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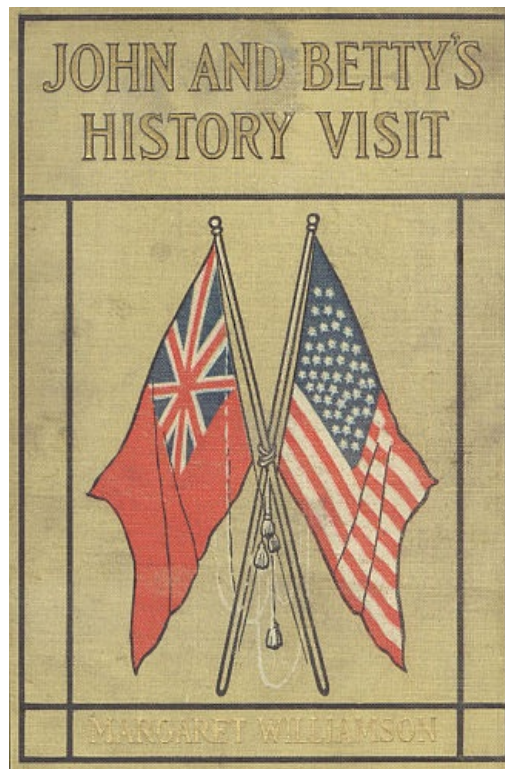
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JOHN AND BETTY'S HISTORY VISIT

BY

MARGARET WILLIAMSON

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



BOSTON
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JOHN AND BETTY'S HISTORY VISIT

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They suddenly saw the tremendous cathedral looming up before them.—Page [70](#).

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JOHN AND BETTY’S HISTORY VISIT

CHAPTER ONE

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Two eager young Americans sat, one on each side of the window of an English train, speeding towards London. They had landed only that morning, and everything seemed very strange to them, as they watched the pretty scenes from the car-window. The lady who had met them at the steamer, was an old friend of the family, who had often been to America, and was well known to the children, though they had never seen her son and daughter, whom they had come to visit. Mrs. Pitt soon aroused them by saying:—

“Come, John, we are almost there, so please fetch down Betty’s wraps from the rack. Here are your umbrellas; you may take Betty’s bag and I’ll take yours. Yes, it is really England, and soon we’ll be in London, where Philip and Barbara are very impatiently waiting to meet the American friends with whom they have been exchanging letters for so long. They have been studying history hard, and have learned all they possibly could about their own country, which they love, and want you to know, too. They have never seen very much of England, and this is an excellent chance for them to do some sight-seeing with you. I think you’ll have a jolly time seeing all the strange sights and customs, and visiting some historic places. Now, you must not expect to find Philip and Barbara just like your friends at home; English children dress very differently, and may use some expressions which you do not exactly understand, but you’ll soon become accustomed to them all. Here we are at Waterloo Station.”

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As the guard swung open the door, two impatient young people hurried up to the party.

“Here we are, Mother; did they come?”

John and Betty shyly shook hands with their English friends, but did not find anything to say, just at first. Mrs. Pitt went to the luggage-van, to find the children’s trunks, and the others followed.

“Aren’t the trains funny, John?” said Betty, nervously holding her brother’s hand.

“See, this is the baggage part of the car, but isn’t it small!”

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“Oh, there are several on each train,” explained Philip. “Are your vans any bigger?”

“There are our trunks, Mrs. Pitt,” called John. “I know them by the C’s we pasted on the ends.”

“Here, porter, put this luggage on a four-wheeler, please,” and Mrs. Pitt and her charges crowded in, the luggage was piled on top, and they drove away.

“Do you think you will like London?” asked Barbara of Betty, rather anxiously.

Betty ventured to answer, “Oh, I think so, only it is very different from New York.”

It certainly was! Great, top-heavy buses swung and lurched past them, some of them drawn by splendid horses, but still more with motors. The outsides of the vehicles were covered with all sorts of gay advertisements and signs, in bright and vivid colors; in this way, and in their tremendous numbers, they differ from the New York buses on Fifth Avenue.

“To-night, we will take you out for a ride on top of a bus if you like, John,” said Philip.

John, losing his shyness, began to ask questions, and to give his opinion of the things he saw.

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“I think the buses are great! I shall always choose that seat just behind the driver, where

I can talk to him. He must have fine stories to tell, doesn't he, Philip? I like the hansoms, too. There really seem to be more hansoms than anything else in London! Just look, Betty, at that long row there in the middle of the street! I suppose they are waiting for passengers. And there's a line of 'taxis,' too. My, but these streets are crowded! Fifth Avenue isn't in it!"

Philip and Barbara looked at each other and smiled. All the sights which were so familiar to them, seemed very novel to their American visitors.

"I suppose it would be just the same to us, if we were to visit New York," said Barbara. "Those bus-horses, which you admire, do look very fine at first, but the work is so hard on them, that they only last a very short time. Their days are about over now, for soon we shall have only the motor-buses."



"Oh, what's this place? I am sure I have seen pictures of it!"—Page 12.

"Oh, what's this place?" cried John excitedly. "I am sure I have seen pictures of it! Why, Philip, I think you once sent me some post-cards which showed this!"

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"Oh, yes, this is Trafalgar Square," broke in Mrs. Pitt. "People sometimes call it the center of all London. Here is the celebrated statue of Lord Nelson—here, in the middle; see all the flower-girls, with their baskets, around its foot. That large building, with the pillars, is the National Gallery, where I may take you to see the pictures. The church near it they call St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. Yes, it doesn't seem a very appropriate name now, but once it really was 'in the fields,' it has stood here so long. Do you notice all the streets leading out from this great square? That way is the direction of the Strand and Fleet Street; Westminster Abbey is not far away; and you can see the towers of the Houses of Parliament—just there. You will soon grow more familiar with all this. Now, we must go this way, and before long, we shall be at home. I think you'll be glad to rest after your tiresome journey. This is Regent Street, where many of the shops are. Aren't they attractive?"

"Yes," said John, "but how very low the buildings are! As far as I can see they are all of the same height. They are almost all yellow, too, and with the bright buses the scene is very gay."

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They rode along for some time, the silence being often broken by exclamations and questions. John and Betty could not understand how people avoided being run over when they all dashed across the street, right under the very noses of the horses. It was amusing to see people stumbling up the narrow, winding stairs of the buses, as they jolted along, and even the signs over the shops attracted some attention. They wondered if the King and Queen could shop in them all, for so many bore the words, "Jewelers to T. R. M.," or "Stationers to Their Royal Majesties." London seemed very large to them on this first drive—very strange and foreign, and they were glad when the cab drew up before a big house in a spacious square, and the rest cried, "Here we are at home!"

THE FIRST EVENING

The big library at Mrs. Pitt's home was a fascinating place, the two visitors thought. The ceiling was high, the wainscoting was of dark wood, and the walls were almost entirely lined with book-cases. John was delighted with some little steps, which you could push around and climb up on to reach the highest shelves. This room suggested great possibilities to both the young visitors, for, as they were to stay many months, there would certainly be days when it would be too wet to go out, and they could by no means entirely give up their reading.

As they had felt rather chilly on their bus-ride that evening, the four young people all came into the library upon their return, and drew their chairs up to the tiny grate. Betty and John had greatly enjoyed this new experience, for they had been truly English. Having jumped aboard while the bus was moving slowly, near the curb, they had scrambled up the little steps and taken the seats behind the driver. They had not noticed much about where they were going, for it had all seemed a jumble of many lights, crowds of people, and noise. But John had slipped a coin into the driver's hand, and there had been a steady stream of stories from that moment. London bus-drivers have plenty to tell, and are not at all loath to tell it—especially after the encouragement of a tip. John was delighted to hear about the time, one foggy Christmas Eve, when his friend had “sat for four hours, sir, without daring to stir, at 'Yde Park Corner.” John envied him the splendid moment when the fog had finally lifted and disclosed the great mass of traffic, which had been blinded and stalled for so long.

As John stood in front of the fire thinking it all over, he suddenly exclaimed, “It was fun to hear that driver drop his h's; that was real Cockney for you!”

Betty looked puzzled for a moment, and then said, “Wasn't it supposed that only people who had been born within the sound of the bells of old Bow Church could be real Cockneys?”

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**“Do you remember those quaint little verses about Bow Bells?”—
Page 17.**

“That's right, Betty; your history is good,” said Mrs. Pitt, who had just entered; “but John, I must tell you that dropping h's is not necessarily Cockney. The peculiar pronunciation of vowels is what characterizes a true Cockney's speech, but many others drop h's—the people of Shropshire for instance.

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“Do you children remember those quaint little verses about Bow Bells?” continued Mrs. Pitt. “In the days when Dick Whittington was a boy, and worked at his trade in London, it was the custom to ring Bow Bells as the signal for the end of the day's work, at eight o'clock in the evening. One time, the boys found that the clerk was ringing the bells too

late, and indignant at such a thing, they sent the following verses to him:

‘Clerke of the Bow Bells,
With the yellow
lockes,
For thy late ringing,
Thou shalt have
knockes.’

The frightened man hastened to send this answer to the boys:

‘Children of Chepe,
Hold you all stille,
For you shall have Bow
Bells
Rung at your wille.’”

“That was bright of them,” commented John, as he rose to take off his coat.

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Philip and Barbara had long since thrown off their wraps and pulled their chairs away from the fire, saying how warm they were. Even after John had dispensed with his coat, Betty sat just as near the tiny blaze as she could, with her coat still closely buttoned.

“No, thanks; I want to get warm,” she answered, when they spoke of it. “It seems to me that it’s very cold here. Don’t you ever have bigger fires?”

As Betty spoke, the little blaze flickered and almost went out.

“I’ll shut the window,” said Philip. “I remember, now, how cold Americans always are over here. Mother has told us how frightfully hot you keep your houses. We don’t like that, for we never feel the cold. Why, just to show you how accustomed to it we English are, let me tell you what I read the other day. At Oxford University, up to the time of King Henry VIII, no fires were permitted. Just before going to bed the poor boys used to go out and run a certain distance, to warm themselves. Even I shouldn’t care for that!”

“Let’s make some plans for to-morrow,” exclaimed Mrs. Pitt. “What should you like to see first, Betty?”

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“I want to go somewhere on a bus!” was John’s prompt answer, at which everybody laughed except Betty.

“Oh, yes, but let’s go to Westminster Abbey just as soon as possible, John. I’ve always wanted so much to see it, that I don’t believe I can wait now. Think of all the great people who have been associated with it,” said Betty very earnestly.

“Very well, I quite agree on taking you first to the Abbey,” said Mrs. Pitt. “It is a place of which I could never tire, myself. And strange to say, I very seldom, if ever, get time to go there, except when I’m showing it to strangers. Why! It’s twenty-five minutes past nine this very minute, children; you must go to bed at once!”

CHAPTER THREE

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WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The first thing that Betty heard the following morning was a gentle knock upon her bedroom door, and a voice saying, “It’s seven o’clock, and will you have some sticks, Miss?”

“What sticks? What for?” Betty asked sleepily.

They were for a fire, it seemed, and Betty welcomed the idea. She was soon dressed, and Barbara came to show her the way to the breakfast-room.

“You can’t think how good it does seem not to be thrown about while dressing, as we were on the steamer! Do you know that I can’t help stepping up high over the door-sills even yet!” laughed Betty, as they went downstairs together. “Mrs. Moore, the friend of mother’s in whose care we came, you know, told me that I should probably feel the motion for some time after landing.”



"I only wish I could be a guard and ride a horse like one of those!"—Page 21.

To the surprise of John and Betty, there was a very hearty breakfast awaiting them. They had expected the meager tea, toast, and jam, which some Americans consider to be customary in English homes, because it is encountered in the hotels.

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Early in the morning, the buses were even more crowded than the night before, and they had some difficulty in finding seats. John placed himself beside a soldier dressed in a scarlet coat and funny little round cap held on sidewise by a strap across his chin, with every intention of starting up a conversation with him; but one glance at his superior air discouraged the boy from any such attempt. When they arrived at Trafalgar Square again, they jumped off, and walked down towards the towers of the Houses of Parliament. In front of the Horse Guards they stood in admiration of the two mounted sentries, stationed there.

"Those black horses are great!" cried John. "How fine those fellows do look sitting there like statues in their scarlet uniforms, and their shiny helmets with the flying tails to them! I only wish I could be a Guard, and ride a horse like one of those!"

"Would you rather be a Horse Guard, or a bus-driver, John?" asked Betty teasingly.

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"Sometimes you see dozens of the Guards together; that's a fine sight!" said Barbara, after the laugh had subsided. "They escort the King when he goes out in state. Oh, you'll see them often."

That comforted John somewhat, but he could not resist turning around for several glances towards the gateway where the Guards were.

"Why do they always stand there?" he questioned.

Mrs. Pitt explained that they were organized by Charles II, who needed all possible protection to enable him to hold the throne after his exile in foreign lands. After the days of Cromwell, times were very unsettled, and many disturbances were likely to occur. Hence the duty of these Guards was probably to keep the peace (the 'prentices and common people were very hot-headed), and to escort the King, as they still do.

"Perhaps," she went on, "you don't understand who the 'prentices were. Long ago it was the custom to apprentice boys to one of the great and powerful guilds or companies. These were organizations of many merchants belonging to the same trade; such as shipbuilders, carpenters, candle-makers, and so forth. Their main object was to see that the work which was turned out was good. Every man belonged to his guild; some were for 'common and middling folks,' while kings and princes were members of others. A great deal of good was done by these companies, for each, besides aiding and protecting its own members, usually had some other charity. For instance, the guild at Lincoln fed yearly as many poor as there were members of the guild; and another kept a sort of inn for the shelter of poor travelers. The guilds played an important part in the life of the time. Well, as I was saying, when a boy had chosen the trade which was to his taste, he went to the city, and was apprenticed to a member of one of the guilds, with whom he usually lived. The boys were called 'prentices. Their life was not an easy one, and yet, it seems to me that they must have enjoyed it. In those days, there were great tournaments and grand processions of kings, with hundreds of servants and followers, all splendidly dressed in brilliant colors. Men wore magnificent clothes of silks and velvets and cloth-of-gold, with costly jewels, such as ropes of pearls; and

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their servants, whose duty it was to go before their masters on the street, wore suits of livery with the silver badge of their master. London in those days was a wonderfully busy place! On board the ships sailing up the river were men in strange costumes, from foreign lands. The 'prentices would often stop work to watch a company of Portuguese sailors pass, or a gorgeous procession of bishops with their retainers; and from this little verse we know that they did not always return very quickly to their duties. Do you know this?

'When ther any ridings were in
Chepe,
Out of the shoppe thider would he
lepe;
And till that he had all the sight
ysein,
And danced well, he would not
come again.'

There were always processions, too, in winter as well as in summer, for the people seemed not to mind rain or storm in the least. The boys had many holidays,—there were frequent pageants, feasts, and celebrations of all kinds,—and on the whole, I think they must have been very happy in spite of the long hours of work, don't you? Another curious custom was the keeping of cudgels in every shop for the use of the 'prentices, in case of a fight—and I imagine that they were numerous. Now, come close to me, children, while we cross this street; there's the Abbey right ahead of us."

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As they entered the north transept of Westminster Abbey, the dim light, in contrast to the sunshine outside, was almost blinding. At first, all was indistinct except the great rose-window, in the opposite transept, through which the light strayed in many colors. The morning service was in progress, so they sat down near the door, and listened and looked. How beautiful!—how tremendous it all was! Even John's overflowing spirits were quieted, it was so wonderfully impressive! The rose-window still stood out clearly against the deep shadows all about it, but a faint light could now be seen coming in through the little windows, high up near the roof,—the clerestory windows, they are called. Betty could see the massive roof, the long aisles crowded with marble monuments, and the pillars. The canon's voice was heard intoning in a deep, monotonous key; reading followed, and then some one sang, in a high, clear voice, which seemed to come from far away, and yet to fill all the space of the great building. Betty could not have spoken a word; she was filled with a kind of wondering awe such as she had never known before.

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John, more matter-of-fact, was examining the statues nearest to him.

He touched Betty's arm to attract her attention, and said, "See, there are lots of statues here, Betty, but I only know the names of William Pitt and Benjamin Disraeli, 'Twice Prime-Minister.' Do you remember him? Wonder if William Pitt was an ancestor of our Mrs. Pitt!" he rambled on, not seeing that his sister took no notice of him.

As for Betty, she scarcely knew that any one had spoken to her. She seemed to be back in the Middle Ages, and the present had vanished away.

When the service was ended, they walked about, examining the monuments as they went.



“There’s the Abbey right ahead of us.”—Page 25.

“This long, broad aisle extending from the main entrance to the choir is called the nave,” explained Mrs. Pitt. “The shorter aisles which form the crossing are the transepts, and the choir is always the eastern end of the building, containing the altar. These are facts which you will want to learn and remember.”

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“The kings and queens are all buried here, aren’t they, Mrs. Pitt?” questioned John. “Will they put King Edward here, too, when he dies?”

“A great many kings and queens are buried here, though not all,” Mrs. Pitt told them. “The Royal Tombs are there, behind those gates, in the chapels which surround the choir. We can’t go in there unless we take a guide, and I thought we would wait for another day to visit the lovely chapel of Henry VII and all the famous tombs. I don’t want you to see too much at one time. No, John, King Edward probably will not be buried here. Queen Victoria, his mother, lies at a place called Frogmore, near Windsor, and it is likely that her son will choose that spot, also. Here’s the Poets’ Corner, and there is at least one face which I’m sure you will be glad to see. This is it.”

As she spoke, the party stopped in front of the well-known bust of our poet, Longfellow, which I suppose every American is proud to see.

“So they read ‘Hiawatha,’ even in England,” Betty remarked.

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“There are tablets all over the floor, under our feet! Look, I’m standing on Dickens’ grave this very minute! And there’s ‘Oh, Rare Ben Jonson,’ right there on the wall; I’ve always heard of that. And here’s Spenser, and Chaucer, and Browning, and Tennyson, very close together. Oh! It’s dreadful! I don’t want to step on them! Why, everybody who ever was anybody seems to be here!” gasped John, forgetting his grammar in his interest.

“Here are busts of Scott (there’s the man for me!), and Burns, Goldsmith, and Coleridge; I know all these names. Here’s a statue of Shakespeare, though of course he isn’t buried here. There’s a tablet to Jenny Lind. Wasn’t she a singer? Seems to me I’ve heard my grandpa speak of her. And, if here isn’t Thackeray’s grave—there in the floor again! Well! Well!”

“Come over here, John, and see this,” called Philip, pointing to a tomb on which was this inscription:

Thomas Parr of ye county of Salop, born A.D. 1483. He lived in the reignes of ten princes, viz.—King Edward IV, King Edward V, King Richard III, King Henry VII, King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, King James, and King Charles; aged 152 years, and was buried here, 1635.

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“Well, that beats them all!” laughed John, who was greatly pleased.

Mrs. Pitt now led the rest into the little chapel of St. Faith, off the south transept, where they sat down to rest.

"It's the most wonderful place I ever dreamed of!" said Betty quietly, as though she were talking to herself. "This little chapel is the quaintest, oldest thing I ever saw! The walls are so dark; that tiny window up so high, hardly lets in any light at all; and the altar, with the faded picture, is so strange! I can't believe it is the twentieth century; the people in the Abbey now don't seem real to me at all. They look so small and shadowy beside the huge statues of people of other days! Surely the people the statues represent belong here, and not we! Why, I feel so far back in history that I shouldn't be in the least surprised to see Raleigh, or Chaucer, or Queen Elizabeth, walk into this chapel, right now! I should probably go up and say 'How do you do?'" she added laughingly.

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Betty did not know that any one had heard her talking, but Mrs. Pitt had been listening, and when Betty was silent, she said:

"Come, let's go out into the sunshine of the cloisters now. I am really afraid to have Betty stay in here any longer! The first thing we know, she'll be disappearing into the Middle Ages! She's almost there now!"

As they went through the low door into the cloisters, she continued, "I want to explain to you children, that in connection with this Abbey, as with all, there was for centuries a great monastery; and that the buildings which we shall see, as well as the cloisters, had to do with the monks. Henry VIII dissolved all the monasteries in England, you remember."

The ancient cloisters of Westminster Abbey are deeply interesting and impressive. They are four arcades built around the square grass-plot, which was the monks' burial-ground. The fine tracery of the windows is now much broken, and is crumbling away with age, but its exquisite carving is still plainly seen. The original pavement yet remains; it is much worn by the feet of the monks, and is almost covered by tablets which mark the resting-places of the abbots, as well as of others. The members of our party were touched, as are all, by the pathetic simplicity of the epitaph: "Jane Lister, Dear Childe, 1688." Those four short words suggest a sad story about which one would like to learn more.

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"You must know," said Mrs. Pitt, "that the cloisters were something besides burial-places. Here the monks spent most of their time, for this was the center of the life of the monastery. The southern cloister, over opposite, was the lavatory, and there the monks were forced to have their heads shaved,—every two weeks in summer, and every three in winter. These walls were then painted with frescoes, the floor and benches were covered with rushes or straw, the windows were partly glazed, and lamps hung from the ceiling. In one of the cloisters was held a class of novices, taught by a master, and this was the beginning of Westminster School. I believe the pupils were allowed to speak only French. How would you like that?"

Adjoining the cloisters are numerous little passageways, with low arches, which lead into tiny courts dotted with flowers and little fountains. In the houses about, live the canons of the Abbey and others connected with the church. Lovely glimpses of sunlight and the bright colors of flowers are seen at the ends of these dark, ancient passages.

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Westminster School may also be reached from the cloisters. Our party stood a moment in the doorway of the schoolroom to see the splendid old hall, with its fine oaken roof. This was once the dormitory of the monks, but is now taken up with the boys' "forms," or desks, piled with books. The walls above the wainscoting, and the window-recesses, are covered with signatures of the scholars,—some of them famous, for the school was begun as long ago as the time of Henry VIII, who was the founder. The visitor may see the name of the poet, Dryden, on one of the desks; he was a pupil there, as were also Sir Christopher Wren, the architect; Ben Jonson; Southey, the poet; and John and Charles Wesley.

"What is that iron bar for?" questioned the curious John, pointing to a long bar which stretches from wall to wall, across the middle of the room.

"That divides the Upper and Lower Classes," was the prompt reply of Mrs. Pitt, whose stock of knowledge seemed endless. "At one time, a curtain was hung over that bar. Don't you know the story which is told in the 'Spectator Papers,' about the boy who accidentally tore a hole in this curtain? He was a timid little fellow, and was terrified at the thought of the punishment which he felt sure would be his. One of his classmates came to the rescue, saying that he would take the blame upon himself, which he did. It was years later, when the timid boy had become a great judge, that the Civil War broke out, and he and his friend took opposite sides. The kind man who had saved his friend from punishment was a Royalist, and was captured and imprisoned at Exeter, where the other man happened to come at the same time, with the Circuit Court. At the moment when nothing remained but

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to sentence the 'rebels,' the judge recognized his friend, and by making a very hurried trip to London, he was able to secure a pardon from Cromwell, and thus succeeded in saving the man's life."

"That was fine!" said John. "He did pay him back after all, didn't he? I thought he wasn't going to."

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"Now, we will just look into the Chapter House and the old Jerusalem Chamber, before we go," said Mrs. Pitt, as they left the school.

The Chapter House is a beautiful, eight-sided room, dating from the thirteenth century. Here the business of the monastery was always conducted, and at the meetings which came every week, the monks were allowed to speak freely, and to make complaints, if they wished. Here also the monks were punished.

"They used to whip them against that central pillar, there," the guard explained. "Here sat the abbot, opposite the door, and the monks sat on benches ranged around the room. Parliament met here for many years, too, its last session in this room being on the day that the great King Hal died."

The Chapter House has been restored now, and the windows are of modern stained-glass. In the cases are preserved some valuable documents, the oldest being a grant of land, made by King Offa, in 785.

To reach the Jerusalem Chamber, it is necessary to go through a part of the cloisters, and into the court of the Deanery. On one side is the old abbot's refectory, or dining-hall, where the Westminster school-boys now dine. John went boldly up the steps and entered. After a few minutes, he came running out again, exclaiming:

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"Nobody stopped me, so I went right in, and looked around. A maid was setting the tables, and I noticed that she stared at me, but she didn't say anything, so I stayed. The hall is great! It isn't very large, but is paneled and hung with portraits. The old tables, a notice says, are made from wood taken from one of the vessels of the Spanish Armada. Wonder how they found it and brought it here! I was just going to ask the maid, when a savage-looking man appeared and said I had no business there. So I came away. I don't care; I saw it, anyway!" he added, as they approached the entrance of the Jerusalem Chamber.

All three sides of this little court were the abbot's lodgings, and are now the deanery. The Jerusalem Chamber was built about 1376, as a guest-chamber for the abbot's house.

"The name is curious, isn't it?" remarked Mrs. Pitt. "It probably came from some tapestries which formerly hung there, representing the history of Jerusalem. It was in this room, right here in front of the fireplace, according to tradition, that Henry IV died. A strange dream had told the King that he would die in Jerusalem, and he was actually preparing for the journey there, when he was taken very ill, and they carried him into this room. When he asked where they had brought him, and the reply was, 'To the Jerusalem Chamber,' he died satisfied. Many bodies have lain here in state, too,—among them, that of Joseph Addison, whom they afterwards buried in the Abbey. When we come again, I will show you his grave. Now, notice the bits of ancient stained-glass in the windows, and the cedar paneling; except for that, there is nothing specially noteworthy here."

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As they left the Dean's Yard and crossed the open space in front of the great western towers of the Abbey, John and Betty agreed that if they could see nothing more in England, they were already repaid for their long journey across the ocean.

CHAPTER FOUR

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PENSHURST PLACE: THE HOME OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

In Charing Cross Station one morning, Mrs. Pitt hurried up to the "booking-office," as the English call the ticket-office, to "book" five tickets to Penshurst. While the man was getting her change, she turned and said to Philip:—

"Please ask that guard who is standing there, on which platform we shall find the 9.40 train for Penshurst."

Philip did so, and returned with the information that they should go to Platform 8. So they all mounted the steps and walked over the foot-bridge which always runs across and above all the tracks, in an English station. There was a bench on the platform, and they sat

down to await the arrival of the train. About 9.35, five minutes before the train was to start, John happened to see a train official sauntering by, and asked him if it was correct that the Penshurst train left from that platform.

The man stared. "Really, you are quite mistaken," he drawled; "that train leaves from Platform 2. You had better hurry, you know; you haven't much time."

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John waited for nothing more, but ran to tell the rest, and they all started for the other end of the station. Up the steep steps again ran Mrs. Pitt, with the four young people following. Along the bridge they flew till they reached Platform 2, and then they almost fell down the steps in their hurry, for the train was already there.

When they were fairly seated in a third-class carriage, John, still out of breath, exclaimed:

"Whew! My! I never ran faster in my life, did you, Philip? How the girls kept up, I don't know! You're a first-class sprinter all right, Mrs. Pitt! We'd like you on our football team, at home! My, but I'm hot!"

He paused for breath, and then went on excitedly:

"There was a close call for you! We'd have lost it if I hadn't spoken to that guard, just in fun! There we were calmly waiting, and all of a sudden, we took that wild dash across the bridge! It was great! I hope somebody caught a photograph of us! I'd like to see one! How stupid of the guard to make that mistake! They never seem to know very much, anyway. If I ever am a guard, I shall be different; I shall know things!"

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They all had a good laugh over the adventure, and Mrs. Pitt assured John that when he was a guard, they would all promise to use his station.

"Don't these trains seem different from ours, Betty?" the future guard asked of his sister. "It seems so queer to me why they want to take a perfectly good, long car, and chop it up from side to side, into little narrow rooms, like this! What's the use of having so many doors?—one on each side of every 'compartment'! And then, they put handles only on the outside, so you have to let down the window and lean away out to open it for yourself, if the guard doesn't happen to do it for you! We Americans couldn't waste so much time!"

Just then, Betty, who could contain herself no longer, burst out laughing.

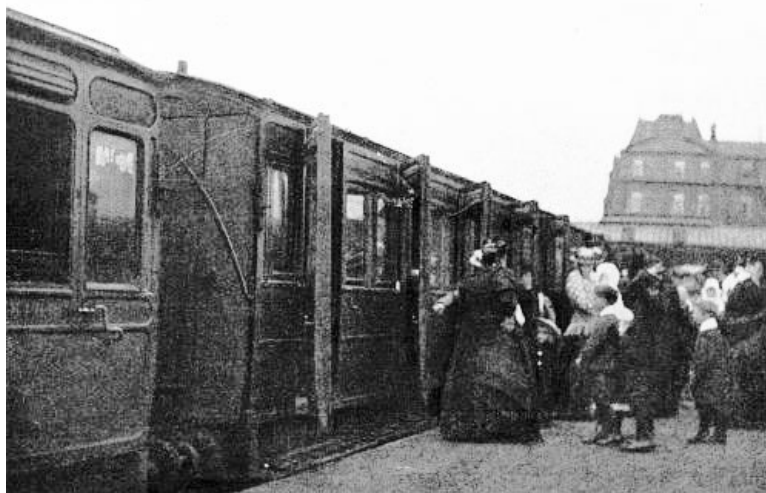
"Why, what in the world's the matter?" cried Barbara.

Betty could only point to a passing train. "It's only the funny little freight cars!" she finally explained, rather ashamed that she had let her feelings escape in that way. "They look so silly to us! They seem about a third the size of the ones at home. Really, these remind me of a picture in my history-book, of the first train ever run in America!"

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Mrs. Pitt smiled. "Yes, I can imagine just how strange they must seem to you, for I remember very well how I felt the first time I ever rode in one of your trains. To me, one of the most interesting things about visiting a foreign country, is to see the different modes of travel."

"Oh, please understand that I think so, too!" urged Betty. "It was only that I couldn't help laughing just at first, you see. I wouldn't have your trains just like ours for anything, and I'm sure that John wouldn't either."



