 1840, he resumed his journey to London,

by road, of course, for the railways that serve Dover (and serve it badly, too !) had not as yet been built.

Starting about midday, the father of our future kings reached Canterbury at two o'clock. The inevitable Address was, it is surely scarcely necessary to add, immediately forthcoming, to which the Prince as inevitably "replied graciously"; afterwards attending service in the Cathedral, where, as he could have understood but little of the service, he must have been supremely bored. The Cathedral was thronged with crowds who came not so much in order to pray as to peep at the Princeling whom the young Queen had delighted to honour.

The Prince slept at Canterbury that night, and left, with his suite, *en route* for Chatham at half-past nine the next morning, pursued by a body of clergymen with an Address. Alarmed at this appalling eagerness on the part of servile Britons to read lengthy orations of which he understood not a word, the Prince gave directions for the cavalcade to drive faster, and so they swept on through Chatham and Rochester, without stopping to hear what the Mayors and Corporations of those places had to say. Those deadly Addresses were, in fact, "taken as read," and the Mayors, Aldermen and others returned home with their ridiculous parchments, wiser, and, it is to be feared, not only sadder, but less loyal men.

At Dartford, the bridegroom-elect was met by one of the Queen's carriages, and he thereupon changed from his travelling chariot to enter London in some degree of State. At New Cross an escort of the 14th Dragoons was waiting, and, instead of proceeding along the classic Old Kent Road, and so to the traditional entrance to London by London Bridge, he went to town by way of romantic Peckham and idyllic Camberwell, ending his journey at that dream of architectural beauty, Buckingham Palace. What followed: How the *Times* waxed violent and denunciatory of Lord Melbourne and the frivolous *entourage*

with which he had surrounded the Queen ; how that paper preached homilies, and how all the others, nearly without exception, gushed fulsome nonsense, it is not the business of the present historian to set forth. All he has to do is to remark that with this event closes the history of Royal processions along the Dover Road.

The hilly road to Dover is not remarkable for sporting events, but two may here be noted. On April 1st, 1903, Mr. Walter de Creux-Hutchinson walked from Dover to London Bridge in 14 hrs., 19 mins., 40 secs. ; and on September 18th, 1909, A. G. Norman cycled from London to Dover and back in 8 hrs., 8 mins.

### XXXVI

THE chief point of interest in Canterbury is, of course, the Cathedral, the bourne to which countless pilgrims came from all parts of the civilized world to gain the goodwill and intercedence of that thrice sacred and potent Saint Thomas whose peculiar sanctity overtopped by far that of any other English martyr, and whose shrine possessed scarce less efficacy than that of the most renowned Continental resorts of the pious.

But long before Becket's day the Metropolitan Cathedral of Canterbury had arisen. The establishment of the See dates from the time when Augustine landed at Ebbsfleet, in the Isle of Thanet, in A.D. 596, and, marching at the head of his forty Benedictine monks, held a conference with Ethelbert, King of Kent, by whose favour he was allowed to preach Christianity to the Saxons. Thus was the Cross of Christ re-introduced to these islands where it had flourished centuries before among the Romans and the Romanized British.

Saint Augustine, however, does not deserve quite all the honour that has been paid him for his work. He undertook his mission against his will and only by the peremptory orders of Pope Gregory the First ;

orders which he feared to disobey even more than he had dreaded coming over the sea from sunny Italy to convert the pagan Saxons. As first Archbishop of Canterbury he died in A.D. 605; and when he died he left the first Cathedral already built on the site of an ancient Romano-British Church where the present great Minster stands. But that was not by any means the first Christian Church in England. To the little village church of Saint Martin belongs that honour, and to this day the hoary walls of that building show the traveller unmistakable Roman tiles which, having been originally built into a pagan temple, remain to prove the humble beginnings of the Word that has spread throughout the world.

Saint Augustine's Cathedral was small, but, patched and tinkered by generation after generation, it lasted nearly five hundred years; until, in fact, the troubles of the Conquest practically ruined it. Lanfranc, the first Norman Archbishop, rebuilt the Cathedral Church, and now one rebuilding speedily followed another, each one growing more elaborate than before. Lanfranc's work was superseded in 1130 by a magnificent building approaching the present bulk of the Cathedral. Henry the First was present at its consecration, with David, King of Scotland; and all the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the realm, together with a great concourse of nobles, assisted. Conrad and Ernulf, Priors of Christ Church, were the architects of the work, and so grand was it, and so great was the occasion, that an old chronicler described the ceremony of consecration as "the most famous that had ever been heard of on earth since that of the temple of Solomon."

But, four years later, the "glorious choir of Conrad" was burned down, and all the pious fervour and exaltation that had raised these sculptured stones and tall towers was wasted. People and clergy alike "were astonished that the Almighty should suffer such things, and, maddened with grief and perplexity, they tore their hair and beat the walls and pavement

of the church with their heads and hands, blaspheming the Lord and His saints, the patrons of the church."

This fury of rage and perplexity overpast, however, the strenuous folk of those times began the work of rebuilding the church almost before the blackened stones and charred timbers of the ruined building were cold. They employed a French architect, William of Sens, and for four years he laboured in designing and superintending the construction of choir, retro-choir, and the easternmost chapels, incorporating with his work the old Norman towers and chapels which had, in part, survived the great fire. William of Sens did not live to see his task completed; for, one day, as he was on the lofty scaffolding, directing the work of turning the choir vault, he fell and was disabled for life. His successor, who brought the rebuilding to a close, was "William the Englishman," identified by some with that William de Hoo, the architect-Bishop of Rochester.

The present choir, then, shows the work of these two Williams; nearly all, in fact, to the eastward of the crossing, from choir-screen to Becket's Crown, is their handiwork. Meanwhile, Lanfranc's heavy Norman nave was left uninjured by fire and untouched by those mighty builders, and it was not until the fourteenth century that it was reconstructed in the Perpendicular style by Prior Chillenden. "It had grown ruinous," so say the records, but the greater probability is that it was not so crazy but that effectual renovation without rebuilding would have been possible. But the spirit of the age was altogether opposed to the ponderous character of Norman architecture. Men began to build so lightly and loftily that walls soon assumed the appearance of mere framings to the huge windows that characterize this ultimate phase of Gothic architecture.

The constructional aspect was gone altogether, and most of the artistic interest too. Vulgar ostentation of skill—engineering knowledge that led architects to pile up slender alleys of stone to the last point of

endurance—was the note of the age. Unfortunately, the age which witnessed the growth and development of the Perpendicular style was one of the greatest wealth and activity. A ceaseless and untiring energy pervaded the land, tearing down the Norman, the Early English, and the Decorated churches, and rearing upon their sites buildings immeasurably larger, loftier, and lighter, but less individual and less interesting in every way than the work of the builders who had gone before.

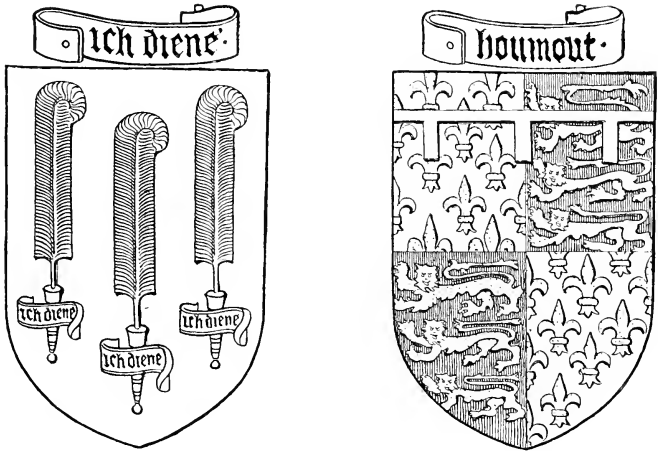
Frankly, then, the great soaring nave of Canterbury, with its long alleys of clustered pillars, its great windows and broad, unornamented wall-spaces, is disappointing. No details tempt the amateur of architecture to linger, and the sole ornamentation which the builder has allowed himself in this long-drawn-out vista is seen on the sparsely sculptured bosses of the groining. The times which witnessed the piling up of this great nave were days when this church was rich beyond compare with the offerings of pilgrims; and, given riches, ostentation is sure to follow, but art is not to be bought at a price.

A long array of altar-tombs of kings, princes, warriors, and archbishops adds to the historical interest of Canterbury Cathedral. Easily first, both for historic and artistic value, are the tomb and effigy of Edward the Black Prince, who, dying of a wasting disease in 1376, was entombed in the Cathedral as near as might be to the Martyr's shrine. There is not a statue in all England to rival the beautifully-wrought bronze effigy of the Black Prince which lies on an altar-tomb decorated with the Prince of Wales's feathers he was the first to assume, surrounded by the *Ich Dien* that so admirably expresses the chivalry of his character.

The shields bearing his arms and badge are interesting. The arms, those with the leopards (or lions) of England, quartered with the lilies of France, are ensigned with the mark of cadency, indicating the



heir, or eldest son, and bear above them the word “Houmout.” This is a Flemish word meaning “Chivalry,” literally “high mood.” The Dutch language has “hoog moed,” with the same sense.



THE BLACK PRINCE'S ARMS AND BADGE.

The shield with the badge of three ostrich feathers standing upright on their quills, bears the words “Ich diene.” In his will the Prince especially directed that these should appear. These “Prince of Wales” feathers, said to derive from the ostrich plumes of John, King of Bohemia, slain in the Battle of Crécy, give antiquaries a good deal to consider, for it is by no means certain that this is all the story. The Prince’s mother, Queen Philippa, used the badge; which, furthermore, seems to have been not unknown as a royal device. “Ich Dien” = “I serve,” is an expression of the heir’s loyalty and submission to the sovereign; and is perhaps a reading of Galatians IV, i, “The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be

lord of all." The modern drawing of the Prince of Wales' feathers originated in Tudor times.

Here, then, he lies, in full armour, as he had enjoined in his will, the likeness of the spurs he won at Crécy on his heels, his head resting on his helmet, and his hands joined in prayer. The face and head are clearly an excellent portraiture of him, so masterly is the work, and so like the features to those of his father in Westminster Abbey and his grandfather at Gloucester ! Traces remain of the gilding with which the effigy was covered ; the shields of arms and the curious Norman-French inscription are uninjured, and every little detail of his magnificent memorial is as perfect now as when it was finished five hundred years ago. The wooden canopy suspended over his tomb has survived the march of time and the fury of revolution ; his wooden shield ; his blazoned tabard, colourless now and in the semblance of a dirty rag, but once a truly royal adornment of velvet, glowing with the red and blue and golden quarterings of England and France,—all these things are left to speak of the grief with which the nation saw its most perfect gentle knight borne to his grave. His gauntlets, too, and his tilting helmet are here, and only one thing is missing from its place. The sword wielded at Crécy and Poitiers, and at many another fight, has vanished from its scabbard. If, as tradition says, Cromwell stole that weapon, how much more impressive it is to think of the hero-worship thus felt by one great captain for another.

