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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HANDBOOK TO THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY ***

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HANDBOOK TO THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY

Illustrative and Descriptive of Places along the Line,
FROM
WORCESTER TO SHREWSBURY.

BY J. RANDALL, F.G.S.,
AUTHOR OF "SEVERN VALLEY," ETC.



LEGEND OF THE SEVERN, WYE, AND RHEIDOL.

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(See Illustration on the Cover.)

The Welsh are justly proud of their hills and their rivers; they frequently personify both, and attribute to them characters corresponding with their peculiar features. Of the Severn, the Wye, and the Rheidol, they have an apologue, intended to convey an idea of their comparative length, and also of the character of the districts through which they flow. It is called "The Three Sisters," and in substance is as follows:—In some primitive period of the earth's history, Father Plinlimmon promised to these nymphs of the mountain as much territory as they could compass

in a day's journey to the sea, by way of dowry upon their alliance with certain marine deities they should meet there. Sabra, goddess of the Severn, being a prudent, well-conducted maiden, rose with the first streak of morning dawn, and, descending the eastern side of the hill, made choice of the most fertile valleys, whilst as yet her sisters slept. Vaga, goddess of the Wye, rose next, and, making all haste to perform her task, took a shorter course, by which means she joined her sister ere she reached the sea. The goddess Rhea, old Plinlimmon's pet, woke not till roused by her father's chiding; but by bounding down the side of the mountain, and selecting the shortest course of all, she managed to reach her destination first. Thus the Cymric proverb, "There is no impossibility to the maiden who hath a fortune to lose or a husband to win."

THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY.

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The Severn, like other English rivers, may be said to have been the pioneer of railways along its banks: first, in having done much to correct the inequalities of the surface; secondly, in having indicated the direction in which the traffic flowed; so that early in the history of railway enterprise eminent engineers, like the late Robert Stephenson, saw the desirability of following its course, and thus meeting the wants of towns that had grown into importance upon its banks, wants which the river itself was unable to supply. In 1846 the route was finally surveyed by Robert Nicholson, with a view to a through traffic in connection with other railways. The scheme met with opposition from advocates of rival lines. Ultimately, however, the Bill passed the committees of the two Houses, and the promoters were successful, whilst the expenses of counsel and witnesses were enormous. The original estimate for the line was £600,000: £110,000 for land, and £490,000 for works. £8,500 was down for a girder bridge at Arley, £8,000 for one near Quatford, £9,000 for one above Bridgnorth, and £10,000 for one at Shrewsbury. The two bridges near Bridgnorth and the one near Shrewsbury were abandoned, and a considerable saving was effected by shortening the line at Hartlebury, by a junction, with the Oxford, Wolverhampton, and Worcester higher up than was originally intended. The estimated cost of the works, in consequence of these reductions, and of the determination of the company to make it a single line, was thus reduced to nearly one-half the original sum.

Although the Severn Valley Railway joins the Main Trunk line at Hartlebury, Worcester is regarded as its proper terminus; and at that point we commence our description.

WORCESTER.

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Population, 31,123. Returns two Members to Parliament

Market days—Wednesdays and Saturdays Fair days—Saturday before Palm Sunday, Saturday before Easter Day, August 15th, September 19th, and first Monday in December.

Our engraving represents the "faithful city" as it appears from a point between the bridges, with the Cathedral rising from an eminence above the river. The venerable pile was raised by the brave and pious bishop Wulstan, upon the site of an earlier edifice, formerly the church of a priory founded by one of the Saxon kings. Recent restorations, carried on under the direction of the Dean and Chapter, have led to the correction of defects, resulting from time, and ignorance on the part of past builders, and have disclosed features which add much to the grandeur of the edifice; so that in addition to impressions its magnificence creates upon the mind of the general visitor, it now affords a rich treat to all who delight to trace the boundary lines of ecclesiastical architecture, as they approach or recede from the present time. First, there is the Norman or Romanesque of the period of its erection, of which the crypt and part of the central transept are

specimens; secondly, the First Pointed or Early English, as seen in the eastern transept; thirdly, the Middle Pointed or Decorated, as in the tower, guesten hall, and refectory; and, fourthly, the Third Pointed or Perpendicular, as in the north porch, in the cloisters, and Prince Arthur's Chapel. Amongst ancient mural monuments, covering the dust or commemorating the virtues of the great, will be found King John's tomb, in the centre of the choir; one in white marble of Prince Arthur; and those of bishops Sylvester, Gauden, Stillingfleet, Thornborough, Parry, and Hough, the latter a *chef d'œuvre* of Roubilliac's; also that of Judge Lyttleton, "the father of English law;" and others of men renowned for learning, piety, or bravery. Near this fine old ecclesiastical edifice once stood the feudal stronghold that protected it, the only remaining portion of which is a crumbling mass of stone known as Edgar's Tower. From standing in the college precincts it is sometimes mistaken for a portion of the cathedral; it is, however, a relic of the old castle, the keep of which rested on a mound of sand and gravel, which was found to contain, upon its removal in 1833, Roman remains of the reigns of Augustus, Nero, Vespasian, and Constantine. In High Street, leading from the Cathedral to the Cross, is the Guildhall, erected from a design by a pupil of the great Sir Christopher Wren, and considered to be one of the most handsome brick-fronted structures in the kingdom. It is decorated with statues of Charles I., Charles II., Queen Anne, and with emblematic figures of Justice, Peace, Labour, &c.; whilst over the doorway is the city coat of arms, with the motto, "*Floreat semper fidelis civitas.*" The lower hall contains a collection of interesting specimens of ancient armour, gleaned from the battlefields of Worcester, and one of those quaint old instruments of punishment formerly used for scolds, called a "brank." In the municipal hall, on the second floor, is a portrait of George III., who presented it to the inhabitants, and others of citizens who have done good service to the town, or in some way distinguished themselves, the last added being that of Alderman Padmore, one of the members for the city.

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The churches are fifteen in number, some being ancient edifices, others recent erections built on the sites of older structures, whilst a few are copies of the originals. There are nearly as many dissenting and other chapels, several of which are handsome specimens of modern architectural skill. Among instances of domestic architecture of past centuries may be mentioned, "The Old House" in "New Street," from which Charles II. escaped after the battle of Worcester. It was the house also in which Judge Berkeley was born, and has over the door the inscription, "Love God (W. B. 1557, R. D), Honor the King."

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Worcester is rich in schools, almshouses, and institutions, whose united incomes, representing a total of £4,000, speak much for the public spirit and large-hearted benevolence of the inhabitants.

The Museum and Natural History Society, in Foregate Street, to which visitors are admitted on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, {6} with its collection of antiquities, fossils, and objects of natural history, should be visited. Also, the Arboretum and Public Pleasure Grounds, near Sansome Walk, where fêtes are given and bands frequently play. The grounds are tastefully laid out, portions being set apart for games of archery, cricket, bowls, and quoits. The usual admission fee is sixpence, but on Mondays they are free to the inhabitants.

In describing Worcester it would be unpardonable not to allude to its hops, from 2,000 to 3,000 pockets of which, it is said, not unfrequently change hands, in the market in the Foregate, during the season.

Glove making also is still one of the staple trades, nearly half a million being annually manufactured by Messrs. Dent and others.

Worcester is celebrated for Porcelain of a very superior kind; and facilities are afforded to strangers visiting the manufactory, both in Diglis, and in Lowesmoor. The productions of the former are highly esteemed by connoisseurs. The works have the good fortune to receive distinguished and even royal patronage; and the show-rooms form one of the attractions of the city.

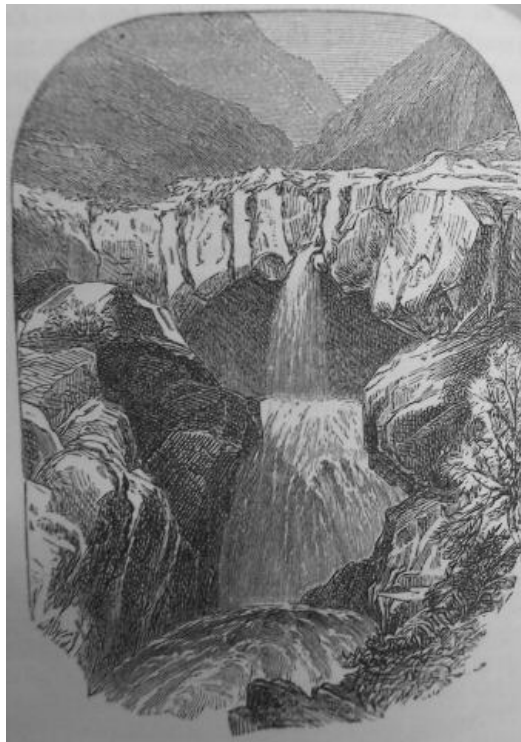
The Iron trade, so far as regards the manufacture of bridges, machinery, and general castings, notwithstanding the distance from the iron making districts, is well represented by the Vulcan Works, and those of Messrs. Padmore and Hardy. Other establishments on a large scale have sprung into existence in the city and its suburbs, in which chemistry and machinery, singly or combined, produce results the most astounding. Among them are those of Hill, Evans, and Co., where the visitor wanders amidst enormous vats, from which as many as 1,208,600 gallons of vinegar have been produced in a single year; and those of Lewis, Watkins, and Co., where a large portion of the vinegar is used in preparing pickles, and where hundreds of tons of preserved fruits and jam are annually produced for sale. There are also those of the well-known firm of Lea and Perrin; the chemical works of Webb; the extensive carriage manufactory of McNaught and Smith, and others upon which space forbids us to dwell.