“Now,” said Mrs. Pitt, “there is a little confession which I feel that I ought to make. It’s about where we are going to-day. Probably most people would blame me for not taking you to Windsor or Hampton Court, on your first trip out of town. Both those places are charming, but I wanted to show you, first of all, this dear little corner of Kent. All tourists flock to Windsor and Hampton Court, but a great many do not know about this tiny, out-of-the-way village, with which I fell in love years ago. Penshurst Place was the home of Sir Philip Sidney, and is still owned by a member of the same family. You know that Sir Philip lived in Queen Elizabeth’s time, and that his name stands for the model of a perfect courtier and ideal gentleman. He died when he was very young—only thirty-two, I think—and he did very little which you would suppose could have made him so famous. That is, it was little in comparison with what Raleigh and Drake accomplished, and yet the name of Sidney ranks with all the rest. It seems to have been more in the way he did things, than in what he did. Of course, you remember the story of his death,—that when he was dying, he passed a cup of water which was brought him, to another dying soldier, saying, ‘Thy need is greater than mine.’ Well, to-day we shall see where he was born and bred,—where Ben Jonson, Edmund Spenser, and Queen Elizabeth all visited.”

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They were now riding through Kent, in which county is some of the most picturesque English scenery. Although it was only the last of April, the grass was the freshest green, the great trees were in full leaf, and primroses were beginning to spring up in the fields. They sped through little villages of thatched-roofed cottages, each with its tiny garden of gay flowers. There were little crooked lanes, bordered by high hedges, and wide, shady roads, with tall, stately elms on either side, and fields where sheep grazed.

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“Oh, there’s a cottage which looks like Anne Hathaway’s!” exclaimed Betty. “It couldn’t be, could it? Anyway, it’s real story-book country!”

They left the train at the little station of Penshurst, two miles from the village. Behind the building stood a queer, side-seated wagon, with one stout horse. The driver, when Philip found him, seemed loath to bestir himself, but was finally persuaded to drive them to the castle.

Penshurst village proved to be even prettier than those they had seen from the train. The Lord of Penshurst Place is a very wise, appreciative man, and he has made a rule that when any cottage in the village is found to be beyond repair, it shall be replaced by a new house exactly like the original. In consequence, the houses look equally old and equally attractive, with their roofs of grayish thatch, and the second stories leaning protectingly over the lower windows, overgrown with rose-vines.

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Mrs. Pitt went into the tiny post-office to buy their tickets of admission to the castle, and when she called out that there were also pretty post-cards to be had, the others quickly followed. Having chosen their cards, they all walked through the little church-yard, with its ancient yew trees, and out into a field from which they could see Penshurst Place itself.

“Why! isn’t it a huge place!” cried Barbara. “This is just as new to Philip and me, you know, Betty, for we have never been here, either.”

“How charmingly situated it is!” exclaimed Mrs. Pitt enthusiastically. “Just a glance at it would tell you that it was never a strong fortress. Like Raby Castle, another favorite of mine, I believe that Penshurst never stood a siege. But it is so stately and graceful, standing in the center of these perfect lawns and groups of noble old trees! It is a beautiful contrast to the many fortress-castles! This seems to speak of peace, happiness, and safety.”

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The castle covers a great deal of ground, and is low and square, with here and there a turret. A terrace, or broad walk, runs the length of the front of the building, where the moat formerly was, and the party crossed this to reach the entrance-way. His Lordship came out just then, with his dog, and glanced kindly at the eager young people. Continuing, they crossed a square court, and came to a second gateway, where a servant met them and conducted them into the old-time Baronial-hall, dating from the fourteenth century.

“This,” announced the guide with tremendous pride, “we believe to be the only banquet-hall now remaining in England, where the ancient fireplace in the center of the room still exists. You’ll see many fine halls, but you’ll not see another such fireplace.”

John went up to investigate, and found that right in the middle of the vast room was a high hearth, on which some logs were piled. “But how——?” he was asking, when the guide’s explanations flowed on once more:



“This seems to speak of peace, happiness, and safety.” Page 44.

“Yes, the smoke went out through a little hole in the roof. This hall has never been restored, you see. That’s the best thing about it, most people think, lady. Here’s the oak paneling, turned gray with age; there, up on the wall, are the original grotesque figures, carved in wood; here, are two of the old tables, as old as the hall; and there’s the musicians’ gallery, at that end, over the entrance.”

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Mrs. Pitt was leaning against one of the massive tables, with her eyes partly closed. “Let’s just imagine the grand feasts which have been held here,” she mused. “I can almost see the Lord and Lady, dressed in purple and scarlet, sitting with their guests at a table across this end of the room. A board stretches down the length of the hall, and here sit the inferiors and retainers. A long procession of servants is winding always around the tables, bearing great roasts, birds, pasties, and all sorts of goodies, on huge platters, high above their heads. Up in the gallery here, the musicians are playing loudly and gayly, and even when they cease the guests do not lack for entertainment, for the fool, in his dress of rainbow colors, is continually saying witty things and propounding funny riddles. In such a place much elegance and ceremony were the necessary accompaniments of a grand feast. In a book giving instructions for the serving of the Royal table, is this direction, which always interested me: ‘First set forth mustard with brawn; take your knife in your hand, and cut the brawn in the dish, as it lieth, and lay on your Sovereign’s trencher, and see that there be mustard.’ As you see, they were exceedingly fond of mustard. Richard Tarleton, an actor of Queen Elizabeth’s time, who was much at Court as jester, is reported as having called mustard ‘a witty scold meeting another scold.’”

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The guide was growing impatient, and Mrs. Pitt ceased, saying reluctantly, “Well, I suppose we must go on.”

A servant rang a bell, and soon, down some stairs came a dear little old lady dressed in stiff black silk, with white apron and cap, and mitts on her hands. She escorted the party up the stairs, into her domain.

“Wouldn’t you just know to look at her that she had been in the family all her life?” whispered Barbara to Betty.

First they saw the Ball-room, a stately apartment in which hang three very valuable chandeliers, which Queen Elizabeth gave to Sir Henry Sidney. The next room is still called “Queen Elizabeth’s Room,” for here that Queen slept when upon a visit to the house. The same furniture which she used is still in place, as well as some tapestries made in honor of the visit, by Lady Sidney.

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“If Queen Elizabeth slept in that bed,” remarked Betty, “she couldn’t have been very tall.”

Their guide, taking this as criticism of one of her beloved treasures, was quick to say:

"It only looks short, because it's so uncommon wide, begging your pardon, Miss."

"Did that stool belong to anybody?" questioned Barbara, tactfully changing the subject. "It looks as if it has a history."

"And it has, Miss; that stool was used by the late Queen Victoria (God bless her!), at her coronation at Westminster Abbey!" and the loyal old lady patted the black velvet stool respectfully.

The rooms and corridors of the old house are crowded with things of interest. Sir Philip's helmet is there, and a bit of his shaving-glass. In a small room called the "Pages' Closet," are preserved rare specimens of china—Queen Elizabeth's dessert-set, in green, and Queen Anne's breakfast-set, in blue and white. Betty and Barbara were deeply interested in Mary Stuart's jewel-case, and they laughed over a very curious old painting which shows Queen Elizabeth dancing. The long picture-gallery is lined with portraits—most of them Sidneys—and among them those of the mother of Sir Philip, and of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, for whom he wrote his "Arcadia."

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When they again passed through the Ball-room on their way out, they were shown a little square window on one of the walls, which they had not noticed before.

"Why! I can see down into the Banquet-hall!" exclaimed Philip, who had climbed up to look through.

"Yes," said their guide, "in the olden times, the master at the ball could look through there to see how the servants were behaving, down in the hall below."

Out on the lawn again, they lingered for a few minutes while Mrs. Pitt reminded them that there is every reason to believe that under those very trees Spenser wrote his "Shepherd's Calendar."

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Reluctantly they left the castle and walked back to the carriage, which awaited them in the village.

"If all English castles are as beautiful as Penshurst Place," declared Betty earnestly, "I can't go back to America until I have seen every one!"

CHAPTER FIVE

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THE TOWER OF LONDON

"I should think they'd call it 'The Towers,' instead of 'The Tower,'" remarked Betty, surveying the curious, irregular jumble of buildings before her, as they left the bus.

"That's true," Mrs. Pitt agreed; "but I suppose the name was first given to the White Tower, which is the oldest part and was built by William the Conqueror as long ago as 1080. Why did they call it the White Tower? Well, I believe it was because they whitewashed the walls in the thirteenth century. Why, what's the matter, John?"

"I want to see who those fellows in the funny red uniforms are," John called back, as he ran ahead.



“I want to see who those fellows in the funny red uniforms are.”—Page 50.

When they reached the entrance, they saw John admiring a group of these “fellows,” who stood just inside the gate. In reality, they are old soldiers who have served the King well, and are therefore allowed to be the keepers and guides of the Tower. They bear the strange name of “beefeaters” (a word grown from the French “buffetiers”), and are very picturesque in their gorgeous scarlet uniforms, covered with gilt trimmings and many badges, a style of costume which these custodians have worn ever since the time of Henry VIII, and which was designed by the painter, Holbein.

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Any one may pay sixpence for a ticket which entitles him to wander about the precincts of the Tower, and to see the “Crown Jewels,” and the armory, but Mrs. Pitt, being more ambitious for her young friends, had obtained a permit from the Governor of the Tower. This she presented to the “beefeater” who stood by the first gateway, after they had crossed the great empty moat. The old man stepped to a tiny door behind him, opened it, disclosing a small, winding stair, and called “Warder! Party, please!”

A venerable “beefeater” with white hair and beard came in answer to the summons, and bowing politely to the party, immediately started off with them. They set out along a little, narrow, paved street, lined by ancient buildings or high walls.

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“They do say h’as ’ow the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards Queen, was h’imprisoned in that room, up there,” stated the guide, pointing to a small window in a wall on their left. “By Queen Mary’s h’orders she was brought in through the Traitor’s Gate, there. That was a great disgrace, you know, Miss,” he said to Betty, “for h’all the State prisoners entered by there, and few of them h’ever again left the Tower.”

Before them some steps led down to a little paved court, and beyond, under a building, they saw the terrible Traitor’s Gate,—a low, gloomy arch, with great wooden doors. The water formerly came through the arch and up to the steps, at which the unfortunate prisoners were landed. As the Princess Elizabeth stepped from the boat, she cried, “Here landeth as true a subject, being a prisoner, as ever landed at these stairs; and before Thee, O God, I speak it!”

“Isn’t there a proverb, ‘A loyal heart may be landed at Traitor’s Gate?’” questioned Mrs. Pitt; and turning to the guide she added, “Wasn’t it right here where we are standing that Margaret Roper caught sight of her father, Sir Thomas More, after his trial?” As the guide nodded his assent, she went on, “You all remember Sir Thomas More, of course,—the great and noble man whom Henry VIII beheaded because he would not swear allegiance to the King as head of the Church in England. In those days, an ax was always carried in the boat with the prisoner, on his return to the Tower, after the trial. If the head of the ax was turned toward the victim, it was a sign that he was condemned. It was here, as I said, that Margaret Roper stood with the crowd, eagerly watching for the first glimpse of her beloved father; and when he came near and she saw the position of the ax, she broke away from the soldiers, and flung herself into her father’s arms. The two were so devoted that their story has always seemed an especially pathetic one to me. I suppose there were many like it, however.”

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“Indeed there were, lady,” returned the guide, quite moved.

Just opposite Traitor’s Gate is the Bloody Tower, the most picturesque bit of the entire fortress. The old portcullis there is known as the only one in England which is still fit for use. At the side is an ancient and rusty iron ring, which attracted John’s attention so much

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that he asked about it.

"Boatmen coming through the Traitor's Gate yonder, used to tie their boats to that ring," the "beefeater" told them. "That shows you 'ow much farther h'up the water came in those days. H'in a room over the gateway of the Bloody Tower there, the Duke of Clarence, h'according to some, drowned himself in a butt of Malmsey wine; and in h'an adjoining room, they say that the little Princes were murdered by h'order of their uncle, the powerful Duke of Gloucester, who stole their right to the throne. Right 'ere, at the foot of these steps, is where 'e 'urriedly buried them, h'after 'is men 'ad smothered them."

The children stood gazing at the little window over the gateway, their eyes big with horror. It did not seem as though such terrible things could have been done there in that little room, into which the sun now poured through the tiny window.

Every night at eleven o'clock, the warder on guard at the Bloody Tower challenges the Chief Warder, who passes bearing the keys. Each time this conversation follows:—

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"Who goes there?"

"Keys."

"Whose keys?"

"King Edward VII's keys."

"Advance King Edward VII's keys, and all's well."

Not until then, may the keys in the Chief Warder's care be allowed to pass on.

Some steps just beyond lead into the Wakefield Tower, where the "Crown Jewels" are now kept. The "beefeater" remained below, but Mrs. Pitt took the young people up into the little round room where the splendid crowns and other jewels are seen, behind iron bars. After examining minutely the objects on view, while leaning just as far as possible over the rail, John burst out with:

"Just look at those huge salt-cellars!" pointing to several very large gold ones. "I should say that the English must be about as fond of salt as they are of mustard, to have wanted those great things! Oh, I don't care for these!" he added. "They are stupid, I think! Imagine being King Edward, and owning such elegant crowns, scepters, and things, and then letting them stay way down here at the Tower, where he can't get at them! What's the use of having them, I'd like to know! Oh, come on! I've seen enough of these!"

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"Wait just a minute, John," interrupted Betty. "See! here's Queen Victoria's crown, and in it is the ruby that belonged to the Black Prince, and which Henry V wore in his helmet at Agincourt! Just think!" with a sigh. "Now I'll go."

"Speaking of crowns," observed Mrs. Pitt, in passing down the stairs, "have you ever heard about the large emerald which George III wore in his crown, at his coronation? During the ceremony, it fell out, and superstitious people regarded it as a bad omen. Their fears were realized when that sovereign lost something much dearer to him than any jewel: his American Colonies."

The previously-mentioned White Tower stands in the center of all the other surrounding buildings. It is large and square, with turrets at the four corners,—an ideal old fortress. As they approached, the guide took out some keys and unlocked a door, starting down some steps into the darkness. "Oh, the dungeons!" gasped Betty, and she and Barbara shivered a little, as they followed.

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Just at the foot they halted, and the guide showed them some round holes in the floor.

"'Ere's where they fastened down the rack. This 'ere's the Torture Chamber. You may think that being so near the entrance, the cries of the victims could be 'eard by the people outside, lady, but these walls are so thick that there was no possible chance of that. Ah, down in these parts is where we still see things, ladies!"

"Why, what do you mean?" whispered John, dreading and yet longing to hear.

Thus encouraged, their guide continued:—

"Once h'every month, it is my turn to watch down 'ere, during the night. Some of us don't like to admit it, lady, but we h'all dread that! Many things which 'ave never been written down in 'istory, 'ave 'appened in these 'ere passages and cells! Ah, there are figures glide around 'ere in the dead o' night, and many's the times I've 'eard screams, way in the distance, as though somebody was being 'urt! Now, this way, please, and I'll show you Guy Fawkes's cell,—'im h'as was the originator of the Gunpowder Plot, and tried to blow up the

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'ouses of Parliament."

They felt their way along the uneven floors, and peered into the darkness of Guy Fawkes's cell, which was called "Little Ease."

"Just imagine having to stay long in there!" sighed Betty. "Not able to stand up, lie down, or even sit up straight! Did they make it that way on purpose, do you think?"

"They certainly did, Miss," declared the guide. "They tried to make 'im confess 'o 'ad associated with 'im in the plot; but 'e wouldn't, and they finally put 'im on the rack, poor man! A terrible thing was that rack!"

"Let's come away now," broke in Mrs. Pitt quickly. "I really think we have all had about enough of this, and there are more cheerful things to be seen above."

So they threaded their way out to the entrance again, getting whiffs of damp, disagreeable air from several dark dungeons, and passing through a number of great apartments stacked with guns. It was a relief to gain the main part of the building, where other people were, and plenty of warmth and sunlight. Their spirits rose, and they laughed and joked while climbing the narrow, spiral stairs.

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The large room in which they found themselves was filled with weapons also, and various relics of the old Tower. It was used as the great Banqueting-hall when the Tower was the Royal Palace, as well as the fortress, the State prison, the Mint, the Armory, and the Record Office. The apartment above this was the Council Chamber. They went up.

"It was here that Richard II gave up his crown to Henry of Bolingbroke who became Henry IV, by demand of the people," said Mrs. Pitt. "Richard was a weak, cruel king, you remember, and was confined in a distant castle, where he was finally murdered. Suppose we examine some of this armor now. This suit here belonged to Queen Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Leicester. Notice the initials R. D., which stand for his name, Robert Dudley. This here was made for Charles I when he was a boy; and that belonged to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; and this, to Henry VIII himself. Aren't they interesting? Yes, what's that you have found, Barbara?"

The two boys were absorbed in the armor for some time, but Barbara and Betty liked a figure on horseback, which represents Queen Elizabeth as she looked when she rode out in state. It is strangely realistic, for the figure is dressed in a gown of the period said to have belonged to that Queen.

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"Do you suppose that jewels were sewn into the dress where those round holes are?" asked Betty, gently touching the faded velvet with one finger.

They all examined the dreadful instruments of torture, some of them taken from the Armada, and the ghastly headsman's block and mask, and then they descended the winding stairs again and went into the little shadowy St. John's Chapel, on the floor with the Banqueting-hall.

"I want you all to remember that this is called the 'most perfect Norman chapel in England,'" began Mrs. Pitt. "Some day when you have learned more about architecture, that will mean a great deal to you. These heavy circular pillars and the horseshoe arches show the ancient Norman style. It's a quaint place, isn't it? Here Brackenbury, the Lieutenant of the Tower, was praying one evening when the order came to him to murder the two little Princes. In this chapel, the Duke of Northumberland, the aged father of Lady Jane Grey, heard Mass before he went out to execution. 'Bloody Mary' came here to attend service upon the death of her brother, Edward VI. Somewhere on the same floor of this tower, John Baliol, the Scotch King, was imprisoned and lived for some time in great state. There is (at any rate, there was) a secret passage between this chapel and the Royal Apartments. I have read so much about the dreadful conspirators who skulked about the Tower, and the fearful deeds that were done here, that I can almost see a man in armor, with drawn sword, lurking behind one of these pillars!"

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Some soldiers in their gay uniforms were parading on Tower Green when they went out again, and the scene was a merry, bright one.

"How different from the days when the scaffold stood under those trees!" exclaimed Mrs. Pitt, as they approached the fatal spot. "Here perished Lady Jane Grey, Anne Boleyn, Katharine Howard, and Queen Elizabeth's unfortunate favorite, the Earl of Essex. Most of the victims were beheaded just outside, on Tower Hill. Now, we'll look into St. Peter's Chapel."

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It is a gloomy, unattractive enough little chapel, but there are buried here many illustrious men and women, whose lives were unjustly taken by those in power. Here lie the

queens who suffered at the Tower, and, strangely enough, their tombs are mostly unmarked. John Fisher, the ancient Bishop of Rochester, lies here, and Guildford Dudley, husband to Lady Jane Grey, the Earl of Arundel, Sir Thomas More, and many others whose names are forever famous.

Our party visited the little room in the Beauchamp Tower, which so many examine with intense interest. Many people were imprisoned there, and the walls are literally covered with signatures, verses, coats-of-arms, crests, and various devices cut into the stone by the captives. Perhaps the most famous is the simple word "JANE," said to have been done by her husband, Guildford Dudley. A secret passage has been discovered extending around this chamber, and probably spies were stationed there to watch the prisoners and listen to what they said.

"That's the Brick Tower," said Mrs. Pitt, pointing to it with her umbrella, as she spoke. "There's where Lady Jane Grey was imprisoned, and there Sir Walter Raleigh lived during his first stay at the Tower. It was when he was in the Beauchamp Tower, however, that he burnt part of his 'History of the World,' the work of many years. It happened in a curious way! Do you know the story? He was at his window one morning and witnessed a certain scene which took place in the court beneath. Later, he talked with a friend who had been a nearer spectator of this identical scene, and they disagreed entirely as to what passed. Raleigh was very peculiarly affected by this little incident. He reasoned that if he could be so much mistaken about something which had happened under his very eyes, how much more mistaken must he be about things which occurred centuries before he was born. The consequence was that he threw the second volume of his manuscript into the fire, and calmly watched it burn. Think of the loss to us! Poor Raleigh! He was finally beheaded, and I should think he would have welcomed it, after so many dreary years of imprisonment. He is buried in St. Margaret's Church, beside Westminster Abbey, you know."

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"Was there a real palace in the Tower?" inquired Betty, while they retraced their steps under the Bloody Tower and back toward the entrance. "Isn't there any of it remaining?"

"Yes, there was a palace here once, for royalty lived in the Tower through the reign of James I. No part of it now exists, however. It stood over beyond the White Tower, in a part which visitors are not now allowed to see."

On a hill just outside the Tower, in the center of a large, barren square, is a little inclosed park with trees and shrubbery. Here stood the scaffold where almost all of the executions were held. The place is now green and fruitful, but it is said that on the site of the scaffold within the Tower, grass cannot be made to grow.

As they walked toward a station of the "Tube," an underground railway, John suddenly heaved a great sigh of relief and exclaimed:

"Well, I tell you what! I've learned heaps, but I don't want to hear anything more about executions for a few days! What do you all say?"

CHAPTER SIX

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ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AND ITS VICINITY

When Betty came down to her breakfast the following morning, she found her plate heaped with letters and fascinating little parcels of different shapes. For a moment she looked puzzled, then she exclaimed:

"Oh! I know! It's my birthday, and I'm having such a splendid time sight-seeing, that I had forgotten all about it! How lovely!" as she glanced again at the presents.

"See, John!" she cried, opening the first package, which had an American postmark, "see what mother has sent me! It is such a pretty tan leather cover, with little handles, to put on my Baedeker. You know I always carry the guidebook, and read about things for Mrs. Pitt. Now, I can keep the book clean, and besides, people can't recognize me as an American just from seeing my red book! That's a fine idea, I think!"

John thought that his sister was not opening the bundles quite fast enough, so he pounced upon one and unwrapped it for her.

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"This long thing is father's gift, Betty. It's an umbrella, of course, and a fine one! Here's a card which says, 'Knowing that two umbrellas could never be amiss in England, I send this.' Do you suppose he guessed that you'd lost yours?"

After the bundles were all opened, the letters hurriedly devoured, and Betty had at last settled down to eating her cold breakfast, Mrs. Pitt said:

"I had not decided exactly what we would do to-day, and now I think I'll let the birthday girl plan. Where will you go, Betty?"

After due consideration, Betty announced that she would choose to visit St. Paul's Cathedral, and afterwards, by way of contrast, to have lunch at the Cheshire Cheese.

"What in the world's that?" inquired John.

Mrs. Pitt laughed. "You'll see, for we'll go there, as Betty suggests, when we have seen St. Paul's. I'm not sure whether you'll care to have lunch there, but we'll look in, at any rate. It's rather different from the places where you are accustomed to take your lunch! No, you must wait, John! I'm not going to tell you any more about it!"

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"What a beautiful day!" Betty cried, taking her seat on the bus a little later. "I do wish it wouldn't always be so windy, though! I almost lost my hat then!"

"As you stay longer in London, you'll notice that a really clear day is almost always a very windy one as well. We Londoners have to accept the two together," Mrs. Pitt told the visitors.

Leaving Trafalgar Square, the bus carried them by Charing Cross Station, in front of which is a copy of the old Charing Cross. Edward I, when his queen, Eleanor of Castile, died, put up many crosses in her memory, each one marking a spot where her body was set down during its journey to Westminster Abbey for burial. A little farther along, the bus passed the odd little church of St. Mary-le-Strand, which is on an "island" in the middle of that wide street and its great busy, hurrying traffic. It is good to remember that on that very spot, the maypole once stood. Narrow side streets lead off the Strand, and looking down them one may see the river, and understand why the street was so named. It originally ran along by the bank of the Thames, and the splendid houses of the nobles lined the way.

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"These fine stone buildings on our left are the new Law Courts, and the griffin in the center of the street marks the position of old Temple Bar. There! We've passed it, and now we are in Fleet Street. Temple Bar was the entrance to the 'City,' you know. To this day the King cannot proceed into the 'City' without being first received at Temple Bar, by the Lord Mayor. At one time, the city of London comprised a small area (two and a quarter miles from end to end), and was inclosed by walls and entered by gates. Originally there were but four gates,—Aldgate, Aldersgate, Ludgate, and Bridgegate. Think what a small city it was then! It is curious to know that in spite of that, there were then one hundred and three churches in London. The real center of life for centuries was at 'Chepe,' or Cheapside, as it is now called. You'll see it later."



"The King cannot proceed into the 'City' without being first received at Temple Bar by the Lord Mayor."—Page 68.

Betty had been looking eagerly, even while she listened to what Mrs. Pitt was saying. Her eyes now rested upon an old church, over the door of which stood a queer, blackened statue of a queen.

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"The church is St. Dunstan's," responded Mrs. Pitt again. "That old statue of Queen

Elizabeth is one of the few things which escaped the great fire in the reign of Charles II. The figure once stood on the ancient Lud Gate of the city. They say that it was in the church-yard of St. Dunstan's that John Milton sold his wonderful poem of 'Paradise Lost' for five pounds."

"Let's see,—that would be twenty-five dollars, wouldn't it? I haven't your English money clear in my mind yet," John confided to Philip. "I can't somehow feel that it's real money unless it's in dollars and cents."

Philip soon pointed to a little alley-way on their left, and said, "The Cheshire Cheese is in a little court back of there. You can't think how many buildings, courts, and alleys are hidden in behind all of these shops. Some of the old inns, or coffee-houses, which were famous are (or were) there. Now, here's Ludgate Hill, and in a minute you'll have a view of St. Paul's."

St. Paul's Cathedral stands on a hill, and because of its position and huge dome it is the most conspicuous of London's landmarks. But, because of the closely surrounding buildings, it is much hidden from near view. As the bus mounted Ludgate Hill, having passed under the railroad-bridge, they suddenly saw the tremendous cathedral looming up before them.

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They paused for a moment by the statue of Queen Anne, in front of the main entrance, while Mrs. Pitt, following her delightful habit, reminded them of certain notable facts.

"No one knows exactly how long there has been a church upon this site," she began, beckoning them closer to her, as the noise of the traffic was so great, "but Bede, the oldest historian, says that a chapel was built here by a Saxon king, before the time of the Romans. When Sir Christopher Wren, the architect, built this present edifice, after the great fire of 1666, he found relics of three periods,—the Saxon, the British, and the Roman. St. Paul's has been burned five times. The last fire (the one of which I just spoke) destroyed the church which we know as 'old St. Paul's.' Now, let's go in, for there is much to be seen."

Next to St. Peter's at Rome, St. Paul's in London is the largest church, in the world. The first impression a person gets is one of great vastness and bareness, for, unlike Westminster Abbey, here one does not encounter at every step famous statues, memorials, and graves. The nave is tremendous in width and in length. Chapels open from both sides, but they seem far off and shadowy. Way in the distance is the choir, the altar, and the group of chairs used at services. Everything is quiet, empty, and bare.

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"I never imagined such a huge church!" said Betty, much impressed. "I feel lost and cold, somehow. What are you thinking, Mrs. Pitt? I'm sure we'd all like to hear."

"I was just picturing, as I always do when I come here, the scenes the nave of old St. Paul's presented in Henry VIII's time. Would you like to hear? Well, in the sixteenth century, this nave was called 'Paul's Walke,' and it was a place of business. Yes," she assured them, as John and Betty exclaimed, "down these aisles were booths where merchants of all kinds sold their wares. Counters were built around the pillars, and even the font was used by the vendors. Pack-horses laden with merchandise streamed always in and out, and crowds of people elbowed their way about, shouting and gesticulating excitedly."

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"But didn't they have any services at all in St. Paul's Cathedral?" asked Betty wonderingly.

"Oh, yes!" continued Mrs. Pitt, "the services went on just the same. The people were used to the noise and confusion. Here came the tailors to look at the fine new clothes which the young dandies wore when they took their morning promenades. All the latest books and poems were always to be found on sale here. Bishop Earle wrote 'Paul's Walke—you may call—the lesser Ile of Great Brittain. The noyse in it is like that of Bees, in strange hummings, or buzze, mixt of walking, tongues, and feet; it is a kind of still roare, or loud whisper.'

"I am glad to be able to say, however," she continued, "that before that dreadful period, there was a time when the cathedral was not so dishonored. Once these walls were covered with valuable shrines, pictures, and tapestries, and costly jewels glittered everywhere. There was one huge emerald which was said to cure diseases of the eyes. Here came John Wycliffe, the great reformer, at the summons of the Archbishop of Canterbury, to answer for the publication of his new doctrines. Here, Henry of Bolingbroke prayed for his successful seizure of the throne, and here he also wept over the grave of his father, John of Gaunt. Sir Philip Sidney was buried here, and his father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's secretary; and there was a magnificent monument to Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor, but these were all destroyed by the Great Fire."

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About the aisles and nave are many monuments to great soldiers, sailors, painters, statesmen, literary men, and others. Most of them are very ugly, and our party did not linger long over these. After walking under the dome, and looking up into its tremendous heights, they went down into the crypt, which is really the most interesting part of the cathedral.

The crypt is vast, dark, and gloomy. Other parties may be heard walking about and talking in the distance, without being seen, and their voices echo strangely. In the "Painters' Corner," Sir Joshua Reynolds, West, Lawrence, Landseer, and Turner, all famous artists, lie buried beneath the pavement. Sir Christopher Wren, surrounded by members of his family, lies under the dome, as was his wish. Lord Nelson and the Duke of Wellington both have splendid tombs there.

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"These are all we now have of the monuments of the old cathedral," remarked Mrs. Pitt, pointing to where in a corner some mutilated figures, heads, and broken monuments lay, all in a heap.

John was delighted when it was proposed to climb up into the dome, and to test the "Whispering Gallery," on the way. It seemed an endless climb up the spiral stairs, and Mrs. Pitt, Barbara, and Betty lagged behind. When they finally came out into the great round gallery, the two boys were over on the opposite side. Betty, after waving to them, sat down on a bench against the wall, and suddenly she heard John's voice, saying "Glad to see you at last!" She put her lips to the wall and whispering an answer, found that John could hear her, too. They were having quite a lengthy conversation, holding first their lips to the wall to speak, and then their ears to listen, when Mrs. Pitt interrupted them.

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"That's great fun, but we have still a hard climb before us," she reminded them. "I think we had better go on."

The remainder of the way was much more difficult, as the steps were steeper and narrower than ever, but they at last emerged on the little platform, running around the top of the dome.

"My, what a view!" they cried.

"Yes, you're the first visitors in many a day who could see so far," the man in charge told them.

If the terrible black smoke which comes from the hundreds of chimneys, and the fog permit one to see it all, the view is truly fine. It is especially interesting to trace the river in its various curves, and to pick out the many bridges which span it. Another striking feature is the immense number of spires. The guide pointed out the churches to them, and also the different parts of the city.