The Black Prince was the darling of England. He had won a glory for this country the like of which had never before been known, and he was the flower of chivalry. But do those who gather round his tomb, and feel themselves the greater for being countrymen of his, ever think how little his chivalry would have spared them ? His humble and dutiful bearing towards his father, and even to his captive, the King of France, shows that his reverence was for rank and titles ; the cruelty he exhibited when,

the city of Limoges having revolted, he ordered a general massacre of the inhabitants and was carried through the streets in a litter, to see his bidding done, dims the glory of his arms. Men, women, and children were alike butchered in those streets, and when, crying for mercy, they were hewed in pieces before his eyes, their fate left him unmoved. It was only when he saw three French knights fighting valiantly in the market-place against overwhelming odds, that the chivalry of the Black Prince was touched. That hundreds or thousands of the citizens should be slain was nothing to him, for *they* were nothing, but to see gentlemen of rank and birth fighting a hopeless fight was too much. He ordered the massacre to be stayed.

## XXXVII

WHEN in the last days of 1170 Becket was murdered in his own Cathedral, no one could have foreseen how fertilizing would be the blood of the martyr to religious faith ; and not only to faith but also to English thought, trades, and professions. No sinner could be considered safe for Paradise unless he had made pilgrimage to Canterbury, and this pilgrimage became one of the chief features of English life during four hundred years. We owe directly to it the inspiration which has given Chaucer, our earliest poet, an immortal fame ; from it comes the verb “ to canter ”—originally describing the ambling pace at which the pilgrims urged their horses on this road, and now common in modern English speech ; while the great bulk of the Cathedral would never have loomed so largely across the Stour meads to-day had it not been for the fervent piety that, centuries ago, heaped gold and jewels here for the expiation of sins. Pilgrimage was a blessed thing indeed for the keepers of inns and for a multitude of other trades ; and mendicants had but to take staff

and scrip, and tramp in guise of palmers through the country to be liberally helped on their way. The Palmer was, indeed, the ancestor of the modern tramp. He had but to go unwashed, unshaven, and unshorn, and he could live his life without toil or work of any kind. If he were taxed with filthy habits, he could reply that a vow to remain unwashed until he had reached this shrine or another forbade him to remove the grime that covered him as a garment; and his claim to be dirty would be allowed. Eventually the number of these palmers at home and from over sea became a nuisance and a danger to Church and State, and no less objectionable were the hermits who squatted down at every likely corner of the roads and solicited alms. Human nature in the fourteenth century was not appreciably different from that of the present era, when many would rather beg a livelihood than earn it; and not only the laziness and the number of these palmers and hermits, but also their shocking immorality, became a scandal, until many laws and Archbishopal edicts were levelled against them. Pilgrimage, Saint Thomas, and religion itself became discredited by these creatures, and even as early as the year 1370, the fame of Becket was resented by some, and the efficacy of pilgrimages doubted. That year was the fourth jubilee of Saint Thomas, when pilgrims were crowding in many hundreds of thousands to Canterbury from all parts of the civilized world to receive the free indulgences, the free quarters, and the free food and drink, alike for themselves and their horses, that were accorded to all who came to the jubilee festival that was held, once in every fifty years, for a fortnight. As these multitudes of pilgrims were proceeding along the road to Canterbury during the Festival fortnight of 1370, Simon of Sudbury, the then Archbishop, overtook them. This Prelate had a hatred for superstition somewhat in advance of his time. He did not believe at all in pilgrimages and but little in Thomas à Becket, and he told the crowds he passed

on the road that the plenary indulgence which they were pressing forward to gain would be of no avail to purge their sins. The people who heard this heretical and previously unheard-of doctrine issuing from the mouth of an Archbishop, turned upon him in fear and rage, and cursed him as he went. A Kentish squire among the throng rode up and indignantly said, "My Lord Bishop, for this act of yours, stirring the people to sedition against St. Thomas, I stake the salvation of my soul that you will close your life by a most terrible death." To this all the people replied with a fervent Amen!

Saint Thomas was indeed avenged upon the Archbishop. Eleven years later, when Wat Tyler's rebels pillaged London, and forced themselves into the Tower, they found Simon of Sudbury there, among others. Dragging him out, they beheaded him with revolting barbarity, and here he lies in the Choir, where his headless body was seen, years ago, the place of the missing head supplied with a leaden ball.

The spirit of irreverence grew fast. In 1512 Erasmus made, with Dean Colet, a pilgrimage to Canterbury, not so much from piety as from curiosity. Descending the hill of Harbledown, they came into the city, wondering at the majesty of the Cathedral tower and at the booming of the bells resounding through the surrounding country. They entered the south porch, discussing the stone statues of Becket's murderers, then to be seen there; they entered the great nave, where Erasmus noted satirically the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus chained to a pillar; and, armed with a letter of introduction from Archbishop Warham, they were shown many things not usually exhibited to the crowd. Passing through the iron gates which then as now divided the nave from the more holy portion of the building, they were taken to the Chapel of the Martyrdom, where they kissed the sacred rust that remained on the broken point of Brito's sword. From here they descended

into the Crypt, which had its own priests in charge of the martyr's perforated skull, which was shown, with four of his bones, on a kind of altar. The forehead was left bare to be kissed, while the rest was covered with silver. Here hung in the dark the hair-shirts, the girdles and bandages, and the cat-o'-nine-tails or more with which Becket had subdued the flesh; striking horror with their very appearance, reproaching the pilgrims for their luxuries and self-indulgence, and perhaps, as Erasmus remarks, even reproaching the monks. From the Crypt they returned to the Choir, where the vast stores of relics were unlocked for their admiration and worship.

To read of the relics shown by the monks of Canterbury Cathedral fills one with amazement, both at the impertinence of those disgusting humbugs, and at the illimitable credulity that accepted the exhibition as genuine. Besides the pre-eminently holy (and really genuine) relics of the Blessed Thomas were heaps of bones, hair, teeth, and dust of a vast concourse of miscellaneous saints, with portions of their attire and articles connected with their domestic history. How genuine they were likely to be may be judged from a short list of the most venerated among them. The bed of the Virgin, with the wool she wove, and a garment of her making, occupied the foremost place, and the rock on which the Cross of Christ stood; His sepulchre; the manger; the table used at the Last Supper; the column to which He was bound when He was flagellated by the cursed Jews; and the rock whereon He had stood on ascending into Heaven, were prime favourites. More wonderful still, the monks possessed Aaron's Rod; a portion of the oak on which Abraham mounted that he might see the Lord; and—more stupendously blasphemous than anything else—a specimen of the clay with which God moulded Adam!

Colet was wearied with all this, and when an arm was brought forward to be kissed which had still the

bloody flesh of the martyr clinging to it, he drew back in disgust. The priest then shut up, locked, and double-locked his treasures, and showed them the sumptuous articles, the great wealth of gold and silver ornaments, kept under the altar. Erasmus thought that in the presence of this vast assemblage of precious things even Midas and Cræsus would be only beggars, and he sighed that he had nothing like them at home, devoutly praying the Saint for pardon of his impious thought before he moved a step from the Cathedral. However, they had not yet seen all. They were led into the Sacristy, and "Good God!" exclaims Erasmus, "what a display was there of silken vestments, what an array of golden candlesticks!" Saint Thomas's pastoral staff was there, a quite plain stick of pear-wood, with a crook of black horn, covered with silver plate, and no longer than a walking-stick. Here, too, was a coarse silken pall, quite unadorned, and a sudary, dirty from wear, and retaining manifest stains of blood. These things, relics of a more simple age, they willingly kissed, and were then conducted to the Corona, where they saw an effigy of Saint Thomas, "that excellent man," gilt and adorned with many jewels. But here Colet's anger broke forth, and he addressed the priest in this wise. "Good father, is it true what I hear, that Saint Thomas while alive was exceedingly kind to the poor?" "Most true," said he, and he then began to relate many of his acts of benevolence towards the destitute. "I do not imagine," said Colet, "that such disposition of his is changed, but perhaps increased." The priest assented. "Then," rejoined the Dean, "since that holy man was so liberal towards the poor when he was poor himself and required the aid of all his money for his bodily necessities, do you not think that now, when he is very wealthy, nor lacks anything, he would take it very contentedly if any poor woman having starving children at home should (first praying for

pardon) take from these so great riches some small portion for the relief of her family ? ”

The priest pouted, knitted his brows, and looked upon the two friends with Gorgonian eyes, and he would probably have turned them out of the building had it not been for the Archbishop's letter of introduction which they carried with them. Erasmus was alarmed at his friend's free speech. He was pacifying the priest when the Prior approached and conducted them to the Holy of holies, Becket's Shrine. A wooden canopy was raised, and the golden case enclosing the martyr's remains disclosed. The least valuable part of it was of gold : every part glistened, shone, and sparkled with rare and immense jewels, some of them exceeding the size of a goose's egg. Monks stood round, and they all fell down and worshipped, after which they returned to the Crypt, to see the place where the Virgin Mother had her abode, a somewhat dark one, hedged in by more than one iron screen. “ What was she afraid of, then ? ” asks his interlocutor, and he replies, “ Of nothing, I imagine, except thieves,” for the riches with which she was surrounded were a more than royal spectacle. Again they were conducted to the Sacristy ; a box covered with black leather was brought out, and again all fell down and worshipped. Some torn fragments of linen were produced ; most of them retaining marks of dirt. With these the holy man used to wipe the perspiration from his face and neck, the runnings from his nose, or such other superfluities from which the human frame is not free. The Prior graciously offered to present Colet with one of these dirty rags, and, indeed, to the devout such a gift would have been of a quite inestimable value. But Colet, handling the rags delicately as though they might possibly infect him, replaced them in the box with a contemptuous whistle. The Prior was a man of politeness and good breeding. He appeared not to notice this rude, not to say heretical, rejection of his gift, and, offering them a cup of wine, courteously dismissed them.



## XXXVIII

Soon after this came the downfall. With the struggles of the Reformation went the relics, the gold and jewels, and—worse than all—the decorations and painted windows of the Cathedral. With many abuses and with the disgusting humbug of the old order of things went also, it is sad to think, much of the living reality of religion ; and Canterbury Cathedral is to-day an historical museum to the crowd of tourists, and an architectural model for students of that first of all the arts. Curiosity, and little else, draws the crowd. Byron has caught the spirit of the times happily enough (although “ beadle ” and “ cathedral ” are not among the elegancies of rhyme) when he says of Don Juan and his companion :—

They saw at Canterbury the Cathedral,  
 Black Edward's helm, and Becket's bloody stone,  
 Were pointed out as usual by the beadle,  
 In the same quiet uninterested tone :—  
 There's glory for you, gentle reader ! All  
 Ends in a rusty casque and dubious bone.

And how very dubious are the bones that are said to be those of Becket is a question that may not be enlarged upon here.

For the rest, a holy calm reigns unbroken in the Cathedral Close. Hemmed in and surrounded\* by massive walls, modernity has no place here, and if the interior of the building is somewhat disappointing, the exterior and its surroundings, especially the north-east aspect, viewed from the Green Court, must be seen to be appreciated. To be sure, this part of the building is Norman and Early English, and no other periods produced such wildly irregular masses. Added to the original irregularity of outline are the puzzling ruins—ivied wall and broken window—

\* Mr. Gladstone has said, most notoriously, that to be “ hemmed in ” is not to be “ surrounded.” But that was part of the political game of bluff, and may not be regarded as a contribution to philology.

dating from the time when Henry the Eighth's Commissioners destroyed the monastery. Queer passages, dark and tortuous, giving suddenly upon little cloisters and grassy quadrangles, are to be found everywhere; conspicuous among them the "Dark Entry," immortalized by Tom Ingoldsby in his *Legend of Nell Cook*.