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The Severn supplies the inhabitants with water, which is purified by means of extensive filter-beds at the upper end of Pitchcroft, and then thrown by machinery to the top of Rainbow Hill, a position sufficiently elevated to ensure its distribution over the upper stories of the highest houses. The "Old Waterworks" remain, and, as will be seen from our sketch, form a picturesque object in the landscape. The Severn is, however, no longer the fast-flowing stream poets have described it, but what it has lost in speed it has gained in depth, breadth, and majesty; the locks and weirs at Diglis—the former two abreast, and the latter stretching 400 feet across the stream—giving to it the aspect of a lake, an aspect aided by the appearance upon its surface of a number of swans. Its contrast with itself, whilst yet in its rocky cradle on Plinlimmon, will be seen from the accompanying sketch of *Blaen Hafren*, or the "Head of the River," two miles from its source. Anglers will find pleasant spots at which to indulge in the "gentle art," near Henwick, where the old Worcester monks had weirs; also near Bevere Island, and Holt Castle; at the confluence of the Severn with the Teme (two miles

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below Worcester), thence to the tail of Kempsey Lake; and still better near the Rhydd (the seat of Sir E. A. H. Lechmere, Bart.). Worcester is surrounded by very many spots of interest to lovers of natural scenery, to archæologists, botanists, and geologists. Among those within easy reach, and deserving of special notice, may be mentioned Croome Court, the seat of the Earl of Coventry (nine miles); and Witley Court, backed by the Abberley and Woodbury hills, (ten miles); also Madresfield Court, the seat of the Earl of Beauchamp (six miles); Cotheridge Court, the seat of W. Berkeley, Esq. (four miles); and Strensham village, the birthplace of Butler, the author of "Hudibras" (three miles from Duffore station, on the Bristol line). Leaving Worcester at Shrub Hill—a portion of a long natural terrace commanding pleasing views of the city and of the Malvern range of hills—we pass the cemetery; then Hindlip Hall, the residence of Henry Alsop, Esq., a handsome modern mansion standing in the midst of a very pleasant country on the left, and approached by an avenue of trees nearly a mile in length. The "Old Hall," upon the site of which the present one is built, was constructed by some quaint architect having less peaceful times in view, who contrived numerous secret chambers, of which the conspirators Garnet and Oldcorn are known to have availed themselves. Here also lived the sister of Lord Monteaule, whose letter to her brother is said to have led to the discovery of Gunpowder Plot. Near the hall is the old ivy-towered church of the hamlet, with its rustic graveyard. At a distance of six miles

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from Worcester is the borough town of

DROITWICH.

Population, 3,123

Market day—Friday. Fairs—Friday in Easter week, June 18th, September 24th, and December 18th.

The town, which lies beneath the embankment of the railway, in the valley of the river Salwarp, on the right, is on weekdays so enveloped in steam, that little beyond its stacks, and the murky tower of St. Andrew's Church, are seen. Its staple trade is salt, for the export of which the canal, the Severn, and modern railways offer great facilities. From early times, the subterranean river beneath the town has yielded an uninterrupted supply of the richest brine in Europe; and it is curious to observe how the vacuum created by the amount raised has caused the ground to collapse and crack, as shown by the decrepit state of the buildings, many of which are broken-backed, twisted, and contorted—although the intermediate earth is about 200 feet in thickness. The place, therefore, has a sort of downcast look, and the streets have a melancholy appearance; whilst the sheds of the brine works, made to appear more murky by contrast with heaps of white salt refuse, suggest the thought that the town has gone into mourning. Exception must be taken to St. Peter's Church, which stands outside the town, and is surrounded by green fields, with no building near, except an exceedingly dilapidated half-timbered mansion, the property of Lord Somers. Tradition says that this church once adjoined the town, but that the latter shifted in the direction of the springs; if so, the injunction over the doorway, to "Remember Lot's wife," seems a strange rebuke, if intended for the inhabitants. The building has many features of interest, the Norman, the Transition, and subsequent styles of architectural decoration being observable.

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The old town has an interesting charity, founded by Lord Coventry, for the support of poor people, and the education of poor children. The almshouses, which have recently been rebuilt, and are eighteen in number, are commodious and convenient, with garden plots at the back; whilst the inmates have 3s. 6d. per week, or 5s. if upwards of 70 years of age, beside clothing. Connected with these is an infirmary, in which at the time of our visit were three old ladies, who looked particularly clean and comfortable, and whose ages were respectively 83, 89, and 93.

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On a red marlstone cliff, [\[11\]](#) rising above the river Salwarp, and overlooking the town of Droitwich, is the church of Dodderhill, belonging to the parish of that name. It gave shelter to the Royalists during the civil wars, and suffered much from an attack of the Parliamentary forces, who battered down its nave and tower. The former has never been rebuilt, and the latter, instead of being placed in the position it formerly held, has been made to fill up the south transept.

On the left of the line is the seat of Sir John Packington, the present member for Droitwich. It may be reached from the town by a pleasant walk; first by the side of the canal and river, and then through the park. Westwood was given by Henry VIII. to an ancestor of the present baronet, in consequence of his residence at Hampton Lovett having been injured during the civil wars; and the house is one of the most interesting specimens of Elizabethan architecture in the kingdom. The railway passes Hampton Lovett church, near which are neat model cottages erected by Sir John; and at a distance of eleven miles from Worcester we arrive at

HARTLEBURY.

Hartlebury, which is about a mile from the station, has been for a thousand years the residence of the bishops of Worcester; the old castle having remained entire until the middle of the 17th century, when, from having given shelter to the Royalists, it became a heap of ruins, and the present palace was erected in its stead. It is approached by a noble avenue of limes, and is

surrounded by pleasure-gardens, fashioned out of its ancient moat, one portion of which is still a quiet lake. It has a park with well-timbered tracts adjoining, one of which is called the Bishop's Wood, and near which is the famous Mitre Oak.

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STOURPORT

Derives its name from the great basins constructed by Brindley upon the canal, and also from the river Stour, which here enters the Severn. The advantages of position led to the erection of large manufacturing establishments on the spot. Steam has been brought to aid the Stour, whose waters are pounded back to create a capital of force to turn great wheels that spin, and weave, and grind; whilst iron works, vinegar works, and tan works, upon a large scale, have also sprung into existence. On the opposite bank of the Severn, about three-quarters of a mile from Stourport, is Arley Kings, or Lower Arley; and about a mile lower down the river is Redstone Cliff, in which is the famous hermitage of Layamon, a monkish historian of the 13th century, who is said to have composed a "Chronicle of Britain," embracing that mythical period extending from Brute to Cadwallader.

On leaving Stourport, the traveller passes Burlish Common, and plunging into a deep cutting, terminated by a dark tunnel, emerges in sight of the little town of

BEWDLEY.

Population, 2,900.

Market day—Saturday. Fair days—Last Tuesday in February, April 23rd, the Monday before St. Ann's, second Tuesday in October, and December 11th.

Principal Hotels—The George, and the Wheatsheaf.

Bewdley is an ancient borough town, corporate and parliamentary, returning one member. The place long ago obtained the appellation "beautiful." Leland says, "because of its present site men first began to resort there;" adding, "the towne itself of Bewdley is sett on the side of a hille, so comely that a man cannot wishe to see a towne better. It riseth from Severne banke by east, upon the hille by west, so that a man standing on the hille *trans-pontem* by east may discern almoste every house in the towne; and att the rising of the sun from east, the whole towne glittereth, being all of new building, as it were of gould." Bewdley has been said to resemble the letter Y in form—the foot in the direction of the river being more modern, and the extremities stretching out against the hills the more ancient, portions. It was privileged as a place of sanctuary when Wyre Forest was infested by men who lived merry lives, and who did not refuse to shed their brothers' blood. It had the privilege of taxing traders upon the Severn, as appears from a petition presented by "the men of Bristowe and Gloucester" in the reign of Henry IV., praying for exemption. It obtained its charter of incorporation from Edward IV., and one granting the elective franchise from James I.

p. 13

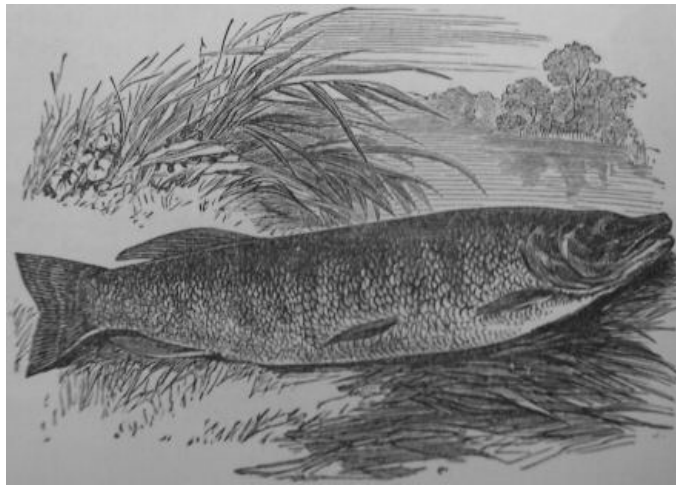


Wribbenhall, on the same side the river as the station, is a hamlet belonging to Kidderminster, from which town it is distant about three miles. Bewdley and Wribbenhall are surrounded by pleasant spots, not a few of which are occupied by mansions, handsome villas, and gentlemen's seats, seen from the line.

Winterdyne is one of these; from dark rocks above the Severn it overlooks the valley, and is surrounded by walks and grounds commanding magnificent prospects, the one from the Fort being perhaps the most romantic. Lovers of quiet rambles, anglers, or botanists, would do well to take up their quarters at Bewdley, as a centre from which to explore the neighbourhood. There are few more charming spots than Ribbesford, a mile lower down the river; it is a sylvan bit of landscape, with grassy flats and weathered cliffs, the latter, rising abruptly from the stream, being delicately tinted into harmony with the boles, and foliage of the trees above them.

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Opposite is Burlish Deep, noted for its pike.



As at Worcester, the Severn here is a quiet, slow-flowing river. From Gloucester to Bewdley the old gravelly fords and sandy shallows have disappeared, and the "gentle art" has had to adapt itself to these changes; fish once familiar to anglers are now strangers, rarely, if ever seen on this side Gloucester; but the regulations enforced by the Severn Fisheries Commission, and the vigilance of local associations, will, it is hoped, soon be the means of re-peopling the Severn with those members of the finny tribe once common to its waters. Steam-tugs and trows, propelled by screw or paddle, now navigate the river, each with a dozen old-fashioned barges at its stern; but this portion of the Severn being comparatively free, it is a favourite breeding place with pike, who for reproductive purposes seek the stillest portions of the stream. Dowles Ford, at the mouth of the brook of that name, which enters the river a little above Bewdley, also Laxlane Ford, and Folly's Ford, are each famous for their trout.

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Leaving Bewdley, we pass the line of railway to Tenbury, but confine ourselves to the Valley of the Severn, along which the river and the rail are now close companions nearly all the way to Shrewsbury. The elevation of the embankment above the river affords glimpses of Bewdley Forest, or, as Drayton calls it, the Stately Wyre.

"These scenes are desert now and bare,
Where nourished once a forest fair;
When these waste glens with copse were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind."

But portions of the district still are wooded, affording famous fields for botanists. Seckley Wood comes down to meet the bold projecting rocks above the river; and we have Eyemoor Wood and others right and left on approaching Upper or Over Arley.