"If you thought it was windy on the bus, Betty, I wonder what you call this," exclaimed Barbara, grasping her hat with both hands. "I'm going down now."

The others were quite ready to follow, and they wound their way down, down, down, until they stood again on the main floor, under the dome.

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"This is called St. Paul's Church-yard," said Mrs. Pitt, leading the way around back of the cathedral. "This used to be a very busy place. St. Paul's School was here, within the yard, as well as many shops. The first printer who produced books for children had his shop in this corner. In the days when the interior of the building was put to such dreadful uses, the outside was treated quite as badly. Shops of all kinds were built up against the cathedral, and sometimes the noise which the carpenters made greatly disturbed those at the service within. It must have been shocking indeed! It is said that for a very small sum, the sexton would allow boys to climb up and ring the bells as much as they liked; and, on the day of Queen Mary's coronation, she saw a Dutchman standing on the weather-vane, waving a flag."

"My! I'd like to have seen that!" cried John, to whom such gymnastic feats appealed.

While they walked back to the Cheshire Cheese, Mrs. Pitt explained to them what St. Paul's Cathedral once comprised.

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"In the London of the Middle Ages, the Church ruled supreme," she told them. "At least one-fourth of the entire city was owned by the churches and the religious houses. To carry on the monasteries and churches, a tremendous number of people were necessary. At St. Paul's, in 1450, there were:

The bishop,
Four archdeacons,

The treasurer,
The precentor,
The chancellor,
Thirty greater canons,
Twelve lesser canons,
Fifty chaplains, and
Thirty vicars.

These were of the higher rank; there were innumerable others of lower rank, such as the master of the singing-school, the binder, and the translator. The brewer, in 1286, brewed 67,814 gallons, and the baker baked about 40,000 loaves. This gives one a little idea of what it meant to conduct a cathedral in those days of the all-powerful Church."

Between the poor shops of Fleet Street, open many little passages, and these lead into tiny courts and winding alleys. The entrance to one of them is marked with the sign, "Wine Office Court." Directly off from this narrow, dark alley stands the famous Cheshire Cheese, the only genuine old-time tavern or "coffee-house" which still exists unchanged. It is a little, low building, with quaint bow-window of square panes.

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"Why, we can't all get in there, can we?" laughed John, as Mrs. Pitt stepped inside. The door is very small, and the hallway was so crowded by curious visitors, and by jostling, pushing waiters, that it did not seem possible for another person to enter. They managed, however, to elbow their way through the crowd into the celebrated "coffee-room" itself.

That "coffee-room" is splendid! The ceiling is very low, and the walls are wainscoted in dark wood. Although the room is so small, there are numerous long tables, and old-fashioned, high-backed settles. One seat, in the corner farthest from the door, is marked with a little tablet, telling us that there was Dr. Johnson's chosen place. Several pictures of that noted gentleman adorn the walls. It always seems very much out of keeping with the quaintness of the room, to find it full of laughing, chattering Americans. A few quiet English clerks come there for their noon meal, but the majority of the patrons of the Cheshire Cheese are the tourists.

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"There's nothing to do but to wait here until we can get seats," said Mrs. Pitt; so they all remained standing in the middle of the floor, directly in the path of the waiters, until finally some seats were free, and they slid into one of the long benches which extend down each side of the tables, placed endwise to the wall.

"Are you sorry you proposed coming here?" Mrs. Pitt asked Betty, watching with amusement her crest-fallen face as she saw the soiled linen, and untidy look of the entire table.

"Oh, no," Betty answered doubtfully, "only I guess people come here more because Dr. Johnson did, than because they like it."

Mrs. Pitt laughed. "That's very true," she said. "The service isn't exactly prompt, either. We've already waited quite fifteen minutes, I am sure. I ordered lark pie and Cheshire cheese for you, of course. Every one takes them on his first visit here."

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The lark pie was Dr. Johnson's favorite dish, but that fact does not suffice to make it very enjoyable. Betty frankly confessed that she could not manage to eat hers, but John pretended to be very industrious over his, although he did a good deal of looking about the room and commenting upon things he saw.

"There's even sawdust on the floor," he announced jubilantly. "Did you ever! My! How hot and stuffy it is here! Were all old inns just like this, Mrs. Pitt?"

"Yes, pretty much so, I think," was the response. "There were ever so many of them, you know, and each was frequented by a certain class of men. For instance, there was the 'British Coffee-house,' where all the Scotch visitors went; there was 'Robin's,' which was noted for its foreign bankers and ambassadors; and there was 'Dolly's Chophouse,' where the wits congregated. Most of the famous clubs held their meetings at one or another of the 'coffee-houses,' too. The 'Spectator Club' met at 'Button's Coffee-house,' and there the 'Spectator Papers' had their beginnings. There Addison, Steele, Pope, and others, spent their leisure hours. Some of the London clubs of the eighteenth century had very queer names!" she continued. "There was the 'Ugly Club,' the 'Quack Club,' the 'Beefsteak Club,' the 'Split-Farthing Club,' and the 'Small Coalmen's Music Club,' for example. Here, at the Cheshire Cheese, Goldsmith often came with Dr. Johnson. Can't you imagine the two sitting over at that table, with Boswell not far away, patiently listening, quill in hand? Dr. Johnson was very careless and untidy, you know, and invariably spilled his soup. It was he who used to walk up and down Fleet Street touching every post he passed!"

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All this time they had been waiting for their cheese. When it finally came, it proved to be much better than the lark pie. The cheese is served in little three-cornered tins, and is poured hot over crisp pieces of toast.

When they had finished, they went up the winding stairs to see the room where the famous "Literary Club" used to meet. Dr. Johnson's chair is preserved there.

"Didn't Dr. Johnson live near here, too, Mother?" asked Barbara, as they came out again into the court. [Pg 82]

"Yes, I believe he lived in both Johnson and Bolt Courts," Mrs. Pitt told them. "His haunts were all about here. In number six, over there, Goldsmith is said to have written 'The Vicar of Wakefield.'"

From there, they walked up Fleet Street, discussing their unusual lunch as they went. They had all enjoyed it,—even Betty.

She made them all laugh, however, by announcing seriously, "I'm glad I went, but I think it is just about as nice to read about lunching there, as to really do it. And then, you wouldn't be quite so hungry afterwards!"

CHAPTER SEVEN

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A SUNDAY NIGHT CHAT

It was Sunday afternoon, and the time for John and Betty to send their weekly letters home. The day was a beautiful one in early spring, the grass and trees in the garden behind the house were very green, birds were singing outside, people were continually walking by, and the letters progressed but slowly. Every few moments Betty stole a glance out-of-doors, and John sat leaning his elbow on the desk chewing the end of his penholder, while he gazed steadily out of the window.

"Well, what do you think of it all, John?" asked Betty thoughtfully. "Aren't we glad we came, and aren't Mrs. Pitt and Barbara and Philip good to us?"

"Just splendid!" exclaimed John most emphatically. He had turned away from the window now, and was entering earnestly into the conversation. "I just tell you what, Betty, it's a different thing to peg away at an old, torn history-book at school, and to come over here and see things and places, while Mrs. Pitt tells you about them! Why, I honestly like English history the way we're learning it now!" [Pg 84]

Betty smiled in an elder-sisterly fashion. "Well, I always did like to study history, but it surely makes it nicer and easier to do it this way. But besides that, John, don't you think it's queer and very interesting to see the way the English do things—all their customs, I mean. They're so different from ours! Why, when I first saw Barbara that day at the train, I thought it was the funniest thing that her hair was all hanging loose down her back. I wouldn't think of being so babyish! I thought perhaps she'd lost off her ribbon maybe, but she's worn it that way ever since. And her little sailor-hat looks so countrified as she has it,—'way down over her ears!"



“I’d feel like ‘Little Lord Fauntleroy’ going around with those clothes on!”—Page 84.

“I know it; it seemed mighty funny to me to see Philip’s black suit with the long trousers, his broad collar, and skimpy short coat! It’s what all the boys at the Eton School wear, he says. They must feel like fools! Why, I’d feel like—like—‘Little Lord Fauntleroy’ going around with those clothes on all the time!” John’s voice was full of scorn, yet his eyes twinkled with fun. “But, the high hat, just like father’s opera-hat, which Philip wears, beats it all!” he continued. “I’m so used to it now, though, that I don’t think of it any more. It’s queer how soon you get used to things! It’s just like riding along the streets, and keeping to the left instead of to the right. The first time I rode in a hansom (you weren’t there that day, Betty) and we suddenly turned a corner, keeping close to the left curb, I poked open the little door in the roof and shouted, ‘Hey there! Mister! You’ll bump into something if you don’t look out!’ The driver just stared; he didn’t seem to know what I was talking about.”

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“Yes,” went on Betty in her turn, “keeping to the left did seem queer at first. You know, John, how often we have wished that Dan and the automobile were over here. Honestly, I think Dan would surely have an accident! He never could remember to keep to the left! Now, we simply must go on with our letters! Begin when I say three! One—two—(hurry, John, you haven’t dipped your pen!), three!” and both commenced to write industriously.

The letters were finally finished just as the tea-bell rang. Betty ran to wash her hands, and then they went down to the library, where tea was served every afternoon that they were at home.

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“Why! I quite like tea over here!” Betty remarked. “I never drink it at home! Mother would be so surprised if she saw me! Do all English people drink it every afternoon as you do, Mrs. Pitt?”

“Yes, it seems to go with the English people, somehow. We’d quite as soon think of doing without our breakfast or dinner as our four-o’clock-tea. You’ve noticed, my dear, how I always manage to get my tea at some little shop when we are on one of our sight-seeing tours. Really, I am quite lost without it! Oh! it’s just a habit, of course.” As she spoke, Mrs. Pitt poured herself another cup.

When the tea things had been removed, and a fire was lighted, stories were called for.

“Tell us some of the stories you know about different places and old customs, Mother,” urged Barbara.

“Very well,” said Mrs. Pitt willingly. “Let—me—see! You remember, don’t you, having the guide point out London Bridge to you, from the top of St. Paul’s, day before yesterday? That’s the oldest bridge, you know, for it seems to have existed as long ago as we know anything of London itself. But legend has it that before there was any bridge over the

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Thames, people crossed in a ferry which was run by a certain John Overs. This man naturally became rich, as very many people were always paying him for taking them across the river, but he was a great miser. The ferryman had one fair daughter about whom he was as miserly as he was with his money,—keeping her shut up out of reach of her lover. One day, John Overs thought he would like to save the cost of providing food for his household, so he pretended to be dead. He expected that his servants would fast in consequence, as was the ancient custom; but so great was their joy when they thought their master dead, that they all began to dance, to make merry together, and to feast upon all they found in the house. The old miser stood this just as long as he could, and then he sprang up to lay hands upon them. The servants fled, believing that it was something supernatural—all except one, who, more daring than the rest, killed his master with his weapon. So old John did die after all, but in an unexpected way.

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“Part the second of my story tells of how the monks of a neighboring abbey finally consented to bury the body; when the abbot returned, however, he was very angry at what they had done, and gave the friars some orders. They dug up the body of the poor old boatman, tied it to the back of an ass, and turned the animal loose. The body was finally thrown off at the place of public execution (directly under the gallows), and there it was buried and remained. Meanwhile the daughter, Mary, was having more trouble. Immediately upon the death of her father, she had sent for her lover, but in coming to her, he had been thrown off his horse and killed. This was too much for the unfortunate girl, who decided to retire to a nunnery, leaving her entire fortune to found the church of ‘St. Mary Overy.’ That is the real name of the church now known as Southwark Cathedral, which stands just across London Bridge. Now, how do you like that story?”



“You remember, don’t you, having the guide point out London Bridge?”—Page 86.

“Great!” exclaimed John. “Whoever thought that up had a vivid imagination, all right!”

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“Why, don’t you believe it, John?” said Betty, who always took everything most seriously.

When they were quiet again, Mrs. Pitt talked on.

“London Bridge, up to the time of the Great Fire, was crowded with houses, you know, and there was even a chapel there. Over the gate at the Southwark end of the bridge, the heads of traitors were exhibited on the ends of long poles. Here Margaret Roper, whom you met at the Tower, came, bargained for, and at last secured the head of her father, Sir Thomas More. But, to go back to the houses! Hans Holbein, the painter, and John Bunyan, the poet, are both said to have resided on London Bridge. I also like the story which tells of a famous wine merchant, named Master Abel, who had his shop there. Before his door, he set up a sign on which was the picture of a bell, and under it were written the words, ‘Thank God I am Abel.’ Here’s a picture of old London Bridge. Imagine how quaint it must have looked crowded by these picturesque old houses, and with its streets filled with travelers. All those entering London from the south came across that bridge, which was consequently a great thoroughfare. Near the Southwark side of the bridge is where the Tabard Inn stood—the inn from which the Canterbury Pilgrims set out; and near the bank, known as Bankside in those days, was the celebrated Globe Theatre, connected with Shakespeare and his associates. The popular Paris Gardens were there, too, where the sport of bear-baiting was seen in Queen Elizabeth’s time. If we went over there, we could see the former sites of these historic places, but they are now covered by unattractive, modern buildings or great breweries. It’s hard to conjure up the Globe Theatre out of present-day Southwark,” she added with a sigh, as if she were speaking to herself. “Not far

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from the site of the Tabard Inn, a picturesque, gabled house once stood, in which John Harvard was born. Yes, John, that was the man who founded Harvard College, at your American Cambridge."

"Yes, and I mean to go there myself some day!" announced John, immediately fired by the familiar name of our oldest university. "My father went, you know."

Mrs. Pitt and the two girls spent the remainder of the evening in talking over plans for the next day, but John's thoughts had been turned to college, and so he and Philip had a lively time comparing notes about English and American colleges. [Pg 91]

"Where do you mean to go, Philip?" John inquired.

"Oh, to Cambridge, of course! My father, his father, and all my family for generations back have been to Trinity College, Cambridge. That's the largest college in England, and was founded by Henry VIII. Oh, it's jolly there! There are old quadrangles around which the men live; there's a beautiful old chapel, built in the Tudor period; and there's the dining-hall. That's grand! Back of the college is the river, the Cam. There's a lovely garden there, and over the river on which the men go boating, is an old bridge. I had a cousin who lived in the rooms which Byron once occupied. He, Macaulay, Tennyson, Thackeray, Dryden, and many other famous men went there. Oh, it's the only college for me! I shall be there in three years, I hope!"

"Well, Harvard's our oldest college. It was founded by your John Harvard almost as soon as Boston itself, and 'Teddy' Roosevelt went there! It's good enough for me! The only trouble is that they can't seem to beat at football, somehow, and I mean to play and see if I can't help 'em win. That's the only trouble with old Harvard, though," John said, feeling that he must be loyal to his college in this international discussion; "otherwise she's all right! There's the Stadium, where all the big games are played, and there's the Charles River for us to row on. There are loads of fine new buildings, too, and I'd like those better than the old ones. We don't care who lived in 'em! Oh, the fellows at Harvard have a splendid time!" [Pg 92]

Mrs. Pitt had overheard some of this conversation with much amusement, for the ideas and ideals of the two boys were so different, and so very characteristic of each.

"I think you'd enjoy a visit to Cambridge, John," she said. "We must try to manage it. You'd find one of our colleges very unlike yours in America. Both Oxford and Cambridge Universities are made up of many colleges, you know; at Oxford, there are twenty-two, and at Cambridge, eighteen. Each college has its own buildings, its own professors, its own chapel and dining-hall, and each college is complete in itself, although they all belong to one university. You would think the rules very strict! When the Cambridge men go to chapel, and at other specified times, they are required to wear their gowns and queer little flat caps, called 'trenchers' or 'mortar-boards.' At Oxford, the gates of each college are closed at nine o'clock every evening; a man may stay out later (even until twelve), if he can give a good reason for it. If he remains out all night, though, he is immediately dismissed. How would you like that?" she laughed, seeing John's disgusted expression. "There are men called 'scouts,' who look after the men's rooms, and bring them their breakfast. The students are very carefully watched, and if one of them stays away from his meals at the dining-hall more than two or three times a week, the affair is investigated." [Pg 93]

"My! When we go to college in America, we are men, and can look after ourselves!" John drew himself up very straight, and spoke with great dignity. "Cambridge may be older and have more—more—'associations,' but I'd rather go to Harvard."

CHAPTER EIGHT

WINDSOR CASTLE, STOKE POGES, AND ETON SCHOOL

"It's only a little more than twenty miles out to Windsor," remarked Mrs. Pitt, one June morning. "Suppose we go in the motor, and then we can have a glimpse of both Stoke Poges and Eton School, on the way."

There were always many exclamations of delight at mention of the "motor," so it was settled, and the party set out at ten o'clock, all in the highest of spirits. It was slow and difficult driving through the city streets, but the English chauffeur was quite used to keeping to the left, as well as being perfectly familiar with the rules which govern the traffic, so he had none of the accidents which Betty and John had prophesied that their

father's American chauffeur would not be able to avoid. Very soon, however, they had reached the suburbs, and then they came into the open country.

They could go faster now, and the big touring-car sped over the wonderfully smooth roads at a speed which delighted the young people. The weather was proving a bit uncertain. Every little while, a tiny shower descended upon them out of a blue sky full of great white clouds, the sun shining warm and bright all the while.

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"Oh, don't let's put up any umbrella," exclaimed Betty, during one of the showers. "Rain never seems to do any harm in England. You don't get wet, and never mind it a bit. Truly, I like it, for it's so pretty to see it raining with the sun out. There! now, it's stopped again! Just see that lovely rainbow!"

The English country is always beautiful in its individual way, but it is especially so on one of these showery days, when every leaf and flower looks fresher than ever with the rain-drops glistening on it. Now and then, they slowed down while passing through a busy town, where pretty ladies and children in little two-wheeled carts drove about doing the morning marketing. Most of the way, however, lay through country roads bordered by green-hedged fields in which the ever-present sheep grazed; and here and there were high brick walls over which the stately, vine-covered homes were just visible. There were also picturesque little workmen's cottages at the edge of the wood, and lodges covered with climbing-roses.

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It seemed as though they had only been riding a very short time when, upon emerging from a shady road, they drew up at a little gateway. John felt impatient at having to stop, and looked questioningly around at Mrs. Pitt from his place on the front seat. The others were already getting out, he found, and Mrs. Pitt was saying:

"This is Stoke Poges, and I want you to see it, for it's such a lovely spot. Probably you have all learned in school parts of Gray's 'Elegy,' and very likely you never cared or thought much about the poem. Even if that's true, you can't possibly help loving this peaceful, beautiful place, in which it was written."



**The moss-grown Saxon porch.—
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They were now walking along a little path which led into the church-yard. A straight gravel walk stretches between the graves, up to the ancient church, which is very small, and has one tower closely covered with ivy. The fine old Saxon porch, and one doorway show great age; but it is in the whole effect rather than in any detail of the little church and its surroundings that the charm lies. One cannot imagine a more quiet, remote spot! On one side is the group of yew-trees which Gray mentions in the poem, and in their shelter are the hoary stones which mark the graves of the "rude forefathers of the hamlet." Standing there, one almost hesitates to speak above a whisper for fear of arousing something or somebody out of sleep, or of breaking the wonderful spell of the place. Pausing under those trees, and feasting one's eyes upon the lovely, rural scene, not a sound reaches the ear except the

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twitter of the birds, and perhaps the faint jingle of a cow-bell. Mrs. Pitt gave a start at the sound of John's voice, when he suddenly said:

"Let's go and find Gray's tomb, Philip; the guidebook says it's on the other side of the church."

The rest lingered for just one more look at the little church, with its vines, and the rich, dark-red brick-work of the moss-grown Saxon porch, which the sun touches lovingly as it filters through the heavy leafage of the yew-trees; then they followed Philip and John.

Close to the outer wall of the church is a large tomb in which Gray is buried with his beloved mother. No word on the slab tells that the famous poet is buried within; there is only his mother's epitaph, which Gray wrote, and in which he speaks of himself as "the only child who had the misfortune to outlive her."

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When Mrs. Pitt came up, John was standing near the tomb with his hat off, saying, "All right, Mr. Gray; I'll read your poem over again just as soon as ever I get home."

The bustling, lively scenes of Eton School presented a marked contrast to the quiet of Stoke Poges. Moving about the grounds between the different school-buildings, were dozens of boys all dressed in the regulation Eton suit, such as Philip himself wore. They were laughing, shouting, and playing games, just like other boys, but such actions somehow seemed out of keeping with their quaint costumes. From the automobile John looked down upon them, his eyes full of wonder and surprise.

"I suppose they are real boys," he said in a puzzled way, "but they don't look like them."

While Philip talked with some of his friends, and John lingered near the group, the others visited the beautiful Eton Chapel, and were especially interested in the familiar picture of Sir Galahad, which hangs there. The principal buildings of the school are ranged about two large courts; in the center of the Outer Quadrangle is a bronze statue of Henry VI, the founder of the school. The library is valuable and contains some costly books and manuscripts. Fox, Peel, Chatham, Wellington, and Shelley were Eton boys, and the latter's autograph may still be seen on one of the desks.

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As they left Eton and crossed the bridge over the Thames, they duly admired the magnificent view of Windsor Castle, which may be enjoyed from that point. Above its many roofs and towers stands the great round keep, the oldest part of the castle, having been built by Edward III.

The castle is on a hill in the center of the town, and the quaint, red-roofed houses reach even to its walls. After passing the statue of Queen Victoria, the automobile left the party at the entrance to the castle, through Henry VIII's gateway, carved with the Tudor Rose. Inside, they joined a party and were shown about by a guide.

They saw so many buildings that John and Betty found it rather bewildering. In thinking it over afterwards, certain objects remained most clearly in their memory.

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"St. George's Chapel is really the most beautiful thing there, of course," said Betty, as they rode away. "I never saw such carving as there is on the seats—no, stalls—in the choir! Henry VIII, Jane Seymour, and poor Charles I are buried there, too. I like those faded banners and the coats-of-arms which belonged to the Knights of the Garter. The whole place is lovely, I think. There are lots of little chapels off from it, too, like Westminster Abbey; didn't the guide say that the tomb of Queen Victoria's father, the Duke of Kent, is there?"

"Yes," answered Mrs. Pitt, "and I hope you haven't forgotten the Albert Chapel. It adjoins St. George's, you remember, and we stood in the doorway when our turn came and looked in. It is very old, and is on the site of an ancient chapel of St. Edward, but Queen Victoria made it what it is now, and restored it in honor of her husband, Prince Albert. The interior is truly remarkable for its fine marbles, mosaics, sculptures, stained-glass, and precious stones. I fancy they would not especially appeal to you, however. How did you like the State Apartments? It was fortunate that the Royal Family was not in residence, so that we could be admitted."

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"Well," began John, "they made us hurry so that I didn't see very much. That guide drove us along as though we were a flock of sheep! I liked that big room though, where all the portraits of the generals are. They called it the Waterloo Room, didn't they? Anyway, there were splendid pictures of Wellington, Metternich, Blücher, and lots of other fellows. Did you see the busts of Wellington and Marlborough in one of the other rooms, Philip? There are silk flags which hang over both the busts, and that cross old guide growled out that they are replaced every year on the anniversaries of the two battles;—Wellington gets a new flag on June 18th, because of Waterloo in 1815, and Marlborough gets his on August

13th, on account of the battle of Blenheim in 1704.”

“In that room,” explained Mrs. Pitt, “is where the ‘command’ theatrical performances are held. When the King hears the report of a play which he thinks he would like, he simply commands the company to come to him; and if he happens to be at Windsor, he and the Court witness the play in the Waterloo Chamber. Your American Sousa’s Band played there once. I saw Betty and Barbara lingering before the large picture of Charles I and his family. I am glad you liked it, girls, for that’s an especial delight of mine. Dear little ‘Baby Stuart’ is so lovable! That was in the Van Dyck Room, which contains many of that master’s works. Those State Apartments are only for the use of Royal guests, you understand, when they come on visits. I always wish that we could see the King or Queen’s private rooms, don’t you? It would be so interesting. What’s your favorite part of the castle, Barbara?”

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“Oh, I like the terrace better than anything else,” Barbara answered, without a moment’s hesitation. “The view of the valley, with the river and Eton Chapel in the distance, is so pretty! Then, there is something so stately and impressive about the wide, long terrace itself. I once read that it was Queen Elizabeth’s favorite walk, and there couldn’t be a more appropriate place for a queen to choose. I like that gateway with E. R. on it, showing that it was built in Elizabeth’s reign; and it’s fun to look up to the little bay-window which is said to have been her room. Then I like the old Curfew Tower, too,” she added.

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“Yes,” broke in Mrs. Pitt. “That’s one of the gloomiest parts of the whole castle, in its history as well as in its aspect. Of course, terrible things happened at Windsor just as they did elsewhere; but although Windsor dates from a very early period, and figures in the reigns of all the sovereigns, its history contains more of the bright and happy than of the tragic. Down in a miserable, windowless cell in the lower part of the Curfew Tower, it is wrongly said that Queen Anne Boleyn was put to spend the night before her execution, as you know, and there still remain in the Tower some fearful instruments of torture. The Horseshoe Cloister near there, is very ancient, and the houses are delightfully mediæval. Did you look in some of the tiny windows as we passed through? It is said that in a small hall there, in the Horseshoe Cloister, Shakespeare’s ‘Merry Wives of Windsor’ was first produced.”

“Who was it that the guide told us was imprisoned near the Round Tower, and who fell in love with a lady whom he saw walking in the gardens? I have forgotten the names.” It was Betty who spoke, for she had been quietly thinking over the visit.

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“That was young James of Scotland, whom Henry V caused to be captured in time of truce, and thrown into prison at Windsor, where he remained almost twenty years. The English treated him kindly, however, and he spent his time in studying and watching the lady in the garden, who afterwards became his queen.”

“Oh! But, really, the stables are best of all!” exclaimed Philip, who loved horses like a true Briton. “I do like to go there and be shown about by one of those men in the black suits and yellow vests, and the bright cockades in their silk hats. Once when I was little, one of them let me go into a stall and feed some sugar to a splendid great horse named Black Beauty. I wished I could do it to-day, too! All the carriages which carry the Court ladies are stupid, I think, but the horses and ponies are jolly!” whereupon Philip and John went off into an animated discussion about the horses of the Royal Stables, and how much they envied the men who cared for them.

“Oh, what a sweet little village!” cried Betty, jumping up excitedly, as the automobile slowed down and entered a little narrow lane.

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Chalfont St. Giles is an extremely picturesque, old-time village. Its thatched-roofed cottages huddle together in a beautiful green valley, and about the edge of a pond where ducks swim, and happy, barefooted children play. One of the old houses is a place of interest to many, as the great poet, John Milton, lived there after he fled from London at the time of the plague.

The poet’s home is a most primitive cottage with low ceilings, and a little dark room, lighted by one casement window, in which he may have written part of “Paradise Lost.” When standing in that chamber, one is reminded of the well-known picture which shows the blind Milton dictating one of his poems to a daughter. Outside is a delightful old-fashioned garden in which the largest and reddest of poppies grow, and where it is said that Milton loved to linger.

“I wish we needn’t hurry,” sighed Mrs. Pitt, “but I’m afraid we’ll be late to dinner. See, we are short of time already!”

So they quickly took their seats again for the short trip back to town, and drew their wraps about them, as the air had grown chilly. They all felt rather tired, and were silent as

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they reviewed in mind the history and scenes of Windsor Castle, one of the most beautiful and certainly the most famous of English royal residences.



**John Milton lived there after he fled from London.—
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CHAPTER NINE

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MORE ABOUT LONDON

“Big Ben,” the great bell on the clock-tower, was just booming ten deep strokes as our party neared the Houses of Parliament. A steadily rushing stream of people, buses, hansoms, and trucks (not forgetting bicycles, which are still numerous in England), was pouring across Westminster Bridge, and swinging around the corner into the wide street called Whitehall; but in the near vicinity of the graceful, long building, with its pinnacles and spires, in which the English laws are made, all was quiet and few people were moving about. In a square court from which steps lead down to the river, a sentinel was pacing back and forth.

“In the days when the Thames was the most used highway of the Londoners, here was probably one of the places where the nobles could step on shore from their luxurious barges.” Mrs. Pitt said this as they were looking down upon the soldier from the street above.

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Close up against one side of the Houses of Parliament is Westminster Hall, with its quaint row of supporting buttresses. This ancient edifice was built by William Rufus, the son of the Conqueror himself. Having entered by St. Stephen’s Porch, the usual approach, they went down a few steps at the left into this fine old room. It is empty now, and its vastness is unadorned except by some statues of kings and queens along the sides.

“This hall,” stated Mrs. Pitt, “was first begun by William Rufus, but it has been restored and added to at various times by many of the other sovereigns. It also formed part of the ancient Palace of Westminster. I want you to notice especially the oak roof with its heavy timbers, and unsupported by any columns. It is considered very fine in its construction, and I think it beautiful, as well. Have you the guidebook, Philip? Read to us some of the great events of the hall while we stand here.”

So Philip began. “Well, some of the earliest meetings of Parliament were held here; also, all the kings as far down the line as George IV have celebrated their coronation feasts in this hall. Here Charles I was tried and condemned (there’s a brass in the floor which marks where he stood at the trial), and here Cromwell in royal purple robes was received as Lord Protector. Some of the others who were tried here are William Wallace, the Scotch patriot, Sir Thomas More, Sir Thomas Wyatt, Guy Fawkes, and the Earls of Essex and Strafford. Until very recently the Law Courts adjoined here.”

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“Thank you, Philip; now, if you are ready, Betty, we’ll go on and see something more of this great building.”

It gives one a slight idea of the extent of the huge structure to know that therein are one hundred stairways and eleven hundred rooms! Visitors are shown the “King’s Robing-

room," the "Victoria or Royal Gallery," the "Prince's Chamber," and so many rooms and corridors, that it is impossible to remember them all, or even to appreciate them at the time of a visit. Fine wall paintings, statues, and rich decorations of all kinds abound. Both the rooms where sit the House of Peers and the House of Commons, respectively, are magnificent apartments; perhaps the former is rather more splendid in appearance, with its stained-glass windows picturing all the English sovereigns, its frescoes, and throne, with the gilded canopy.