By walking outside Canterbury, a mile distant to Saint Thomas's Hill, on the Whitstable Road, you shall see how thoroughly the Cathedral dominates the city; and arrive, by an exploration of the narrow lanes and the meads below, at an understanding of how this great Minster *was* Canterbury, and how subservient to it was all else. Affairs are now very different. A vigorous and pulsing life belongs to the streets and lanes, while it is the Church that has passed away from the intimate life of the people, and sunk back into retirement. Canterbury is far larger than ever before, and its modern pavements, that ring with soldiers' tread, or with the speedy walk of busy citizens, are raised many feet above the street level of old Durovernum. Where the old Roman Watling Street left the city by what is now called the Riding Gate, the original paving of that military way was discovered some few years ago at a depth of fourteen feet below the level of the present road. Everywhere, when foundations for new houses have been dug, are discovered Roman pavements and the walls of forgotten buildings, and thus does Canterbury progress through the ages, rearing itself upon itself until its beginnings are hidden deep below the light of day. Strangely do modern ways here jostle with the old. A newly fronted house, proclaiming nothing of its antiquity, will yet often be found to contain much of interest. The ugly fronted Guildhall is an instance. Without, it is of the plainest and most uninteresting type; within, it has panelling and portraits and old arms to show the curious. At its door, too, stands all day and every day, or walks about the streets, a

gorgeous creature clad in black knee-breeches and silk stockings; with buckled shoes and cocked-hat; with coat and waist-coat of a courtly type, trimmed and faced with gold lace. It is nothing less than startling to see such an uniform in daily use; and, still more amazing is it, when you ask the wearer of it who he is, to hear him reply, with a grave politeness, that he is the City Sergeant. Old institutions live long here, and old people, too. At Canterbury died, in 1891, aged ninety-one, William Clements, one of the last, if not *the* last, of the old stage-coach drivers, who had driven the "Tally-ho" coach between this and London long before the railway was thought of; and in July, 1901, aged 89, died Stephen Philpott, who was coachman of the Dover Mail, until the railway ran him off.



"A GORGEOUS CREATURE."

He was transferred to a route between London and Herne Bay, and afterwards became proprietor of the "Royal Oak," Dover, since demolished for street improvements.

## XXXIX

THE Dover Road, after leaving Canterbury, loses very much of that religious character, picturesquely varied with robbery and murder, which is its chiefest feature between Southwark and the Shrine of Saint Thomas; for, although many foreign pilgrims landed at Dover to proceed to the place where the martyr lay, encased in gold and jewels, their number was



WILLIAM CLEMENTS.

nothing to be compared with that of the crowds who came into Canterbury from London, or along the Pilgrims' Road from the West Country; and consequently the wayside shrines and oratories were fewer. The greater part of the sixteen miles between Canterbury and Dover is bare and exposed downs, with here and there a little village nestling, sheltered from the bleak winds, in deep valleys; but the first two miles, between the city and the coast, are now becoming gay with the

geranium-beds, the lawns and gardens of Canterbury villadom.

At the first milestone is Gutteridge Gate, where the old toll-house remains beside the "Gate" inn, and where bacchanalian countrymen gather on Sunday evenings in summer, drinking pots of ale as the sun goes down, and recalling to the artistic passer-by Teniers' pictures of boors, as they shout and bang the wooden tables and benches with their pewter pots. Looking back at such a time down the long, straight road ascending from Canterbury, there come many

jingling sons of Mars, each man with his adoring young woman, and sometimes one on either arm, for there is great competition for these gallant Hussars, Lancers, and Dragoons among the Canterbury fair ones ; and “ unappropriated blessings ” of a rank in life that does not permit of “ walking out ” with mere troopers sit at windows commanding the road, sighing for that the conventions of the age do not permit them to “ stoop to conquer ” the conquerors of their fluttering hearts. “ I could worship that man,” says the Fairy Queen in *Iolanthe*, gazing admiringly upon “ Private Willis of the Grenadier Guards ” ; and how much more worshipful than a foot-soldier are the “ cavalry chaps ” of the Canterbury depôt !

It was a hundred yards or so along the road from Gutteridge Gate that two Dragoons figured in a highway robbery upon His Majesty’s Mails in 1789. The bells were chiming three o’clock in the morning of July 31 in that year when Daniel Goldup, the mounted postman, came up the hill from Bridge with the French mails slung across his horse’s back. As he eased his pace in ascending the hill, three men called upon him to stop. One of them he recognized as a villager from Elham named Hills, and the two others he perceived to be Dragoons disguised in smock-frocks. Telling Hills he had no letters for him, Goldup proceeded on his way. Hills fired but missed, and the three then ran after him ; one laying hold of the horse’s bridle while the other two seized the mail-bags and rifled them. They detained him an hour while they examined the letters, and then, tying up the mail-bags again, let him go.

The village of Bridge, down below, takes its name from the small bridge that carries the road over the Lesser Stour. It is a pretty and peaceful place to-day, with quaint boarded houses ; a Norman and Early English church, containing some curious and grotesque carvings of Adam and Eve ; and encircled by woods, the remote descendants of the almost

impenetrable forests that once surrounded Canterbury, leaving only Barham Downs and their neighbouring chalk hills bare and islanded amid a sea of greenery.



BRIDGE.

Barham Downs commence immediately beyond Bridge. They have been the scene of many remarkable gatherings, from the time of Julius Cæsar to the waning years of the last century, when the Downs were alive with soldiers camping here in readiness for that inglorious Armada that never left port—Napoleon's flotilla of Boulogne.

To go back to the year 55 B.C., when Cæsar first landed at Deal, may seem to the readers of evening

newspapers something of an effort in retrogression—and so indeed, it is—but when you once succeed in getting there, the history and details of that time are a great deal more interesting than perhaps the reader of special editions, hot and hot, would imagine. We *can* succeed in picturing the detailed events of that remote time, because Cæsar, who was as mighty with the pen as with the sword, has left full and singularly lucid accounts of his wars here and on the Continent—lucid, that is to say, when one penetrates the veil of Latin behind which his exploits and the doings of his legionaries are hid ; but darkly understood by the stumbling schoolboy, to whom the *Bello Gallico* is as full of linguistic ambushes as the Kentish valleys were of lurking Britons in Cæsar's time.

It was in the year 55 B.C. that Cæsar, having overrun, if not having entirely conquered, Gaul, came to its northern coast and gazed eagerly across that unknown sea, beyond which had come strange warriors, extraordinarily strong and equally fearless, to aid those troublesome Gaulish fighting-men who had already given him four years of campaigning, and were still to prove themselves unsubdued. He had already felt the prowess of these " Britons," as they were called, and fighting having slackened somewhat, he conceived the idea of voyaging across the Channel in quest of glory and adventure in the dim and semi-fabled land of these mysterious strangers. " Cæsar," he says, speaking of himself always in the third person, " determined to proceed into Britain because he understood that in almost all the Gallic wars succour had been supplied thence to our enemies." So much for his written reasons, but other things must have weighed with him. The lust of conquest would alone have impelled him forward beyond this very outer edge of the known world, even had he not desired to crush these allies of Gaul ; but when wild tales reached him of the richness of the land that lay beyond this strait, whose cliffs he could dimly see, the impulse to invade it was

irresistible. But Cæsar was a cautious general, and rarely moved without having reconnoitred, and so he sent over a certain Volusenus to spy out that wonderful land whence came tin and skins, oysters, pearls, hunting dogs, gold, slaves, and terrible warriors. Volusenus sailed across the straits, and returned with quite as much information as could have been expected from one who had never left his ship. That sarcasm is Cæsar's own, and no doubt he was in a peculiarly savage and sarcastic humour at the time, for although this Britain was so frequented by merchants, yet he could not find any one who would acknowledge having been there ; and so his information as to the population, the shores and harbours of the country, remained vague and uncertain. And to add to the disappointments he had experienced from those crafty traders who wished to keep all knowledge of the island to themselves, this over-cautious Volusenus returned after four days with just such a hazy and indefinite story as he had been told before ; the hearsay evidence of one who was too timorous to land !

But Cæsar's desire to see Britain was only whetted by the deceits which those artful traders had practised upon him, and by the vague reports of his envoy. He lay at Portus Itius, identified either as Boulogne or some place in the immediate vicinity, and, collecting a flotilla of over eighty vessels, with an additional eighteen for his cavalry, he sailed from under the shelter of Grey Nose Point at midnight, August 24, B.C. 55. The following morning about six o'clock, this armada arrived under Dover cliffs. The cavalry, however, which had sailed from a different harbour, had been driven back by adverse winds, and did not arrive until four days later. His force, then, consisted of two legions of foot soldiers, equal to about 10,000 men. No sooner had the transports anchored in Dover harbour than the cliff-tops became alive with Britons, armed, and determined to resist a landing. Seeing this, Cæsar decided to select some less dangerous landing-



place, and, weighing anchor, sailed seven miles onward to Deal. The British, however, were ready for him when he reached the site of that town, and it was only after a stubborn fight on the beach, and half in the waves, that the Roman legionaries effected a landing. The decks of Cæsar's triremes were crowded with men who slung stones, threw javelins, and worked great catapults against the Britons, in order to cover the advance of the heavily armoured soldiers as they waded through the shallow water. When once these men, led by the intrepid standard-bearer of Cæsar's favourite Tenth Legion, had gained the beach, their discipline, their helmets, armour, shields, and short swords speedily prevailed against the ill-protected and undisciplined hordes of the brave islanders. The day was won, and the Romans, having put the Britons to flight, encamped by the shore. Three weeks of battles, ambushes, skirmishes, and negotiations for peace followed this landing, and then Cæsar left Britain. The equinox was at hand, and storms raged. Half his fleet was destroyed by a tempest, and he was anxious to be away. So, accepting any terms that he might with honour, he patched up his vessels and sailed for Gaul; and thus ended the first attempt of the Romans to conquer Britain.

The following year Cæsar determined to invade the island on a larger scale. His first expedition had been obliged to remain ingloriously within sight and sound of the waves; but this time the general resolved to push into the heart of the country. Sailing from his former harbour, his force numbered five legions and two thousand horse, roughly 27,000 men, and with this army, considerable as times went, he landed, unopposed, at Deal on the morning of July 22. Cæsar tells us that the Britons were frightened by the great number of his ships seen sailing across the Channel, but the truth seems to be that he had been sowing jealousies and dissensions among the petty chiefs and kinglets of Kent, and that a secret understanding was arrived at

between himself and a discreditable son of King Lud by which his landing should not be contested. However that may be, Cæsar left a guard over his vessels, and started immediately on a twelve miles' night march inland, in force.

When morning dawned, he found himself on a high table-land with a river flowing along a valley below him, and here he first descried the Britons. The place at which Cæsar had arrived was Barham Downs, and the river he saw was the Lesser Stour, that even now, although a much smaller stream than then, flows through the valley to the right of the Dover Road. A road of some sort existed even at that time, although it perhaps might be more correctly described as a "track." Down it went the exports of that far distant age; the undressed skins of wild animals; the dogs and the gold; and up this way from the primitive Dover came the beads and the trinkets; the manufactures of pottery and glass, which our very remote fathers loved as much as the uncivilized races of to-day delight in the selfsame kind of thing.

Cæsar deployed his forces along the ridge of the Downs facing the road, the river, and the enemy, who had entrenchments on the further side of the river immediately fronting him and others advancing diagonally toward the road which they crossed on the northern hill-top at Bridge, ending at a point slightly to the north-east of the place where Bekesbourne Station stands now. Cæsar's first object was to reach the water in the valley, there to refresh his horses, and a forward cavalry movement was made with this object.