ARLEY,

Twenty miles from Worcester, is one of the sweetest little villages along the line. Its ferry on the river, its timbered cottages, partially concealed in green indentations of the hill, its grey church tower, and those of the castle near, are a picture of themselves; but when showers of blossoms crown the orchard trees in spring, or ruddy fruits hang ripe in autumn, the scene is more enchanting still.

The castle tower is 120 feet in height, and commands an extensive sweep of country, through which the Severn in the distance winds its way, in and out, like a silver thread. The gardens and grounds contain rare shrubs and trees, imported by the late Earl Mountnorris; to visit which R. Woodward, Esq., the present proprietor, like the late earl, very rarely refuses his permission.

The railway having crossed the Severn by the Victoria Bridge, an iron structure, 200 feet in span, now continues its course along the right bank of the stream, disclosing glimpses now and then of gentle sweeps and undulating lines of wood and field, where quiet tones of light and shade, with sweet harmonious tints, refresh and please. Wandering at its own sweet will, the river here goes freely on its way, bubbling and brawling at the fords, gathering itself up into deep, dark lakes carved out of the softer rocks over which it flows, or dividing to embrace some willow-covered island in its course. Between Arley and Bewdley it is well stocked with grayling, dace, and that king of Severn fish, the salmon which is often taken hero; also with that "queen of fresh-water fish" the carp, speaking of which an old distich says:—

p. 16

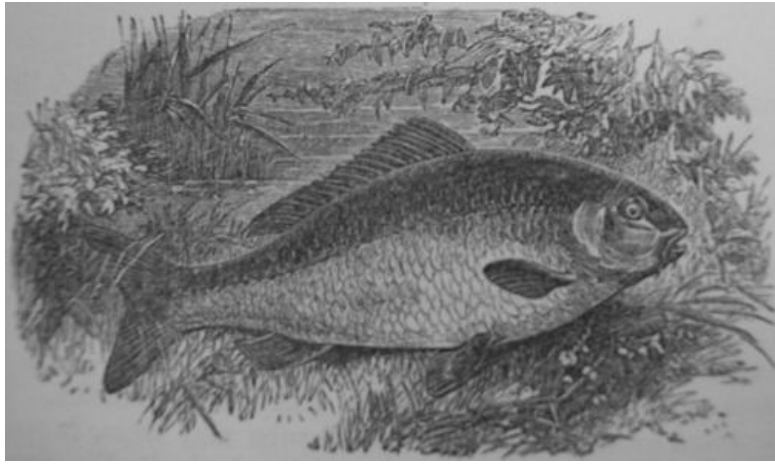
"Hops and turkeys, carps and beer,
Came into England all in one year."

Like pike, they are long-lived; referring to which, Ben Jonson says:—

"Fat, *aged carps*, that run into thy net,
And pikes, now weary their own kind to eat."

During the winter months carp are caught in broad, quiet parts of the river; in summer, in holes

and reaches, under hollow banks, and near beds of weeds or flags. All kinds of bait are recommended, but a well-scoured worm is often best.



HIGHLEY,

Or Higley, as it is commonly called, is two and a half miles from Arley. The village is situated high upon the hill, and consists of scattered cottages, with a sprinkling of goodly houses, some half timbered, after the quaint fashion of former times. The church has an ancient chancel window, and in the graveyard is an old cross, elaborately carved in freestone, a material found very extensively in the neighbourhood. Highley was an old Saxon manor, which, with Chetton, belonged to the widow of Leofric—Godiva, of Coventry celebrity. Kinlet, four miles distant, occupies a picturesque eminence of a horse-shoe form; the church is an ancient structure, containing noble altar tombs, one of which has a rich canopy, with the figure of a knight and lady kneeling.

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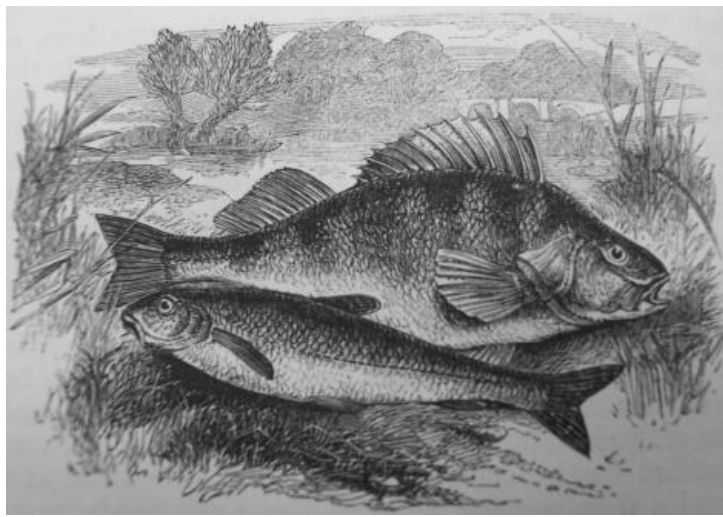
HAMPTON'S LOADE.

Lode was a Saxon term for ford, and the name here, as elsewhere, denotes an ancient passage of the Severn. In this case, it was one by which the inhabitants of Highley, Billingsley, and Chelmarsh formerly passed to Quatt and Alveley. A ferry has long been substituted, but the old load still winds along the hillside, past an old stone cross, in the direction of Alveley, an old Saxon manor. The tall grey tower of the old church is seen from the line, occupying a high position on the right. The building is an ancient and interesting structure, with many Norman features, and is greatly admired by antiquarians. Judging from the materials used in older portions of the building, the first church would appear to have been built of travertine. Above Hampton's Loade, the wooded heights of Dudmaston and of Quatford, with the red towers of Quatford Castle, come into view; but a deviation of the line, and a deep cutting through the Knoll Sands, prevent more than a passing glimpse. *Quat* is an old British word for wood, and refers to a wide stretch of woodland once included in the great Morfe Forest; and *ford* to an adjoining passage of the river—one, half a mile higher up, being still called *Danes' Ford*. On a bluff headland, rising perpendicularly 100 feet above the Severn, close by, the hardy Northerners, who thus left their name in connection with the Severn, established themselves in 896, when driven by Alfred from the Thames; and on the same projecting rock, defended on the land side by a trench cut in the solid sandstone, Roger de Montgomery afterwards built himself a house.

And tradition adds that, in consequence of a vow made by his second wife, Adeliza, the church close by was built upon the borders of the forest, then the favourite hunting-ground of the Norman earl. The church, like other neighbouring structures of ancient date, was built of tuffa, or travertine, a material found in the beds of brooks in the district, and portions of the chancel, including its fine Norman arch and pillars, are still composed of the same. Among old endowments of the church, is one, from a source unknown, of a piece of land, the proceeds of which defray the expense of ferrying persons attending church across the Severn.

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The old man at the ferry is a fisherman, who knows well where to get "a rise" of trout, or to hook a grayling, and where to look for pike, or perch, or gudgeon.



In the parish of Quatford is Eardington, celebrated for the manufacture of iron for guns, wire, and horse nails; and parochially and manorially combined with Eardington is the More, the ancient tenure of which indicates the manufacture of iron here at a very early period. By it the tenant was required to appear yearly in the Exchequer, with a hazel rod of a year's growth, and two knives, the treasurer and barons being present. The tenant was to attempt to sever the rod with one of the knives, the other knife was to do the same work at one stroke, and then be given up to the king's chamberlain; a custom which was continued until recently.

BRIDGNORTH

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Population, 6,569.

Market day—Saturday. Fairs—January 20th, February 17th, May 1st, June 9th, July 14th, August 18th, September 15th, October 29th, December 28th.

Principal Hotel—The Crown, for which, as well as for the Swan, the Raven, and the George, see Advertisements.

The station, at the southern termination of the tunnel, is a chaste building of freestone, and forms an additional ornament to the town. It occupies a position from which its two divisions come pleasantly into view, the Low Town lying peacefully in the valley by the Severn, the High Town dotting the terraced sides, and crowning the bold impending rocks that give it, in the eyes of travellers, such an eastern aspect. Caverned in the hill, at many stages from its foot, and reached by winding walks, are picturesque holes and habitations—happily now no longer used, excepting in very few instances indeed—where the first settlers crowded when the ruthless Dane perched himself like a famished eagle on the rocks of Quatford down below. In the foreground are the time-worn relics of its two castles, to which the little colony was indebted for protection from fierce and threatening foes. The one opposite is Pampudding Hill, a smooth, grassy mound, on which the daughter of the great Alfred, Queen Ethelfleda, built a fortress. According to Florence of Worcester, what we now call Bridgnorth was then *Brycge*. In his time, as in that of Leland, who so well described its position, the Severn ran nearer to the frowning cliffs on which the town is built than at present.

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The discriminating eye of the outlawed Belesme was not slow to perceive the advantages nature had given to the place, when he sought to raise a fortress that should shield him from the wrath of his royal master, and he removed the materials, it is said, of his house at Quatbrigia—a bridge having, it is supposed, succeeded the ford—to *Brycge*, afterwards Bridgnorth, or the bridge north of the one at Quatford. Florence of Worcester says: "Earl Robert carried on the works night and day, exciting Welshmen to the speedy performance of his wishes by awarding them horses, lands,

asses, and all sorts of gifts." With such aids, and advantages of site, the Norman earl erected a castle that held out three weeks against a large force marshalled by Henry, who, as an old Saxon chronicle states, came here "with all his army" to besiege it. It stood a second siege when Hugh de Mortimer espoused the cause of Stephen, and was attacked by Henry II., whose life was saved by the zeal of an attendant, who received a well-aimed arrow intended for the king. It was taken by the confederate barons, and retaken by Edward II., who afterwards marched to Shrewsbury, where the proud Mortimers humbled themselves and sued for mercy. It served not only as a garrison and a prison, but, from its position on the frontier of Wales, very often as a royal residence. King John came with a splendid retinue, of which the bishops of Lincoln and Hereford, the earls of Essex, Pembroke, Chester, Salisbury, Hereford, and Warwick formed part; upon which occasion the entertainment is said to have cost, for the three days it lasted, a sum equal to £2,000 of modern currency. Prince Edward was a visitor after the battle of Evesham; and the second Edward too—the first time at the head of his army, the second, as a fugitive, crossing the Severn in a small boat at nightfall. Henry IV. was here:

"On Wednesday next, Harry, thou shall set forward;
On Tuesday, we ourselves will march.
Our meeting is Bridgnorth; and, Harry, you
Shall march through Gloucester; by which account
Our general forces at Bridgnorth shall meet."