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As they finally passed out and started over toward Westminster Abbey, Mrs. Pitt said:

"It was at one of these entrances (perhaps at the very one by which we just left), that a most curious thing happened in 1738. It had just been decided that ladies should no longer be permitted in the galleries of the Houses. Certain noble dames who were most indignant at this new rule, presented themselves in a body at the door. They were, of course, politely refused admission, and having tried every known means of gaining entrance, they remained at the door all day, kicking and pounding from time to time. Finally, one of them thought of the following plan. For some time they stood there in perfect quiet; some one within opened a door to see if they were really gone, whereupon they all rushed in. They remained in the galleries until the 'House rose,' laughing and tittering so loudly that Lord Hervey made a great failure of his speech. Wasn't that absurd? It seems that there were 'Suffragettes' long before the twentieth century."

Arrived at the Poets' Corner once again, they found that one of the vergers was just about to conduct a party "in behind the scenes," as Barbara called it. "Behind the scenes" includes the Chapel of Henry VII and that of Edward the Confessor, besides the many smaller ones which surround the choir.

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These little irregular chapels are crowded with all sorts of tombs, from those of the long effigy to those of the high canopy. Sometimes a husband and wife are represented on the tomb, their figures either kneeling side by side, or facing each other. Often the sons and daughters of the deceased are shown in quaint little reliefs extending all around the four sides of a monument. The figures are of alabaster or marble, and there are frequently fine brasses on them which bear the inscriptions. It is interesting to remember that the effigy or reclining figure of a Crusader always has the legs crossed.

A flight of black marble steps leads up to Henry VII's Chapel. Betty thought this reminded her a little of the choir of St. George's Chapel at Windsor,—and it is true that the two are somewhat similar. To build this memorial to himself, Henry VII tore down another chapel, and also an old house in which the poet Chaucer once lived. The loveliest feature of this chapel is the "fan-tracery" of the ceiling. Its delicacy and grace are very beautiful! There are wonderfully carved oak choir-stalls here also, each having been assigned to a certain Knight of the Order of the Bath, and decorated with the Knight's armorial bearings. Above each stall is a sword and a banner of faded colors. The tomb of the founder, Henry VII, and of his wife, Elizabeth of York, is in the center of the chapel, and surrounded by a brass screen. George II and several members of his family, Edward VI, Charles II, William and Mary, Queen Anne and her consort, and Cromwell, are all buried near by—most of them having no monuments. In the north aisle of this chapel is the tomb of the great Queen Elizabeth, and just opposite it, in the south aisle, is that of her cousin and enemy, poor Mary Queen of Scots.

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Just behind the high altar is the chapel of Edward the Confessor, containing the once splendid, mediæval tomb of that sainted King. Its precious stones have been stolen away now, and the whole is covered by a gorgeous cloth put there at the coronation of Edward VII.

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"I've seen the tombs of so many kings and queens," exclaimed John, heaving a sigh, "that I truly can't take in any more. Why, they're so thick all around here that you can't move without bumping into three or four of 'em! There's Henry V, and overhead the shield and helmet he used at Agincourt; and here's Edward I, and Richard II, and Edward III, and Queen Eleanor, and Queen Philippa. Who was she? Oh, here's the old Coronation Chair, isn't it?" At sight of this, he once more became interested.

This famous old chair was made in the time of Edward I, and every English sovereign since that day has been crowned in it. Underneath the seat of the chair is kept the ancient Stone of Scone, which is said to have been used as a pillow by the patriarch Jacob. Edward I, in 1297, brought the stone from Scotland as a sign of his power over that country, and placed it in the Abbey. King Edward III's sword and shield-of-state stand beside the chair. There is something about these three objects which makes one stand long before them. They are so ancient—so deeply impressive—and embody so much of English history itself.

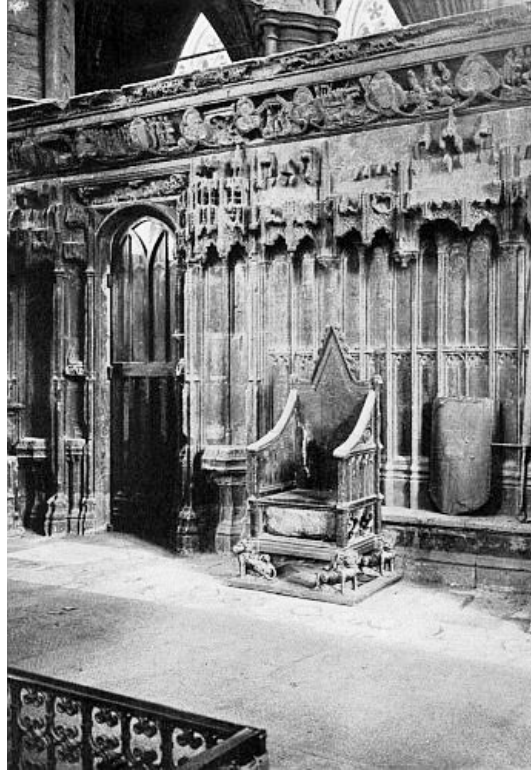
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In a little room above one of the smaller chapels are found the curious Wax Effigies.

These figures made of wax, and of life size, were carried at funerals, and were intended to look like the deceased, and dressed in their clothes. They are very ghastly, robed in their faded, torn garments, as each peers out from its glass-case. Queen Elizabeth, Charles II, William and Mary, Queen Anne, General Monk, William Pitt, and Lord Nelson are among those represented.

Betty stood before the figure of Queen Elizabeth, whose waxen face is pinched and worn, and really most horrible to look at.

“Didn’t she die propped up on the floor in all her State robes?” asked Betty.



“Oh, here’s the old Coronation Chair, isn’t it?”—Page 113.

“Yes,” was Mrs. Pitt’s reply. “It isn’t any wonder that she looked like that, is it? She is said to have been beautiful in her youth, but later, she became so very ugly that her ladies-in-waiting got false looking-glasses, for they didn’t dare to allow their mistress to see her wrinkles.”

After lingering for a short time in the grand old Abbey, they all mounted a bus and rode down to Bishopsgate Street to take lunch, at Crosby Hall.^[A] This splendid old example of a London mediæval palace (having had a varied career since its great days), is now turned into a restaurant, and our party took seats at a long table in what was once the Banqueting-hall.

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“This is really a very historic old house,” declared Mrs. Pitt. “It was built in 1470 by Alderman Sir John Crosby, who died about the time it was finished, and it passed into the hands of the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III. Here, that cruel man had the news of the successful murder of the little Princes in the Tower, and here held his great feasts—in this room, I suppose.”

They were all looking about at the lofty hall with its carved oak ceiling, minstrels’ gallery, stained-glass windows, and large fireplace.

“This has recently all been restored, and I suppose it gives us a very slight idea of its past glory. Later on, Sir Thomas More lived here, and then Philip Sidney’s sister, the Countess of Pembroke, owned it. Shakespeare mentions it in his play of ‘Richard III,’ you know. In mediæval times, there were many great houses in London (Baynard’s Castle and Cold Harbour foremost among them), but all except a little part of Crosby Hall have disappeared. The owners of these houses, the wealthy nobles, lived in great magnificence, having four, six, or even eight hundred servants. Just fancy how large the establishments must have been! In Queen Elizabeth’s day, the French Ambassador was lodged here with four hundred retainers. At that time, there were more great palaces in London than there were in Verona, Florence, Venice, and Genoa, all counted together; but instead of being situated on the Grand Canal or in a spacious square, the English palaces stood in narrow, filthy streets,

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surrounded by the poor hovels of the common people.—It seems to me that our lunch is a long time coming,” she commented.

Adjoining Crosby Hall is a very interesting church—St. Helen’s, which has been called the “Westminster Abbey of the City,” because of famous citizens of “the City,” who are buried there. Among them is Sir Thomas Gresham, the great merchant of Queen Elizabeth’s reign, who founded the Royal Exchange, and did much to increase London’s trade. The church—dating mostly from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century—is very quaint and old. It consists of two parallel naves, divided by pillars.

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“The church was once connected with an ancient nunnery which covered the whole square outside. The naves were originally quite separated by a partition; one side was used by the nuns, and the other by the regular members of the parish. Shakespeare once lived in St. Helen’s parish, and is charged up on the church books with a sum of something over five pounds.” Mrs. Pitt gave this information as they walked about, gradually growing accustomed to the dim light.

“See here, John,” whispered Philip; “here’s something interesting. It’s this little square hole in the wall, which is called the ‘nuns’ squint.’ That woman, whom I suppose is the caretaker, has just been telling me what that means. You see, the nunnery was on this side, or, at any rate, the part where the nuns slept. When a nun was dying, the rest would carry her to that little ‘squint,’ and in that way she could look through to the church and see the altar.”

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Leaving St. Helen’s Place, and passing the picturesque, narrow façade (or front) of Crosby Hall, Mrs. Pitt took them along Cheapside, one of the most crowded streets of the city. The amount of traffic is tremendous there, and it is said that sometimes teams are held eight hours in the alleys before they can get out. They noted Bow Church, and the site of John Gilpin’s house at the corner of Paternoster Row.

“Oh, is that the John Gilpin in Cowper’s poem?” cried John, excitedly. “He lived here, did he? And where did he ride to?”

“I believe he went out through Tottenham and Edmonton. Mrs. Gilpin was at the Bell Inn at Edmonton when she saw her husband fly by. Over the entrance at the Bell is such a funny picture of the scene! They don’t know just where he went, do they, Mother?” inquired Barbara.

“No, I rather think not,” was Mrs. Pitt’s laughing answer. “Let’s walk through Paternoster Row, now. The little bookshops are so old and quaint! For centuries the booksellers have been loyal to this locality, but I hear that they are beginning to move elsewhere now. Here’s Amen Corner, and Ave Maria Lane is not far away. In London, there’s a reason for the name of almost every street. The monks, in walking from the river to St. Paul’s, used to be telling their beads and reciting their prayers all the while. You see, the Ave Maria was said at this point, and back at the corner came an Amen. In olden days, the makers of rosaries and paternosters had their shops in the little street we have just left, as well as the booksellers. The streets leading off Cheapside show what business was carried on there; for instance, on the south side are Bread, Candles, Soap, Fish, and Money-changing; and on the north side are Wood, Milk, Iron, Honey, and Poultry. By the by, the poet Milton was born in Bread Street. The ironmongers congregated in Ironmongers Lane; the vintners or wine-merchants were in the Vintry; and the makers of hosiery in Hosiery Lane. Now we’ll go to Chancery Lane, and pay a short visit to the Record Office, for there are some things there which I want you to see.”

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The Public Record Office is a modern building, constructed for the purpose of keeping the valuable State documents and archives, which, during the present reign, have been moved from the Tower and the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey. The different departments of government are continually handing over to the Record Office papers which are no longer needed for daily use. Among the intensely interesting treasures of this museum are the logbooks of the Royal Navy, and dispatches from Marlborough, Wellington, and others. There are State papers of Wolsey, and Thomas Cromwell, and letters of all the kings and queens, as well as of Chaucer, the Black Prince, Raleigh at the Tower, Lady Jane Grey as Queen, Sir Philip Sidney on his death-bed, and many, many others of equal interest.

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“Why, you’d need a whole week to see all these!” exclaimed Betty, looking up from her examination of a paper containing the confessions of Guy Fawkes.

Mrs. Pitt glanced at her quickly. She was excited, and her face was flushed.

“Yes, and we must not stay any longer, for we have seen enough for one day. I want to show you just one more thing before we go, however, and this is more wonderful than all the rest. See, it is the great Doomsday Book!”

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Carefully kept under glass, in cases furnished with dark shades to pull over when the books are not being examined, are the two large volumes of what is known as the "Doomsday Book." On the ancient, yellowed parchment pages, and in strange old characters, are the records, made at the time of William the Conqueror, of the disposal of the lands of England among his Norman nobles. It is simply impossible to believe that it is authentic,—that such a very ancient relic really can exist!

They soon felt tired and ready to leave any further examination of the papers until another visit, however. There are times when all sight-seers, no matter how enthusiastic, come to a point where for that day they can appreciate no more. So our party adjourned to a little tea-shop in Regent Street, and afterwards, to make a few purchases at that fascinating shop,—Liberty's.

CHAPTER TEN

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RICHMOND AND HAMPTON COURT PALACE

"Well, I really don't care much how long the boat is in coming," exclaimed Betty delightedly. "It's such fun to watch all the other boats going up and down the river, and to look up at busy Westminster Bridge!"

Our friends were at the little landing in the shadow of the above-mentioned bridge, awaiting the arrival of the steamer which was to carry them to Kew Gardens. It was early morning, and the distant roar of the traffic from the great bridge above reached them together with the shrill whistles of all the different river craft.

"Hey! There goes *Sir Walter Raleigh* under the bridge there! I can see the name just as plainly! And,—well I never!—there come *Lady Jane Grey* and *Sir Thomas More*! Do all the boats have names like that? Wonder how the great people would like it if they knew! *Sir Thomas* is an express; he's on official business this morning, and isn't going to stop! Now! here comes *Queen Elizabeth* herself! Nothing less than a queen for me! I hope we'll take her!" John cried excitedly.

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The *Queen Elizabeth* did prove to be the Kew and Hampton Court boat, so when the gangway was put across, the five went on board and took some comfortable seats in the bow.

"Now, there are a number of things which I wish to point out to you right away," remarked Mrs. Pitt, "so please be very attentive for a few moments. Just as soon as we are started and go under Westminster Bridge here, you will have the most beautiful view of the Houses of Parliament, on your right. There! See if the great building isn't graceful from here! And isn't its river-front imposing with all the statues of the sovereigns!"

"Now! Quickly! Look to the left, and see the building with the gateway and square, blackened towers and battlements. That's Lambeth Palace," she added, "which has been the residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury (or the 'Primates of England,' as they are called) for six hundred years. It's a delightful old place, with its fine library, and its several court-yards! It's very historic as well, for in one of those towers, according to some people, the Lollards or followers of the religious reformer, Wycliffe, are said to have been tortured. Queen Elizabeth's favorite, the unfortunate Earl of Essex, was imprisoned there, too."

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"Here on our left was the famous amusement-park, Vauxhall, which was so popular in the eighteenth century. Some day when you read Thackeray's novels you will find it mentioned. There on the right is Chelsea, where was Sir Thomas More's home. I think his grounds bordered on the river, and he used to walk down to the bank, step into his boat, and his son would row him to the city. At his house there he was often visited by Henry VIII, Holbein, and the great Dutch scholar, Erasmus. Just behind those trees is Cheyne Walk, where Thomas Carlyle's house still stands. (There's the old Chelsea Church, which is most interesting, and Chelsea Hospital for old pensioners.) There have been many famous residents of Chelsea in more recent days; among them George Eliot, the great novelist, who died there; Edward Burne-Jones, the artist; Rossetti, the poet; Swinburne, Meredith, and Whistler. There! now I'll leave you in peace to enjoy your boat-ride, and the music."

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They now came to a part of the river which is neither especially historic nor attractive, and the young people amused themselves for a while in talking, or listening to the rather crude music of some old musicians on the boat. It was not long, however, before the banks again became green and beautiful, and they passed odd little villages, and comfortable country-houses, whose smooth terraces slope down to the river. On the arrival of the boat

at Kew, they went on shore and walked towards the celebrated Gardens.

"Have Kew Gardens any story or history to them, or are they just famous because of their flowers?" inquired Betty, as they passed through the gateway, and caught glimpses of bright blossoms within.

"Oh, rather!" replied Mrs. Pitt. "You'll find plenty of history about here, Betty. Let's look at the flowers first, though."

Kew Gardens are most immaculately cared for. Wide gravel-paths stretch between the wonderful lawns, which are dotted with flower-beds of all shapes. There are hot-houses containing tropical plants, and in the "Rock Garden" is a pond where there are pelicans and other strange water birds. The party spent an hour very happily in wandering about, admiring the beautiful views as they went. Best of all were the rhododendrons, which were glorious at this season in their riot of pink, deep rose color, and lavender. Betty, who dearly loved flowers, could hardly be enticed away from that fascinating spot, and was only persuaded at mention of the old palace, which she had not yet seen.

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When she reached it, she was rather disappointed. Kew Palace is not large, and altogether, is quite unlike a palace, although it was the favorite residence of George III and his queen, who died there in 1818.

"It just looks like any old red-brick Tudor house, which hasn't any history at all. Even its rooms are all empty, and it isn't the kind of a palace I like!" Betty declared in injured tones.

"Well, cheer up, Betty; we're going to Hampton Court Palace soon, and I guess that'll suit you all right. Is this where we take the tram, Mrs. Pitt? There's one coming now!" John ran out into the road and gesticulated frantically, so that the motorman would be sure to stop. That dignified English personage looked rather surprised, but John did not care. He liked to take the lead, and to make himself useful whenever it was possible.

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The ride was not quite as enjoyable as they had hoped, because of a very high wind. Upon their perch at the top of the tram, it required about all their attention to keep their hats and other belongings from blowing away. On the whole, they were quite content to get off at the bridge at Richmond, and walk up the long hill to the famous Star and Garter Inn.

"This hill seems longer than ever to-day, Mother," Barbara complained. "When we reach that lovely surprise view (you know where I mean), let's sit down and admire it while we rest a bit."

"Very well, we will," her mother panted; "we're nearly there now."

The view to which Barbara and her mother referred proved to be really very beautiful. On one side of the hill is a little park from which a precipice descends to the river. Looking through an opening in the luxuriant foliage of the trees (an opening which takes the place of a picture-frame), one sees a glorious view of the green valley below, through which the lazy Thames winds dreamily; and if the day is clear, Windsor Castle may just be discerned in the distance.

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"Philip, you and John go and engage one of those drivers over opposite the hotel, to take us for a little drive in the Park; as soon as I order our luncheon, I'll be out again to go along." With that, Mrs. Pitt disappeared for a few moments into the Star and Garter.

Richmond Park is a favorite resort for tourists, and driving and bicycle parties. It contains some fine old trees, and a great many deer which add to its attractiveness. Mrs. Pitt directed the coachman not to drive about much, however, but to show them two points of interest.

"This is the 'King's Mound,'" she observed, as the horses slowed down. "Yes, that little low mound of earth just this side of the clump of trees. I'll admit that it looks uninteresting enough; but it is known as the spot where Henry VIII stood while listening for the sound of the gun at the Tower, which told him of the execution of Anne Boleyn."

"Ugh!" Betty interposed, in disgusted tones, giving a little shudder. "Think how he must have felt! Horrid old thing!"

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"Don't be silly, Betty!" retorted John. "I guess a little thing like that wouldn't trouble him!"

Almost in the center of the Park is a house called White Lodge, which has long been a royal residence. It is approached by an avenue, which was the scene of Jeanie Deans's interview with Queen Caroline, as Scott describes it in his "Heart of Midlothian."

Their lunch was quickly over, and they were again on their way down the long hill. In the

town of Richmond, they mounted another tram for the forty-minute ride to Hampton Court.

"If we only had had a bit more time," Mrs. Pitt apologized, "I should have shown you what still remains of the famous old palace of Richmond. Henry VIII and Elizabeth both held their courts there often, and there the latter died in 1603. The palace was destroyed by order of Parliament in 1649; only a small part of it was spared, and in that the widow of Charles I, poor Queen Henrietta Maria, was allowed to live. Are you getting plenty of history, Betty, my dear?"

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"Oh, yes, but I'm always ready for more," smiled that young lady in response.

The tram set them down very near the great palace of Hampton Court. They went quickly through the entrance-gates of wrought iron, and walked towards the building itself. This West Front is as Wolsey left it, and is made of the old crimson bricks, with here and there a black one. Passing under the gatehouse, they came into the Green or Base Court, and here they paused to look about them.

"You'll remember that the great and powerful Cardinal Wolsey built Hampton Court," suggested Mrs. Pitt. "He lived in regal state, and had almost as large a retinue of servants and followers as the King himself. To gratify his great love for splendor and luxury, he built this magnificent residence for himself. He was in need of a home a little removed from the city, where he could rest and enjoy the fresh air. Yet it was also accessible to London, for he could be rowed up the river in his barge. Wolsey's two great ambitions—wealth and power—were both gratified, and for a while all went well; but time brought the King's displeasure, and it was he who took possession at Hampton Court after the complete disgrace which led to the death of the Cardinal. Henry VIII tore down some of Wolsey's buildings, and put up new ones in their stead; and other monarchs added portions also; for instance, the huge State Apartments were erected under the supervision of Sir Christopher Wren, and by order of King William III. We shall see all these later on. Have you noticed those little oriel windows of the gatehouse? They are the originals of Wolsey's palace, and I think this court here is also much the same as he built it. In his day there were pretty latticed windows in these surrounding buildings, a grass plot in the center, and around these narrow passages Wolsey probably rode on his ass."

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"Ass!" cried John. "What for? With all his money, couldn't he even have a horse?"

"Oh, rather!" Mrs. Pitt laughed. "No doubt Wolsey would have liked one, but he was wise enough to always follow custom in such matters as had to do with his outward appearance and attitude. All religious men rode on asses; it was the habit of the day. Now, come this way, and see the Great Hall. Oh, Philip! Please fetch me my umbrella; I left it on the step in the court, there!"

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Leading into the second or Clock Court, is Anne Boleyn's gateway. Under this is a broad flight of stairs which takes one to the Great Hall, erected by Henry VIII, probably on the site of Wolsey's earlier hall. It is a grand old room with a fine timber roof, and complete with its dais or raised platform at the end, its minstrels' gallery over the entrance doors, its old tapestries, stags' heads, and suits of armor, and its windows mostly filled with modern stained-glass. Out of the hall are two smaller apartments, which also contain good tapestries. From here, the visitor again descends to Anne Boleyn's gateway.

"What a funny old clock!" exclaimed Betty, spying it, up above on the tower under which they had just passed. "It seems to be so mixed up, somehow, that I can't tell the time by it."

"It is curious! It's Henry VIII's Astronomical Clock; it has all sorts of appliances and strange attachments. That's why you can't read it. It was recently repaired and set going again."

"The King's Grand Staircase" is broad, stately, and quite as impressive as its name, and this leads to the pompous State Apartments. These great square rooms, one opening out of another, seemed endless to the young people, and contained no attractions for them. The walls are covered with pictures, some of which are fine, but there are so many which are very similar that even Sir Peter Lely, Holbein, and Van Dyck become hopelessly tiresome. These rooms also contain some old furniture which is interesting, but on the whole, the best thing about them is the ever charming view of the gardens from the windows. The visitor may enter one tiny room called "Wolsey's Closet," which is deeply impressive with its paneled walls and ancient ceiling. The very atmosphere of the sixteenth century still seems to linger here, and one can easily believe that nothing herein has been changed since the great Cardinal used it daily. Near this is a long gallery which is supposed to be haunted by the ghost of Queen Catharine Howard. After the dullness of the State Apartments, this possessed great interest for the boys, and they lingered here as long as Mrs. Pitt would allow. They were forced to come away disappointed, however, without having heard even

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one little scream.

“You’d better spend the night here, John,” remarked Philip, in teasing tones. “That’s the proper time to see and hear ghosts.” John decided not to wait, however.

Of all the one thousand rooms of the great palace, they saw only one more, and that was Henry VIII’s Gothic Chapel, gorgeous in its fine carving and gilding, and in which the magnificent ceremony of the baptism of Prince Edward, afterwards Edward VI, was held.

The gardens of Hampton Court are perhaps better known and enjoyed than the palace itself. They are very extensive, and are laid out in the French style. Directly before the long front of William III’s addition, is a great round basin with a fountain, and beyond stretches the “Long Canal,”—a straight and narrow artificial pond, bordered by very beautiful trees. Then there is the “Home Park” on either side of the canal; here Henry VIII and Catharine Howard probably wandered often during their long honeymoon at Hampton Court; and here William III was riding on the day when he was thrown from his horse and killed.

There is what is called the “Wilderness,”—in reality a maze—which was greatly enjoyed by the party; and nearer the palace, again, is the tennis-court, where that game has been played for three centuries and a half. Some of the players here have been Henry VIII, the Earl of Leicester, Charles I, Charles II, and the present King, Edward VII, when he was Prince of Wales.

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“And didn’t that American, Pettitt, play here?” inquired John. “He won the World’s Championship in England, you know. Yes, I thought it was here, though the word Hampton Court never meant much to me before to-day.”

There is still the remarkable Hampton Court Vine, the fame of which has spread so far. The vine fills a whole greenhouse, and one of its branches is a hundred and fourteen feet long. The attendant told Betty that the crop consists of about eight hundred bunches, each one weighing a pound. Having duly marveled at this, they explored Queen Mary’s lovely bower or arbor, where that Queen used to sit with her ladies at the tapestry-frames.

“Dear me, let’s go back now!” said Betty. “I’m sure we’ve been miles over these grounds.”

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So they walked along the paths where Henry VIII made love to Anne Boleyn and Catharine Howard, where Queen Elizabeth took her morning walks, and where Pope, Swift, Addison, and Walpole wandered in more recent days.

“I think I haven’t mentioned Cromwell to you in connection with Hampton Court, but he must not be forgotten, for he came here after he was made Protector, and lived with as much pomp and splendor as any king. Every time I visit this palace I marvel at the amount of history with which it is connected, and at the number of scenes for which it was the setting!”

As she spoke, Mrs. Pitt was leading the way to the railroad-station. A London train came along very soon, fortunately, but they ran up and down in vain looking for seats in their customary third-class compartment. These were all crowded, the following day being a “bank holiday,” so when the guard at last came to their rescue, he put them in a first-class compartment. This greatly interested John and Betty, as they had not seen one before.



“It isn’t so very different, after all,” commented Betty. “The cushions are a little nicer, and there’s carpet on the floor, but that’s the only change from an ordinary third-class carriage.”

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“I know it,” said Philip. “And most English people never think of traveling first-class except on a long journey; for it really is very little better, and the price is so ruinously dear!”

CHAPTER ELEVEN

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STRATFORD-ON-AVON

“We’re going to stay in a really, truly old inn at last, aren’t we!” Betty gave a sigh of satisfaction and walked rapidly along by Mrs. Pitt’s side, as that lady led the way from the station at Stratford to the famous Red Horse Hotel.

“Stratford is exactly like any other little English town,” John was commenting to Philip. “There are plenty of new houses made of shiny, red bricks, and all put close together in blocks, with their tiny lawns and gardens in front. I suppose they build that way even in the small towns, because you haven’t as much room to spread out as we have in America. Too bad, though, I say! Makes a little town look just like a big city, only smaller. I thought Stratford would be different!” His tones betrayed not a little disappointment.

As they came into the central and older part of the town, however, even John was forced to admit that it was “different,” after all. Along Stratford’s narrow, clean little streets stand many old houses adorned with great oak timbers, quaint inscriptions, and carvings; and quicker than all else, the sight of these, remaining here and there between the more modern structures, makes one feel the antiquity of the place. These houses totter a little, and lean their upper stories over the street,—perhaps with a kind of curiosity to see better the strange and more and more startling scenes which the centuries bring forth. For instance, what must these ancient houses, which perchance witnessed the passing of some splendid pageant of the “spacious times of Queen Elizabeth,” think of the bustle and prosperous commercial air which the town has gradually taken on? What of the sight-seers whose automobiles go tearing along, uttering weird and frightful sounds? No wonder the old houses stand on tiptoe and bend farther and farther over the street in their amazement and horror!

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The young people were delighted with the odd little Red Horse Hotel. As it was market-day, the wide street before it was crowded with people, and down the middle was a row of queer, covered wagons, in which the farmers bring their produce, and which are used as stalls on arrival at the market-place. The little hotel is severely plain and square, and has a passage leading into an old-time court-yard. Inside, it has quaint little rooms filled with antique furniture, narrow corridors, and uneven floors, with here a step up, and there two steps down. Leaving their luggage in the rooms assigned to them, the party immediately set out for “the Birthplace,” as all Stratford people invariably call the famous Shakespeare house on Henley Street.

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“Is that it!” gasped John, as they stood on the opposite side of the way and gazed across at the first home of the great Poet. “Why, I didn’t suppose it was as big as that! And it doesn’t look old a bit!”

Shakespeare’s birthplace has been too often pictured, and is far too familiar to all to need any description given it here. Perhaps it does seem rather larger than we imagined, and the outside certainly looks surprisingly strong and new.



**“Why I didn’t suppose it was as big as that!”—Page
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“But you know it now belongs to the nation,” Mrs. Pitt explained, “and is always kept in perfect condition. The last restoration was finished only about fifty or sixty years ago. Although the house was so completely renewed, the greatest care was used to make it look as nearly as possible as it did at the time of Shakespeare’s birth in 1564. That window above the entrance, with the little diamond panes, is the original, and is in the room in which the Poet was born.”

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Going under the old porch and through the door with its high threshold, our friends found themselves in the family living-room of the house. It is low and rather dark, and has whitewashed walls and an earthen floor. This was in all probability the kitchen and dining-room as well, and one is reminded of the fact by a huge fireplace which juts out into the room. In olden times this would have been filled with great pots and kettles hanging over the fire on cranes. The chimney is deep enough and wide enough to have two little seats within it—one on either side. John quickly bent down and seated himself where he could look straight up the chimney and see a square patch of blue sky.

When Mrs. Pitt saw him, she smiled and said, “No doubt, Shakespeare himself, when he was a small boy, often sat right there with his brothers and sisters. It must have been very pleasant on cold winter evenings, to creep into these ‘inglenooks,’ as they were called, beside the great blazing fire, and tell stories. I think the children should have felt themselves very lucky to have such delightfully warm quarters!”

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From a small entry at the rear of this room, the narrow winding stairs lead to the floor above. Before going up, Mrs. Pitt wrote their names in the huge Visitors’ Book. Betty was much pleased to find, while carelessly turning its pages, the name of a girl friend who had been in England the previous summer.

“How queer that I should see Evelyn’s name!” she exclaimed; “but I guess almost everybody who visits England comes to this house.”

“Aye! We ‘ave thousands of visitors ‘ere every year, Miss, and the most of ‘em are Americans, it do appear to me! They do be powerful fond o’ Shakespeare!” The attendant shook his head knowingly as he gave Betty this information.

One of the most interesting rooms in the whole world is that chamber on the second floor in which the great Shakespeare was born. In itself, it is not in any way remarkable; it contains but a chair or two, and an old table, which holds a bust of the Poet. But its plaster walls, low ceiling, and even its window-panes, are inscribed with the names of great people,—poets, authors, statesmen, men of all countries, occupations, and beliefs,—who have journeyed here to pay their tribute to the greatest of all poets and writers.