But this advance precipitated the battle that was imminent, for the Britons, who held the opposite ridge in force, rushed down the slope to the waterside, and furiously attacked the Roman horse. Exhausted though they were by a waterless night march, the Roman cavalry met the assault, and, repelling it, drove the enemy back into the woods. This cavalry

charge was followed by a general advance into the dense thickets, into which, excellently suited, both by nature and by art, for defence, the Britons had retired. Here they fought in small bands, protected by mounds and trenches and by felled trees cunningly interlaced. One of these *oppida* remains in Bourne Park, on the summit of Bridge Hill and beside the Watling Street which, until 1829, was identical with the Dover Road. In that year a slight deviation was made to the left over the hilltop for about two



“ OLD ENGLAND’S HOLE.”

hundred yards' length of roadway, and in the course of cutting through the hill a number of Roman urns and skulls were discovered at a depth of five feet. The circular earthwork of the redoubt still remains in very good preservation, surrounded with trees, the successors of those which covered the hill when the Britons and Romans contended together here. The place is known locally as “ Old England’s Hole,” and tradition has it that here the Britons made their

last stand. Tradition is not lightly to be put aside at any time, but when it is supported by Cæsar's own words it deserves all respect. "Being repulsed," he writes, "they withdrew themselves into the woods, and reached a place which they had prepared before, having closed all approaches to it by felled timber." The soldiers of the Seventh Legion, however, soon captured this stronghold. Throwing up a mound against it, they advanced, holding their shields over their heads in the formation known as "the tortoise," and drove out the defenders at the sword's point. This was the last place to hold out that day. Everywhere the Britons were dislodged, and numbers of them slain. The survivors withdrew further into the woodlands that surrounded Caer Caint, and Cæsar, suspecting ambushades in those unknown forests, forbade pursuit.

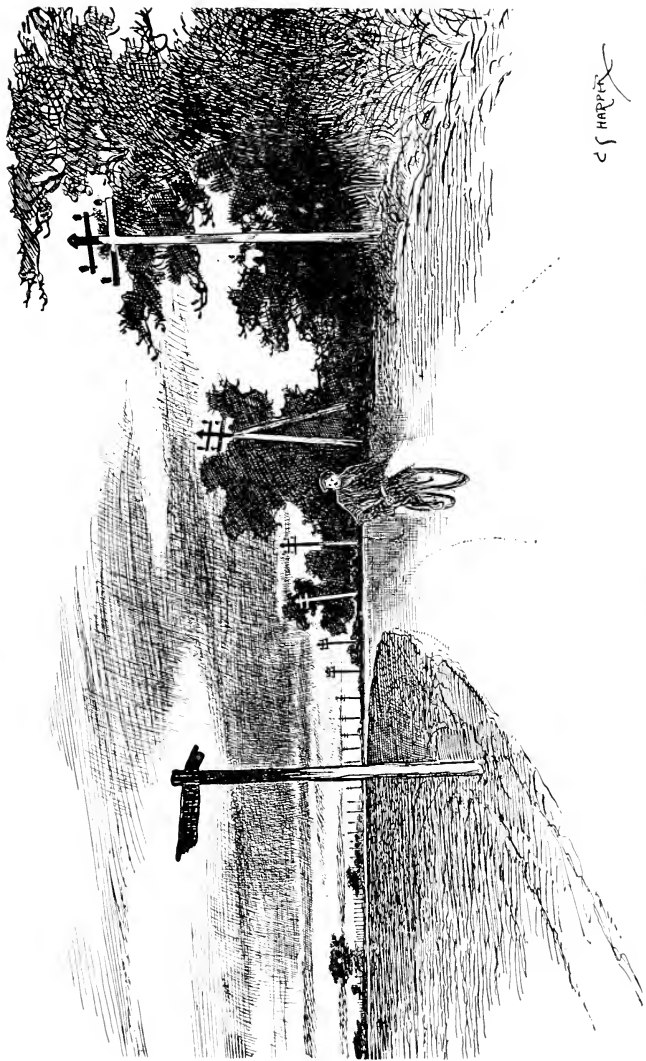
It was evening before the last fighting was done. The battle had raged on a front extending for three miles, from Bekesbourne to Kingston, and it now remained to camp for the night, and to fortify against a possible surprise the ridge which Cæsar held. And so, before the exhausted soldiery could lie down to rest after the incessant labours of two days and nights, they threw up the lines of entrenchments that still, after a lapse of more than nineteen hundred years, remain distinct upon Barham Downs.

The next day the Romans buried their dead, and Cæsar had just despatched three columns in a forward movement towards Caer Caint, when hasty news arrived from Deal that a storm had shattered his fleet. The rear-guard of the hindmost column was just disappearing from his gaze as he stood on Patrixbourne Hill, and hurriedly sending messengers to bring the expedition back, he at once prepared to return to the coast, taking with him artificers for the repair of his vessels, and an escort sufficient to secure his own safety. Cæsar had no certain means of knowing how long a time his absence would extend, but, bidding his legions to

remain in camp until his return, and meanwhile to increase the strength of their defences, he set out. He was absent ten days. In the meanwhile the courage of the Britons had revived. They perceived from their woody lairs the Roman soldiery busily throwing up mounds and long lines of earthworks on the level summit of the downs, and they judged that the invaders were compelled, either by fear, or from lack of numbers, to remain on the defensive. Their numbers increased as the days went by and the Romans made no advance, and they were now commanded by a general of great ability, none less than the celebrated Cassivelaunus. Cæsar, on his return, was harassed by them, and found his camp seriously threatened when he arrived. Leaving 10,000 men in camp, he advanced with the remainder, and made a determined stand on a spot that may be identified on the hills half a mile to the north-west of Bridge. Here a desperate and bloody day's fighting took place, the Britons returning again and again after repeated repulses. Many of the foremost legionaries who had pursued them into the woods were surrounded and slain there; many more of the Britons fell in that glorious fight. One of the Roman tribunes, Quintus Laberius Durus, was killed that day, and Nennius, one of the foremost British leaders, was slain in the last onset, when he burst at the head of a chosen few on the Roman soldiery engaged in the formation of a camp. Both sides claimed the victory, and, indeed, Cæsar had, so far, little reason to boast, for when night came he had only advanced three miles beyond the stream upon which his first camp on Barham Downs had looked, and, even then, he had only been enabled to hold his own by the aid of reinforcements drawn from his camp-guard. The next day, however, put a different aspect upon his campaign. He had probably intended to rest his troops, and sent out a strong force only in order to perform the necessary foraging; but the Britons

attacked them with such fierceness that another battle was fought, resulting in a decisive victory for the Romans, who pursued the vanquished and cut them down for miles. The Britons were now thoroughly disheartened, and retreated towards London along their track-way, followed by Cæsar. Desultory fighting occurred on the way, and one ineffectual stand was made at some unidentified place, conjectured to have been at Key Coll Hill, near Newington. But, thenceforward, the accounts left by Cæsar and by early British writers grow confused. Whether the victorious general, in pursuit of Cassivelaunus, crossed the Thames at London, or whether "Coway Stakes," near Weybridge, mark the scene, will never be known. But when he had penetrated into Hertfordshire, and had humbled the British king to the point of asking for peace, Cæsar found it was time to return to Gaul. Exacting hostages, he commenced his retreat. Harassed by flying bands of natives, who cut off stragglers and placed obstacles in his line of march, he reached Deal in September, sailing thence on the 26th of that month. Thus ended Cæsar's second and last invasion of Britain. He had been six weeks in the island; had marched a hundred miles into its dense forests, and had humbled the native princes. But winter was approaching, and it was dangerous to delay. He returned to the Continent, a victor, with hostages, prisoners, and promises of tribute; but he left many of his expedition, dead, behind him. And it is significant of how hazardous these invasions were, that not until another ninety-six years had passed did another Roman so much as land on these shores.

The camp which Cæsar constructed along Barham Downs is still to be seen. On this wild and worthless tract of land which has never known cultivation, the marks of the spade will exist for many centuries if left undisturbed by new-comers. And although many historic gatherings have taken place here, no entrenchments have been made since the defeat of the Britons



C. S. HAPPEL

BARHAM DOWNS.

in B.C. 54. King John's army of sixty thousand men encamped here in 1213, to withstand the French invasion, and Simon de Montfort, somewhat later, at the head of disaffected Barons; Henrietta Maria held her first Drawing Room here in a tent, while on her way to be married to Charles the First at Canterbury; and, centuries afterwards, a great army encamped on Barham Downs in readiness for Napoleon's projected invasion. But on none of these occasions were any earthworks thrown up, and the fosses and ditches that still remain to be explored are of undoubted Roman construction.

Here, amid these long lines of Roman entrenchments, occurs again the mysterious name of "Coldharbour," a perplexing place-name that is found no less than 170 times in England, in situations the most diverse and in districts widely scattered. At least twenty-six of these Coldharbours are to be found on the ordnance maps of Kent, and six of them on, or closely adjoining, the Dover Road. Their situation, scattered thus along the old military *viâ* of Watling Street, adds greatly to the force of the argument that this singular name has some connection with Roman times, but what connection, and what is the real meaning of the name, not all the acumen and ingenuity of archæologists has ever been able to satisfactorily explain. The fact of the great majority of Coldharbours lying by the site of Roman roads or camps has led to the ingenious theory that they first acquired their name in Saxon times when, the country being wasted with ruthless and decimating wars, the Roman villas still remaining were destroyed, and great desolate tracts of country created. Travellers (this theory goes on to say) could find no other shelter on their journeys save the ruined walls of the once magnificent palaces that the Romans had left; and as they crouched, shivering, to leeward of these ruined and roofless remains of a decayed civilization, and tried to warm themselves at fires painfully and laboriously made of leaves and sticks, they called them "cold



harbours." Unhappily for this theory, the places called "Coldharbour" are by no means always situated in exposed situations, and no remains of buildings have been discovered on their actual site, although their neighbourhood is frequently found to be rich in Roman remains. A suggestion has been made that "cold" is a variant of "cool," and that, far from being the miserable refugees of forlorn travellers, the Coldharbours were really the "Mount Pleasants" and "Belle Vues" of ancient times, to which our remote forbears resorted for "a breath of air." We should probably be within our rights in deriding this suggestion as a theory made to fit a fertile imagination, but it is not safe, in the presence of such an apparently insoluble problem, to do more than present a few of the derivations advanced. It would be equally rash to assume that the stations of the "colubris arbor," the Roman serpent-standard, gave their name to these places, although the idea is plausible enough.