Charles I. arrived here from Shrewsbury, October, 1642, when he remained three days and gave expression to the eulogium, which townsmen quote for the benefit of strangers, respecting the beauty of the castle walk. It was garrisoned for this unfortunate monarch, too, in the struggle which cost him his head, upon which occasion the town was stormed by three divisions of the Parliamentary army, March, 1646. The fight waxed hottest near the north gate, and in the old churchyard, where the leader of the loyalists fell. That the adherents of the king were not "all on one side," would appear from the fact that the town's defenders were pelted upon retiring to the castle by the inhabitants, treatment which they seem to have deserved in setting fire to the town, bombarding St. Leonard's, burning the adjoining buildings and driving the wretched population in search of such shelter as the rocks and woods afforded.

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The garrison capitulated on the 26th of April, 1646, in consequence of a mine, by which the Parliamentary leader proposed to blow up the castle and set fire to their magazine, then in St. Mary's Church, which stood within the castle walls. Ecclesiastical dignitaries often then wore coats of mail as well as cassocks, and daggers in addition to their girdles; and this old church being collegiate, had for one of its deans Rivallis, who forged the charter and seal of Henry III., by which the Irish possessions of the Earl of Pembroke were invaded, and that nobleman cruelly treated and killed. The more distinguished William of Wykeham, who held the Great Seal in the reign of Edward III., and exercised considerable influence in his day, both in church and state, was also a dean of St. Mary's.

St. Leonard's occupies a position at the opposite extremity of the town. Its crumbling tower, shattered by the cannon of Charles' army, remains, but the nave and side aisles have recently been restored—that on the south side at the sole expense of John Pritchard, Esq., M.P., in memory of his brother. The celebrated divine, Richard Baxter, began his ministry at St. Leonard's, apparently with little success, as he is said to have shook the dust from his feet upon leaving, declaring the hearts of the inhabitants to have been harder than the rock on which their town was built. Nevertheless, he afterwards dedicated his well-known book, "The Saint's Rest," to them. Adjoining the churchyard is a hospital for ten poor widows, built and endowed, as a brass plate over the entrance informs us, by a relative of Colonel Billingsly, who fell in the service of "King Charles ye First," and whose sword is said now to be in the possession of a descendant of the family, in the parish of Astley Abbots.

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Like other ancient towns, Bridgnorth had places founded for the relief of the poor, the destitute, and the diseased. The house of the monks of the "Friars of the Order Grey," stands near where a dilapidated sign of the Preaching Friar still swings over the entrance of a public-house. It forms part of the carpet works of Mr. Martin Southwell, who uses its oak panelled hall, and a number of cells carved out of the solid rock, as storerooms. In making some alterations recently the little cemetery was disturbed, and skeletons of several of the monks, embedded in spaces cut out of the rock, in the form of a sarcophagus, were exposed. In the Cartway is the "Old House" in which Bishop Percy, author of the "Relics of Ancient English Poetry," was born, a fine specimen of the domestic architecture of the 16th century; and in the entrance-hall of which are the following words in large letters in relief, "Except the Lord BVILD THE OWSE The Labourers Thereof Evail Nothing. Erected by R. For * 1580." Another of these quaint old structures, called Cann Hall, contains some curious unlighted double dormitories in the roof; one is called King Charles' Room, and another is pointed out as that in which his nephew, Prince Rupert, is said to have slept. The house is supposed to be haunted, and the present tenant is not loth to admit that he sometimes hears strange noises, a fact, if such it be, at which one can scarcely wonder, seeing that the wind and the bats have undisputed sway. The Townhall, in the Market Square, built in the place of the one destroyed during the civil wars, is thus noticed in the "Common Hall Order Book" of the Corporation: "The New Hall set up in the Market Place of the High Street of Bridgnorth was begun, and the stone arches thereof made, when Mr. Francis Preen and Mr. Symon Beauchamp were Bayliffs, in Summer, 1650; and the timber work and building upon the same stone arches was set up when Mr. Thomas Burne and Mr. Roger Taylor were Bayliffs of the said town of Bridgnorth, in July and August, 1652." The new Market Hall, with the Assembly Room, the rooms of the Mechanics' Institution, &c., is a handsome building, situated at the lower end of the same large open square.

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The grand promenade round the Castle Hill, which King Charles pronounced the finest in his dominion, commands a prospect that cannot fail to interest. Below, the river winds like a thing of life; around, are wave-like sweeps of country, red and green, broken by precipitous rocks into a succession of natural terraces, many of which, being higher than the town itself, afford the most enchanting views.

The Hermitage is one of these, the prospect from which, on a clear, sunny day, is such as to commend the choice of the anchorite, who is said to have exchanged the excitements of a court for retirement in such a spot. The tradition is, that Ethelwald, brother of King Athelstan, who succeeded his father, Edward (924), retired here to escape the perils of the period; a tradition which receives support from the following royal presentations found on the rolls of Edward: "On the 2nd of February, Edward III., 1328, John Oxindon was presented by the king to the hermitage of Athelardestan, near Bridgnorth. On 7 Edward III., Andrew Corbriggs was similarly presented to the hermitage of Adlaston, near Bridgnorth. On 9 Edward III., 1335, Edmund de la Marc was presented to the hermitage of Athelaxdestan," a name signifying the stone or rock of Ethelwald.

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The Cemetery lies embosomed in a sunny opening of the rocks below the Hermitage, where nature and art combined—the former predominating so much by means of a noble amphitheatre of rocks—have given to the spot a quiet, pleasing interest. Outside the Cemetery, a winding path leads to the High Rocks, the road to which the inhabitants have recently improved. This elevated position above the Severn well deserves a visit, commanding as it does the Vale, through which the river winds amidst alluvial lands, bounded by the heights of Apley and Stanley, the hills of the Wrekin and Caradoc, and those of the Brown and Titterstone Clees, with the Abberley and Malvern hills in the distance. The castellated structure at the foot of the High Rocks, now used

for manufacturing purposes, occupies the site of the Old Town's Mills, given by Henry III. to the inhabitants, and out of which he made provision for the hermit of Mount St. Gilbert.

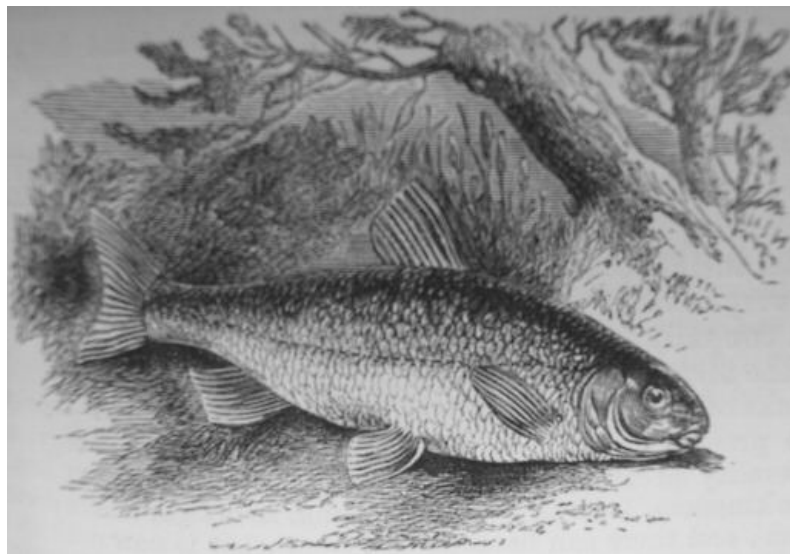
APLEY.

On leaving Bridgnorth the scenery becomes exceedingly interesting. On the left is Hoard Park, Severn or Sabrina Hall, and Little Severn Hall. Astley Abbots and Stanley lie higher up on the hill on the same side; whilst on the right, rocks, crowned by trees, rise from the river in undulating lines, and introduce us to the picturesque grounds of Apley. The house is a castellated structure of fine freestone, with a domestic chapel on the north side; it occupies a slight elevation above the river, where it is thrown into pleasing relief by woods that crown still greater heights. The park is diversified by clumps of noble trees, by projecting rocks, pleasing glades, and grassy flats, on which groups of browsing deer are seen; and the terrace is one of the finest and most extensive in England. From its great elevation it commands pleasing views of the park, of the Severn, and of wide, undulating districts on either side, rich in sylvan beauty. The proprietor is T. C. Whitmore, High Sheriff of the county, whose ancestors, from the time of Sir William Whitmore (1620), have occasionally enjoyed that honour. Opposite to Apley is

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LINLEY STATION.

The angler, desirous of a few hours' amusement, may here find good sport at the fords, where the brooks come down and enter the river. Grayling and trout are often caught, and chub, less in favour with fishermen, of large size.



If the tourist be a geologist he will find it pleasant to follow the course of Linley Brook, on the banks of which he may find fish of ancient date, in beds forming a passage from the Upper Ludlow to the Old Bed Sandstone. He will be interested, too, in noticing the angles at which the latter dip beneath the carboniferous strata, and these again beneath the overlying permians.

A series of interesting dingles now occur, where the nightingale is heard in May and June, through which whimpering streams come down, and where Tom Moody hunted with the famous "Willey Squire." Tom's exploits have been immortalised by Dibden in the song,—

"You all knew Tom Moody, the whipper-in, well,
The bell that's done tolling is honest Tom's knell."

A plain slab in Barrow churchyard covers Tom's remains, and simply records the date at which he died. At

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COALPORT STATION,

Seven miles from Bridgnorth, and thirty-six from Worcester, the Severn is crossed by a handsome iron bridge, at the opposite extremity of which is the London and North-Western Company's line to the Shropshire Union at Hadley.

The China Works are about five minutes' walk from the station; they are extensive, and were established during the latter half of the last century, at which time they were removed here from Caughley. The productions are of a high order of merit, and combine those distinctive characters for which Caughley and Nantgarw were celebrated. They were successful, some years ago, in obtaining a medal awarded by the Society of Arts; in obtaining a First Class Exhibition Medal in 1851, also in 1855, and again in 1862. The works are very advantageously situated, having the river, the canal, and two railways adjoining.

The *Art-Journal*, in giving the history of these works, thus speaks of them: "The productions of the Coalport Works at the present day, thanks to the determination, energy, and liberality of the proprietor, take rank with the very best in the kingdom, both in body, in potting, in design, and in

decoration; and there can be no doubt, from what is now actively in progress, that the stand taken by Coalport is one of enviable eminence among the ceramic manufactories of the world."

Edge and Son's chain and wire rope works are situated not far from these; and between the two, at the foot of the inclined plane, an ingenious device for transferring boats from one canal to the other, is the celebrated "Tar Tunnel," driven into the coal measures, from which petroleum was formerly exported on a large scale, under the name of Betton's British Oil.