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“Whenever I meet people who believe that Lord Bacon or any other man wrote Shakespeare’s plays, I never discuss the question with them, for I have no arguments to withstand their claims,” said Mrs. Pitt intently. “I only remind myself that if such men as Browning, Thackeray, Kean, Scott, and Carlyle, who have all left their signatures here, believed that the ‘immortal Shakespeare’ wrote his own plays, I can feel safe in believing so, too. Therefore I want you to understand, children, that you are standing in the room where Shakespeare was born, and be glad all your lives when you remember that you have seen it.”

The other room on the second floor—a kind of attic—contains an important picture of

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Shakespeare. It is called the "Stratford Portrait," as it was discovered in that native town, and it is now thought to have been painted in the eighteenth century, from a bust.

The Shakespeare house is double. In the other half, which is now a museum, John Shakespeare, the father of the Poet, used to have his shop and carry on his trade, or trades, for, like many people at that time, he had several. This museum now contains many relics of Shakespeare, which are more or less authentic, as well as a large number of First Editions of his plays. The young people were interested in an old desk, much scratched and marred, which it is supposed that the Poet used when at the Guild School. It is not clear whether it was when he was a pupil there, or at the time he was "Junior Master," as he is thought to have been by some. The desk is long and narrow, having but one little opening into which a hand could be reached to pull out the books. It occurred to John that it would have been a very convenient place to hide apples or pickles, or any such forbidden articles, as the master could never even suspect their existence in that dark interior.

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"You will see where that desk once stood," remarked Mrs. Pitt, "for later, I shall show you the old Guild Hall, and the room where the Stratford boys had their lessons. Now, we are all hungry, and we'll go straight to the Shakespeare Hotel and have some luncheon. Don't you all approve that plan?"

Before leaving "the Birthplace," it must be remembered that there exists a really very picturesque old English garden. In it were planted, about fifty years ago, a quantity of the flowers which are mentioned in the plays of Shakespeare, and the result is a very lovely mass of brightly-colored, old-fashioned flowers.

At the Shakespeare Hotel, they were served a typically English luncheon of mutton, peas seasoned with mint, greens, and afterwards a "gooseberry tart." John and Betty were in gales of laughter when the shy, rosy-cheeked maid asked if they would have some "jammed fingers."

"What in the world does she mean?" inquired Betty, between her giggles.

"I don't know, I am sure. Do you, Barbara? Oh, yes I do! Probably she means 'jam fingers.' I have heard the name. Please bring us some," Mrs. Pitt requested.

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The "jammed fingers" proved to be long strips of pastry with jam between. They were very good, and John and Betty much preferred them to the sour gooseberries, to which they had not taken at all kindly.

The Shakespeare Hotel is much like its neighbor, the Red Horse, except for the fact that each room bears the name of one of Shakespeare's plays.

"How lovely it would be to sleep in the 'Romeo and Juliet' room,—if there is one!" Betty sighed. "I almost wish we had planned to stay here, although I do want to write letters on the table in Washington Irving's room at the Red Horse!"

Very near the Shakespeare Hotel is what is known as the "John Harvard House,"^[B]—more accurately, the girlhood home of the mother of John Harvard. It is high and narrow, but fully as picturesque as is the nearby Tudor House, which is large and square. Both are excellent examples of Elizabethan houses, and are very quaint and pretty. The lower floor of the Tudor House is a most fascinating shop, in which one may find a really astonishing number of post-cards, books, pictures, and little souvenirs relating to Shakespeare.

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"Seems to me, everything, from the hotel to the cheapest post-card, has the name of Shakespeare attached to it somehow!"

"You are quite right, John!" agreed Mrs. Pitt. "The modern town has grown up and literally lives upon Shakespeare! Without him, and the immense number of visitors which his memory brings, Stratford could hardly exist at all, as there are no factories or important industries here."

A long, beautiful afternoon of sight-seeing followed. First, came a visit to the site of Shakespeare's home of New Place, to see the old foundations. As they stood looking down at the few pathetic remains, Mrs. Pitt explained how the house happened to be pulled down.

"It was shameful!" she cried indignantly. "I dislike to think of the man who was responsible for its destruction. The house was an old one, even in Shakespeare's day, as it was probably erected in 1490 by Sir Hugh Clopton. A historian named Leland of the sixteenth century says this about New Place and its surroundings: 'There is a right goodly chappell, in a fayre street towards the south ende of the towne dedicated to the Trinitye; this chappell was newly re-edified by one Hugh Clopton, Mayor of London; this Hugh Clopton builded also by the north side of this chappell a praty house of brick and tymbre,

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wherein he lived in his latter dayes and dyed.’ To appreciate that fully, you should see the queer old spelling! Well, to continue, Shakespeare left New Place to his eldest daughter, Susanna Hall, and I don’t know just how long it remained in the family. However, at length it was in the possession of the Rev. Francis Gastrell, who cut down Shakespeare’s celebrated mulberry-tree because too many visitors troubled him by coming there to see it. In 1759, he became so angry in a quarrel about the taxes imposed upon New Place, that he had it torn down and the material sold. I can never forgive him for that! It seems to me that I never knew of anger having led to a more outrageously unjust and deplorable act!” Mrs. Pitt’s eyes flashed, and her face was flushed from her feeling of what one might almost be pardoned for terming “righteous indignation.”

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Leaving New Place, they turned into Chapel Lane, which borders on one side the grounds formerly belonging to the Poet’s estate.

“Let me give you just a little description of this street in Shakespeare’s time,” Mrs. Pitt reflected. “You must know that sanitary conditions were fearful then, and that Stratford was as bad, if not worse, than other towns in that respect. Even as late as 1769, when Garrick visited here, he considered it ‘the most dirty, unseemly, ill-paved, wretched-looking town in all Britain.’ The people had absolutely no idea of cleanliness. In Stratford, there were six places where it was lawful to dump rubbish,—right in the street! Just fancy! Sometimes these dumps prevented a man from making his way about the town. Chapel Lane was considered the worst part of the whole place, for besides the fact that there was a dump here, the neighbors in the vicinity seemed to be more than usually untidy and shiftless,—allowing their pigs to wander about loose, for instance. That was the kind of street which Shakespeare must have entered every time he left his own house. Think of it! Some people have, I believe, attributed his early death to the unhealthful conditions of his surroundings. Inside the homes, things were but little better. People laid rushes on the floor in the place of carpets, and these became filthy from dirt, mud, and other things which clung to them. Fresh rushes were brought but seldom. The churches were not often swept or cleaned, either. Once, when the roof of the Guild Chapel was being repaired, a certain man and his wife were appointed to sweep the interior and clear away the cobwebs. A widow used to sweep the market-place. She was provided with her utensils,—a shovel, broom-stick, and bundle of twigs—and was paid six shillings and eightpence a year. How carefully and how often do you suppose she swept? Dear me! I sometimes have wished that I had lived in Queen Elizabeth’s age, but when I remember some of the terrible circumstances of that time, I cannot be too thankful that I live in the twentieth century!”

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They had been standing before the old Guild Hall for some few minutes while Mrs. Pitt finished what she was saying. They now turned to admire and examine it more closely. It is a building of plaster and huge timbers, long and low, with a second story projecting slightly over the lower. The old hall on the ground floor is said to be where the boy Shakespeare first saw a play. A room just above it was the Grammar School, which Shakespeare probably attended for five years, and where the desk shown at “the Birthplace” may have been used by him.

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“It was rather different going to school in those days!” declared Mrs. Pitt. “The hours were very long, the lessons hard, and the masters strict, and not unwilling to use the rod for the slightest misdemeanor. There have been terrible stories of boys being much hurt, or even killed as a result of this practice. The pupils sat on narrow benches, their heavy books propped up before them on long tables. It must have been very hard to stay here in this dark room and listen to the master’s voice reciting monotonous Latin, while birds sang and the fair world of an English summer was just out of reach. If Shakespeare was a real boy,—and we think he was—he was surely describing his own feelings when he wrote the lines in ‘As You Like It’ about:

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‘The whining schoolboy, with his
satchel,
And shining morning face, creeping
like snail
Unwillingly to school,—”

As they had already walked a good deal that day, Mrs. Pitt found a carriage, and they drove to Trinity Church and the Shakespeare Memorial. On the way, the driver pointed out the home of Marie Corelli, the writer. It is an attractive, square house, which presents a very gay appearance, with a box of bright flowers on every window-ledge.

Trinity Church stands close beside the picturesque Avon. The waters flow gently against the rushes, making a soft music, and the breeze just stirs the leaves of the tall trees which keep guard over the graves in the church-yard. One feels something of the peace and quiet of Stoke Poges, but here the presence,—or, rather, the memory—of the great Shakespeare

hovers over all, and every one hastens inside to see the tomb.

The church is ancient—in part dating from the twelfth century—and it contains many interesting monuments, but somehow the whole seems like one huge memorial to Shakespeare. On the floor, at one side of the chancel, is the slab which marks the Poet's grave, and which bears the famous epitaph, said to have been written by himself:

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“Good frend; for Jesus' sake
forbeare
To digg the dust enclosed heare;
Bleste be y^e man y^e spares thes
stones,
And curst be he y^t moves my
bones.”

On the wall above the tomb is the monument,—a bust of Shakespeare, on which the original colors have recently been restored. Nearby are buried Anne Hathaway, Shakespeare's wife, his daughter, Susanna Hall, and her husband, and other members of the family.

For some minutes our party stood quietly looking over the altar-rail at the grave and its inscription, but finally, the arrival of some loud-voiced, laughing tourists, who conscientiously made fun of everything they saw, caused them to turn away.

Mrs. Pitt then called their attention to some of the stained-glass windows. “Two of them were given by Americans,” she said. “This one here pictures the Seven Ages of Man, which Shakespeare describes in ‘As You Like It,’ Do you see? Now come to the back of the church and look at the parish register, which contains the record of the baptism and burial of Shakespeare. Here it is.”

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A glass case holds this precious relic, and by studying carefully the quaint old writing, the words “Shakespeare” and the dates can be traced.

“Think how fortunate that this register was preserved!” exclaimed Mrs. Pitt, leaning over to examine it again. “Important records of births, marriages, and deaths, as well as notable events, were always kept in these books, and yet the people generally did not consider them of much value. The parchment leaves were often torn out and used to rebind schoolbooks, or to line a housewife's cooking-utensils! Fancy! Some vergers, however, recognized the great worth of these books and preserved them with care. Luckily the men of this church were of that type.”

Here the modern verger, in his flowing black gown, accosted them, and urged them to buy some of the Shakespeare Post-cards, at a shilling each. Having purchased several, and posted them then and there to various friends, they left the church and walked down the lovely path, shaded by arching lime-trees. They then drove to the Shakespeare Memorial, which also stands near the river.

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This large, irregular building of red brick and stone, with its one high tower, was erected in 1879. In it is a theatre where plays are given every spring, on the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, as well as at certain other times. The children were amused at seeing a rehearsal in progress on the stage.

“How absurd Lady Macbeth does look strutting about and clasping her hands, dressed in that black skirt, shirt-waist, and sailor hat!” Betty laughed.

In this Memorial Building are many photographs and paintings of celebrated actors and actresses in Shakespearean rôles, as well as a very fine library. There is so much to be seen here—so much detail—that our friends only took a very hasty look about, and then went up into the tower to see the view. Stretched out below them, the quaint little town of Stratford and the lovely green meadows through which the Avon flows, made a very effective picture!

It was now late afternoon, and the sun was getting lower and lower. They did not feel like doing any more real sight-seeing, yet it was still too delightful out-of-doors to return to the hotel, so Mrs. Pitt, who always had some fascinating plan ready, suggested that they walk through the Weir Brake.

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“What's that, Mother? You never took us there!” exclaimed Barbara.

“Didn't I? Well, I'll show it to you, and I am sure you will like it, too,” their mother promised. “Come on! We'll cross this little foot-bridge, and go along the opposite bank.”

The view of Holy Trinity Church from across the river is very charming. The luxuriant

foliage almost hides it except for the old gray spire, which rises most gracefully above the tree-tops. They strolled happily along over the rough field, Betty stopping sometimes to gather a few attractive blossoms to add to her bunch of wildflowers. The light was wonderfully soft and lovely, and the sun had gone down only to leave behind it a sky glorious in its tints of pink and lavender, with the deep blue still remaining above.

“Now, we’re coming to the Weir Brake!” announced Mrs. Pitt triumphantly. “Take care, Barbara! Don’t trip over that stump!”

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They followed their guide over a stile, across a field where the smell of new-mown hay was sweet, through some bars, and finally along a narrow, rough path on a steep bank close to the Avon. This was the beginning of the Weir Brake, where Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway may perhaps have done their courting, as Mrs. Pitt suggested.

The Avon is narrow at this point, and flows rather swiftly. The sunset sky was reflected in its waters, which were overshadowed by willow trees, rushes, and ferns. On the bank was a tangle of underbrush and wild flowers, and above, the great trees,—the elms, of which Shakespeare so often speaks. As they rambled on and on, the trees seemed to grow larger, and more and more gnarled and picturesque.

“Oh! Can’t you just see Titania and Oberon and all the other fairies dancing here and playing games about these trees! It looks exactly like a stage-setting for ‘As You Like It’ or ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream,’” exclaimed Betty, who was fascinated with what she saw. The evening was just dark enough to produce a weird but beautiful effect of shadows under the elm trees.

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“I’m rejoiced that it appeals to you so, Betty!” cried Mrs. Pitt. “That’s just as I always feel! It seems as though you could actually touch spots of which Shakespeare must have been thinking when he wrote certain passages. And it is a fact that he did often have this or similar places in mind; for, although the scene of ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’ was supposed to be in Greece, Shakespeare allowed his characters and his entire background to be as absolutely English as he was himself. You know that in olden times, the Forest of Arden covered much of Warwickshire; even these old trees with which we are now surrounded, are remnants of that splendid woodland which is so familiar to us through Shakespeare. It was surely in just such a scene that Titania and the other fairies danced, and where Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, and the rest came to practice their play,—those so-called Athenians, who were so exactly like Stratford tradesmen of Shakespeare’s day. Certainly it was under just such trees that Hermia, and Helena, Lysander, and Demetrius wandered!

“And see there where those branches touch the water,” she soon continued; “might not that have been the very place where poor Ophelia lost her life? Listen!

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‘There is a willow grows aslant a
brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the
glassy stream;’

Isn’t that a perfect description of this very spot? And then:

‘I know a bank whereon the wild
thyme blows,
Where oxslips and the nodding violet
grows,—’

Just see the violets all about us here! There are the ‘pale cowslips,’ too! Do you see? Oh, it’s wonderful,—wonderful to find so many of the very flowers which Shakespeare loved and talked of so much!—the daisy, the musk-rose and woodbine! There’s some right by your foot, Betty. But come, come, we really must go now! We’ll go back by the field above, where it is not so steep and dark. Come, John!”

So they hurriedly retraced their steps toward the town. In skirting the fields on the hill-top, they once had to pick their way with some difficulty through holes in bristling hedges, and Mrs. Pitt and the girls were forced to run away from a buck, but these were little incidents to which they were all quite equal, and they arrived at the Red Horse Hotel, nothing daunted, just as the dinner-gong sounded loudly.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

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A DAY IN WARWICKSHIRE

Betty did spend the evening "writing letters in Washington Irving's room at the Red Horse," as she had planned. It was in that quaint, tiny parlor that Irving wrote his well-known paper about Stratford-on-Avon, and perhaps Betty hoped to benefit by the literary atmosphere. At any rate, the letters were accomplished with great ease and rapidity, after her curiosity had been satisfied by an examination of the room.

Washington Irving's armchair is there, and the old poker with which he is said to have tended the fire. On the walls hang the pictures of a number of actors and actresses who have played Shakespearean parts. Except for these, the room differs very little from the rest of the inn. About nine-thirty, the children started up to bed, Betty, enthusiastic at the prospect of a high four-poster, which "you really have to run and give a jump to get into." She and Barbara did not stay long awake to enjoy it, however, for it seemed as though their heads had hardly touched the pillows before the maid was calling them, and the bright sun was pouring in at the windows.

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Very early they set out to walk "across the fields to Anne." The little village of Shottery, where stands the cottage known all the world over as "Anne Hathaway's," is only about a mile distant from Stratford, and our party gayly took the path through the fields,—perhaps the very one over which Shakespeare trod when he was Anne's lover. This led them first past the "back-yards" of Stratford, then over a stile and through the green meadows, where daisies and cowslips abound. As they went along, Mrs. Pitt repeated to them the following little verse from Shakespeare's "Winter's Tale":

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

The boys learned this, and half-chanted, half-sang it over and over while they all kept time to the rhythm.

"There's Shottery, I guess!" Betty called, interrupting the singers, as she caught sight of a pretty little group of thatched-roofed cottages. "It seems a very short 'mile-a,' doesn't it!"

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Anne Hathaway's cottage is even more picturesque than its neighbors, or does this only seem so because of the associations which it has for all? Every one knows the picture of the cottage. One end stands close to the country road, and in front of it, behind a green hedge, is the garden. Growing on the cottage walls are at least half a dozen different kinds of roses, as well as honeysuckle and jasmine, which clamber way up and mingle with the heavy thatch. The old casement-windows with their thick panes of glass were swung open to let in the morning's fresh air. A young girl dressed in pink and carrying a broom, appeared on the doorstep as Philip opened the gate. She was evidently rather surprised to see such early visitors, but she said they might go in. While Mrs. Pitt paused to speak with her, Betty, who had already rushed inside, called out: "Here's the old settle! I know it from its pictures!"

Sure enough, there it was, close beside the great fireplace,—we hope just where it has always been ever since Anne Hathaway and Shakespeare sat there together.

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"But, Mother, is that really the same bench, and did Anne truly live here?" questioned the all too matter-of-fact Barbara.

"My dear daughter," began Mrs. Pitt, feigning great severity; "banish that thought immediately! Just for one little hour we are going to know that Anne did live here,—that Will said 'Will you?' and Anne said 'I will,' right on this very bench. I quite refuse to listen to any doubts on the subject for to-day! You write our names in the book, please, Philip. I'm going to rest myself here in Anne's rocking-chair!"

The girl with the broom looked at her visitor in a puzzled way, and began,— "But, lady, I brought that chair here with me only—" But Mrs. Pitt quickly interrupted her, asking some trifling question. Her illusions were not to be disturbed, it seemed, and the girl beat a retreat.

"Well, Mother," said Philip, "you aren't the only one who has ever believed in the house! Here in this old Visitors' Book are the names of Dickens, Longfellow, Holmes, General



“Did Anne truly live here?”—Page 164.

“Never mind the rest, Phil; if General Grant said so, it’s true! He knew what he was talking about!” And so John settled the question.

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A flag-stone floor is all this little room can boast of, and a low ceiling of huge timbers, but it has an air of homelikeness and cosy comfort, nevertheless. At the windows are flowers which nod to their cousins out in the garden; some gray knitting usually lies on the table; and there is the huge fireplace with all its cranes, different hooks, pots and kettles; and the crowning glory of all, the old oak settle, upon which every visitor religiously seats himself.

“Isn’t there any upstairs?” demanded John, before many minutes.

“Oh, yes! May we go up, please?” Mrs. Pitt asked of the attendant. “Yes, thank you; I know the way, and I’ll be careful.”

So they climbed the rickety stairs, and saw a little bedroom under the eaves, in which stands an old, very forlorn-looking “four-poster.”

“I’m so glad that tiresome, truthful person let us come up alone,” said Mrs. Pitt, panting. “If she had come, too, I could not have explained that this was Anne’s bedroom. She used to sit by this window and dream about Will, and watch for his coming, too. She——”

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“Don’t spoil it all, Mother,” pleaded Barbara. “Perhaps it really was her room!”

“And didn’t I just say as much?” her mother laughed. “But seriously! This room never appealed to me as does the one below. Anne couldn’t have been very comfortable up here. If she was tall, she could hardly have stood up straight because of the slanting roof.”

So laughingly, they went downstairs and toward the patch of bright yellow sun-flowers in the farthest corner of the garden. The young girl followed them. “Shall I point out the different flowers?” she timidly inquired.

They were duly shown the “rosemary for remembrance,” the “pansies for thoughts,” and a great many others of Shakespeare’s loved flowers. The view of the cottage from the group of tall sun-flowers is most charming. There is surely nothing in the world more picturesque than a thatched-roof.

Arrived once again at the Red Horse, they all packed up their belongings, and Mrs. Pitt went over to the station with a boy, who wheeled the luggage. When the suit-cases were duly labeled “Leamington,” and the station-master had received his tip of a shilling, to insure his remembering them, Mrs. Pitt returned to the hotel, where she found five bicycles lined up. At sight of her, the rest came running out. “This is great!” cried John, already astride one of the bicycles, and impatient for the start.

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“Yes,” answered Mrs. Pitt, much pleased by the enthusiasm. “I thought this would be rather better than driving out to Charlecote and back, and then taking the train to Leamington. I know the roads, and am delighted at riding once more! I had my divided-skirt with me, you see, in case of this very emergency. You girls will manage somehow; your skirts are fairly short.” This was to Barbara and Betty, and then they were off.

The ride of about four miles to Charlecote seemed all too short, for, as Betty expressed it, “the roads are so smooth and level that I can’t stop. My wheel just goes of itself!” They first

came in sight of Charlecote Park, where there are still great numbers of deer. As the party passed, the graceful creatures rose from the tall grass, making an extremely pretty picture. They tried in vain to coax them to the fence.

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“Deer in Shakespeare’s time must have been tamer, or he couldn’t have stolen one,” observed John knowingly.

“Isn’t the ‘Tumble-down Stile’ near here, Mother?” Barbara questioned.

“Yes, it’s just beyond this turn in the road. There it is now! So long as we are believing all we see to-day, I feel quite justified in telling you that when the youthful Shakespeare was escaping with his deer on his shoulders, he fled by way of this stile. Touch that top rail, John, and see what will happen. No, this end of the rail!”

As John put his hand on the place which Mrs. Pitt designated, that end gave way and hit the three other rails, so that they also bent down to the ground. John was much amused, and repeated the motion again and again.

“Did Shakespeare fall over that stile when he was trying to climb it with the deer, and did they catch him then?” he asked eagerly.

“Yes, that’s the story, and, of course, we know it is true! Now, come this way to the gatehouse. I was able to get permission, through an influential friend, to take you inside. I am so glad, for not every one has such good fortune. This woodland,” motioning to the fine old oaks, as they sped along, “is also a part of the ancient Forest of Arden. That wood was so dense in this county in the thirteenth century, that the King ordered the Constable of Warwickshire to cut down six acres in breadth between Warwick and Coventry, to insure the greater safety of travelers.”

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They were now getting distant glimpses of the fine Elizabethan residence itself. It was built in 1558, the year of Elizabeth’s accession to the throne, and was made in the general shape of the letter E, in honor of that Queen. The color of the ancient bricks has been softened and beautified by the hand of Time, which has also caused heavy vines to grow upon, and in certain places, almost to cover the walls. The different courts, gateways, and gables, are therefore most picturesque. The present owner, a descendant of the Sir Thomas Lucy whom Shakespeare knew and ridiculed, permits visitors (the privileged few) to see the Great Hall and the library.

The former is the most interesting of all the apartments, for here one stands in the very room where Shakespeare is said to have been questioned by the pompous Sir Thomas Lucy, after the deer-stealing episode. This lofty hall has a slight modern atmosphere about it now, but the dark paneling, bits of really old glass in the windows, and, above all, the bust of Shakespeare, recall the past very vividly to mind.

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Most historians admit that there is some truth in the story that Shakespeare came into unpleasant contact with the Lord of Charlecote, through a more or less serious boyish prank; but not all believe that there can be any truth in the statement that he was brought into the Great Hall by the forester who caught up with him at the “Tumble-down Stile.” It may be, however, that Shakespeare was later on friendly terms with the Lucy family, and so it is possible that he was then entertained in the hall.

“You know,” remarked Mrs. Pitt, “that the disgrace of that affair with Sir Thomas Lucy is thought to have caused Shakespeare to leave his native town and go to seek his fortune in far-away London. Therefore the prank is said by some to have been a most important, though seemingly trivial event in the Poet’s life. Shakespeare’s revenge upon the owner of lovely Charlecote came later, when he very plainly described Sir Thomas in his plays, under the name of ‘Justice Shallow.’”

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Another room at Charlecote is very attractive,—that is, the old library. There is preserved some wonderful inlaid furniture which tradition describes as a gift from Queen Elizabeth to Leicester, and which consequently would once have found a place at Kenilworth Castle. A very charming view of the lawn sloping gently down to the river is seen from the library windows.

Within the precincts of Charlecote is a beautiful church which was erected by Mrs. Henry Spenser Lucy, in 1852, upon the site of an ancient chapel. Here there are huge tombs in memory of three Lucys, and also an interesting monument to the wife of Sir Thomas, with its tribute to her lovely character, supposed to have been written by Shakespeare’s “Justice Shallow” himself, who seems at least to have been a devoted husband. This last-mentioned monument was originally a part of the older edifice, of course.

It was now about noon, and they were feeling rather hungry, so at a short distance from Charlecote they selected an inviting place by the roadside, and there they unpacked the

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lunch which Mrs. Pitt had brought. How good it did taste! They all thoroughly enjoyed the picnic, and when a scarlet automobile went rushing past them, the ladies' veils fluttering in the breeze, Betty merely remarked:—"An auto's lovely, of course, but to-day I'd rather have a bicycle. It seems more appropriate, somehow."

"Yes," Mrs. Pitt responded. "When you are in such a beautiful county as this, and want to see it well, a bicycle is best. And then, I think it is more respectful to Shakespeare to go through his beloved haunts at a fairly leisurely pace. I imagine that he never would have understood how any one could care so little for Warwickshire as to go whirling and jiggling along through it in a motor, at thirty miles an hour."

Betty had absent-mindedly picked a daisy from the tall grass in which she was sitting, and was pulling off its petals, reciting the little verse about:

"Rich man,
Poor man,
Beggan man,
Thief."

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"Oh, dear! It's thief!" she cried, making up a wry face. "I'd rather have any one than that!"

"Try the other verses," suggested Barbara, entering into the fun.

"What others?" asked Betty in much surprise. "I didn't know there were any more."

"Dear me, yes," Mrs. Pitt broke in. "I used to know several of them myself,—the one about the house:

'Big house,
Little house,
Pig-stye,
Barn,'

and about the conveyances:

'Coach,
Carriage,
Spring-cart,
Wheelbarrow.'

Wasn't there one more, Barbara? Oh, yes, about the dress materials:

'Silk,
Satin,
Muslin,
Rags.'"

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"Well, well!" exclaimed Betty. "I never heard those. They must be just English."

"Perhaps so. At any rate, when I was a little girl, I used to say them, and believe in them, too. I lived here in Warwickshire, in my childhood, you know; my father was rector of a tiny village not far from Coventry. There are ever so many queer old rhymes, verses, and customs still common among Warwickshire children."

"Tell Betty about some of them, Mother," Barbara urged. "I'm sure that she'd like to hear, and we don't need to start on just yet."

Mrs. Pitt leaned thoughtfully against the lowered bars, at the entrance to a field. "I'll have to think about it," she said; but she soon added, "There was the 'Wishing Tree.' I remember that."

"What was it?" the two girls eagerly questioned. John and Philip, privately considering this talk "silly stuff," had retired to the farther side of a hay-rick, where they were whittling industriously.

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"The 'Wishing Tree' was a large elm that stood in the park of a neighboring nobleman's estate. To all the girls of the village, it was a favorite spot, and we used to steal through the hedge and very cautiously approach the tree. If the cross old gardener happened to see us he'd come limping in our direction as fast as his lame legs could carry him, calling out angrily that if we did not 'shog off right away, he'd set his ten commandments in our faces.' That's an odd expression, isn't it? It's very, very old,—so old that Shakespeare was familiar with it and used it in one of his plays—'King Henry VI,' I think. The gardener meant that he

would scratch us with his ten fingers—but he wouldn't have, for he was too kind-hearted in spite of his threats. He was a queer man, with a brown, wrinkled old face. I can see him just as though it were yesterday."

"What was that you said?" asked Betty. "'Shog off!' What does it mean?"

"Simply Warwickshire for 'Go away,'" was Mrs. Pitt's careless answer. Her thoughts had gone back to her childhood.

"You forgot to tell us what the 'Wishing Tree' was for," Betty timidly suggested, fearful of interrupting her reminiscences. [Pg 176]

"Why, so I did! We would tiptoe all alone up to the tree, and if, under its wide branches, we made a wish, we thought it was sure to come true. There was another curious old game of finding out how many years we were to live, by a ball. We would bounce it upon the hard ground, and catching it again and again in our hands, would chant all the while:

'Ball-ee, ball-ee, tell me true,
How many years I've got to go
through,
One, two, three, four,—'

If that had proved true, I shouldn't be here to-day to tell of it, for I was never very skillful with the ball, and could only catch it ten or fifteen times at the most."

Mrs. Pitt laughed. "There is so much of ancient folk-lore here in Warwickshire," she went on. "I remember that the old country people always crossed themselves or said some charm for a protection, when one lone magpie flew over their heads. That meant bad luck, for the verses said:

'For one magpie means
sorrow,
Two, mirth,
Three, a wedding,
And four, a birth.'

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Why, what is it, Barbara?"

Barbara had jumped to her feet, and was wildly waving her arms about her head. "It's only a bee," she said, rather ashamed. "I don't like them quite so near."

It was delightful to ride along on this "rare day in June," through the fair county of Warwickshire,—the "Heart of England." If they were just a bit uncomfortably warm on the hill-top where the sun beat down upon the fields and open road, they were soon again in the beautiful woodland, where the cool air refreshed them, or passing through the street of some remote village, shaded by giant elms. In each little hamlet, as well as the row of peaceful thatched cottages, with smoke curling upwards from their chimneys, there was the ancient vine-covered church, with perhaps a Norman tower, where the rooks found a home, and the gray old rectory close at hand.

When Betty asked if it was in a church "like this" that Mrs. Pitt's father preached, and if her former home resembled the particular rectory they then chanced to be passing, Mrs. Pitt replied, "Yes, my home was somewhat like this one. All English country churches and rectories look very much alike,—that is, almost all are vine-covered, and very old and quaint—yet, I think each has its own very distinct individuality, too." [Pg 178]

Mrs. Pitt, of course, wanted some tea, so about four o'clock they stopped at a clean little cottage, near a stretch of woodland. Mrs. Pitt herself dismounted and stepped up to the door, which stood hospitably open. A little flaxen-haired child ran out curiously at the sound of the knock, and then, frightened, scampered away to call her mother. That good woman, in her neat black dress and stiffly-starched white apron, at once understood the situation.