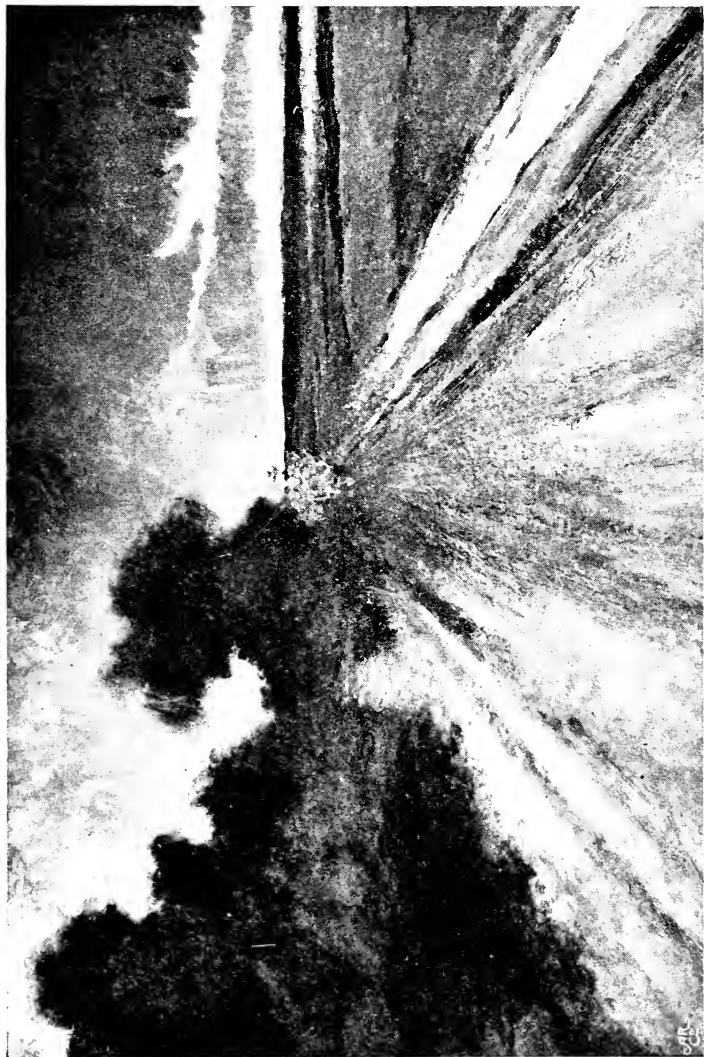
Many Coldharbours are in exceedingly exposed places, as indeed here, on Barham Downs,\* and many more are in quite sheltered situations, in places where dense woodlands once spread, giving work and shelter to charcoal-burners. This fact has led to the formulation of another theory, one which holds that these strangely named places were, prosaically enough, "coal-harbours," or storage-places for charcoal. It is much to be desired that some leisured antiquary would devote himself to the elucidation of the name and the rescuing of the purpose of these Coldharbours from the mists of a remote and romantic antiquity. The other Kentish Coldharbours to be found near

\* An excellent story is told of the cold that rages up here in the winter. It belongs to coaching times, and was told by a coachman who had a new guard with him one frosty night, when the temperature was going down to 15°; a cockney guard who was unused to exposure, and who, moreover, had not the experience which led the Jehu to wrap himself up in layers of flannel, a many-caped coat, and three or four waistcoats. "Ain't it cold?" asked the guard several times, climbing over the coach roof with numbed hands and blue nose. "Cold!" returned the coachman, "not at all." "That's all very well," says the guard, "but your eyes are watering like hanythink." "Oh! are they?" rejoins the coachman, "I suppose that's the perspiration!"

the Watling Street are at Bishopsbourne, Bridge, Newington, Northfleet, Sittingbourne, and Woolwich, and all—so close is the connection between the name and ancient dwellings—near the site of undoubted Roman stations or villas. Alike with the equally mysterious name of “Mockbeggar,” which also occurs with great frequency, the meaning of “Coldharbour” will probably never be discovered.\*

Standing here beside the road at evening when the sun is going down and these bleak unenclosed uplands grow dark and mysterious, the centuries pass away like a fevered dream. Here and there the solemn expanse of the barren land is diversified by a few trees; here and there a few yards of hedge, beginning nowhere in particular and ending with equal strangeness, skirt the way; weather-beaten sign-posts start suddenly out of the moorland, and occasional haystacks take on a dead and awful blackness as the evening light dies out of the sky in long and angry streaks of red. When the moon rises and casts her cold beams upon the road and plays strange pranks with the shadows of trees and bushes, then the days of the Romans are come once more, and the legionaries live again. They rise from their camp of nineteen hundred years ago; they march along the Watling Street that was made by their descendants; and the sheen of their armour, the glitter of the pale moonlight on their eagle standards, and the tramp

\* There are “Mockbeggars” in Kent, as in most other counties. There is one near Rochester. Some old buildings pulled down in 1771 at Brighthelmstone were called Mockbeggars. Local opinion held the belief that there had been a Mendicant Priory, but this was not generally credited. The name seems to have been generally applied to objects wearing at some distance the appearance of an hospitable mansion, to which travellers would be drawn out of their road only to meet with a disappointment in finding an empty house, or no house at all. Two such places, so called, are to be instanced: one is an isolated rock at Bakewell in Derbyshire, presenting from the road the semblance of a house, to which it is said beggars and tramps wend their way, only to be mocked by a freak of nature: seeking for bread they find, literally, a stone. The other is an old Tudor mansion, called Mockbeggar Hall, at Claydon in Suffolk, standing in a conspicuous situation, near the road leading from Ipswich to Scole; a place to which mendicants would naturally be attracted, in expectation of finding inhabitants there, but which has, according to tradition, remained so long unoccupied as to have earned its name a hundred years, or more, ago.



WATLING STREET : MOONRISE.



of many feet are as real to the imaginative traveller, if not of a greater reality, than the moaning telegraph that runs on countless poles in a diminishing procession beside the road as far as eye can reach.

## XL

By daylight the traveller can see that the barren chalk of Barham Downs, although left so long in repose, has been lately cut up into golf links. A racecourse, little frequented now, also stands on the ridge. Bourne Park skirts the road for some distance on the right, and the spire of Barham Church, rising from behind a thick clump of trees in a little valley, shows where the village of Barham lies secluded, some three hundred yards down a country lane.

How few the wayfarers who either notice where Barham stands or who visit it even when they know its situation! And yet that place, together with its hamlet of Denton, is full of memories of one of the best and most genial among the humorists of the nineteenth century. There is a great deal of history, ancient and modern, genealogical and literary, about Denton and Barham, and the genealogical part of it commences in the reign of Henry the Second. At that time, the manor, including Denton and a great number of other hamlets round about, belonged to that Sir Randal, or Reginald, Fitzurse, who has come down through the ages as one of the murderers of Becket. Immediately after their crime, the murderers fled, Fitzurse escaping to Ireland, where he is said to have taken the name of MacMahon, which, meaning "Bear's son," was an Irish form of his original patronymic. He died an exile, leaving the Manor of Barham to his brother, who, so odious had the name of Fitzurse now become, changed it for that of his estate, and called himself De Bearham. His successors clipped and cut their

name about until it became plain "Barham," and the manor finally descended to one Thomas Barham, who, in the reign of James the First, alienated it to the Rev. Charles Fotherby, Archdeacon of Canterbury. Thus were the Barhams torn from their native soil and rendered landless, for already they had sold their adjacent manor of Tappington Everard situated at Denton. Some improvident Barham had done this deed in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and the property passed through a number of hands until it was bought from Colonel Thomas Marsh by a wealthy hop-factor of Canterbury, Thomas Harris. The hop-factor died in 1726, leaving as sole heir his daughter, married to a Mr. John Barham. In this manner the Barhams became once more owners of a portion of their ancient heritage, and from this John Barham was descended that witty Minor Canon of St. Paul's, Richard Harris Barham, author of the *Ingoldsby Legends*. To one who knows his *Ingoldsby* well, and is possessed, moreover, of some antiquarian fervour, the neighbourhood of Denton and Barham must needs be of the greatest interest. Fact and fiction are so inextricably mixed up in those delightful tales of mirth and marvels that it would require all the knowledge of an expert in local and family history to disentangle them. The countryside appears in those pages under fictitious names, and the deeds or misdeeds of local families are decently veiled under many an *alias*; and yet here and there are real names, and actual facts are cited, leaving the stranger in a delightful uncertainty what to accept for truth and what to disbelieve. The manor-house of Tappington, where Barham spent his youth, would seem to readers of the *Legends* to be a grand Elizabethan mansion, approached by a long avenue and guarded by gates bearing "the saltire of the Ingoldsbys." Indeed, Barham's fertile imagination led him to picture such a place on the frontispiece of the *Legends*; but the stranger would seek for it in vain. Instead, he would

find an ancient farmhouse, standing in a meadow skirting the road to Folkestone, a mile from the place where it branches from the Dover Road. An ancient farmhouse, its roof bent and bowed with age, and the greater part of it shrouded in ivy, from which Tudor chimneys peep picturesquely. In the meadow are traces of walls and an old well which before the greater part of Tappington Manor-house was destroyed stood in a quadrangle formed by the great range of buildings. Within the farmhouse there remains much that is quaint and interesting. The chief feature is a grand oak staircase of Elizabethan or Jacobean period, with the merchant's mark of that "Thomas Marsh of Marston," familiar to readers of that fine legend *The Leech of Folkestone*, carved on the newel. On the whitewashed walls, crossed here and there by beams of black oak, hang portraits of half-real, half-legendary Ingoldsbys, and on the staircase landing, outside the bedroom of the "bad Sir Giles," are still shown bloodstains, relics of an extraordinary fratricide that was committed here while the war between Charles and the Parliament was raging.

It is quite remarkable that while Barham clothed Tappington with many a picturesque legend and detail of his own invention, he never alluded to the genuine tragedy. The secret staircase, the "bad Sir Giles," "Mrs. Botherby," and many another picturesque but fictitious character or incident are introduced, and perhaps the visitor may feel somewhat disappointed at not finding the turrets, the hall, or the moat described so fully in the *Legends*; but the story of the fratricide is genuine enough for the most sober and conscientious historian. It seems that when all England was divided between the partisans of Charles and his Parliament, Tappington Manor-house was inhabited by two brothers, descendants of the Thomas Marsh whose mark is on the staircase. They had taken different sides in the great struggle then going on, and had quarrelled so bitterly that

they never spoke to one another, and actually lived in different parts of the house ; only using this staircase between them as they retired along it at night to their several apartments. One night they met on top of the stairs. No one knew what passed between them, whether black looks or bitter words were used ; but as the Cavalier passed, his Puritan brother drew a dagger and stabbed him in the back. He fell and died on the spot, and the blood-stains are there to this day.

Opposite Tappington is the modernized Denton Court, with the old chapel of Denton standing in the Park. Of this you may read in the *Legends*, but those who seek the brass of the Lady Rohesia, with its inscription—

“ Praie for ye soule of ye Lady Royse,  
And for alle Christen soules ! ”

will be disappointed, for it is one of Barham's embellishments upon fact. “ Tappington Moor ” is, of course, Barham Downs, and the wild characteristics of the place are very well described in *The Hand of Glory*. The nearest approach to the Tappington gates existing in fact are the entrance gates to Broome Park, standing on the road near the lane leading to Barham ; and the mansion of Broome, an Elizabethan country house, bears a strong resemblance to the stately seat seen in Barham's drawing.