Our view of the Valley of the Severn, with Ironbridge in the distance, is from the hill overlooking the handsome mansion of John Anstice, Esq.

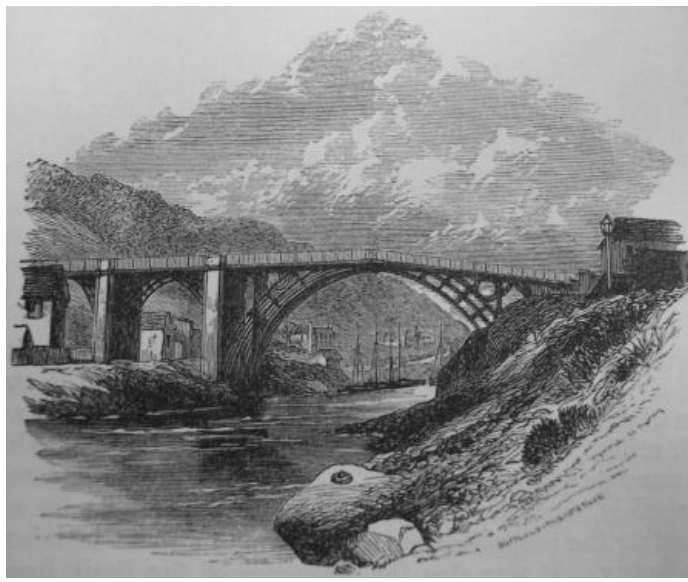


Coalport is in the parish of Madeley, the village of which is now looped in by railways. Madeley is one of those names or word-pictures by which our ancestors, with a touch alike of poetry and feeling, were wont to convey their meaning. The place, however, has lost those sylvan features that distinguished it when described in Domesday, as part of the possessions of St. Milburgh; and the old Court House, surrounded by its park, where the prior of that monastery received his perquisites, is strangely changed in aspect. Although little beyond the foundations exist to show where the hall stood from whence the house derives its name—where festivals were held, suitors heard, or penalties inflicted—the present edifice has many points of interest. The arms of the Ferrers family, in a shield, over the principal doorway, may still be seen, indicating the proprietorship at one time of some member of that family. It was also the residence of Sir Basil Brooke, fourth in descent from a noble knight of that name; a zealous royalist in the time of Charles I. The substantial, roomy, and well-panelled apartments, and the solid trees, one upon the other, forming a spiral staircase, are objects of interest. Ascending these stairs, the visitor finds himself in the chapel, the ceiling of which is of fine oak, richly carved, with the *fleur-de-lis* and other devices. In the garden, which formed an enclosed court, upon an elegant basement approached by a circular flight of steps—the outer one being seven feet in diameter and the inner one about three—is a very curious planetarium, or horological instrument, serving the purpose of a sun dial, and that of finding the position of the moon in relation to the planets. In niches outside the parish church are finely sculptured, full-length figures of some of the early proprietors of the Court House; and in the register is an entry dated April, 1645, stating that the edifice was at that time garrisoned by a Parliamentary regiment, commanded by Captain Harrington. Six years later than the event recorded, we have the story of King Charles' visit to the village in disguise, after the battle of Worcester, and of his being lodged in a barn belonging to Mr. Wolfe. At the Restoration the king did not forget his host, but presented him with a very handsome tankard, with the inscription, "Given by Charles II., at the Restoration, to F. Wolfe, of Madeley, in whose barns he was secreted after the defeat at Worcester." The tankard is now in the possession of W. Rathbone, Esq., and a print of it hangs in the old house, now the possession of C. J. Ferriday, Esq. The tankard has upon the cover a coat of arms; the crest is a demi-wolf supporting a crown. In the hall there is also an old panel, containing the initials F. W. W. Mr. and Mrs. Wolfe, with the date 1621.

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Madeley is also celebrated as the scene of the labours of the venerated Fletcher, so much so, that admirers of his life and writings come long distances to visit his tomb, a plain brick structure, with a simple inscription upon an iron plate.

IRONBRIDGE

Is nine miles from Bridgnorth, and thirteen and a half from Shrewsbury. From the disposition of the buildings on the hill side, it has a novel and romantic aspect, whilst the high grounds adjoining afford varied views of interesting scenery. Underneath the lofty ridge of limestone, the higher portion of which is planted with fir and other trees, are extensive caverns, which are open to visitors, who will find these fossiliferous rocks, rising immediately from beneath the coal measures, highly instructive.

BROSELEY

Is celebrated all the world over for its pipes, a branch of manufacture for which it is now as famous as of yore. Partly in this parish and partly in that of Benthall, and only about 300 yards from the station, are the geometrical, mosaic, and encaustic tile works of the Messrs. Maw. They were removed here a few years since from Worcester, the better to command the use of the Broseley clays, since which they have attained to considerable importance, and now rival the great house of Minton.

On leaving Ironbridge, the line passes by a sea wall the foot of Benthall Edge—a limestone ridge, continuous with that of Wenlock, so famous for that class of silurian fossils to which the town of Wenlock has lent its name.

Benthall is a name significant of its elevated position—*Bent*, meaning the brow, and *al* or *hal*, a hill.

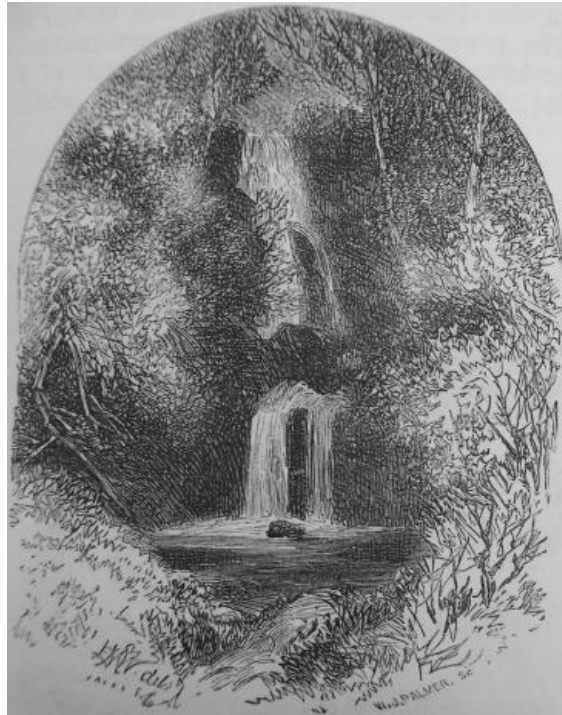
Benthall Hall, the property of Lord Forester, and in the occupation of George Maw, Esq., F.L.S., F.S.A., is a fine specimen of Elizabethan architecture, built by William Benthall in 1535, on the site of a former house.

COALBROOKDALE.



At the foot of Benthall Edge the Wellington and Severn Junction railway crosses the river by a bridge 200 feet in span, and brings before us, at a glance, this interesting little valley, with its church, its schools, and its palatial-looking Literary and Scientific Institution. The name has long been famous, as well for its romantic scenery as for its iron works. Notices of these occur from the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI., down to the period of 1711, when the Darby family first settled here. It was here that the first iron bridge—the elegant structure that gave both name and existence to the little town adjoining—was cast in 1779; the first iron rails were laid here in 1768, and the first successful use of mineral fuel for smelting iron was introduced in 1718. For metal castings these works were celebrated as early as the time of Boulton and Watt, when those for their early engines were produced here; whilst the Exhibitions of London and Paris show that they have lost none of their prestige. The brook from which the place derives its name, and which was formerly of more importance than at present, is still a pleasing feature in the landscape, swelling out into shining sheets, or forming pleasant waterfalls as at *La Mole*, from which our view is taken.

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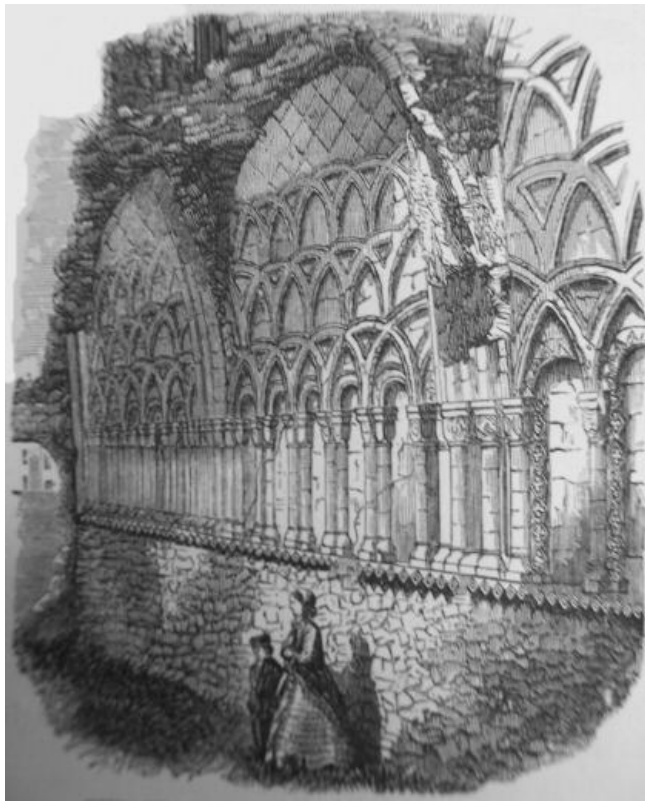
The Wellington and Severn Junction line through Coalbrookdale is joined by the branch line to

WENLOCK,

one of the oldest borough towns in the kingdom. Its chief attraction is the Abbey, founded by St. Milburgh, a Saxon saint, and daughter of Penda, one of the last and fiercest of the Saxon heathen kings. It fell before the Danes, but was rebuilt by Earl Leofric and his wife Godiva. A second time it fell, and was again rebuilt; this time by Norman masons, in greater splendour than before. Of the architecture of this period the present ruins show some fine examples, and none finer than the chapter-house, the clustering arches of which are shown in our engraving.

The south transept, with a portion of the nave, of the Early English style of architecture, remind the visitor of the stately grandeur of the church, which was upwards of 400 feet in length. The house of the prior, which communicated with the chapter-house, is now the private residence of J. M. Gaskell, Esq., M.P., the present proprietor of the estate. The parish church has several points of interest, one of which is its fine Norman front, hidden from the street by the present tower. To this may also be added the arches which separate the nave and side aisles, rising from clustering pillars of great beauty; also the one dividing the nave from the chancel, where there is an elegant sedilia. Wenlock grew up beneath the patronage and protection of its Priory, by means of which it received many royal favours, and was protected by many royal charters, one of which conferred the right, at a very early period, of representation in the Commons House of Parliament.