"You just seat yourselves there under the trees," she ordered them, "and I'll bring right out a shive off a loaf of bread, and a tot o' tea for each of you."

The young people looked puzzled at this speech, but Mrs. Pitt smilingly led the way to the place their hostess designated. In a surprisingly short time the woman brought out a table (having scorned the assistance of the two boys), spread it with an immaculately clean cloth, and set thereon a very tempting loaf of brown bread and a pot of steaming tea. There was also jam, of course. While they enjoyed their meal, she stood by, her hands on her hips, and a radiant smile upon her face at the praises of her guests. Every few moments the little girl would peep out from behind the cottage, and once she almost came up to the group under the trees; but her mother, when she spied her, sent her hastily back, saying by way of an [Pg 179]

apology:—"She's all swatched, but she's only my reckling, you must know." As they rode away into the woods, the good woman stood in the middle of the road waving her tablecloth for good-by.

"Wasn't she a dandy!" John burst out. "Couldn't understand what she said, though! Might just as well have been Greek!"

"She certainly did have some old Warwickshire expressions!" laughed Mrs. Pitt. "I don't know when I've heard that word 'reckling.' It simply means her youngest child, who she said was all 'swatched.' That signifies being untidy, but I am sure I couldn't see the tiniest spot of dirt anywhere upon the child."

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Betty was rather glad when they at last jumped off their bicycles at the hotel in Leamington.

"I guess I'm not used to quite such long rides as you," she said. "It has been beautiful, though, and I wouldn't have come by train for anything. I just love Warwickshire, and everything about it, especially the language, which I mean to learn while I am here."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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WARWICK AND KENILWORTH CASTLES

The bicycles were returned to their owner in Stratford, and Mrs. Pitt's plan was to drive to Warwick and Kenilworth the following day. Consequently it was a great disappointment at breakfast-time to see gray and threatening clouds overhead, from which rain very soon began to descend. The day was also very cold, and such a chilling wind was blowing and whistling around the corners of the hotel, that fires were lighted in all the tiny grates.

"Whoever heard of such cold weather in June!" John protested, not in the best of spirits at being shut up in the house. "It's horrid, I say! Ugh! If my fur coat was here, I should put it on, and then get inside the fireplace, too."

At this very dismal burst of feeling from John, Mrs. Pitt came to the rescue, suggesting a game of billiards. John brightened very considerably after this, and the remainder of the day was pleasantly spent in writing letters, playing games, and reading aloud from Scott's "Kenilworth," in preparation for the morrow's visit to that castle.

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"Just think of seeing the very spot in the garden where Queen Elizabeth met Amy Robsart! And perhaps the same room where she slept. Oh, I can hardly wait till morning!" sighed Betty rapturously. "Kenilworth" had long been one of her favorite books.

At bedtime Mrs. Pitt, inwardly rather uncertain about the prospects of the weather, was outwardly most cheerful with her assurance that she "felt sure it would be fine in the morning."

Mrs. Pitt was "usually right about things," as the children had long since discovered, and this proved no exception to the rule. The sun shone brightly on the morrow, and the whole country-side looked as though it had been washed and cleaned so as to appear at its loveliest for the visitors.

The drive through Leamington revealed a very pretty watering-place, with baths, parks, gay streets of shops, and many neat little private villas, each being dignified by a name.

"How do they ever find names enough to go around?" Betty thought to herself.

They soon left the town behind, and a short drive along the perfectly smooth, wide, country road, brought them to the well-known bridge over the Avon, and revealed the fact that the river had not lost a bit of its beauty since they left it at the Weir Brake. It is from this bridge that the famous view of Warwick Castle is to be had, and a more charming picture cannot well be imagined. Just at a bend of the river, the great gray front looms up, long and straight, the turrets here and there giving it a most formidable air of old-time majesty and strength.

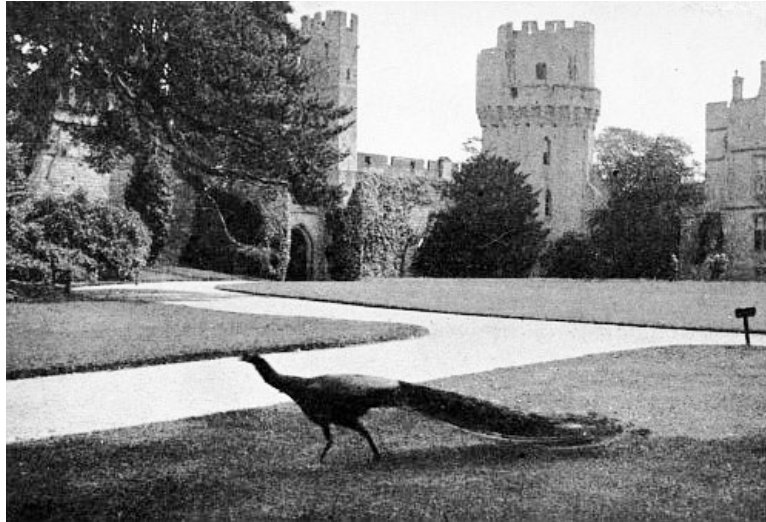
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Leaving the carriage at the castle entrance, Mrs. Pitt led the way up the narrow walk, bounded by high walls of rock, to which the damp moss clings and over which flowers and trailing vines hang. Finally they passed under an old gateway with a portcullis, and found themselves in the inner court-yard of the castle, which is almost round in shape. Old towers or buildings very nearly surround this court, and in the center is a wonderfully smooth grass-plot, which is sometimes used as a tennis-court. Several stately peacocks strutted

about displaying their magnificent feathers. They were very tame, and almost allowed Betty to come near enough to touch them. She was delighted when the largest most obligingly dropped a gorgeous feather at her very feet.

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“For a souvenir!” she exclaimed, as she picked it up. “How dear of him! I like peacocks even if they are proud! I would be, if I lived here! They know how important they are, and that this garden wouldn’t be complete without them.”



“They know how important they are, and that this garden wouldn’t be complete without them.”—Page [184](#).

“Do you see that high mound?” asked Mrs. Pitt, pointing to the northern end of the court. “There Æthelflæd, the daughter of Alfred the Great, is supposed to have built a castle, and thus the history of Warwick may be said to have commenced in 914. Just fancy! Since that day, many great families have been in possession here (De Newburghs, Beauchamps, Nevilles, Plantagenets),—from traditional Guy of Warwick to ‘Warwick the King-maker,’ and all along the line to the Greville family, which has owned it since 1759. ‘Warwick the King-maker,’ or Richard Neville, was the famous baron who possessed such wonderful power in England that he could make and unmake kings at his will. It was he who captured poor, weak Edward IV, and brought him here as a prisoner. Of Guy of Warwick, the great warrior and hero, I shall tell you more when we are at Guy’s Cliff, where he lived. He is really more associated with that place than this. You will see here, however, what is known as ‘Guy’s Porridge Pot.’ It is an interesting old vessel, very large and made of metal. Most probably it had nothing whatever to do with the great Guy; some authorities consider, because of the existence of this little rhyme, that it belonged to a certain Sir John Talbot, who died about 1365.

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‘There is nothing left of Talbot’s
name,
But Talbot’s pot and Talbot’s
Lane.’

But let’s go over to that door by which we enter. There comes a guide with his party; perhaps we can go in with them.”

They found the interior of Warwick Castle very delightful, and in a perfect state of preservation, for the family of the present Earl occupy it often. The ever-present Great Hall is here more grand and lofty than that of Charlecote, though it has not the appearance of as great antiquity as the one at beautiful Penshurst Place. Its walls are lined with old suits of armor, but, nevertheless, the room is furnished with comfortable easy-chairs, as the family, when in residence, use this as their living-room. Among the collection of armor is the helmet of Oliver Cromwell, and a whole miniature suit of mail which was once worn by the little dwarfed son of Robert Dudley, the famous Earl of Leicester. In a great bay-window, overlooking the Avon, stands the huge caldron of Guy of Warwick. Strangely enough, an exquisite Elizabethan saddle of green velvet had found a temporary resting-place in its great depths.

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“I think this Cedar Room is very beautiful,” remarked Mrs. Pitt, as they stepped into that apartment. “Do you see that the walls are entirely of cedar wood from floor to ceiling? Isn’t the effect rich, and doesn’t it smell good? Do you notice the fine carving, and the pictures,—some of Van Dyck’s best works? Oh! I must not call your attention to so many things all at

once!"

In the Green Drawing-room, the Red Drawing-room, the State Bed-room, and the various other rooms and corridors, are priceless treasures of art; for besides invaluable paintings by the greatest masters, there are here beautiful pieces of furniture, made of tortoise-shell and inlaid with gold or pearl, and ancient marriage-chests, which once belonged to Italian princesses of bygone days. The armory contains one of the most valuable collections in England, and in the State Bed-room are many relics of Queen Anne. One really wearies of so much costliness which it is utterly impossible to appreciate at one visit.

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"Haven't we time to walk in the gardens a little longer?" asked Barbara, wistfully. To her, Nature was nearer and dearer than all the wonders of art and history.

After a ramble through the bewitchingly lovely gardens,—going across ancient drawbridges, spanning long-unused, grass-grown moats; under little postern-gates; into rustic grottoes—they at last came to the conservatory, in which is preserved the "Warwick Vase." This is made of white marble, carved with various devices.

"It has a curious history," answered Mrs. Pitt, in reply to the children's questions. "In 1770, some workmen found it at the bottom of a small lake which is about sixteen miles from Rome. Of course, it is not possible to determine with any certainty how it came to be there, but as Hadrian's Villa was in A.D. 546 occupied by a king of the Goths, an enemy who was then laying siege to Rome, it has been thought that the vase was cast into the lake, to save it from the hands of the invaders. The second Earl of Warwick was its purchaser."

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Slowly and unwillingly they wended their way back through the gardens, to the central court of the castle, and then out under the old gateway.

"My!" cried John, "it must have taken heaps of soldiers to defend a place like this in the Middle Ages! I wish I'd been here when it was just plumb full of great warriors,—when the moat had water in it, the drawbridge worked, and sentinels called out to you for the password as you came near the gate. I suppose they could peep out at you from those little windows up high, too." John looked longingly back, as they walked away.

"Oh, yes!" continued Mrs. Pitt, in tones which made the girls shudder. "From those windows they rained shot down upon the enemy. And there are little slits in the wall from which men poured boiling metal or tar upon those besieging the castle. Upon the roof of Guy's Tower there, it is thought that a huge machine used to stand,—a machine for slinging down great stones. Oh, yes; there were dungeons here, too,—deep, dark, damp, and evil-smelling dungeons, into which many prisoners were thrown. Why, it was from here that Piers Gaveston, the unfortunate favorite courtier of Edward II, was taken out and executed upon a hill close by. Underneath the fine halls where splendid banquets were carried on, out of sight and reach of the fair gardens and lawns, there were always poor prisoners who were shut away from the daylight for years perhaps, and laboriously carving crests or verses in the stone walls, to while away the hours."

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Mrs. Pitt suddenly burst into peals of laughter as she saw the pained expressions upon the faces of the two girls; then a glance at the rapt, enthusiastic attention of John, caused her to become serious again.

"Never mind, girls," she said gravely. "Such things are now gone forever; people have advanced too far in their ideas to ever permit of more of those unjust acts and horrible punishments. I can never believe that the world isn't growing daily better! And, boys, it is all very well to love and long for the golden deeds and knightly ideals of the men of mythical King Arthur's Court, for instance; read about them all you can, and try to imitate them, but never wish back the terrible conditions of warfare and brutality which existed at the time. The kindly thoughts and acts will endure always, but the rest,—never!"

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Silently they took their seats in the carriage, and the coachman next drove them to Saint Mary's Church, which stands in the quaint village of Warwick. Its old tower holds ten bells, and these play every four hours. There is a different tune for each day, which is always changed at midnight. The Warwick towns-people, living near their church, must have an enviable musical education, for they have continually dinned in their ears all sorts of tunes, from the "Easter Hymn" to "The Blue Bells of Scotland."

On the site of Saint Mary's, an ancient church is believed to have stood, prior to William the Conqueror. The present edifice, having been much altered and added to by various benefactors, and at very various times, presents a rather confused and not especially pleasing appearance architecturally. All visitors to the town are attracted there, however, by the presence of the Beauchamp Chapel, which contains the tomb of the Earl of Leicester.

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Having paid the entrance fee, Mrs. Pitt and her charges were permitted to descend the

few steps leading from the church proper into the Beauchamp Chapel. It is very beautiful, and was built in 1443, by William Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who intended it as his memorial. It was once most elaborate with its fine marbles, monuments adorned with precious stones, and the gold statuettes which filled its niches, but these have long since been carried away. The tomb of Ambrose Dudley, who was named the "Good Earl of Warwick," stands in the center, and against the wall is that of the great Leicester and the Countess, his wife.

"Look here," called Mrs. Pitt. "Here lies their son, the little boy who wore the armor which you saw over at the castle. The inscription speaks of him as 'That noble impe, the young Lord Denbigh, their infant son and heir.' 'Impe' in those days had no such meaning of mischievous as we give it to-day. It then simply signified a young boy."

Betty was much impressed by a small flight of winding stairs, just off the chapel, which are entirely worn down in the middle. [Pg 192]

"Was it because so many monks went up there?" she asked.

"Yes, so it is said," was Mrs. Pitt's reply. "Perhaps it may have been a kind of confessional, where the monks knelt."

There was one more thing in the church which they paused to note; that is, the tomb of Fulke Greville, the first Lord Brooke, who was stabbed by a valet, in 1628. Greville was "servant to Queene Elizabeth, conceller to King James, and friend to Sir Philip Sidney," as the inscription tells us; and it would seem that the greatest emphasis and respect was even then given the fact that he was "friend to" the noble Sir Philip Sidney.

Nearby, the quaint buildings of Leicester's Hospital still stand. Here was a monastery until the Dissolution, or the breaking up, of all the religious houses, under Henry VIII. When the property came into the hands of Leicester in 1571, he made the house into a hospital for twelve men. The present brethren have all been soldiers of the Crown, who now receive a pension and are spending the remainder of their days in the sunny nooks and corners of the old timbered houses. One of these brethren who showed the party about, was a most curious old character, and afforded the young people no end of amusement. He invariably gave his information in a very loud voice, which was absolutely without expression, and his eyes were kept steadily fixed upon some distant point. [Pg 193]

He showed them the ancient hall in which Sir Fulke Greville once received King James, and it seemed to give him the keenest pleasure to describe how that King was "right royally entertained."

"Oh, ye're right, lady," he panted, "the 'ospital was founded by Robert Dudley, Lord Leicester, 'e 'o was much at Elizabeth's court, h'as you all know. And it's a descendant h'of 'is, or of 'is sister, as you may say, 'o 'as the right to appoint the master 'ere in this 'ospital to this day. 'E's Lord D'Lisle and Dudley, of Penshurst Place h'in Kent,—'im as is descended direct from the Lady Mary, sister of Robert Dudley, 'o married Sir 'Enry Sidney. H'its 'e 'o appoints the master h'over us this very day. But as I was saying,—it was 'ere that 'is Majesty King James was right royally h'entertained." [Pg 194]

"Yes," broke in John, interrupting the rapid flow of expressionless words. "We'll remember that all right." Then in an aside to Philip, he whispered: "That's the ninth time he has said 'right royally entertained.' I'm going to keep count."

Having examined an embroidered curtain, the work of Amy Robsart at Cumnor Hall, the King of Dahomey's State Execution Sword, which seemed a bit out of place amid the surroundings, and an old battle-ax, supposed to have been used for one side or the other on the Field of Hastings, in 1066, they bade farewell to their guide (who had suddenly ceased his mechanical orations like a clock which has run down), and drove away toward Kenilworth.

Guy's Cliff next called for attention. It is first seen at the end of a long, stately avenue lined by great trees. At the back of the castle flows a stream, at this point widened out into a miniature lake, on the bank of which stands a very ancient, moss-covered Saxon mill. The castle across the water and the old mill make such very attractive pictures that their vicinity is always frequented by numbers of artists, sitting under their big umbrellas. [Pg 195]

As the party stood under the trees by the mill, Mrs. Pitt gathered the young people about her.

"Now, I want to tell you the story of Guy of Warwick, for whom this Guy's Cliff was called. He lived long, long ago (if he really did live at all), when England had great tracts of unsettled country, where men were afraid to go for fear of horrible monsters. This brave young Guy was a strong warrior, and he became famous because he slew the Dun cow, and

other terrible animals which were tormenting the country folk. Guy later went off to the Crusades. These were pilgrimages which devout men made to Jerusalem, in the endeavor to win back that city from the Turks. Guy was gone some time from England—years probably—and when he came back, he lived the life of a hermit, in a cave near here. The story goes that his wife used to carry food to him each day, and that she never recognized him until he was dying and revealed to her his identity.”

Here Mrs. Pitt was forced to pause for breath, and John broke in excitedly, “Oh, let’s go and see the cave! Can’t we?”

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“I’m afraid not, John. You see, Guy’s Cliff belongs to Lord Algernon Percy, and the cave is on his private premises. I fear we would not be allowed to visit it,—especially as the family is now in residence at the castle. Did I tell you that Guy and his faithful wife were buried together in the cave?”

After taking lunch at the King’s Arms Hotel at Kenilworth, and seeing the room in which Scott wrote his novel, they proceeded to the castle. The afternoon was warm and sunny, with a blue sky and a summer haze over the landscape,—the kind of afternoon which invites one to day-dreams. Consequently, Mrs. Pitt ensconced herself against the crumbling wall of Cæsar’s Tower, put up her umbrella to keep off the glare of the sun, and sat dreaming over the remains of the once magnificent castle. Meanwhile the young people, accompanied by a guide, climbed all over the ruin. They scrambled up narrow stairs in thick walls, climbed as high as it was safe to go on old towers, and explored the dark chambers and passages near the old Banqueting-hall.

“This tower is supposed to be where Amy Robsart’s lodgings were,” their dignified guide told them, and then he boldly spoiled Betty’s delight, by saying, “It’s queer now how fascinated all visitors are by Amy Robsart. Of course, they’ve read of her in Scott’s novel, but curiously enough, that’s the only part of the tale which is not taken strictly from history. No one really knows whether Amy Robsart ever was at Kenilworth, and at any rate, it doesn’t seem at all likely that she was here at the time of Queen Elizabeth’s famous visit of 1563.”

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“O dear!” Betty sighed, really bitterly disappointed. “I always liked the part about Amy best of all, and now it isn’t true at all!”

“Never mind, Miss; there would be plenty of interest attached to the old place, even if Scott had never written of it. Oh, I know it’s a great book, and makes that particular period of Kenilworth’s history remarkably vivid. What I mean is, that the old castle is not dependent on Scott for its grand history and reputation.” He looked above him at the beautiful oriel-windows of the Banqueting-hall, as if he loved every stone there. After a few such speeches, even the children began to notice that he was “different from most guides”; he used most excellent English, was very neatly dressed, had a pleasant, refined face, and seemed to take an especial interest in the young people.

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The guide went on in his deep voice. “Kenilworth was built in 1120, by Geoffrey de Clinton, Lord Chamberlain to Henry I. Later, it came into the possession of the great Simon de Montfort, and it then successfully withstood a siege; but it was during the Civil Wars that Cromwell’s soldiers reduced the splendid castle to these almost equally splendid ruins. Of course, it was at the height of its glory when the Earl of Leicester owned it, and Queen Elizabeth came here on a visit. I’m sure you have all read about that famous week,—of all the pageants, feasts, carnivals, and displays of fireworks upon the lake. The lake was there; water covered all those low fields back of the castle. At that time, the main approach was here,” pointing to where a rustic bridge crosses a little ravine. “There was once a large bridge there, and from that entrance the Queen had her first glimpse of the castle where she was to be so magnificently entertained.”

Just then Barbara saw that her mother had risen and was motioning that it was time for them to go. So they reluctantly left the guide, thanking him as Philip handed him his fee. That gentleman (for so he really seemed) doffed his hat most politely, and appeared genuinely sorry to have them go. As Betty turned to take a last look at the old Banqueting-hall, she saw him standing just where they had left him, and a bit wistfully watching them walk away. When they were once again in the carriage and driving toward Coventry, they described the guide to Mrs. Pitt, who showed much interest. Barbara thought that he was a poor scholar or teacher, who was taking that way of earning a little during the summer months; John was sure he was a nobleman in disguise, for some highly romantic, secret reason; Philip could not even imagine who he might be, so great was the mysterious atmosphere about him; but Betty added: “He’s surely a gentleman, and he was such an interesting, polite guide, that I wish they were all like him.”

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“Yes, it is curious,” agreed Mrs. Pitt. “I’d like to have been along with you, for I should

have enjoyed studying him. I have once or twice before come across just such puzzling characters. I once spent a month at a small hotel down in Devonshire, where there was a head-waiter who always interested me. I decided that he must have a history, and it was proved that I was right when I discovered him a few months later, dining with a lady at one of the most aristocratic hotels in London. I'll never forget my sensations when I realized why his face was so familiar, and where I had seen it before! That mystery was never explained, and I'm afraid yours never will be."

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They found Coventry a delightful old town. Here it was that so many of the Miracle Plays used to be given in olden times. The "Coventry Plays" were famous, and Mrs. Pitt took the party to the court-yard of Saint Mary's Hall, where they were wont to be performed; for such entertainments always took place in the open air,—in squares or courts, the stage being rudely constructed upon a wagon, which could be taken from place to place.

At the corner of two streets is an absurd figure of "Peeping Tom," which recalls the fabled ride of the Lady Godiva, and her sacrifice to procure the freedom of the people of Coventry from unjust taxes.

Coventry streets are very narrow and crooked (Hawthorne once said that they reminded him of Boston's winding ways), and there are many picturesque houses, their upper stories jutting out over the street. One most charming example of sixteenth century architecture is Ford's Hospital, a home for forty aged women. The street front is unique in its construction of timbers, gables, and carvings. Inside is an oblong, paved court, overhung by the second story of the building.

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"It's like Leicester's Hospital at Warwick, only this is really more quaint, isn't it? The old ladies peeping out from their little rooms are dear! I'm going to make friends with them," Betty declared, as she disappeared under one of the low doorways. She was soon seen accompanying an old dame on crutches, who was hobbling out to show off her bit of a garden, back of the house.

On the return trip to Leamington, they were rather quiet. Having seen so many famous places, it was natural that they should wish to think them over. The driver approached Leamington by another road than that by which they had left it, and it took them past Stoneleigh Abbey, the country seat of Lord Leigh. It is situated in the midst of woodland, which has been called "the only real bit of old Arden Forest now to be found in Warwickshire."

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"They say that the Abbey is remarkably beautiful," said Mrs. Pitt, "but I've never been fortunate enough to see it at any nearer range. The house is not very old, having been erected in the eighteenth century, but it stands on the site of a Cistercian Abbey, of which one gateway still remains."

It was late when they reached the hotel at Leamington, and they were forced to hurry in order to be dressed in time for dinner. The gong found them all assembled, however, for such a day of sight-seeing makes one hungry. They all had a good laugh at Betty, for when she was caught in a "brown study," and Mrs. Pitt asked to hear her thoughts, she replied:

"Oh, I was thinking over what a lovely day it has been,—especially at Kenilworth!" and then added with a sigh, "If I only could know who that guide was, everything would be perfect!"

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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SHERWOOD FOREST AND HADDON HALL

Betty could scarcely sit still in the train which was carrying her towards Mansfield, from sheer excitement at the anticipation of actually seeing the haunts of Robin Hood. Ever since Mrs. Pitt had mentioned that town as the gateway of the Sherwood Forest of Betty's dreams, the name had seemed an enchanted one to her. As they had come only the comparatively short journey from Leeds, they arrived at Mansfield in the middle of the morning, and being Friday, the public square presented its usual busy scenes of market-day. Vendors were shouting their wares, long-suffering babies who had been unwillingly brought along were crying, women were loudly chattering in shrill voices, and a poor little dog, who in some mysterious way was being made to play a part in a Punch and Judy Show, was yelping piteously.

"Well," began Betty, who could think of only Robin Hood—her dear hero, whose story

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was about to be made even more vivid to her—"perhaps this is the very market where he came when he had bought out the butcher's stock of meat and was selling it for kisses to the lasses of the town. Oh, do you suppose it is the same place?"

"Why, no!" interrupted John, in the decisive tones which he always used when confident of his superior knowledge. "'Nottingham Town' was where Robin Hood and his whole gang of fellows always went!"

"Yes, that was really more associated with the famous outlaw than Mansfield. You'll see Nottingham this afternoon, or, at any rate, to-morrow. Now, come this way to the Swan Hotel. While you girls unpack, I'll see that some horses are harnessed so that we can soon set off to the forest." Mrs. Pitt then led the way from the market-square toward the inn of which she had spoken.

Before the carriage was ready, the young people had thoroughly explored this remarkable old house. Perhaps the most notable thing about it is the spiral staircase of solid oak, which is three hundred years old; but the entire building is filled with little passages and unexpected, remote nooks and corners, which, like the quaint bedrooms, are crowded with curios, old pictures, and superb antique furniture. Betty declared she had never seen such a "darling old four-poster" as the one which stood in her room, the favorite Number Nine for which all visitors clamor. Altogether, they considered it a most delightful place, and Betty thought that without too great a stretch of the imagination, she could even think of Robin Hood or Little John there.

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The hostess hastened to prepare a delicious, early lunch especially for the party, and having partaken of it, they went at once to the open carriage which was drawn up in the odd little inn-yard. John, as usual, claimed the seat beside the driver, the others settled themselves, and they started off.

No sooner had they reached the open country than Betty's pent-up spirits overflowed entirely.

"Oh, do you see that little river flowing through the meadows?" she suddenly cried, standing up to point at it excitedly. "See the reeds along its edges, the field of tall grain, and the old tree trunk which has fallen across the water! I just know that must be the place where Robin first met Little John. They had a fight on a narrow foot-bridge, you know, and Little John (who wasn't 'little' at all) was the stronger, and tumbled Robin Hood over into the brook. Don't you remember, John? That looks exactly like the picture in my Howard Pyle's 'Robin Hood,' at home. Oh, I'm perfectly sure it must be the same place! Aren't you, Mrs. Pitt?"

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This enthusiasm of Betty's was soon caught by the rest, and during the whole afternoon they took turns in telling, one after another, the "Merry Adventures of Robin Hood," as they recalled them. There could not be a section of country which more perfectly suggests the setting for that particular group of legends which has been associated with it. Here surely is the identical woodland through which Robin Hood and his merry men roamed. No one could possibly mistake it! Here are the very same trees, behind which one can almost see lurking the men in "Lincoln green." Here are ideal little glades carpeted with dainty ferns, here and there touched with the sunlight which flashes between the leaves. Sometimes the road emerges from the forest, and winds along through broad fields,—the "high road" bordered by green meadows and hedgerows.

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"You know," began Mrs. Pitt, her eyes sparkling with fun, "when Robin and his men had been in hiding for some days or weeks, perhaps, because the old Sheriff of Nottingham was trying particularly hard to catch them at the time, some of the most venturesome ones, not being able to exist longer under the restraint, would start off in search of adventure; and leaving a bit reluctantly the heart of Sherwood Forest, they always made straight for the 'high road.' Now in just such a place as this, by the cross-roads, Little John, garbed as a gray friar, met the three lasses who were carrying their eggs to the market at Tuxford. He swung one basket from his rosary, about his neck, and took one in either hand, and thus he accompanied the maids to town. Am I right? Is that the tale?"

"Yes," continued Philip, taking up the story where his mother had left off; "then he went to a 'fair, thatched inn,' you know, and he sat drinking with the tinker, the peddler, and the beggar, when the two rich brothers from Fountains Abbey came out to start again on their journey to York. Little John thought there'd be some fun, and perhaps some good money for him, if he decided to go part of the way with them, so he did. Don't you remember that one brother was very tall and thin, and the other very short and stout? They were proud and ashamed of being seen on the road in the company of a poor friar whose gown was too short for him, as was Little John's. But he insisted upon staying by, and strode along between their two nags. Whenever they met anybody—beggars, fair lords and ladies, or fat

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Bishops—Little John called out: ‘Here we go; we three!’”

“And then,” broke in Betty, her face literally radiant, “don’t you know how Little John finally robbed them? That was best of all! When they came to a certain parting of the ways, he did consent to leave them, but first he asked for a few pence, as he was poor. Both brothers declared that they hadn’t any money, at which Little John insisted upon their kneeling down on the dusty road and praying to the good St. Dunstan to send them each ten shillings, so that they could continue their journey in safety and comfort. You know, he thought it such a pity for two such worthy brothers to be in sore need of food and drink!” The children were unconsciously lapsing into the language of the Robin Hood stories, as they rattled on and on.

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“Well,” Betty went on, “Little John prayed and prayed, and then he asked the brothers to feel and see if the good St. Dunstan hadn’t sent them something. Time after time this performance was repeated, and still they said they had nothing. Finally Little John himself felt in their pouches and found,—oh, heaps of money! He left the brothers ten shillings each, and carried away the rest, saying he was sure that the good St. Dunstan had meant it for him! Oh, I think I like Little John best of all,—almost better even than Robin Hood! He always did such cute things!”

By this time, they were nearing some of the big palaces which gave this section of the country the name of “The Dukeries,” from the fact that so many noblemen have lived there. Earl Manvers, the Duke of Newcastle, and the Duke of Portland, all have tremendous estates between the towns of Worksop and Edwinstowe. Some of the stately houses were pointed out in the distance behind the trees, but neither Barbara nor Betty, Philip nor John, paid the slightest heed to them. Their minds were fixed on Robin Hood, and they saw only the Sherwood Forest which he knew. When Betty looked at Clumber House, across a pretty little lake, she only said:

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“Perhaps near that lake was where Robin found Alan-a-Dale, the dear minstrel.”

“Oh, no, Betty; it was by a fountain that he found Alan-a-Dale,” Barbara politely corrected.

“Yes, that’s so, Barbara,” Betty replied, in all seriousness. “I forgot.”

There was one thing upon the estate of the Duke of Portland which did greatly interest the party, however; that is, an old gnarled oak which is called “Robin Hood’s Larder.”

“Ye see, ’e came ’ere to store ’is venison, and to ’ang it up to dry. ’E was a clever chap, ’e was. ’E ’id it inside the trunk.” The driver grinned from ear to ear, as he gave this valuable information.