The whole district abounds with legends and folk-lore suitable to this wild and treeless country, and that so romantic a humorist as Barham should have sprung from a local family of Kentish squires is only fitting. The terror of these parts at the end of last century was Black Robin, a highwayman who frequented the roads and made his headquarters at a little inn on the by-road between Bishopsbourne and Barham. “ Black Robin's Corner ” it is still called, but the negro's head of the sign is a libel upon that “ gentleman of the road.” He took his name, not from the colour of his skin, but



from the crape mask and the black clothes he wore, and from the black mare he rode. Not a pleasant fellow to meet

On the lone bleak moor at the midnight hour,  
Beneath the gallows tree ;

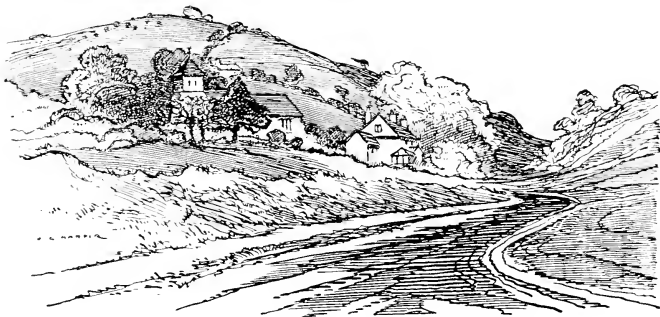
but almost preferable to the spectre horseman who led a foreign traveller out of his way on these Downs. Night had come on, overtaking a party of mounted travellers making for Dover, and so dark had it grown that they soon became separated. However, the hindmost party dimly perceived two cavaliers in front, and spurred towards them ; but when the horses' hoofs in advance flashed fire and their riders were seen to grow strangely luminous, these pixie-led travellers thought it time to turn back. It *was* time they did so, for already their horses were sinking in a bog, and as they turned they heard the rest of their party blowing their horns in quite another direction. Possibly they turned in at the "Halfway House" that stands away back from the road behind a screen of trees, just past the eighth milestone ; both to take something to enliven their spirits withal and to tell the landlord of these strange happenings. If they did, I have no doubt that they saw stranger sights still when they came forth, when the earth would rise up and smite them in the face, and the swinging sign of the "Halfway House" would perform a somersault over the constellations. For they dealt in strange and curious liquors here in the days of old ; spirits that had never paid tribute to the Excise, and were ever so many degrees over-proof, made the heart of man glad and his legs to tie themselves into Gordian knots. You cannot get so immediately and incapably drunk nowadays at the "Halfway House," and 'tis better so, but I have seen the place drunk dry in the space of an hour by thirsty Volunteers marching from London to Dover at Eastertide. When they had gone, it was as hopeless to call for a draught of ale as I imagine it would have been to ask

the hostess for that old-time Kentish delicacy, the "pudding-pie," that was once to be had for the asking at any inn during Easter week. The "pudding-pie" has almost entirely vanished from Kent, but, "once upon a time," not to have tasted one was regarded as unlucky, and it was the usual thing for ale-house customers to ask for a "pudding-pie" as a right. "Neow, missus," the Kentish yokel would say, "let uz tēaste one o' them 'ere puddeners o' yourn," and the "missus" would hand him a flat circular tart, about the size of a saucer, and filled with custard sprinkled thinly with currants.

Downs extend all the way from here to Lydden, three miles away, and Lydden itself lies enfolded in a chalky botton through which the road runs steeply. Downs stretch on either side of the tiny village and frown down upon it, making its insignificance more marked and its little cottages and little church look like toys. On the left hand, at the distance of half a mile, goes the railway, past that old village of Sibertswood, which railway directors in a conspiracy with Kentish rusties have agreed to call "Shepherds-well," and it continues in a deep, precipitous cutting through the chalk to Kearsney station, another three miles ahead; and so presently into Dover. And now the road leads uphill to Ewell, where the springs of the little river Dour burst forth and gem all the valley hence to Dover with gracious foliage. The good folk of Ewell have recovered the "Temple" prefix to the village name. As "Temple Ewell" it was anciently known, for here once was situated a Preceptory of the Knights Templar.

The Dour, whose name means simply "water," bubbles up in springs at Temple Ewell, and is fed by a stream which comes down the valley on the right, from Alkham, two miles or so away, and from Drellingore, a further mile. That stream is intermittent; being a "nailbourne," or chalk stream; storing up water in its caverns until, these being filled, either by exceptional

rains, or long accumulation of springs, there comes an overflow, generally doing more than fill the usually dry bed. The Drellingore stream will then very often flood the road.



FLOODS AT ALKHAM: THE DRELLINGORE STREAM.

The romantic name comes from the old Norman-French "Drelinecourt," the name of an extinct manorial family once holding land in these parts. The water-course is often dry for years, and the filling of it is thus a local event, long ago made the subject of legends of dread and prophecies of scarcity. Thus the old saying :

When Drellingore stream flows to Dover town,  
Wheat shall be forty shillings and barley a pound.

So much a quarter is understood by that.

Well, then, Drellingore stream burst out with exceptional floods in April, 1914, and flowed to Dover town, and flooded the valley at Alkham. Wheat was then round about 37*s.* 10½*d.* a quarter, and barley was 20*s.* 4½*d.*

Wheat had been steadily rising from its lowest, at 22*s.* 10*d.* in 1894 ; and barley from 21*s.* 11*d.* in 1895. Barley was never so low as 20*s.* What, therefore, is the implication of the ominous legend, in respect of barley ?

In less than four months the Great War, 1914-18

broke out, and wheat in 1915 was up to 52*s.* 10*d.*, and barley 34*s.* 7*d.* The course of prices, 1916-1921, was :

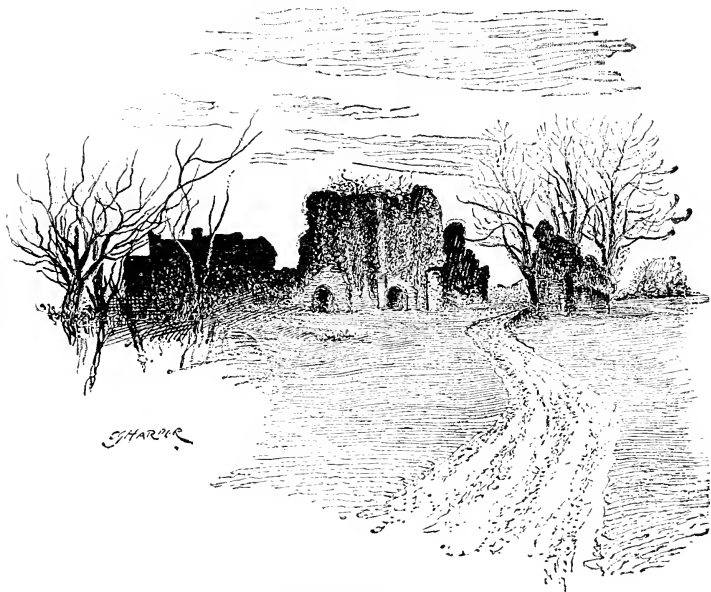
	<i>Wheat.</i>		<i>Barley.</i>
1916 .....	58/5	...	53/6
1917 .....	75/9	...	64/9
1918 .....	72/10	...	59/0
1919 .....	72/11	...	75/9
1920 .....	80/10	...	108/11
1921 .....	85/4	...	73/7

Prices during the Great War very reasonably agitated the community, but in the period of the Napoleonic wars wheat rose to its highest recorded price : 126*s.* 6*d.* in 1812 ; that is, thirty-one shillings and twopence a quarter dearer than ever it has been in our own times. Barley, on the contrary, was very much dearer in 1920 than ever it had been ; for the top price then was 40*s.* 5*d.* above the former highest : 68*s.* 6*d.* in 1801.

The road now grows suburban to Dover, and the valley commences to open out toward the sea. Where the Dour flows, all the vegetation is luxuriant, and there are lovely ponds decked with water-lilies beside the Crabble meadows, below the highway to the right and near the prettily named village of River ; but as the hills rise on either hand they grow barren again and stretch for miles right and left. One green spot amid these eternal chalky undulations lies off to the right. This is Saint Radigund's Abbey, sometimes called by two *aliases*, either " Kearsney " or " Bradsole " Abbey. The first is the legitimate name, the others are given by its neighbourhood and by the wide (or " broad ") pond (or " sole ") that stood beside the ruins. Little is left of the old abbey but a gatehouse and some beautiful stone-and-flint diapered walls, built into an old farmstead ; but, although so little remains, what there is left deserves a visit from either architect or artist. Through this valley came King John on that shameful day when, having previously made an informal submission to Pandulf the Papal Legate in the Templars' house at Ewell, he proceeded to formally ratify the gift of

himself and his kingdom in the Templars' Church on Dover Heights.

Where the Dour crosses the road at Buckland the open highway ends.



ST. RADIGUND'S ABBEY.

Buckland church was enlarged in 1880, and it was then found necessary to move the ancient yew, reputed to be over a thousand years old, in the churchyard. A writer calling himself "Old Humphrey" mentions the tree in his *Country Strolls*, 1841:—"The tree is hollow, and time and the elements have writhed it into fantastic shapes. I can see, or fancy I can see, snakes and dragons in its twisted branches."

It was not without some anxiety that the people of Buckland viewed the proposed removal by some sixty feet of a tree for which they have much affection.

The weight was estimated at fifty-six tons. The contractor was to have forfeited a great part of his price if the removal and replanting caused the tree to die ; but the work was done skilfully, and the old yew seems actually to have become more flourishing for its change.

Henceforward are streets, first suburban, but presently continuous and crowded, for the two miles that remain. Dover is reached, and the road is done.

## XLI

IN the London Road approach to Dover, one mile from the centre of the town, there used to stand an old inn called "The Milestone." A hatter's shop now occupies the site ; but two old milestones are yet there. One says "70 miles to London ; 14 miles to Canterbury," and the other proclaims it to be "1 mile to Dovor."

This old spelling of "Dover" was common until the opening of the railway era ; and the coach-bills of the great Dover Road coach-proprietors, Horne, Chaplin, and Gray, spelt the place-name "Dovor," with two "o's," instead of an "o" and an "e."

It will be expected of me that I should say something of Dover, and I do not intend to disappoint so very reasonable an expectation, although the Dover Road having been traversed, the object of this book is accomplished ; and, therefore, any remarks I may have to offer must be informed, not with the prolixity of the local history, nor with the stodgy statistics of the Guide Book, but with conciseness and something of the sympathy which shows that to which but few Guide Books ever attain—the true inwardness of the place. It is quite easy to be contemptuous of Dover, from the visitor's point of view ; from other vantage-grounds it is a great deal more easy to acquire a certain enthusiasm for the old Cinque Port, its streets, its piers, its Castle,

and the more modern fortifications which cross the Western Heights.

Thy cliffs, dear Dover! harbour and hotel;  
 Thy custom-house, with all its delicate duties;  
 Thy waiters running mucks at every bell;  
 Thy packets, all whose passengers are booties  
 To those who upon land or water dwell;  
 And last, not least, to strangers uninstructed,  
 Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is deducted.

sang Byron.

Turning, however, to a consideration of the two other objects of Byron's outburst in *Don Juan*, the hotel and the cliffs, whether Shakespeare's Cliff or those that form so grand a rampart away towards the North Foreland, Byron, we find, was justified in his choice of Dovorian features for due commemoration. For the cliffs, all that is to be said of the white walls of old Albion has been long ago committed to print, and I do not propose to attempt the saying of anything new about them. As for the hotel of which the poet speaks, it was probably the "Ship." The "Ship," alas! is gone, retired, as many of its landlords were enabled to do, into private life, and the "long, long bills" by which they earned rather more than a modest competency are now produced elsewhere. The "Lord Warden," which was not, unfortunately, built in Byron's time, could probably have afforded him material for another stanza or two, for that huge and supremely hideous building was celebrated at one time for the monumental properties of the bills presented to affrighted guests. Magnificent as were the charges made by rapacious hosts elsewhere, they all paled their ineffectual items before the sublime heights attained by the account rendered to Louis Napoleon when he stayed here.