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The Guildhall is an ancient building of timber and plaster, with a projecting upper story resting on piazzas. The room used for quarter sessions has the arms of Charles II. over the recorder's chair, and the Inner or Municipal Court is beautifully furnished with elaborately-carved oak panellings and furniture. The borough is nearly the same now as formerly, the modern franchise extending over the ancient possessions of the church, wherein the prior of the monastery had jurisdiction over eighteen parishes.

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BUILDWAS.

In descending the dingle between Wenlock and Buildwas, at a point described by an old writer as the boundary of the domains of the two abbeys, is Lawless Cross, formerly one of those ancient sanctuaries, the resort of outlaws who, having committed crime, availed themselves of that security from punishment such places afforded. The monks, in the exercise of that excessive influence they had in those days, provided places, deemed sacred, which should serve for refuge for criminals. A cross was erected for the *Lawless*; from which even the monarch had no power to take them. Villains doubly dyed in crime were wont to rush out from such hiding-places, commit crimes with impunity, and return. The evil, indeed, had become so great, that the Courts of Westminster, in Hilary Term, 1221, were employed in considering the expediency of altering "a certain *pass* in the Royal Forest near to Buldewas," from its having become "the haunts of malefactors, and from its notoriety for the constant commission of crime." Below this is the Abbey Mill, and lower still is the Abbey. The line passes through what was once the cemetery, and over ground formerly occupied by the industrial courts of the establishment. A fine view is obtained of the church, which presents a good specimen of a Cistercian edifice, every part of the original arrangement being distinctly traceable.

The massive proportions of its arcades, and the scolloped capitals of their columns, indicate the Norman style of architecture; whilst the pointed arches show an approach towards that which superseded it, which began about the year 1150. The clerestory remains entire on both sides, with round arched windows throughout. Between the columns are indications of a screen, which shut off the eastern aisles; at the end of the fifth arch from the west, the choir, or portion devoted to the monks, commences; and at the intersection of the transepts still stands the tower, resting on four pointed arches. At the eastern end, beneath long windows, which at some period or other have been formed out of smaller ones, stood the altar, and near it the sedilia; whilst on the south side are the doorways which led to the dormitories of the monks engaged in the night services of the church. On the side next the river, a long line of building forms the eastern cloister and the crypt; on the same side is a handsome archway leading into the chapter-house, the roof of which is vaulted, groined, and supported by beautiful slender columns. Beyond are the remains of the refectory, and the room of audience—the only place where, according to the strict rules of the order, the monks were permitted to converse; and here also was the warm-room, kitchen, and lavatory. On the same side are remains of a string of offices for novices, and for scribes employed in multiplying copies of the Scriptures and other books.

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Our engraving represents the church as seen by moonlight, when strong lights and shadows bring to mind the well-known lines of Sir Walter Scott:—

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“If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight.
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild but to flout the ruins gray:
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light’s uncertain shower
Streams on the ruin’d central tower;
When buttress and buttress alternately
Seem framed of ebon and ivory.”

The traveller by the Severn Valley Railway can scarcely fail to notice here, and at other points along the line, beds of sand and gravel at levels above the highest points now reached by the river; wave-like sweeps of water-worn materials still higher up are no less conspicuous. In both these are found the *Turritella terebra*, and other shells of modern seas, identifying them with the period when a marine strait extended the whole distance from the Dee to the Bristol Channel. The cutting near Coalbrookdale has yielded a rich harvest of these marine remains, sufficient satisfactorily to indicate the true position of the beds, and to associate them with others of great interest elsewhere. Along one of the ancient estuaries of this recent sea, now the Vale of Shrewsbury, the Severn winds in curious curves, and almost meets in circles, imparting a pleasing aspect to the valley. On leaving Buildwas, Buildwas Park is passed on the left, and Leighton Hall and church are seen on the opposite side of the river; while on the left again are Shineton, Shinewood, and Bannister’s Coppice; the latter famous as the hiding-place of the Duke of Buckingham, when unable to cross the river with his army at its mouth. Shakspeare alludes to the event, in “King Richard,” thus:—

“The news I have to tell your majesty
Is, that by sudden flood and fall of waters,
Buckingham’s army is dispersed and scatter’d,
And he himself *wandered away alone,*
No man knows whither.”

Tradition says that the fallen nobleman was betrayed by an old servant to whom the wood belonged, named Bannister; and an old writer thus records the curses which he says befel the traitor: “Shortly after he had betrayed his master, his sonne and heyre waxed mad, and dyed in a bore’s stye; his eldest daughter, of excellent beautie, was sodaynelie stryken with a foulle leperze; his seconde sonne very mervalously deformed of his limmes; his younger sonne in a smal puddell was strangled and drowned; and he, being of extreme age, arraigned and found gyltie of a murther, was only by his clergy saved; and as for his thousand pounde, Kyng Richard gave him not one farthing, saying that he which would be untrew to so good a master would be false to al other; howbeit some saie that he had a smal office or a ferme to stoppe his mouthe withal.”

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CRESSAGE

Is forty-three miles from Worcester, and eight and a half from Shrewsbury. The name is an abbreviation of Christsache, *ache* been the old Saxon term for oak. The folk-lore of the district is, that the old tree was one under which the early Christian missionaries preached, that it stood in the centre of the village, and that upon its decay it was supplanted by a market cross, which cross itself has disappeared. Our engraving represents another of these venerable trees standing a quarter of a mile from the village, known as the Lady Oak.

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Before the railway caused a deviation in the road, it stood by the wayside, where it was regarded with veneration by the inhabitants, who cramped it with iron, and propped it with blocks of wood to preserve it; they also planted an acorn within its hollow trunk, from which, as will be seen by our engraving, a young tree mingles its foliage with that of the parent oak. About a mile from Cressage is Belswardine, the seat of Sir George Harnage, an old border estate, in possession of the same family which received it from the Conqueror. Cressage station is the nearest and most convenient on the Severn Valley line from which to reach the Wrekin. The distance is three miles. The road crosses the river by an ancient wooden bridge, and at Eaton Constantine passes the house in which Richard Baxter lived when a boy; and which the great Puritan divine describes as "a mile from the Wrekin Hill." The visitor, in his ascent of the hill, passes a conical knoll of deep red syenite, clothed with verdure, and known as Primrose Hill. The summit is 1,320

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feet above the level of the sea, and commands a prospect embracing a radius of seventy miles. Our engraving represents a severed cliff of greenstone at the top, called the Needle's Eye, and which tradition alleges to have been riven at the Crucifixion. Near it is a culminating boss of pinkish felspar known as the Bladder Stone, a name derived, it is supposed, from Scandinavian mythology; whilst at a short distance is the Ravens' Bowl, a basin in the hard rock, always containing water. On its sides are stratified rocks which the trap has pierced in its ascent; and which, by the action of heat, have been changed into a white crystalline substance. At the northern termination is an entrenched fortification called Heaven Gate, supposed to be of British origin; and near it is another, called Hell Gate, with what is supposed to be a tumulus. In the valley at the foot of the hill, on the eastern side, tumuli have been opened, in which hundreds of spear heads and other broken weapons have been found. Here formerly,

“Unknown to public view,
From youth to age a reverend hermit grew.
The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,
His food the fruit, his drink the crystal well.
Remote from man, with God he passed his days,
Prayer all his business—all his pleasure praise.”

Henry III., in order to afford the said anchorite, Nicholas de Denton, greater leisure for holy exercises, and to support him during his life, or so long as he should be a hermit on the aforesaid mountain, granted him six quarters of corn, to be paid by the Sheriff of Shropshire out of the Town's Mills of Bridgnorth.

On leaving Cressage, Eyton-upon-Severn is seen on the right, and on an eminence close by is the “Old Hall,” built by Lord Chancellor Sir Thomas Bromley. It was the birthplace of Lord Herbert of Chirbury, of whom Ben Jonson wrote:—

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“If men get fame for some one virtue, then
What man art thou that art so many men,
All virtuous Herbert! on whose every part
Truth might spend all her voice, Fame all her art?”

The railway now passes Cound Hall, Cound Church, and Cound Mill, a manor which Henry III. gave to his brother-in-law, Llewellyn, and which was afterwards held by Walter Fitz-Alan, who entered the service of David, King of Scotland, and became head of the royal house of Stuart. It crosses the Devil's Causeway, and passes Venus Bank, with Pitchford and Acton Barnell on the left; the latter celebrated for the ruins of the old castle where Edward I. held his parliament, the Commons sitting in a barn.

Berrington, forty-seven miles from Worcester, and four and a half from Shrewsbury, lies a short distance from the station. Its church has many points of interest, being of Anglo-Norman and Early English architecture; it also possesses a fine Norman font, and a curious monumental figure of a cross-legged knight, carved in wood.



The little village of Atcham may be reached from here by a very pleasant foot walk of about a mile through the fields. It is celebrated as the birthplace of Ordericus Vitalis, chaplain to William the Conqueror, and a famous historian of that time. The church is an ancient structure reared on the little grassy flat round which the river bends; tresses of luxuriant ivy conceal its walls, in which are found sections of a Roman arch and a sculptured Roman column, part of the spoil of the city of Uriconium. Among its relics is a reading-desk, carved, it is supposed, by Albert Durer, with panels representing passages in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

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Lord Berwick's park adjoins the village, and in front of the mansion the Tern comes down to join

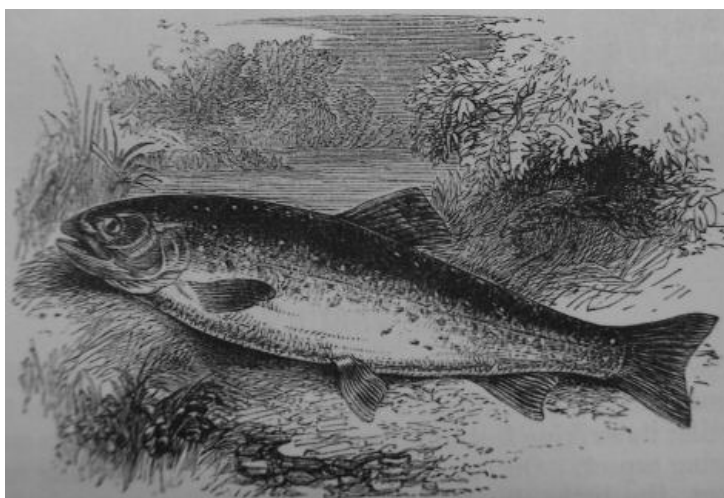
the Severn. From the Bridge it is one and a half miles to

WROXETER,



Where the ruins of Uriconium are still exposed to view. Here, after a lapse of 1,500 years, the visitor may tread the streets and pavements, handle the implements which the old Romans used, admire their well-turned arches, and see the paint and plaster upon the walls of their apartments. The "Old Wall," so long a sphinx by the roadside, suggesting enigmas to passers-by, has found an interpreter in revelations which the spade and pickaxe have made within its shadow. From the time when its walls first fell down, it has furnished plunder to the country round. The old monks, finding it easier to take down its stones than to quarry now ones, built their churches with its spoil, whilst the "old wall" left standing served as an advertisement of the treasures buried around it. The Romans who selected the spot no doubt did so on military grounds; but, looking at its position on the river, and the scenery surrounding it, one can readily imagine that an eye for the beautiful, and a love of nature, had some influence in the choice.