Getting out to explore, the children found that the huge tree is hollow, and propped up to postpone the sad day when it will surely collapse altogether. Many old tree-trunks, all over Sherwood Forest, are like this, and in some of them John could stretch his full length upon the ground. Near “Robin Hood’s Larder” is the spot where, according to Scott, the outlaw met with King Richard of the Lion Heart,—or, at least, so say the local guidebooks.

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“Yes,” said Mrs. Pitt, understanding at once; “don’t you remember that in Scott’s ‘Ivanhoe’? Another version of this famous meeting is in Howard Pyle’s book. King Richard was at Nottingham Town, you know, and having a curious desire to meet with Robin Hood, he and his friends went into Sherwood Forest, dressed as friars. Robin and his men found them, of course, and made them guests at a feast. Later, there was shooting, and Robin Hood, having once missed the mark, applied to the King, whom he did not recognize, for a punishment. Thereupon King Richard arose, rolled up his sleeve, and gave such a blow as Robin had never felt before. It was afterwards that Sir Richard of the Lea appeared upon the scene, and disclosed the identity of the powerful stranger. Then Robin Hood, Little John, Will Scarlet, and Alan-a-Dale followed the King to London at the royal wish, and left Sherwood for many a long day.”

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They were now passing through a very dense part of the wood. Close about the feet of the oaks, a thick, tangled underbrush grows. Some of the old trees seem to be gray with age, and their whitish, twisted branches offer a sharp contrast to the dark shadows, and make a weird, ghostlike effect.

“Oh!” exclaimed Betty, “it must have been in just such a spot as this in the forest that Gurth in ‘Ivanhoe’ suddenly came upon a company of Robin Hood’s men. Gurth was the Saxon, you know. He had been to Isaac, the Jew, at York, and was carrying back the ransom money to his master, Ivanhoe. Of course, poor Gurth thought he would surely be robbed, when he discovered in whose society he was; but as you said, Mrs. Pitt, Robin Hood never took money from honest men, especially when it was not their own. They led Gurth farther

and farther into the depths of Sherwood. I can just imagine it was a place like this,—where the moonlight lit up these ghostly trees, and the red glow of the camp-fire showed Gurth's frightened face. He was quite safe, though, for he proved that the money was his master's, and Robin let him go, and even showed him the way to the 'skirts of the forest,' as he did the Sheriff of Nottingham."

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All this time the carriage had been rolling along, and as they neared an open space in the forest, John suddenly caught sight of something which made him turn to his friend, the driver, and exclaim: "Oh, what are they?"

Stretching away for quite a distance on either side of the road were rows and rows of tiny, peaked houses or coops. The coachman told them that here was where they breed the pheasants which are hunted. When the birds have reached a certain age, they are set free, and a gun is fired in their midst to give them a taint of the wild. John was much interested, in spite of the fact that he considered it "a mean trick." It really does not seem quite fair to take excellent, kindly care of any animal or bird, allow it to believe you are its friend, and then to suddenly turn it loose and proceed to hunt it for mere sport.

In strange contrast to the merry drive through Sherwood Forest, was a little incident which occurred in a village on the edge of "The Dukeries" district, where they halted to water the horses. On one side of the quaint main street is a row of old, old houses, where for many years have lived the aged people who are usually provided for by the nobleman to whom that village belongs.

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All the tiny houses were empty at the time of this visit, with the exception of one where lived a dear old lady, by herself, her neighbors having all died. Mrs. Pitt went in to call upon her, as do most strangers passing through here, and was touched by her pathetic speech. She said they were simply waiting to tear down the houses until she should go, and looking tearfully up into Mrs. Pitt's face, added: "I'm eighty-six years old now, and I won't last much longer, but I can't go until the Lord calls me, can I?" In spite of this, she insisted that she was quite happy, for she had her "good feather bed,"—and what more could she need?

The following morning, the party went by train to Nottingham, where they spent a short time in exploring. The present town is much like others, except in its legendary connection with Robin Hood. All visitors might not find it as fascinating as did Mrs. Pitt and the young people, who knew it as the abode of the disagreeable Sheriff whom Robin Hood heartily hated, and upon whom he continually played so many tricks, always evading punishment most successfully. They pictured the gay procession of soldiers and knights which accompanied King John when he entered that city, as the Sheriff's guest; and to them the old market-square (the largest in all England) suggested the scene of Robin Hood's masquerade as a butcher. There they halted and imagined him standing beside his booth, and calling out: "Now who'll buy? who'll buy? Four fixed prices have I. Three pennyworths of meat I sell to a fat friar or priest for sixpence, for I want not their custom; stout aldermen I charge threepence, for it doth not matter to me whether they buy or not; to buxom dames I sell three pennyworths of meat for one penny, for I like their custom well; but to the bonny lass that hath a liking for a good tight butcher, I charge nought but one fair kiss, for I like her custom the best of all."

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"It was here in Nottingham that Will Stutely had his narrow escape, wasn't it?" questioned Betty. "He was captured by the Sheriff's men at 'Ye Blue Boar Inn,' and they brought him to town and would have hanged him, if Robin Hood and his men hadn't arrived just in time to save his life. Once Little John came to Nottingham Town and lived for some time in the Sheriff's own castle, pretending to be the cook. My! what lots of things happened here!"

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Not far away are splendid Chatsworth House, one of the palaces of the Duke of Devonshire, and lovely Haddon Hall, with its romantic story, and both of these famous places received a visit from Mrs. Pitt and her party.

Chatsworth, I am afraid, was not fully appreciated by our friends. It has a most beautiful situation—in the valley of the Derwent, which rushes along through the extensive park; the house itself is magnificent—filled with fine marble halls and rooms, and costly treasures of art; and in the gardens almost every sovereign of Europe seems to have planted some kind of a tree. One curious thing did wonderfully please the children's fancy; that is, a marvelous weeping-willow tree, from the metal twigs and branches of which tiny streams of water come at a sign from the gardener. But somehow, on the whole, Chatsworth is cold and unfeeling, and failed to appeal to the party.

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Not so was it with Haddon Hall! The most prosaic summer tourist could hardly fail to be moved by admiration of its delights. It is still a real home, and seems alive with memories of the fair Dorothy Vernon and her family. The old castle has scarcely changed at all since the

sixteenth century, and one feels as though the great lords and ladies of Queen Elizabeth's time had thoughtfully stepped out on the terrace, in order that we might wander through their noble old dwelling.

The custodian was having her afternoon-tea when the party arrived; she did not think of hurrying in the slightest, but leisurely finished this most important meal, and then received the visitors' fees and allowed them to enter.

"I feel as though I had walked into a story!" remarked Betty quietly. "Is Dorothy at home?"

The various buildings of Haddon Hall are built around two square courts. The oldest bit is the ancient chapel, in part dating from Norman times, and in which the Vernon family worshiped for four hundred years. It still contains some old wooden pews, and traces of grotesque paintings may be seen upon its walls.

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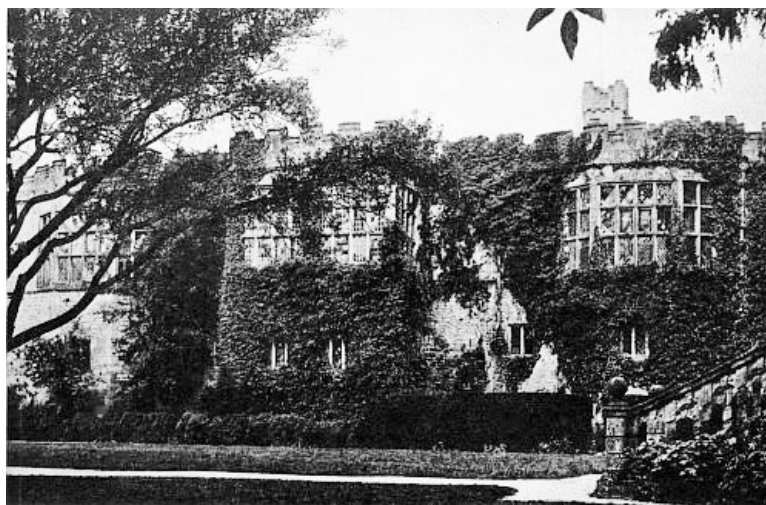
"Where are we going now?" whispered Barbara, keeping close to Betty, as the guide led them down a very dark passage, with an uneven stone floor. "Oh, it's the kitchen!"

A light had now been struck, and the huge fireplaces of this kitchen of bygone days could be seen. Everything seemed complete, even to the woodbox which once held the tremendous logs.

"How in the world could they see to cook in such a dark place?" inquired the practical John.

"Oh, there were probably great torches fastened to the walls, and then there are some tiny windows. When your eyes grow accustomed to the dim light, you can see fairly well. I should think, though, that once in a while, the cook might have put a little too much salt in the pasty," Mrs. Pitt replied laughingly.

An exceedingly curious feature of Haddon's Banqueting-hall is an iron bracket with a ring, which is between the entrance doors. Naturally, Mrs. Pitt was called upon to explain this.



"It still seems alive with memories of the fair Dorothy Vernon."—Page [217](#).

"Well," said she, "it's worth an explanation, for it has a strange purpose. Any guest who could not or would not drink as much as was required of him by the laws of hospitality, had his arm fastened up to that ring, and what he had refused to take was poured down his sleeve. Fancy! For my part, I should consider that a sad waste! Speaking of drinking, I wonder if you really know what it means when a man pledges or drinks a health. It's a very ancient custom! Back in the days of Saxon England, it very often happened that a man would be stabbed while drinking, so it became the habit for him to turn to his neighbor and ask if he would 'pledge' him. If he agreed, his duty was to keep guard over his friend who wished to drink. A trace of this caution still exists at Queen's College, Oxford. There the students who wait upon the 'fellows,' stand behind them and place their right thumbs upon the table."

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The round steps in the Long Gallery are said to have been cut from one great oak, grown on the estate. Up these they went, and followed the guide to the celebrated Ball-room, which is so often and so beautifully pictured. This long room is exquisite with its carved paneling, polished, inlaid floor, and lovely bay-windows overlooking the terrace.

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"Here the ball was in progress at the time of Dorothy Vernon's escape. It was the wedding night of Dorothy's sister, wasn't it? At any rate, while every one was engrossed in the dancing and merrymaking, Dorothy quietly slipped away, ran through this door here, along the terrace, and out to a certain tree in the park where her lover was awaiting her with the horses. That's the story, and certainly it is a pretty one," concluded Mrs. Pitt.

Just off the Ball-room is the State Bed-room, which claims to have had Queen Elizabeth as an occupant. The great bed, fourteen feet six inches high, is considered one of the finest in England, and is finished in green velvet and white satin.

They strolled out through Dorothy Vernon's door and along the lovely terrace, over which the solemn yew-trees hang low. From here is seen a charming view of the garden, hemmed in upon one side by that part of the castle containing the Ball-room. The sun was just setting as they lingered upon the steps of the terrace, and it flooded everything with a golden light. The scene was so beautiful that all were silent as they gazed and gazed. Betty finally rose with a deep sigh, and said:

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"Well, I suppose Dorothy knew what she was about, but I'm sure that I should never have run away from Haddon Hall!"

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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WINCHESTER, SALISBURY, AND STONEHENGE

It was not until they were well on their way toward Winchester, that Mrs. Pitt found a chance to tell the young people something about that ancient city which they were so soon to see.

"Winchester has a cathedral, hasn't it?" Betty had inquired. "I always like to see those."

"Yes, indeed," replied Mrs. Pitt. "There surely is a cathedral, for it's the longest one in all Europe with the exception of St. Peter's at Rome. I'm certain you will enjoy that; but what I think you'll appreciate even more are the associations which Winchester has with the life of Alfred the Great. You all remember about him, don't you!"

"The fellow who burnt the cakes?" put in John, jeeringly.

"Yes, but he was also 'the fellow' who led his army at a time when the country was in great danger—who dressed as a minstrel and dared to go even into the very camp of the enemy, so as to investigate their movements. You certainly like that in him, John?"

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"I know it! That was great!" John answered warmly. "Please tell us some more about him, Mrs. Pitt."

"To me he has always been one of the most lovable as well as admirable characters in all our English history. He came to the throne at a time when his wise leadership was greatly needed, and he fought long and valiantly for his country. When he burnt the cakes, John, it was merely because his thoughts were so busy with the plans for England's future. Alfred made Winchester the capital of his whole realm, and here he lived with all the court, when there was peace in the land. Part of Alfred's boyhood had been spent here, too, when he was the pupil of the wise St. Swithin; and, at Winchester, he made the good and just laws for which he will always be remembered. Within the walls of old Wolvesley Castle, the famous 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' was commenced, at the command of the King. But besides all these useful deeds, Alfred had such a beautiful personality that his family and all the people of his kingdom loved him, and called him 'the perfect King.' I have long admired this little tribute which one historian has given Alfred the Great. He says this; I think these are the very words: 'He was loved by his father and mother, and even by all the people, above all by his brothers. As he advanced through the years of infancy and youth, his form appeared more comely than that of his brothers; in look, in speech, and in manners, he was more graceful than they. His noble nature implanted in him from his cradle a love of wisdom above all things.' And so, through all the centuries between his time and ours, King Alfred's name has stood for all that is just, kind, wise, and beautiful."

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"Where was King Alfred buried, Mother?" asked Barbara.

"I'll show you his grave—or what is supposed to be his. But here we are at Winchester now!" cried Mrs. Pitt; "and the sun has come out just for our special benefit, too!"

In a "cathedral town," one is usually drawn first of all to the cathedral itself, it being the

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central point about which the whole town seems to cluster; and so it was that Mrs. Pitt led the way down the shaded walk between the broad stretches of lawn surrounding the great structure. To her great disappointment, an ugly net-work of staging entirely spoiled the effect of the exterior of the building.

"I once read a book which an American wrote about his trip abroad," related Mrs. Pitt. "It amused me very much! After visiting a really remarkable number of churches and important buildings which were undergoing reconstruction or strengthening, this gentleman ventured the belief that the authorities must have made a mistake in the date of his arrival, for everything seemed to point to the preparation of a splendid reception to him anywhere from a week to a month later. I feel that way to-day. The Winchester people certainly could not have expected us just yet. It's a pity that we cannot see this grand cathedral at its best!"

The usual feeling of quiet awe came over the party upon entering the edifice, and this was here somehow increased by the vastness of the interior. Their footsteps echoed strangely on the stone floor, and looking up at the arches above her head, Betty began to walk about on tiptoe.

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"The marriage of Queen Mary with Philip of Spain took place in this cathedral," Mrs. Pitt said. "In Bishop Langton's Chapel here, is an old chair said to have been used by the Queen at the ceremony. Notice the six wooden chests above that screen. They contain the bones of some of the old, old kings—William Rufus, Canute, Egbert, Ethelwolf, and others. Once upon a time, there was a very famous shrine here—that of St. Swithin. You remember the legend which tells how the body of that saint was delayed from being removed to the chapel already fitted to receive it, by forty days of rain. That's why when we have nasty, rainy weather in England, we always blame St. Swithin.

"I'll show you the tomb of the well-known authoress, Jane Austen, and that of Izaak Walton, who is buried in one of the chapels. The former lived her last days and died in this town, and it was in the little river Itchen which flows through Winchester, that Izaak Walton used to fish. They were both laid to rest here in the cathedral, near the scenes which they dearly loved."

The environs of the cathedral are very pretty, and one of the most picturesque features is the old Deanery, where Charles II once lodged. Just outside the cathedral close is the modest little house which was Jane Austen's home.

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Winchester School was visited,—a very famous old institution which is connected with New College, Oxford, and was built by William of Wykeham in 1396,—and the vine-covered ruins of old Wolvesley Castle, which stand on the outskirts of the town, and near the river.

"Didn't you say that this was where King Alfred had them write the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle'?" Betty asked of Mrs. Pitt. "Will you please tell us what that was? I don't seem to remember very well."

"Well, dear, the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' is the 'first history of the English People,' as some one has correctly said. Part of it was written by Alfred himself, and the rest was done by others, under his direction. It is simply a record of all important events which were written down as they took place. The 'Chronicle' grew and grew for about two hundred and fifty years, the last mention being of the accession to the throne of Henry II, in 1154. For many years it was kept here at its birthplace, but it has now been moved to the library of Corpus Christi College at Oxford. You see, therefore, that this important work really marked the start of the wonderful succession of literary productions which Englishmen have brought forth in these one thousand years."

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Quite at the other end of the town from Wolvesley Castle is the County Court, a fine old hall, which once upon a time formed part of a castle built by William the Conqueror. Mrs. Pitt had some difficulty in finding the caretaker who could admit them, and not until they were actually inside did the children understand why she was so very anxious that they should see it.

Many were the exclamations of delight, however, when the guide pointed to the wall at one end of the Norman room, and told them that the round, flat object hanging thereupon was "King Arthur's Round Table."

"What!" cried Betty, her mouth wide open in her excitement, "the very table at which the knights sat!—Sir Lancelot, Sir Gawain, Sir Perceval, Sir Galahad, and all the rest! Why, I never knew it was here, or I should have come to see it before anything else! To think of it's being the real table!"

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It was hard for Mrs. Pitt to tell Betty that all the legends concerning this table are pure

fiction. "Not all authorities consider its identity absolutely certain," she admitted unwillingly, "but we're going to believe in it just the same. It must date from the sixth century! Fancy! However, it was all repainted in the time of Henry VIII, and these peculiar stripes and devices were the work of some sixteenth century brush."

Betty sat right down on the floor, and stared up at the table of her adored King Arthur and his knights. With much difficulty could Mrs. Pitt persuade her to leave the hall, and that was not accomplished until after Betty had trustingly inquired of the guide whether he knew where the chairs were in which the knights sat when they gathered about the table, for "she'd like so much to find them right away."

Passing under a gate of the old city-wall, and along the quaint streets of the town, the party came to Hyde Abbey,—or what little now remains of it.

"Alfred's body was first buried in the old minster (cathedral); then it was carried to the new; and last of all, it was removed by the monks here to Hyde Abbey, which monastery Alfred himself had founded. In the eighteenth century the Abbey was almost entirely destroyed, and then it was that Alfred's true burial-place was lost sight of. Later still, in making some excavations here, the workmen found an ancient coffin which was examined and believed to be that of the King. Reverently it was reburied and marked with a flat stone, and this doubtful grave is the only trace we now have of Alfred the Great." They had all quietly followed Mrs. Pitt to the spot where, across the way from the Abbey, they saw the grave.

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Before returning to the hotel that night, Mrs. Pitt suggested that they go to see the old Hospital of St. Cross.

"It's only about a mile from the town," she said. "There's a charming little path along the banks of the Itchen, and I think we'd enjoy the walk in the cool of the afternoon."

Mrs. Pitt was quite correct. It proved a delightful stroll, leading them to the fertile valley in which Henry de Blois built his Hospital of St. Cross, by the side of the pleasant little river.

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"The Hospital was really founded by Henry de Blois, but three centuries later, Cardinal Beaufort took much interest in it, made some changes and improvements, and greatly aided in its support," the children were told. "To this day, there is a distinction between the St. Cross Brethren and the Beaufort Brethren, but this is chiefly confined to the matter of dress. Seventeen men are living here now, and are most kindly treated, fed, clothed, and allowed to plant and tend their own tiny gardens."

But the most interesting feature of St. Cross—that which in so remarkably vivid a way holds its connection with the past—is the dole. Since the reign of King Stephen, no one applying for food or drink at the Beaufort Tower of St. Cross Hospital, has ever been turned away. To each has been given, during all the centuries, a drink of beer and a slice of bread. A slight distinction is made between visitors by the scrutiny of the Brethren; for, to the tramp is handed a long draught of beer from a drinking-horn and a huge piece of bread, while to some are offered the old silver-mounted cup, and wooden platter.

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"Can we have some?" John inquired. "I think I might not like the beer, but the bread would be all right, and I'm hungry!"

In spite of Betty's reproving cry of "Why, John!" Mrs. Pitt motioned him to go up to the gate, and ring.

"Yes, it's quite proper for us to apply for the dole," she said. "Emerson and Carlyle once did so, and I imagine they were not in any greater need of it than are we."

As John received his portions and was looking at them a bit dubiously, Philip called out to him, "Don't take so much that you can't eat your dinner, Jack!" and then, seeing that John had already set down the food untouched, they all laughed merrily.

After breakfasting at Winchester the following morning, an early train carried the party to the town of Salisbury, there to see the fairest of the English cathedrals,—that is, in Mrs. Pitt's opinion, of course.

To say that Salisbury Cathedral stands in the center of a velvet-like lawn, to mention the fact that a little stream flows musically by, to add that the towers and lines of the building itself are wonderfully graceful, is attempting to describe things as they exist, but wholly inadequate in the impression which it gives to the reader. There is an indescribable fascination about Salisbury Cathedral, which a person must see to understand. Any one who is at all responsive to the charm of great architecture, can sit for hours under the old trees on the little common, and drink in the whole scene,—the beautiful building with its

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delicate shapes outlined in shadows upon the green grass.

“No doubt it is a generally accepted fact that Lincoln is the finest of the English cathedrals,” Mrs. Pitt explained after a time. “Perhaps Durham comes next in line, and Canterbury has great historical interest. I only assert that to me Salisbury is the most beautiful. You know, Betty, that the construction of most cathedrals was extended over many years,—even many generations, usually. Salisbury was an exception to that rule, for it was begun and finished within forty years (1220 to 1260), and therefore has rare harmony and uniformity of style.”

There are many quaint streets and buildings in the town of Salisbury, but these become familiar though always delightful sights to the visitor who gives a good share of his time to old England. Having noted the old-fashioned King’s Arms Inn, which was a secret meeting-place of the Royalists after the battle of Worcester, the party had an early lunch, and then set out to drive the ten miles to Stonehenge.

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The road which they took begins to ascend gradually, and after about a mile and a half brought them to the high mound which was once “the largest entrenched camp in the kingdom,” according to Betty’s leather-covered Baedeker. This was the site of Old Sarum, a fort during the Roman occupation, and afterwards a Saxon town. Numerous interesting remains of the camp are here, and the high elevation affords an excellent view of Salisbury and the surrounding country.

The rest of the drive was not particularly enjoyable. A sharp wind blew over the high Salisbury Plains, which are bare and not very picturesque to see. In the center of this great stretch of plain stands that strange relic of the past known as Stonehenge. Being on an elevation, the stones stand out weirdly against the sky as the visitor approaches, and give him a foretaste of the peculiar mystery which pervades the place.

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The section is surrounded by a wire fence, and a man collects a fee of a shilling before admitting any one into the company of these gigantic rocks, which are standing or lying about in various positions. It seems as though there were originally two great circles, one inside the other, formed by huge oblong stones, set up on end as a child might arrange his blocks. On the tops of these, others are in some places still poised, though many have fallen. One great stone lies broken across the altar.

After the young people had climbed about and thoroughly explored the ruins, they gathered around Mrs. Pitt to hear her explanation of the place.

“Well,” she began, “it is generally believed that we see here the remains of an ancient temple of the Druids. They were half-mythical creatures who are thought to have inhabited England in prehistoric times. They worshiped Nature,—particularly the Sun, and lived out-of-doors entirely. Most people consider them to have been the originators of this strange work, though it has also been attributed to the Saxons, the Danes, and, I believe, even the Phœnicians. But no matter what people were the real builders, there still remains the question of how these tremendous stones were brought here in days when there was no machinery, and in a district near which no stone-quarries could possibly have been. That has puzzled men in all ages.”

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The laughter and chatter of the members of a large “Personally Conducted” party, who were having their late lunch in the field just outside the picket-fence, grated upon Mrs. Pitt’s nerves. Even more than in a cathedral with solid walls and a roof, here in this open-air, ruined temple, dating from unknown ages, one is filled with deepest reverence. It almost seems possible to see the ancient Druids who worshiped there, dressed in robes of purest white.

In spite of the blue sky, the bright sunshine of early afternoon, and the nearness of very noisy, human tourists, Betty so felt the strange atmosphere which envelopes these huge sentinels of the past, that she suddenly exclaimed:

“Oh, please, Mrs. Pitt, let’s go back to Salisbury! I can’t bear this any longer.”



“There still remains the question of how these tremendous stones were brought here.” Page [236](#).

So they drove slowly away over the fields, and as Mrs. Pitt turned for a last glance behind, she saw the stones looming up in lonely majesty, and thought to herself, “They have a secret which no one will ever know.”

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

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CLOVELLY

A big, high, lumbering coach with four horses was slowly carrying Mrs. Pitt and her young charges toward Clovelly,—that most famous of all English fishing-villages. Betty, having discovered a photograph of it some weeks before, had not ceased talking to the others of her great desire to see the place; and finally Mrs. Pitt postponed her plans for visiting other and more instructive towns, packed up the young people, and started for lovely Devonshire. “Well,” the kind lady had thought to herself, “perhaps it will be just as well for them to have a short holiday, and go to a pretty spot where they can simply amuse themselves, and not have to learn too much history. Bless their little hearts! They surely deserve it, for their brains have been kept quite busy all the spring,—and I believe I shall enjoy Clovelly once again, myself!”

Now that they were actually there, the realization was proving even more delightful than the anticipation. The weather was perfect, and to drive along the cliffs and moors, with a fresh, cool breeze blowing up from the blue water below, was wonderfully exhilarating. Their route led through a country where innumerable bright red poppies grow in the fields of grain, and where there are genuine “Devonshire lanes,” shut in by tall hedges and wild flowers. Sometimes they clattered through the narrow streets of a tiny village, while the coachman snapped his whip, and the postilion in his scarlet coat and brass buttons, sounded his bugle loudly. As they rolled by farmhouses, heads would appear curiously at the windows, while children ran out to watch that important event,—the passing of the daily coach. One rosy-cheeked girl in a blue pinafore tossed a bunch of yellow cowslips up into Mrs. Pitt’s lap, calling out, “Cowslips, lady; thank ye!” When a sixpence was thrown down to her, she smiled, courtesied primly, and then disappeared into the nearest cottage,—one of plaster and thatch, overgrown with roses.

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However, the crowning joy of the day, even in the opinion of John, who was difficult to please, was the first glimpse of quaint little Clovelly itself. The coach set them down in the middle of a field; a few seafaring men stood about, there was a booth or two where old women sold fruit, a steep path was before them, but no town was anywhere in sight.

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“Don’t let’s go down there,” John grumbled. “What’s the use? I’d much rather stay up on that front seat with the driver.”

Mrs. Pitt smiled knowingly, and still led the way on down the walk. The hedges on either side were so high and thick that they could not see beyond them, and the children were really speechless when the path suddenly came to an end, and the whole queer little street of Clovelly lay before them. For a second no word was spoken, then all burst out at once.

“Well, what do you think of that?” chuckled John. “Just look at the donkeys!”

“And the pink and white doll’s houses!” exclaimed Barbara.

“And the funny cobble-stone street!” cried Philip.



**One of plaster and thatch, overgrown with roses.—
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“And the blue, blue water at its feet!” rhymed Betty, all unconsciously. “I just know the Mediterranean isn’t any bluer!”

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“Isn’t it the dearest, oddest little place!” put in Mrs. Pitt, summing up all the children’s remarks in one. “I do think it’s—.” But here Betty interrupted her.

“Look at that little girl!” she fairly screamed. “Don’t let her run down that steep street like that! She mustn’t do it!”

Mrs. Pitt, after one look at the child, merely laughed and replied, “Don’t worry, Betty; she’s used to it. She’s probably done it all her life, and she’ll never fall. Now, I turn you all loose for two hours. Explore the place to your heart’s content, for it will be long before you see such another. Come to the New Inn (that’s it, where the sign is!) at one-thirty for luncheon.”

Enthusiastically the four started off. At first they all picked their way carefully and slowly down over the smooth, slippery stones, but gradually they became more expert in keeping their balance, and could go faster. The two boys made straight for the foot of the town to see the harbor and fishing-boats; Barbara and Betty were bent on investigating all the nooks, corners, and tiny shops of the little place; and Mrs. Pitt contentedly settled herself on the miniature piazza of the New Inn, and looked with never-failing interest and delight at the scene before her.

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To explain more in detail, Clovelly is built in what was once a torrent-bed, and the village tumbles down from the top of the cliff to the very edge of Hartland Bay. The droll, Italian-like cottages cling to the hillside, or seem to grow directly out of the gray rock. At first, the street descends rather gradually and straight, but after a short distance, it zigzags first to left and then to right, twists and turns, takes one under parts of houses, into private yards, out to look-off points, and then pitches very, very abruptly down to the Red Lion Inn, which guards the little harbor with its long, curving sea-wall and tiny lighthouse.

From where Mrs. Pitt sat she had a splendid view up and down the street, which was then crowded, it being the busiest time of the season. Just below her, up against the piazza, sat an artist, bent eagerly forward toward his easel, and absolutely oblivious of the throngs of people who were noisily passing close by. There were tourists in gay attire, children romping about in their queer shoes with nails on the bottom to prevent slipping, big stalwart men sliding luggage down on sledges, and patient little mules, which struggled up with big trunks fastened to shelf-like saddles over their backs. To this busy scene the bright little dwellings which line the way, add the finishing touch. The roof of one house is on a level with the second-story window of that above it; the vines are luxuriant, climbing sometimes up over the very chimneys, and flower-beds and flower-boxes are everywhere. A holiday, festive air seems universal.

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“Where can one see such a scene?” mused Mrs. Pitt. “Not in Italy surely, for there the ‘picturesque dirt,’ as they call it, is so much in evidence. For my part, I prefer the exquisite neatness and cleanliness of Clovelly.”

Lunch at the New Inn tasted very good,—especially as here the young people first made the acquaintance of the much-praised “Devonshire cream.” Served with wild strawberries, or any other fruit, this thick cream is truly delicious, and unlike anything else. The meal itself was partaken of in the Annex, a larger, newer house across the way, but having finished, the party returned to the original hostelry. It is the tiniest house imaginable, and the little rooms are so crowded with furniture, the landlord’s collection of fine old china, and knick-knacks of all sorts, that John endangered many valued treasures by his awkward movements. Once, in passing some people in the hall, his elbow struck a small cabinet of blue china, and there would have been a terrible catastrophe had not Mrs. Pitt arrived upon the scene at the opportune moment.

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“Oh, bother!” exclaimed John, very much irritated, and more ashamed of his clumsiness than he cared to show. “How can a fellow have room to breathe in a bandbox like this! Come along, Philip; I’m going down to talk some more with those sailors.”