There are limits even to Princely-Presidential purses and patiences, and few people cared to incur liabilities at the "Lord Warden," which would have brought the shadow of the Bankruptcy Court looming upon the horizon. As for that most doughty of Lord Wardens

of the Cinque Ports, from whose historic office the hotel takes its title—I name here, of course, the one and only “Duke of Wellington”—*he* usually resorted to an unpretending hostelry, the “Royal Oak Commercial Hotel,” in Cannon Street, nearly opposite the old Church of St. Mary’s, whenever he was called to the town.

It is not enough to know that Dover is a town of hoary antiquity; that Cæsar landed here B.C. 55 (or that he did not land here, but at Deal, as the more scholarly antiquaries inform us). It is not sufficient to be floored with such heavy slabs of historical information as those by which we learn that the name of Dover has been arrived at through a long series of British, Roman, and Saxon forms, originating from the little stream called anciently the Dour, that flowed, once upon a time, through the chalk valley of Temple Ewell and Buckland, tinkling cheerfully through the old town and falling into the waves over the pebbles of Dover beach; now, alas! pouring a contaminating flood through sewer-pipes far out to sea. I say, it is not enough to know that the Romans latinized the name to Dubris, that it was variously Dorobernæ, Dofris, Dovere, and in the eighteenth century occasionally “Dovor,” finally to have the seal set on these changes by its present name. It is not even sufficient to know (although it is highly interesting) that Domesday Book opens with Dover, commencing as it does, “Dovere tempore regis Edwardi.” But this last slice of historical provand is more than usually welcome because it gives us a foothold whereon to begin the exploration of the old town. When one comes to reduce the tough and gnarled latinity of Domesday Book to English as we speak it, we find this first entry to recite that King Edward the Confessor held a lien on a portion of the town rents, and that Earl Godwin also partook of what the Radical politics of our own time term “unearned increment.” Edward the Confessor was a mild-mannered man and weak. It is, for instance,



primarily owing to his unfortunate preference for the foreigner that we owe the Norman invasion and conquest of England ; but for all his mildness, it is extremely unlikely that this saintly invertebrate would not have resented the talk of " unearned increment " in his day. He was sufficiently considerate, however, so it would seem, to reduce the rents in his town of Dover, seeing that, although a thriving place, it had had the misfortune to be burned. The entry in Domesday Book goes on to say that here was a Guildhall, and a mill at the entry of the port, much in the way of shipping ; and here, at this mention of the port we find our most eloquent text.

It seems, then, that when Cæsar came off here, the site upon which almost half the present town of Dover is built was under water. The peculiar site of Dover can perhaps most readily be noted by one who climbs the bare chalk hills that bear on their summits the defences known as the Western Heights. Keeping to rearward of the Citadel, and walking round the shoulders of these hills, one sees that a deep and narrow valley runs down to the sea-beach, contracting almost to the likeness of a narrow gorge where the old town commences, and widening again where it meets the sea. Here, where the site broadens, and where steep streets give place to flatness, rolled the tides up the little estuary of the River Dour when Cæsar's triremes anchored off the primitive port, and antiquaries point out the place, near the present Round Tower Street, where, so late as 1509, a tower was raised, to which vessels lying in the harbour were moored by iron rings. This is almost the only natural feature of Dover that has changed during nineteen centuries. Walk to the outmost verge of the Admiralty Pier and look back upon the town, and you will see it lying in the hollow, with the gaunt and horrid stucco houses of its " front " hiding the old streets that crouch behind in narrow ways. You will see the Castle Hill and the Western Heights, twin eminences guarding

the land and the open roadstead of the Downs ; and, although the grey Castle crowns one cliff and the modern fortifications crest the other, yet, for all the ages during which man has been burrowing galleries here and piling up stonework and masonry there, if Cæsar could revisit the scene of his ineffectual descent upon Britain, he would find no difficulty in recognizing it. Only, the estuary where he beached his vessels is long since silted up and is buried beneath many feet of the rubble and refuse, the shards and potsherds that mark the passing of many busy generations. Here, on these ancient dust-heaps and kitchen-middens stands the chief business street of Dover, Snargate Street, running parallel with the sea, but now separated from it by the breadth of the Harbour and many intermediate alleys, smelling vehemently of tar and stale reminiscences of ocean. Snargate Street is long and narrow, a model neither of cleanliness nor of convenience, and it crouches humbly beneath the towering cliffs which rise on its landward side, cut, carved, and tunnelled ; honeycombed with stores, forts, and galleries, and grimed with the smoke from the clustered chimneys of the houses below. Other short and frowzy alleys run against the soiled chalk, and end there with a whimsical abruptness. Elbow room here is none, and to find it, one ventures upon the Harbour quays, toward the Docks and the Basins, where little gangways and iron swing-bridges lead to *culs-de-sac*, or end in sudden and precipitous descents into the water, causing the unwonted stranger frequently to retrace his steps and to swear freely. But, if one avoids these cryptic curse-compelling places, the Harbour is a very interesting place ; much more so than the "front," where people walk up and down aimlessly, the women dressed to kill, and glaring at one another as they pass, like strange cats on a roof-top. Here, instead, is the reality of life, and a variety that is lacking beyond. In the basins floats generally a strange and fortuitous concourse of vessels ; schooners,

yachts, cutters, hoys, smacks, brigantines, " billy-boys," and steamers of every age, size, and trade, from the neat passenger-boats, with their decks holystoned to wonderment, to the dirty ocean-tramp, or the inky, wallowing collier ; together with other craft whose names are unknown to the landsman. Likewise, there are many of the mercantile marine about. One may not, contrary to general belief, know these by their dress, for there is no peculiarity in the raiment of the mercantile Jack—except perhaps for its raggedness, poor fellow—by which he may be recognized. Rather would one know him by his anxious expression of countenance and by that inveterate habit of his, ashore, of leaning heavily against walls and posts, or anything capable of giving support. You may notice poor Jack's favourite haunts hereabouts by the bare and burnished appearance of the brick and paint bordering on the Docks, and situated at a height of about four feet from the ground, where his shoulders have rubbed immemorially.

## XLII

SINCE we are in the way of it, it comes naturally to include Shakespeare Cliff in this little survey. You reach it from here either by a hideous contrivance called the Shaft, fashioned in the cliffs that frown down upon Snargate Street, or by Limekiln Street beyond. Here, on the way, is Archcliffe Fort, between the Citadel and the sea. They say, who should know, that it is heavily armed, but it is not at all impressive : old boots, tin cans, brick-bats, cabbage-stalks, and rusty umbrella-frames rarely are ; and of these there are rich and varied deposits lying in the fosse, amid the scanty grass where industrious sheep endeavour to earn a living. Indeed, this is the most eloquent picture of mild-eyed Peace I have ever seen, and Landseer's painting which shows a

sheep snuffling in the mouth of a dismantled cannon is quite weak beside it.

Looking over the cliff's edge, just beyond, is a view of the beach below, where the South Eastern Railway runs on a wooden viaduct, entering a double tunnel through the chalky mass of Shakespeare Cliff, rising sheer from the sea to a height of three hundred and fifty feet. A narrow footpath leads to the breezy summit, surmounted by a Coastguard Station, and here you may gaze, if you have good nerves, over the brink of the precipice, and listen to the hissing of the pebbles far down below, as the waves drag them back and forth :

. . . . Here's the place : stand still.  
 How fearful  
 And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low !  
 The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
 Show scarce so gross as beetles : half-way down  
 Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!  
 Methinks he seems no bigger than his head :  
 The fishermen that walk upon the beach  
 Appear like mice ; and yond tall anchoring bark,  
 Diminished to her cock ; her cock, a buoy  
 Almost too small for sight ; the murmuring surge  
 That on the unnumbered idle pebbles chafes,  
 Cannot be heard so high ; I'll look no more,  
 Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight  
 Topple down headlong.

How eloquent is that passage from *King Lear* !

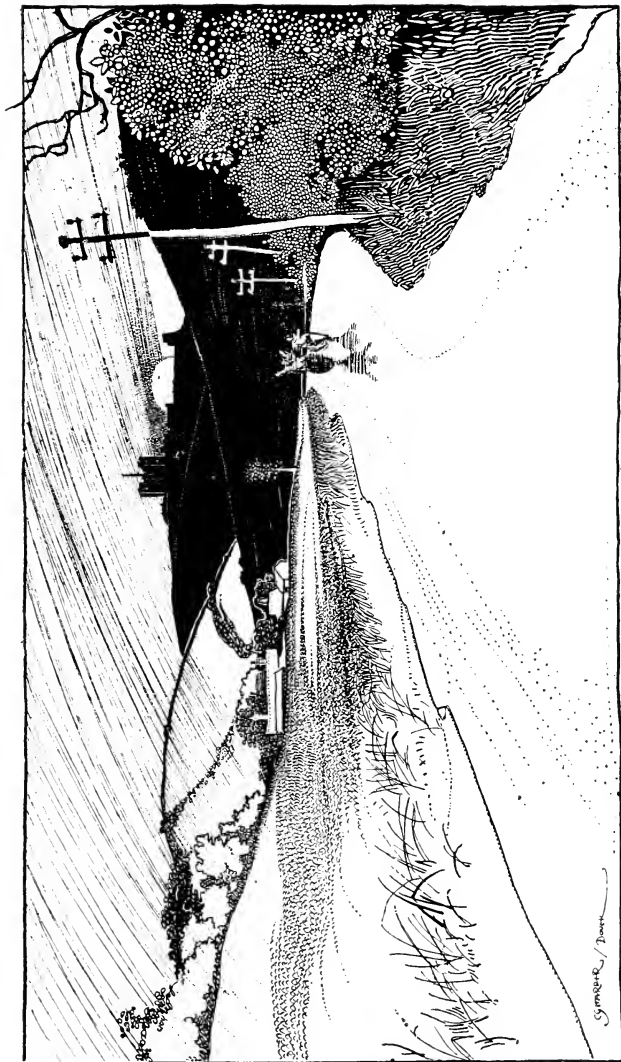
Just past Shakespeare Cliff come the twin workings of the Channel Tunnel and the coal-mine, those notorious fiascos which have cost the South Eastern shareholders so much, and have afforded journalists so large an amount of good "copy." From the cliff-top, a steep and winding stairway cut in the chalk leads down to the beach and the Dover coal mine and the beginnings of the Channel Tunnel. Much money has been sunk in both. Some day the Tunnel will be completed ; but no one expects coal ever to be commercially mined here.