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The Severn, near Wroxeter, is famous for grayling, which seldom exceed three-quarters of a pound, but which have here been caught two pounds and a half in weight. The ford has a marly or shaly bottom, and the stream is quick and clear, conditions such as this famous fish, described by Dr. Fleming as the "grey salmon," has a liking for. It has grey longitudinal lines—hence its name—and a violet-coloured dorsal fin barred with brown; it is best in the winter and early spring months, and spawns in those of April and May. The French, who denounce the chub as "*un villain*," pronounce the grayling "*un chevalier*." And Gesner says, that in his country, which is Switzerland, it is accounted the choicest fish in the world. As bait, grass-hoppers or large dun flies are used, and hooks covered with green or yellow silk; in July, black and red imitation palmer worms are recommended; in August, the artificial house fly, or blue-bottle; and in winter, black or pale gnats are often used. The fords, too, from here to Buildwas are good for trout, that near Cound, from the entrance of Cound Brook into the Severn, being best.

On leaving Berrington, we come in sight of the wooded steep of Haughmond, Shakspeare's "bosky hill." It commands the field where Falstaff fought "an hour by the Shrewsbury clock;" and has still a thicket, called the Bower, from which Queen Eleanor is said to have watched the battle in which the fortunes of her husband were involved. A castellated turret crowns the summit of the rock next the Severn; beyond, is Sundorne Castle and the ruins of Haughmond Abbey.

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SHREWSBURY.



The Severn Valley Railway affords a very interesting approach to the old Salopian capital, by bringing before the traveller its striking features, its singular situation, and its most pleasing aspect. On one side are groups of villa-looking residences, the little church of St. Giles, the column raised to Lord Hill, and the Abbey Church and buildings. On the other is the town, with its spires and towers and red-stone castle rising from an eminence above the river. The station occupies a narrow isthmus of the latter within the precincts of the castle, and is a handsome structure, of the Gothic style of architecture. The castle was built by the first Earl of Shrewsbury, who obtained so many favours of a like kind from the Conqueror. Among portions which the old Norman masons raised, is the inner gateway, through which, it is said, the last Norman earl, in token of submission, carried the keys to Henry I. From its position upon a troubled frontier, it changed masters many times, and suffered much from the attacks of assailants. It was fortified by William Fitz-Alan when he espoused the cause of the Empress Maude; and in favour of Henry IV., in his quarrel with the Earl of Northumberland, when the Shrewsbury abbot went forth from its gates to offer pardon to Hotspur, on condition that he would lay down his arms; and it was taken by storm by the Parliamentary army in 1644. It now belongs to the Duke of Cleveland, and has been converted into a dwelling-house, the present drawing-room having been the guard chamber in the reign of Charles. To the right of the castle gates is the Royal Grammar School, founded in 1551 by King Edward VI., and subsequently endowed with exhibitions, fellowships, and scholarships connected with Oxford and Cambridge, to the number of twenty-six. A little higher is the Chapel of St. Nicholas, an old Norman structure, which belonged to the outer court of the castle, but is now used as a coach-house and stable.

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Close by is a highly ornamental timber gateway, erected in 1620, leading to the Council House, the temporary residence, during feudal times, of the Lords President of the Marches. Continuing along this street, we pass the Raven Hotel, recently rebuilt at a cost of nearly £20,000. It was here George Farquhar wrote his comedy of the "Recruiting Officer," which he dedicated to "All friends round the Wrekin." Descending Pride Hill, the eye rests upon a number of rare old specimens of domestic architecture, which, like those in High Street and others, were the homes of the ancient burghers; mansions here and there of more pretension are also to be seen, mingling an air of antiquity with one of comfort. The town is rich in specimens of ecclesiastical architecture, and possesses some very handsome churches. Of the four whose towers and spires are seen within the circle of the Severn, St. Mary's is the most interesting. Its site is 100 feet above the river, and its tall and graceful spire is a landmark seen for many miles. The lower portion of the tower, the nave, transepts, and doorway, are of the 12th century, whilst other

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portions are of the 15th and 16th. The interior, with its clustered columns, decorated capitals, moulded arches, and its oak-panelled ceiling, ornamented with foliage, has a fine effect; added to which, the exquisitely-sculptured pulpit, given in memory of a former minister, and the still more recently erected screen, in memory of another, with numerous mural monuments, in stone and marble, are of peculiar interest. The windows are of stained glass, some being very ancient, and most of them elaborately and beautifully painted, and highly deserving of attention.

Near to St. Mary's are the churches of St. Alkmund and St. Julian, the former indebted for its foundation to the piety of Ethelfleda, daughter of Alfred; the latter, also of Saxon origin, to Henry IV., who in 1410, attached it to his new foundation of Battlefield College, raised in memory "of the bloody rout that gave to Harry's brow a wreath—to Hotspur's heart a grave."

The old collegiate church of St. Chad, founded, it is supposed, soon after the subjugation of the country by Offa, and transformed, as tradition alleges, out of one of the palaces of the Kings of Powis, is now a ruin. The modern one, dedicated to the same saint, of whom there is an ancient carved figure in the vestry, is now the fashionable church of the town.

The Abbey Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, built upon the site of a Saxon one of wood, with the abbey ruins and the famous old stone pulpit of the refectory, should also be visited.

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In the centre of the Market Square still stands the old Market House, erected in 1595 by the corporation. It has a statue of Richard, Duke of York, father of Edward IV., in an embattled niche in front, and a surcoat, with armorial bearings, moved from the tower of the old Welsh Bridge; also the arms of the town, sculptured in relief.

In the immediate neighbourhood of these relics of antiquity is the recently-erected statue to the great Lord Clive, the Townhall, the Working Man's Hall, the Music Hall, the public news-room, and a group of other handsome buildings. A passage near the Music Hall leads to the Museum of the Shropshire and North Wales Natural History and Antiquarian Society, which no visitor with time on his hands should neglect to visit. In addition to objects of natural history, it contains others of interest obtained from Wroxeter, and is open daily from ten to four to visitors upon payment of twopence. Portions of the town walls, erected in the reign of Henry III., with one of the ancient towers, are still standing, and form a pleasant walk. But the grand promenade is the Quarry Avenue, which, with Kingsland on the opposite side, is the common property of the inhabitants. The former is a sloping piece of meadow land, intersected by limes, whose intertwining branches make a fretted archway of living green, whilst the latter is the spot where the trade pageant, called Shrewsbury Show, is held. In addition to objects of interest which we have enumerated, our readers will find materials for observation and study for themselves; as a further aid to which, we would commend them to "Sandford's Guide to Shrewsbury."

APPENDIX.

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GEOLOGY OF THE DISTRICT.

We glanced in passing at some few features which could scarcely fail to attract the attention of the tourist, and a brief notice only of others will be needed for the geologist. In ascending the river we descend, geologically speaking, from an upper to a lower series of rocks, which rocks, in many instances, are covered over by fluvial and marine deposits of sand and gravel, containing shells of fish inhabiting our modern seas. These show how recently the sea must have retired from a surface so covered with its remains; whilst their position low down in the valley, and but a little way above the present bed of the Severn, proves how much more recently the arm of the sea, known as the Severn Straits, must have been succeeded by the river. The best places for collecting these remains along the railway will be found to be in embankments and cuttings near Buildwas and Coalbrookdale, the latter having yielded as many as twenty-two distinct species. In cuttings along the railway, and in their immediate vicinity, will also be found sections of rocks, from the variegated marls of the New Red Sandstone, of the Mesozoic, to the silurians, of the Palæozoic, or Primary Formations. The coal measures of Coalbrookdale, with their alternating beds of coal, clay, and iron ore, are rich in specimens of the fauna and flora of the carboniferous age; the best places for discovering them being the spoil banks of the mines, where shale, and ironstone nodules, will be found the most productive. One of the richest beds yielding fossils is the Penneystone, which may be seen on the surface near Coalbrookdale and Ketley; remains of the *Megalichthys*, *Gyracanthus*, and *Holoptychus* being occasionally found there, whilst *Conularias*, *Nautili*, *Spirifers aviculus*, *Bellerophons*, and others are numerous. The sand rock overlying it contains *Calamites*, *Lepidodendrons*, *Ulodendrons*, *Sigillarias*, &c., &c. Benthall Edge and Lincoln Hill yield characteristic fossils of the Wenlock limestone and Wenlock shales in great numbers and variety, corals being most abundant. Between the Severn and the Acton Burnell hills fossils of the Caradoc may be found in drift, in old walls by the wayside, and in strata dipping praidly beneath the Wenlock shales.

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BOTANY OF THE DISTRICT.

In shallow portions of the Severn, we have several varieties of the River Crowfoot (*Ranunculus*

fluitans), which, with their long slender stems and pure white blossoms, form a conspicuous feature; also the Canadian Water-weed (*Anacharis alsinastrum*), which has found its way as high up as Shrewsbury. In marshy flats bordering on the river, are found the Yellow Flag (*Iris pseud-acorus*), the Water-dock, (*Rumex Hydrolapathum*), the Water Drop-wort, Soap-wort, Frog-bit-water-lily, and the creeping Yellow Cress; whilst the little Lily of the Valley, the Giant Bell-flower, the Spreading Bell-flower, the rare Reed Fescue-grass, and the tall, handsome Fox-glove, which,

“On fair Flora’s hand is worn,”

adorn the woods along the slopes.

Other plants are found as follows:—

Ranunculus parviflorus (Small-flowered Crowfoot) . . . Stagborough.

Cardamine impatiens (Narrow-leaved Bittercress) . . . Stagborough.

Poterium sanguisorba . . . Stagborough.

Campanula latifolia . . . Owton and Stagborough.

Campanula patula . . . Owton and Stagborough.

Vinca minor (Lesser Periwinkle) . . . Arley Wood and Stagborough.

Heleborus foetidus (Stinking Hellebore) . . . Farlow.

Geranium phseum (Dusky Crane’s-bill) . . . Farlow.

Rhamnus catharticus (Common Buckthorn) . . . Farlow.

Prunus padus (Bird Cherry) . . . Farlow.

Geum rivale . . . Farlow.

Artemisia Absinthium (Common Wormwood) . . . Farlow.

Artemisia campestris . . . Farlow.

Habenaria viridis . . . Farlow.

Lathræa squamaria . . . Ribbesford Wood.

Orobanche minor . . . Ribbesford Wood.

Mentha piperita (Peppermint) . . . Near Horshill, Ribbesford.

Thymus serpyllum and *T. glandulosus* . . . Near Horshill, Ribbesford.

Calamintha Nepeta and *officinalis* . . . About Ribbesford.

Daphne Laureola (Spurge Laurel) . . . About Ribbesford.

Fagus sylvatioa (Common Beech) . . . About Ribbesford.

Paris quadrifolia . . . About Ribbesford.

Cardamine amara (Bitter Ladies’ Smock) . . . Blackstone.

Cerastium arvense (Field Chick-weed) . . . Blackstone.

Hypericum montanum (Mountain St. John’s-wort) . . . Blackstone.

Sedum dasyphyllum . . . Blackstone.

Viola canina (Dog’s Violet) . . . Hartlebury Common.

Radiola millegrana (Thyme-leaved Flax-seed) . . . Hartlebury Common.

Comarum palustre (Purple Marsh Cinquefoil) . . . Hartlebury Common.

Menyanthes trifoliata (Buck-bean) . . . Hartlebury Common.

Chenopodium ficifolium . . . About Bewdley.

Chenopodium polyspermum . . . About Bewdley.

Chenopodium urbicum . . . About Bewdley.

Chenopodium Bonus Henricus . . . About Bewdley.

Rumex sanguineus . . . About Bewdley.

Bryonia dioica . . . About Bewdley. (In hedges.)

Anacharis alsinastrum . . . In the Severn, near Bewdley.

Habenaria viridis . . . About Bewdley.

Spiranthes autumnalis . . . About Bewdley.

Cephalanthera ensifolia . . . About Bewdley.
Tulipa sylvestris (Wild Tulip) . . . About Bewdley.
Ornithogalum umbellatum (Star of Bethlehem) . . . About Bewdley.
Hieracium vulgatum . . . Bewdley and Broseley.
Papaver Argemone (Prickly-headed Poppy) . . . Corn-fields, near Bewdley.
Turritis glabra (Tower Mustard) . . . Near Bewdley.
Sisymbrium Sophia (Flax weed) . . . Near Bewdley.
Hypericum Androsæmum (St. John's-wort) . . . Woods around Bewdley.
Vicia sylvatica (Wood Vetch) . . . Woods about Bewdley.
Prunus Cerasus (Wild Cherry) . . . About Bewdley and Norton Prescott.
Potentilla argentea (Hairy Cinquefoil) . . . About Bewdley.
Epilobium angustifolium . . . Near Bewdley.
Myrrhis odorata . . . Between Broseley and Ironbridge.
Artemisia Absinthium (Common Wormwood) . . . About Bewdley.
Doronicum Pardalianches . . . About Bewdley.
Hieracium umbellatum . . . About Bewdley.
Campanula latifolia . . . Ditto, and Coalport Dingle.
Nepeta Cataria (Cat Mint) . . . Fields about Bewdley and Stourport.
Leonurus Cardiacæ (Mother-wort) . . . Occasionally found about Bewdley.
Thalictrum flavum (Meadow Rue) . . . Banks of Severn.
Nasturtium sylvestris (Creeping Nasturtium) . . . Banks of Severn.
Sinapis nigra (Common Mustard) . . . Banks of Severn.
Saponaria officinalis . . . Banks of Severn.
Malachium aquaticum (Water Chick-weed) . . . Banks of Severn.
Geranium pratense (Blue Crane's Bill) . . . Banks of Severn.
Astragalus glycyphyllos (Sweet Milk Vetch) . . . Banks of Severn about Linkham.
Enanthe crocata (Hemlock Water Drop-wort) . . . Banks of Severn.
Inula Helenium meinelii (Elecampane) . . . Near the Severn, below Quatford Low, near Clee Hills. p. 49
Campanula latifolia . . . Banks of Severn.
Lysimachia vulgaris (Yellow Loose Strife) . . . Banks of Severn.
Scirpus sylvaticus . . . Banks of Severn.
Juniperus communis (Common Juniper) . . . Wyre Forest, near Furnaw Mill.
Gymnadenia conopsea . . . Wyre Forest.
Habenaria bifolia (Small Butterfly Orchis) . . . Wyre Forest.
Habenaria chlorantha (Yellow Butterfly Habenaria) . . . Wyre Forest.
Neottia Nidus-avis (Common Bird's Nest) . . . Wyre Forest.
Epipactis latifolia . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest.
Epipactis palustris . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest.
Cephalanthera ensifolia . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest. (Abundant.)
Convallaria magalis . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest.
Narthecium ossifragum (Bog Ashphodel) . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest.
Luzula sylvatica (Great Hairy Woodrush) . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest. (Abundant.)
L. pilosa (Broad-leaved Wood-rush) . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest.
Triglochin palustre (Marsh Arrow-grass) . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest.
Eriophorum angustifolium (Cotton-grass) . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest.

Eriophorum latifolium . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest.
Carex muricata, *C. vulpina*, *C. teretiuscula* . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest.
C. ovalis, *C. pendula*, *C. pilulifera* . . . In plantations at Willey, and in Wyre Forest.
C. fulva . . . Wyre Forest.
Melica nutans and *uniflora* . . . Wyre Forest.
Equisetum sylvaticum and *E. hyemale* . . . Wyre Forest.
Lycopodium clavatum and *L. inundatum* . . . Wyre Forest.
Thalictrum minus . . . Wyre Forest.
Aquilegia vulgaris (Common Columbine) . . . Wyre Forest.
Rhamnus catharticus and *R. Frangula* . . . Wyre Forest and Farlow.
Sanguisorba officinalis (Great Burnet) . . . Wyre Forest.
Rubus saxatilis, and most of the other species of *Rubi* . . . Wyre Forest.
Rosa spinosissima (Burnet-leaved Rose) . . . Wyre Forest and Weldon.
R. villosa and *R. tomentosa* . . . Wyre Forest.
Pyrus Malus, *P. Aria* and *P. aucuparia*, and *P. torminalis* . . . Wyre Forest.
Epilobium angustifolium (Rose bay Willow) . . . Wyre Forest.
Gnaphalium sylvaticum (Highland Cudweed) . . . Wyre Forest.
Serratula tinctoria (Saw-wort) . . . Wyre Forest.
Hieracium murorum . . . Wyre Forest.
Pyrola minor, and *P. media* . . . Wyre Forest.
Gentiana Amarella (Autumnal Gentian) . . . Wyre Forest.
Lithospermum officinale (Grey Millet) . . . Wyre Forest.
Pedicularis palustris (Marsh Louse-wort) . . . Wyre Forest.
Scutellaria minor and *galericulata* . . . Wyre Forest.
Anagallis tenella (Bog Pimpernel) . . . Wyre Forest.
Daphne Laureola . . . Wyre Forest.
Populus tremula (Aspen) . . . Abundant over the Forest.
Fagus sylvatica (Common Beech) . . . Abundant over the Forest.
Quercus Robur and *Q. intermedia*. (Two very distinct species, *Q. intermedia* occupies almost exclusively the whole of Wyre forest.) . . . Abundant over the Forest.
Polemonium caeruleum (Jacob's Ladder) . . . Bridgnorth. p. 50
Campanula patula, or spreading bell flower . . . Bridgnorth and near Berrington.
Sambucus Ebulus (Dwarf Elder) . . . Bridgnorth.
Lathræa squammaria (Greater Tooth-wort) . . . Bridgnorth.
Camelina sativa (Common Gold of Pleasure) . . . Bridgnorth.
Vicia sylvatica (Wood Vetch) . . . Bridgnorth.
Astragalus glycyphylus . . . Bridgnorth.
Parietaria officinalis . . . Bridgnorth.
Lactuca virosa (Strong-scented Lettuce) . . . Bridgnorth.
Scirpus sylvaticus . . . Bridgnorth.
Erigeron acris (Blue Fleabane) . . . Bridgnorth.
Adonis autumnalis (Pheasant's Eye) . . . Coalport.
Monotropa Hypopitys (Yellow Bird's nest) . . . Coalport.
Ligustrum vulgare (Privet) . . . Benthall Edge.
Erigeron acris . . . Benthall Edge.
Bee Orchis (*Ophrys apifera*) . . . Benthall Edge.

Pinguicula vulgaris (Common Butter-wort) . . . Wrekin.

Vaccinium myrtillus (Bilberry) . . . Wrekin.

Danthonia decumbens . . . Wrekin.

Eriophorum angustifolium . . . Wrekin.

Isolepis setacea (Bristle-stalked Moor-rush) . . . Wrekin.

Myosotis collina (Early Field Scorpion grass) . . . Wrekin.

Polypodium dryopteris . . . Wrekin.

Amongst the ferns of the district may be mentioned—the Royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), which has been found sparingly at Shirlett, in Willey Park, and in Dairley Dingle; the beautiful Beech fern (*Polypodium Phegopteris*), which grows in the greatest luxuriance in Dairley Dingle, also in a wood in Willey Park; and the Hay fern (*Lastrea fæniseeii*), in Coalbrookdale, and upon Shirlett. Also several other commoner species, as *Lastrea Oreopteris*, *Lastrea spinosa*, *Lastrea dilatata*, and its variety *glandulosa*, *Lastrea filix mas*, and its variety *Borreri*; *Aspidium aculeatum*, and *Aspidium augulare*.

In giving the above list, I willingly acknowledge the assistance of my friends, Messrs. Baugh, Jordin, and Maw.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

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Footnotes.

{6} Upon payment of one shilling.

{11} The geological features of the district are readily recognised. The great magazine of salt at Droitwich is sufficiently indicative of the red marls observed in the cutting at Shrub Hill, and which rise, by means of passage shales, into the lias on one side, and descend, by means of other members of the New Red Sandstone, into the permians on the other.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HANDBOOK TO THE SEVERN VALLEY
RAILWAY ***

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