Turn we, though, from these projects to the Admiralty Pier, that centre of interest to visitors and Dover folks alike. Some one—I know not whom—has styled the Admiralty Pier "the pier of the realm," and truly, though you search these coasts, you shall find

nothing to compare with it, as a pier. Plymouth Breakwater is a great deal more impressive, but then, it is not a pier, but is set down in midst of a tempestuous Sound, where no one can get at it without risk and trouble. And the Admiralty Pier owes its very great fame largely to the ease with which you can reach it and promenade up and down its almost interminable pavings. Crowds come to see the boats off or in, and people are always sweeping the seas with telescopes and field-glasses, finding a perennial joy in so doing, difficult to be understood. The boats come in, the tidal trains run out along the huge stone causeway; passengers pallid and cold, muffled up in overcoats, glancing around with lack-lustre eyes, crawl miserably from the decks and cabins of the Channel steamers under the amused scrutiny of the callous crowd, and seat themselves thankfully in the waiting train. Other steamers wait impatiently, shrieking intermittently; and other trains bring down intending passengers for the night crossing to France. Sometimes strange scenes are witnessed on the night mail, when passengers are streaming from the boat-express across the gangways. Quiet gentlemen with little luggage and a marked disinclination for the society of their fellows are discovered, as they lurk in remote corners of the deck, seeking to sneak quietly out of the "very front door of England," by other gentlemen—gentlemen with broad shoulders and square-toed boots—who tap them on the shoulder with an equal absence of fuss or demonstration, and these quiet gentlemen usually say—not without a certain start of surprise, you may be sure—"Oh! I'll come quietly." Then the three (for they are usually two who thus accost one of these undemonstrative and retiring passengers) step again on to the Admiralty Pier, and apparently abandon their Continental trip, for they go up to London by the next train. Sometimes a quiet gentleman refuses to "come quietly" when his shoulder is tapped, and then those who do the tapping are obliged to resort

to the painful, not to say humiliating, process of snapping a pair of handcuffs on his wrists, much to the surprise of the passengers. But whether gentlemen elect to go quietly or to take it fighting is not much matter : the result is the same. Sometimes these quiet ones came back to Dover after a while, and were accommodated in free quarters on the Castle Hill ; presently révisiting the harbour as masons under Government employ. They come here no longer, for the convict prison on the hill is deserted, and the harbour-works are now carried on with paid labour.

And Britain is proceeding with some energy to rule the waves at Dover, for the Harbour of Refuge is completed ; to the end that the battle-ships, the merchantmen beating up and down Channel, and the fisher-boats may ride in some degree of safety, protected from the north-easterly gales that nowadays strew the Downs and the Goodwin Sands with wrecks. For centuries this project had been discussed—and shelved in the dusty pigeon-holes of the Admiralty offices. Raleigh reported in the reign of Elizabeth that “ no promontory, town, or haven in Europe was so well situated for annoying the enemy, protecting commerce, or sending and receiving despatches from the Continent ; ” and works were commenced to replace the pier begun by Henry the Eighth that had been abandoned and allowed to fall into ruin. But when Defoe was here the Harbour had fallen back into its old state, half-choked with shingle cast up by the set of the tides from the westward, and the piers decayed. “ Ill-repaired, dangerous, good for nothing, very chargeable and little worth,” those were the epithets the author of *Robinson Crusoe* applied to it, and thus it remained until 1847, despite local and half-hearted attempts to prevent the accumulation of shingle. In that year the Admiralty Pier was commenced. Meanwhile, the sea, and the tides, thrust out from Dover Harbour by this mighty arm, are setting in strongly upon the Castle Cliffs, and that Castle, the



DOVER CASTLE, FROM THE FOLKESTONE ROAD: SUNRISE.

*Symonds / Down*

survival of six hundred years of strife and change, is being very slowly but very surely undermined. And thus it goes round our coasts ; turn away the currents that eat up particular strips of the land or choke up the havens with sea-drift, and they set with additional fury upon the next unprotected place, presently to be, at great cost, referred elsewhere. It is a game that never ends : a game of General Post of which the sea, at least, never tires.

### XLIII

DOVER CASTLE possesses the longest and most continuous, if not quite the most stirring, military history of any fortress within these narrow seas. Described picturesquely by ancient chroniclers as " the very front door of England," or, as " *clavis Angliæ et repagulum*," it is, and in very truth has ever been, since its foundation, the main bulwark of Britain against foreign foes. At what precise period a Castle was first raised here is a question that has never yet and probably never will be settled. The Romans built their lighthouse here, with another on the topmost point of the Western Heights, but the first Castle is not supposed to have been built before the time of Edward the Confessor, and the first reference to it is found in that oath which Harold swore to the Duke of Normandy, that he would yield up to him both the fortress and the well which was contained in " *castellum Dofris*." Of this building nothing now appears to be left, and the earliest portion of the present Castle is Henry the Second's Keep.

But whatever the size and strength of the Castle that stood here in Harold's day, it would seem to have been formidable enough to induce William the Conqueror to seek a landing elsewhere. He landed at Pevensey, and it was not until after Hastings and the fall of Romney that he turned and took Dover from



the rear. The Castle was then made the seat of government for Kent, and one of those fierce fighting Bishops, Odo, half-brother of the Conqueror, installed. The Kentish people, revolting in 1074, endeavoured in vain to seize it; it was held against Stephen, and eventually surrendered to him; and here within the gloomy walls of the Saxon stronghold he died in 1154. No sooner was Henry the Second crowned than his advisers urged the rebuilding of the Castle, and to this period belong the Keep and the Inner Ward. Sixty years later the fortifications of Henry's reign received their first shock of war when, England having been given by the Pope to Louis, the son of Philip Augustus, King of France, that Prince endeavoured to take the gift. But hateful though John, King of England, might be, Englishmen were neither content that their allegiance should be transferred without reference to themselves, nor willing to become again the prey of invaders. Therefore, they bade Prince Louis to take the Pope's present if he could, and held Dover Castle against his forces. England, divided against itself, had permitted Louis to land, and even to be crowned in London, but the Constable of Dover Castle at that time, Hubert de Burgh, was a patriot to be won over neither by threats nor promises, and he held the Castle against all comers. The siege was undertaken in earnest. Louis sent over to France for all the artillery that the time could produce. It consisted of battering-rams and stone-throwing machines, and in this way it was sought to breach the walls. A wooden shelter for the attacking force was constructed and built up to the outer walls of the inland face of the Castle, and under cover of this device the soldiers worked the battering-rams until the defences shook again. The garrison retorted by flinging heavy stones and fire-balls on the shelter, and would either have demolished or burnt it had it not been for an ingenious invention which the French had imported. This consisted of a series of tall wooden towers called *malvoisins*, and

ill-neighbours, indeed, they were, for they were established on the edge of the Castle ditch, where, overlooking the outer ward, and being filled with archers whose practice soon slackened the defenders' fire, they would soon have brought the siege to a close, had not the death of the English King removed internal quarrels and aroused a united spirit of patriotism throughout England which boded ill for the prospects of the French prince. The invaders retired from London and the southern counties which they had held, not so much by force of arms as by favour of disaffected Englishmen ; they gave up the siege of Dover Castle, and presently re-embarked for France.

The struggles between a despotic King and a rapacious nobility which had caused these troubles in the reign of John were soon resumed, and Dover Castle became alternately the hold of one party or the other. The most notable incident in these events was that of 1265, when the Barons held the Castle and had fourteen knights of the King's party imprisoned in the Keep. Prince Edward attacked the Castle from without, and the prisoners, bursting out from their cells and rushing upon their gaolers from within, forced the garrison to surrender.

It was in the time of Edward the First that Dover Castle reached its full development. That was the grand era of castle-building in England, when military engineering was practised without reference to ordnance, and had attained to a remarkable ingenuity. Like all Edwardian Castles, that of Dover is concentric and has three wards, enclosed within high curtain walls strengthened with a great number of defensible towers. The outer ward had no less than twenty-seven of these towers, among which the Constable's Tower and gateway is first for size and beauty.

It is a long, steep, and dusty climb to Dover Castle from the town. Halfway up, the visitor of forty years ago would be attracted by the tinkling of a small bell, and, looking round, his gaze would fall upon haggard

creatures, gaunt and unkempt, who crouched behind iron bars and piteously adjured him to "remember the poor debtors." Poor devils! condemned by the brutality of obsolescent laws to moulder in captivity in expiation for pitiful debts. But brutal though we were until comparatively recent years, we must not believe Victor Hugo when he says that in 1820 the grim picturesqueness of the Castle Hill was enhanced by the spectacle of three malefactors' bodies, tarred and obscene, which swung in the winds of Heaven. That picturesque detail is more romantic than truthful; but the man who, like Victor Hugo, could write seriously in another place of the Firth of Forth as "*la première de la quatrième*" is not to be taken for either geographer or historian.

All these evidences of a brutal age are gone, and Dover Castle is remarkable nowadays chiefly for the extraordinary way in which old and new are grafted one upon another. Side by side with the Norman Keep are modern magazines and military storehouses, while the curtain walls of the wards give support to repositories of Royal Artillery shot and shell. Even the roof of the Keep is put to practical purpose by the War Department, for it has been vaulted and strengthened to carry a battery of heavy cannon. The Keep is of three floors; on the third floor are the State apartments in which Charles the First welcomed his Queen, and where, seventeen years later, he bade her a sad adieu. They are gloomy rooms, heavy with suspicion of danger, conspiracy, and intrigue, and are approached by a staircase flanked with secret guard-rooms; the walls pierced with arrow-slits, scarcely to be distinguished in the darkness of the place, even when you are bidden to look for them.

It is strange to read in the struggles between Charles and the Parliament with what laxity fortresses were often held for either side. Dover Castle is a case in point. It was held for the King by a small force whose

discipline and courage were so to seek that it needed but the daring of a Dover merchant and a few followers to capture it. With this exploit ends the story of the warlike doings here, and all that is left to tell relates only to Marlborough's French prisoners, who were for years cooped up within these walls pining and eating away their hearts for very love and despair of ever reaching *la belle France*, whose outlines they could dimly see from the narrow embrasures of their foreign prison.

For from Dover Keep the Eye of Faith may discern the coast of France, twenty-one miles across the Silver Streak; but there be those to whom, if visible at all, that coast seems like nothing so much as filmy clouds resting upon the water, and there are but few days when the sun and the absence of sea-mists enable the Englishman's straining eyes clearly to discern that land.

The famous well of Dover Castle still exists, enclosed in the massive walls, and still nearly three hundred feet deep, despite the rubbish and unmentionable abominations cast into it by the prisoners, who chiefly occupied the second floor in which are the Norman Chapel and two large rooms, their walls still bearing traces of the prisoners' handiwork in the shape of inscriptions. Here is the Armoury, with matchlocks, Brown Besses, muskets, and rifles; obsolete and in use. Here, too, are the pikes issued to the peasantry when all England armed to resist Napoleon's threatened invasion. Down below (you can see it from those embrasures) is "Queen Elizabeth's Pocket Pistol," familiar, even to those who have never seen it, by the popular rhyme—

Load me well and keep me clean,  
And I'll carry a ball to Calais Green;

and all around are batteries old and new.

The sentry on Dover Keep at night, when all the world is still, has leisure for contemplation. When the moon rises in solemn majesty on summer nights and

makes a lane of silvery glory across the Channel ; when the winking light from Cape Grisnez shows where the French coast lies, and the glow from the lighthouse on the Admiralty Pier marks the harbour at his feet ; when Dover lamps burn yellow beside the moonrays, and the high-road to London lies stark and white in the valley of the Dour, then may the sentry on his eyrie hear, between the ghostly tapping of the halyards on the flagstaff, the tramp of the ages. Forty centuries looked down upon the French in Egypt ; the sentry on Dover Castle looks upon nineteen hundred years of invasion and foreign expeditions. There, where Dover streets now stand, rode Cæsar's galleys and there our ancestors bled for their country. Down that white highway, so still at this midnight hour, have marched many generations of archers, men-at-arms, and soldiers of a more recent era, to return, covered with wounds and glory ; and across that shining sea have sailed fleets innumerable. For a distance of four hundred feet below him run a series of fortified galleries and platforms, built in the Castle Keep or excavated through the solid chalk down to sea-level ; while level with him, rise the Western Heights, rich in heavy ordnance, across the town. Here, then, is the end of the Dover Road, looking out across the sea ; and he must needs be dull of brain who does not perceive the epic fitness of its ending.

THE END



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