The old fishermen who can no longer follow their loved trade sit sunning themselves comfortably on the doorsteps of their Clovelly homes, gazing dreamily out to sea. When Mrs. Pitt, Barbara, and Betty went to find the boys toward tea-time, they discovered them sitting by a group of these old cronies, who were ensconced upon a bench affording a beautiful view of the lower part of the town, the bay, and the cliffs of the rugged coast. The tide had filled the little harbor, and numerous small boats with copper-colored sails bobbed about on the opal waters; near the Red Lion Inn stood a row of sleepy-looking mules waiting for the start up the street.

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The men had been exchanging fishermen’s yarns, much to the pleasure of their audience, but when the ladies appeared, they commenced telling ghost-stories or curious bits of folklore. One tale especially amused the girls, although John thought he preferred the wild adventures of the sea.

After looking long out over the bay, the particular old salt who was then entertaining them, removed the pipe from between his teeth, and began the following. Mrs. Pitt took pains to remember it, and this is how it reads to this very day in her journal:

“The father of a certain fair young girl had been carried off by smugglers, and kept for ‘a year and a day,’—until a large sum of money was finally paid for his release. He only lived a short time after his return home, however, and his daughter died soon after, worn out by anxiety about her father. This young lady’s ghost continually haunts a certain little village in Devon, where some of the fisherfolk were said to have taken part in the kidnaping of her father. Instead of doing anything more violent, the ghost simply appears on Sunday mornings, just as the dinners are being cooked, and touches the meat with her white, bony hand, thereby rendering it unfit to eat.”

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Mrs. Pitt’s famous journal, which is often referred to, contains also this story heard that day at Clovelly:

“In front of a certain farm-house was a large, flat stone, which tradition said was as old as the Flood. Here, at midnight, there always appeared a female figure, clad in a gray cloak and an old-fashioned black bonnet. The apparition would remain there until dawn, always knocking, knocking upon the stone. The inhabitants of the house nearby became so used to ‘Nelly the Knocker,’ as she was called, that they paid no attention whatever to her, did not fear her in the least, and would even stop to examine her queer garments. Finally, however, two young men of the family decided to solve the mystery, so they blasted the rock one day. To their great surprise, underneath were lying two large urns, packed with gold, which treasure enriched them for the rest of their days. But ‘Nelly the Knocker’ came no more.”

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In place of repairing to the somewhat stuffy dining-room at the inn, they had their tea just outside one of the most sightly cottages, and were served by a pretty young girl. The china was coarse and the thick slices, cut with a big knife from huge loaves of bread, were by no means daintily served, but it could not have tasted better, and John ate a truly alarming amount of bread and jam.

At Clovelly, the summer twilights are very long and lovely, and down on the breakwater our friends enjoyed this one to the full. One might look over the blue expanse of bay and see the faint outlines of the coast of Wales, and then turn and gaze at the picturesque harbor and the quaint, hanging village, in the houses of which, lights were slowly beginning to twinkle, one after another. They stayed until it was quite dark, and were even then loath to wend their way up the steep street, and to waste so many hours by going to bed in the “Doll’s House,” as John persisted in calling the New Inn.

“Well,” said Betty comfortingly, “it will be fun after all,—sleeping in that funny wee inn, where there are only four bedrooms in the whole house. I choose the one with the pink rose

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peeping in the window! I saw it this morning. Come on."

The next day dawned as fair as one could wish, and at Mrs. Pitt's suggestion a walk along the "Hobby Drive" was first taken. This charming road was built by a Mr. Hamlin, the owner of the town of Clovelly, who lives at Clovelly Court. The drive starts just at the top of the village, and extends for three miles along the edge of the cliffs. The views are startlingly beautiful! Through the fresh green of the trees and vines, glimpses of the deep blue sea are to be had, and to add to the vivid coloring, there is the peculiar red rock which belongs to that part of the coast.

As they were retracing their steps, Mrs. Pitt said with slight hesitation:

"I promise not to give you very much history while you are here, but I must tell you just a bit about the relation which all this country bears to Charles Kingsley's great book, 'Westward Ho!' Have you never read it, John? Fancy! I'll get it for you at once! Well, Bideford is the nearest town to Clovelly, and it was from there that Amyas Leigh, Salvation Yeo, and all the rest set out with Sir Francis Drake. By the by, that very sailor, Salvation Yeo, was born in the old Red Lion Inn, at the foot of the Clovelly street. Oh, you'd like him, John, and all his brave adventures! At Clovelly Court, in the days of the story, lived Will Cary, another of the well-known characters in 'Westward Ho!,' and in the little parish church very near there, Charles Kingsley's father was rector. Kingsley himself was at Clovelly a great deal, and probably gained here his knowledge of the seas and those who sail them. One of those old fishermen last night (he who claimed to be ninety-eight) told me that he used to know Charles Kingsley well, and I suppose it is possible."

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That afternoon toward tea-time, after another fascinating roam about the town,—into its back-yards and blind alleys, and along its pebbly beach,—as well as numerous exciting rides on the backs of the mules, the party gathered on the tiny veranda of the New Inn, crowding it to its utmost capacity. The purpose of this formal meeting was to decide where they should go the following morning, as they were then leaving Clovelly. Mrs. Pitt had promised them a week more of play in Devonshire before their trip to Canterbury, and she advised visits to Bideford, Minehead, Porlock, Lynton, Lynmouth, and finally Torquay. As the young people had no ideas of their own upon the subject and as they had vast confidence in anything Mrs. Pitt proposed, this plan was at once adopted.

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"These places are all by the sea," Mrs. Pitt continued, "and I'm quite sure you'll like them. Torquay is just a watering-place, with big hotels, terraces, and gardens, but oh! it is so lovely, and nearby is the duckiest little village of Cockington! You'll never leave the thatched cottages there, Betty! Lynmouth is very fine, with its combination of mountain and seaside views, and its moors. Close by is the Doone Valley, which figures so prominently in the story of 'Lorna Doone,' and we'll visit that. It will all be beautiful—beautiful as only England and Devonshire can be—but you'll find nothing at all like this strange little Clovelly, so enjoy it while you may!"



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

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ROCHESTER AND CANTERBURY

As soon as the familiar chugging of the motor was heard at the front door in Cavendish Square, John hurried out. Just as he was examining all the chauffeur's arrangements for the trip, and looking with approval over the entire automobile, the whir of the engine suddenly gasped, struggled to catch its breath, and then ceased altogether. The chauffeur, perfectly unconcerned, swung himself off from his seat and sauntered around to "crank her up," but his expression of assurance soon changed, for the motor refused to start.

John's face was pitiful to see. "Oh, bother!" he cried, running to where the chauffeur stood, in front of the hood. "Why has it got to go and spoil it all like that! It's mean, I say! Can't you fix her? What's wrong?"

Off came the chauffeur's nicely-brushed coat, his clean hands handled oily tools, and a big streak of grease soon appeared upon his trousers. Great was his humiliation! After about fifteen minutes of disagreeable work, all was well, however,—the engine started, and the sound was again smooth and steady. John's expression was radiant, and he came to help the ladies in, while the forlorn chauffeur retired to make himself presentable.

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"Now, we're off for Canterbury!" John announced triumphantly, as they at last glided around a corner into Piccadilly.

Slowly and carefully they wended their way down to London Bridge, crossed, and stopped for a moment before the site of the old Tabard Inn.

"I'm going to take you to Canterbury by the very road which Chaucer's pilgrims in all probability traveled, and I thought that to make the illusion as perfect as possible, we really should halt here in Southwark. This is where the pilgrims met, you know, and from here they set out in the lovely month of April: the 'verray perfight, gentil knight,' his son, the gay young squire, the stout Wife of Bath, the dainty prioress, the pale clerk (or scholar), the merchant with his fine beaver hat, the parson, the plowman, the pardonner, the summoner, the cook, and all the rest! They traveled on horseback, you remember, and to beguile the tedious hours when they advanced slowly along the dusty road, they took turns in telling the stories which Chaucer gives us in the wonderful 'Canterbury Tales.'"

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"I never did know just why they went," Betty ventured, in some confusion lest they should laugh at her.

"Neither did I!" John promptly seconded. "Please tell us, Mrs. Pitt."

"Dear me, yes! I certainly will, for you must surely understand that!" After pausing a moment in order to think how best to make her meaning clear, Mrs. Pitt went on in her pleasant voice. "You see, pilgrimages were always made to some especial shrine! We'll take Becket's for an example. After his terrible murder, Becket was immediately canonized (that is, made a saint), and for many years a very celebrated shrine to him existed at Canterbury Cathedral. In those days, sumptuous velvets and abundant jewels adorned the shrines, and if a person journeyed to one, it meant that his sins were all atoned for. It was a very easy thing, you see. If a man had committed a wrong, all he had to do was to go to some shrine, say certain prayers there, and he thought himself forgiven. Such trips cost men practically nothing, for pilgrims might usually be freely cared for at the monasteries along the route; a man was quite sure of good company; and altogether, it was very pleasant to see the world in this way. The numerous terrible dangers to be met with only added the spice of excitement to many. In short, such numbers of poor men started off on these religious pilgrimages, leaving their families uncared for, that the clergy finally were forced to interfere. Laws were then made which compelled a man to procure a license for the privilege of going to a shrine, and these permits were not granted to all. You understand then, that toward noted shrines such as St. Thomas à Becket's, pilgrims singly and in companies were always flocking, and among these was the little group which Chaucer has made so familiar and real to us all."

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"Here's Deptford," announced John by and by, seeing the name upon some sign. "What went on here?"

"What makes you think anything 'went on here!'" Mrs. Pitt exclaimed. "Fancy! What a

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curious boy!"

"Oh!" John burst out. "That's easy enough! I haven't seen more than about two or three places in all this country where some fellow didn't do something, or some important thing go on."

Mrs. Pitt pushed up her veil, removed her glasses, and wiped the tears of laughter from her eyes. "I think you are about right, John. And something did happen here in Deptford; in fact, there were several things. First, I'll tell you that it was here that Queen Elizabeth came in 1581 and visited the ship in which Drake had been around the world. The Queen dined on board the vessel and knighted Drake while there. Event number two was the death of Christopher Marlowe, one of the greatest of all England's dramatists. Marlowe was only thirty years old when he was killed in a vulgar fight in a tavern. Fancy! Poor Anne of Cleves, after the early divorce from her royal husband, lived near Deptford, at Place House. Writers say that she used often to go up to London, and visit the Court, just as though she had not been (for a few short days, to be sure) the 'first lady of the land,' as you Americans say. Poor Anne! She always seemed a pitiful character to my mind. She couldn't help it if Henry VIII didn't find her good to look upon!"

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Beyond Deptford, as they were smoothly gliding along, all at once there came a loud report.

"Goodness!" cried John. "What in the world was that!" Then he shouted with laughter at the frightened expression on Betty's face.

"Dearie me! It must be a 'blow-out'! Is that the trouble, Jo? Yes? Well, come, girls; we may as well step out." There was forced resignation in Mrs. Pitt's voice; she was trying not to mind the delay.

For forty minutes she and the girls sat by the roadside and watched the chauffeur and the two boys at work on the tire. It seemed as though every part of this operation took longer than usual. The tools seemed never so easily mislaid; it surely was a longer task than ever to inflate the tube, and then to fit on the wheel-rim. Finally, however, the three rose, grimy and dusty, but triumphant, and ready to set forth once again.

The accident came just at the edge of Blackheath, amid very historic surroundings. Some one has called Blackheath the Rotten Row of the olden days, for there royalty and fashionable people of the town went to ride and disport themselves, just as they now do in Hyde Park; and there important guests on the way to London, were wont to be met with much ceremony by the Mayor and certain great citizens. After the battle of Agincourt, the victor, Henry V, when returning to London, was given a magnificent reception at Blackheath, and many were the speeches of praise which had been prepared. The great soldier cut them all short, however, insisting that the honor be given God. At Blackheath, his descendant, Henry VIII, first saw Anne of Cleves (officially, that is), and straightway decided to divorce her. But perhaps the most joyful scene of all those at Blackheath, took place on the May morning when Charles II came into his own, and all England was glad, after the dark days of the Commonwealth and the iron rule of the sober Puritans.

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"This," declared Mrs. Pitt a little later, "is 'Shooter's Hill.' That should bear a familiar sound. How many have ever read Dickens's 'Tale of Two Cities'? You have, I know, Philip. Well, in the second chapter, the stage which carried Mr. Jarvis Lorry on his way, is described as slowly mounting this very hill, while most of its passengers toil along the wet, snowy road, by its side. Do you remember, Betty? You must try to think over all of Dickens's works which you have ever read, for we are coming to a district which that author knew well and often put into his novels."

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Sure enough, they almost felt as though they had stepped into the world of Dickens's stories, for so many of the places mentioned therein they were able to find. Slowly they drove through Rochester's streets, stopping when they came to any spot of especial interest.

"Here's the old Bull Inn," said Mrs. Pitt, pointing it out as she spoke. "It is supposed that there are no less than twenty-five inns named in Dickens's 'Pickwick Papers' alone. This is one of them, for Room Number Seventeen was Mr. Pickwick's bedroom, and there is also Winkle's, which was 'inside of Mr. Tupman's.' Come, shall we go in?"

The landlord of the Bull has most carefully preserved and cared for all which is of even the slightest interest in connection with Dickens or his books. He most kindly took Mrs. Pitt and her party all about the old house, showing them everything,—including the room where the famous ball in "Pickwick Papers" was held.

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Leaving the Bull, they noted the Crown Inn, on the site of the one where Henry VIII went

privately to take a look at Anne of Cleves, and the old White Hart, built in Richard II's reign, which once sheltered Samuel Pepys. In Restoration House (built in 1587) Charles II stayed after his landing at Dover.

"Dickens wrote thus about Restoration House in 'Great Expectations,'" Betty read from the guidebook. "I had stopped to look at the house as I passed, and its seared red brick walls, blocked windows and strong green ivy clasping even the stacks of chimneys with its twigs and tendrils, as if with sinewy arms, made up a rich and attractive mystery."

"Doesn't that describe it exactly?" exclaimed Mrs. Pitt, with enthusiasm. "That house always fascinated me, too. When Dickens last visited Rochester, it is said that he was seen gazing long at this old place, and some have thought that the result of those reflections would have appeared in the next chapter of 'Edwin Drood,' which novel, as you know, he never finished. Now, we'll drive out to take a look at Gad's Hill. Luckily, this is Wednesday, so we will be admitted."

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After making inquiries, Mrs. Pitt learned that the owner of Gad's Hill throws it open only on the afternoon of each Wednesday; so they took their luncheon first, and then motored the mile and a half to Dickens's home.

Gad's Hill is charming! Dickens was devoted to this square, vine-covered house, where he resided from 1856 to the time of his death, in 1870. The story goes that when he was a small boy the place had a great attraction for him, and that one day his father, wishing to spur him on in a way peculiar to parents, reminded him that if he worked hard and persevered until he was a grown man, he might own that very estate, or one like it.

As they left the house, Mrs. Pitt said, "This hill is the spot where took place the robbery of the travelers in Shakespeare's 'Henry IV.' The inn just opposite Gad's Hill is the Falstaff Inn, probably built about Queen Anne's time. It used to have an old sign with pictures of Falstaff and the 'Merry Wives of Windsor' upon it. I read that in the olden days ninety coaches daily stopped here. Fancy!"

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"Well," observed Betty, "I shall certainly enjoy reading Dickens better than ever, when I get home, for now I've seen his study where he wrote. It makes things so much more real somehow, doesn't it, Mrs. Pitt?"

Having visited the cathedral and the old castle, they now left Rochester, and found that the run to Canterbury was rather longer than they had realized.

"But really, you know," Mrs. Pitt had intervened, "Rochester is just about halfway between the two, London and Canterbury, I would say. And we did stop quite a bit to see the sights connected with Dickens."

At last, however, about six in the afternoon, they came in sight of Canterbury, its great cathedral towering over all,—its timbered houses, old city-gate, and narrow, picturesque streets. As usual, the young people who never seemed to need a rest, desired to start sight-seeing at once, but unfortunately a sudden thunder-shower came up to prevent.

"Oh, well, it will stop soon," Betty assured them. "It always does in England."

This time, the weather was not so kind, however. The rain continued persistently, and the party was forced to remain at the inn the entire evening.

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Sunshine, even though it be sometimes a bit dim and watery, is never long absent during an English summer, so the morning dawned bright and clear. Just as they set forth from the hotel, Betty felt in her coat pocket and found that her precious red notebook, in which she inscribed all interesting facts and discoveries, was missing.

Philip promptly came to the rescue, saying: "I saw you put it behind you on the seat of the motor, yesterday, and it's probably there still. I'll go to the garage and see."

Betty gave Philip a grateful little smile, but insisted upon accompanying him on his search. They came upon the treasure just where it had been left, and soon rejoined the rest of the party in the cathedral close, where John was in the midst of taking some photographs.

The first near view which they had of Canterbury Cathedral was in approaching it from under old Christchurch Gateway. In spite of its great age, the cathedral, in contrast with the much blackened gateway, appears surprisingly white and fair. The exterior is very beautiful; the two towers are most majestic, and beyond, one sees the graceful Bell Tower, rising from the point where the transepts cross. In olden days, a gilded angel stood on the very top of the Bell Tower, and served as a beacon to the many pilgrims traveling toward Becket's shrine.

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Walking about inside the cathedral, they saw, behind the altar, the position of the once famous shrine. All that now remain to remind one that this ever existed are the pavement and steps, deeply worn by the feet of many generations of devout pilgrims.

"I told you something of the splendor of this shrine," Mrs. Pitt suggested to them. "It was said that after his visit to it, Erasmus (the Dutch scholar and friend of Sir Thomas More, you know) in describing it, told how 'gold was the meanest (poorest) thing to be seen.' See, here is the tomb of Henry IV, the only king who is buried here, and there's the monument to the Black Prince. Above hang his gauntlets, helmet, coat, and shield. Do you see them, John?"

The northwest transept, so say all guidebooks and vergers (and they certainly ought to be truthful), was the scene of the murder of the Archbishop à Becket. There is even a stone in the floor which marks the precise spot; but, contrary to her usual habit, Mrs. Pitt absolutely pointed out that all this is false.

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"I'm sorry, children," she said, "but I must contradict this. Becket was killed at five o'clock on a dreary December afternoon of 1170. Four years later, the cathedral was entirely destroyed by fire. Therefore, it is not possible that they can show visitors the exact spot where the tragedy took place. William of Sens came over from France, and in 1184, finished the building which we now see.

"This nave," she continued, as they again entered it, "is one of the longest in England, and the choir is several feet higher. Do you notice? It is an unusual feature. Also, the fact that the walls bend very gradually inward as they near the east end of the choir, is worthy of note. Here, as at St. Paul's and a number of other cathedrals, business was carried on, even during services, and pack-horses and mules went trailing through. It's curious to think of, isn't it?"



"William of Sens, in 1184, finished the building which we now see."—Page 264.

Canterbury's cloisters are wonderfully ancient. Blackened as they are by the centuries, and their still exquisite carvings broken, yet here, more than in the edifice itself, can one imagine the scene of Becket's terrible death.

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"The residence of the Archbishop stood alongside the church," Mrs. Pitt proceeded, "and here the murderers came unarmed, upon their arrival in the town, to interview him. Becket was unmoved by their threats, so they left him to go and arm themselves. The entreaties of the monks that their master should seek safety in the cathedral would have been of no avail had not the hour for evening service arrived. Can't you almost think how dark and cold these stones must have seemed on that winter afternoon, when Becket marched along with majestic deliberateness through these very cloisters, in by that little door, and up to the altar. A feeling of dread and terror was everywhere. Most of the monks had fled to places of hiding, and the Archbishop found himself alone with his three or four faithful friends, whom he commanded to unbolt the heavy church doors, which, in a panic, they had barred. No sooner had the armed men rushed in than the challenge came from Reginald Fitzurse, as Tennyson gives us the scene:

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'Where is the Archbishop, Thomas
Becket?'

and Becket's brave answer:

'Here.
No traitor to the King, but Priest of
God,
Primate of England. I am he ye seek.
What would ye have of me?'

They responded, 'Your life!' and there immediately followed the horrible death."

Mrs. Pitt drew a long breath and sighed.

"Such were the deeds of those unenlightened days. These fierce Norman knights, wishing to gain favor in the eyes of the King, and hearing him say in a moment of anger, that he wished himself rid of the troublesome Archbishop, they at once proceeded to Canterbury and killed him. It was all the outcome of the continual strife and struggle for power, between the Church and the State."

"What did they do to those three Normans?" demanded John indignantly.

"Nothing. I believe they went free. But Henry II himself tried to atone for the deed in doing penance by walking barefooted to Canterbury and Becket's shrine. Come, let's go outside now."

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They then wandered about the precincts of the cathedral, pausing by some lovely, ruined arches which tell of an ancient monastery. Everywhere stretch smooth lawns, with grand old trees, and here and there the houses of those connected with the church. Also, very close by stands the King's School, which was founded by Archbishop Theodore in the seventh century, 'for the study of Greek,' and later refounded by Henry VIII. Here that famous Canterbury boy, Christopher Marlowe, was educated. The school is well worth a visit, if only to see the beautiful outside Norman stairway.

Mrs. Pitt next led the way down Mercery Lane, at the corner of which stood The Chequers of Hope, the inn where Chaucer's pilgrims put up.

"You remember the old gate by which we entered the town yesterday," said Mrs. Pitt. "Well, under that same arch came the pilgrims as they approached from London. Although the city-wall then boasted twenty-one towers and six gates, the West Gate is the only remaining bit. Here, at the inn which stood conveniently near the cathedral, the pilgrims stayed, and in Mercery Lane they bought their souvenirs,—probably rosaries or phials of Holy Water. At the further end of the Lane stood the ancient rush-market. Rushes were then in great demand, you recollect, for people used them to strew over their floors."

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One might stay on indefinitely in Canterbury, and still not discover all its treasures and interesting nooks and corners. The streets are narrow, crooked, and contain many very old houses. There is at Canterbury a castle; one may see the ruins of St. John's Hospital, and of St. Sepulchre's Nunnery, where Elizabeth Barton, the "Holy Maid of Kent," once lived; the old gate of St. Augustine's Monastery still stands, though it is now restored; by exploring, traces of the city-wall may be found, and the weavers' houses which hang over the little river offer a delightful view. Interest is endless in Canterbury. But as it is impossible to see it all, especially in limited time, the visitor usually seeks out the best known and most famous places; and surely, after the great cathedral itself, ranks St. Martin's Church.

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A little way out of the town, and up against a sunny hillside, is this tiny "Mother Church of England." Imbedded in the rough stone of the square, Norman tower are the huge stems of giant vines. Altogether, a more primitive, ancient appearing building cannot well be imagined.

"Well," remarked Betty impressively, "this is the very oldest place we've been in yet. It makes me feel as Stonehenge did, somehow."

"Yes, that's true," assented Mrs. Pitt. "The two places do give you similar sensations. It's simply that you feel the age. I've always thought that if I were suddenly blindfolded, carried away, and set down in St. Martin's Church at Canterbury, that I should know where I was just from the atmosphere, which is so heavy with the weight of the years."

It is claimed for St. Martin's that it is the most ancient church in all England, a land filled with ancient churches. It is in the vicinity of sixteen hundred years old, for Bede states that it was built while the Romans were still in possession, and certain it is that numerous Roman bricks may be seen to this day in the outer wall. The church was perhaps erected for the use of Queen Bertha, whose husband, Ethelbert, King of Kent, was also converted to Christianity, and baptized here. After the arrival of St. Augustine, it is believed that he and his followers came here to worship. Inside, the little church is a curious conglomeration of different styles of architecture; here a Roman doorway, there a Norman, and here an

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ancient Saxon arch. Some of the relics in the church are the Saxon font, built of twenty-two separate stones, a tomb which has been called that of Queen Bertha, and two Elizabethan brasses. The party found a most excellent and intelligent guide, a woman, who showed them the vessel which held the Holy Oil (a very valuable thing), and the "leper's squint," a slit in the wall to which the unfortunate sick men were allowed to come and listen to the service.

"That's something like the 'nun's squint' at St. Helen's Church in the city," observed Barbara.

On the way back to their hotel, John and Philip strayed into the old Guildhall which contains some portraits, which failed to impress the boys, however.

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"S'pose they were old Mayors or some such fellows," said John, when questioned as to what he saw. "Couldn't bear 'em, with their bright velvet clothes and high ruffs. I'm glad I didn't live then! Excuse me from ruffs!"

"If the important men of the town wore such gay and frivolous attire, they had to pay for it surely," Mrs. Pitt added. "Last night I was reading that in the records of Canterbury for the year 1556, the Mayor was required to provide for his wife every year, before Christmas, a scarlet gown and a bonnet of velvet. That was enforced by law! Fancy! The women may have had a hand in that, for they very naturally wanted to make sure not to be outdone by the men in the point of fine clothes."

As the automobile again passed under the West Gate, on its way back to London, Betty turned to Mrs. Pitt, and said in her quiet little way:

"I think you were right in what you said when we were at Salisbury. I think, too, that's the most beautiful of all the cathedrals I've seen. But Canterbury, both the town and church, is very, very interesting. I like the stories about Becket and the pilgrims, too. I'd like to come again some day. Please take hold of my hand, John; I want to stand up a minute and watch that dear Bell Tower as long as I can."

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

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GOOD-BY TO LONDON

"A wire for you, Master John."

The butler's interruption while the family was at breakfast one August morning, caused a sudden hush of expectancy.

"A telegram for me!" replied John, trying to assume sufficient dignity for the momentous occasion,—the arrival of the first message he had ever received. "Why, what can it be?"

"Do open it, John. It must be a cable," Betty pleaded, fearing something might be wrong at home.

"Yes, hurry, dear," put in Mrs. Pitt.

Just the second that the contents were revealed, a great shout of joy went up, and John and Betty fairly jumped up and down in their excitement.

"Father and mother coming!" John cried. "On the way now! Taking us to Switzerland! It's great!"

Betty's radiant face showed what delight the prospect of seeing her father and mother gave her. Glancing at Mrs. Pitt almost at once, however, she hastened to say:

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"We're both sorry to go away from you all, though, and I hope they'll let us come back. We've had such a good time in England! Don't you think we can go on with our trip here after Switzerland?"

"I really can't tell, dear, for this is all so unexpected. I don't know what your father's plans may be, but I hope he will bring you back to me. I'd be very sorry if it were all at an end! But to think I shall so soon see your father!" Mrs. Pitt sat staring into the grate, and seemed to be lost in her thoughts.

After the general commotion caused by the news had somewhat subsided, and they had all adjusted themselves to the new plans, Mrs. Pitt decided to spend the remaining week in the city, as she had still so much there to show John and Betty. The weather being quite

cool and comfortable, they could easily go about.

It happened that two events of those busy days made an everlasting impression on the minds of both John and Betty. First, there was their glimpse of the King and Queen; and then, there was the fire.

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As they emerged at about noon one day from the National Gallery, where Mrs. Pitt had been showing them some of the best pictures, Philip heard some one on the steps of the building say that the King and Queen had come to town to be present at the unveiling of a statue. They were soon to pass through St. James Park on their way from Whitehall, it was understood, and our friends at once hastened in that direction. For some time they waited with the crowd, and it was not exactly agreeable, for the day was damp and foggy, and a fine rain had set in. All the while, John was getting more and more aroused, and when he finally saw a small company of the Horse Guards, he so forgot himself as to shout:

“Hurrah! Here they come!”

Because of the rain, the Guards, wearing their blue capes lined with scarlet, were rather less picturesque than usual, but the black horses were as fine as ever.

“They step as if they were proud of going along with the King and Queen,” Betty said in a loud whisper to Barbara.

Between two small squadrons of the Guards came a modest closed carriage in which Their Majesties rode. Fortunately for the young visitors, they both kept bending forward and bowing very graciously from the windows, so that they could be distinctly seen. The sober British crowd was characteristically well-behaved. No demonstration of any sort was given the Royalties, except that the men removed their hats. Swiftly the carriage rolled up the wide avenue toward Buckingham Palace.

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“Humph! They don’t make much fuss about it, do they?” was all John said, while Betty was especially impressed by how very much the King and Queen resembled their photographs.

The following morning an interesting trip to Smithfield was taken. Going by the “Tube,” the ride seemed a short one, and they soon found themselves at Smithfield Market.

“Have you ever seen Faneuil Hall Market in Boston?” demanded Mrs. Pitt laughingly, whereupon John and Betty, the two Bostonians, were rather ashamed to admit that they had not.

“Somehow we never have time at home,” was Betty’s remark. “And I think perhaps we never really wanted to very much, either.”

“Well, you wouldn’t understand why, then, but it always reminded me of this great Smithfield Market,” went on Mrs. Pitt and then added a bit boastfully, “I’ve been to Faneuil Hall several times.”

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What they saw was a large, lofty building, with a roof of glass and iron, equipped as a most thoroughly up-to-date meat-market. A street runs directly through the center, and from this, one can get a splendid idea of both halves.

“This great barren square of Smithfield was the place where they had the tournaments in the olden days, and because of that, the name was probably once ‘Smooth-field.’ Edward III held a brilliant tournament here, and also Richard II, who invited many foreign guests to be present for that important event. The processions which preceded, as well as the tournaments themselves, were most elaborate. One old writer fairly dazzles us by his description of ‘sixty horses in rich trappings, each mounted by an esquire of honor,—and sixty ladies of rank, dressed in the richest elegance of the day following on their palfreys, each leading by a silver chain a knight completely armed for tilting. Minstrels and trumpets accompanied them to Smithfield amidst the shouting population: there the Queen and her fair train received them.’ Then this same author tells at much length of the commencing of the tournament, and says ‘they tilted each other until dark. They all then adjourned to a sumptuous banquet, and dancing consumed the night.’ For several days and nights this same performance was repeated. That gives you a slight idea of the aspect Smithfield bore in the days when it was far outside the limits of the ‘City.’”

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After pausing a few minutes in her talk, while they walked about the square, Mrs. Pitt proceeded:

“In 1381, after the peasant uprising, the leader, Wat Tyler, was killed here. And then, in the reigns of ‘Bloody Mary’ and of Elizabeth, this was the place of public execution. Way back in 1305, the patriot William Wallace was hanged here, and after him came a long line

of sufferers,—among them Anne Askew, Rogers, Bradford, and Philpot, who were persecuted because of their adherence to the Protestant Religion. After that terrible period, Smithfield was for many years the only cattle-market in London; and here was held Bartholomew Fair, also. Don't you agree that this square has had about as varied a history as is very well possible?"

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The church of St. Bartholomew the Great, one of the oldest and most interesting in London, is reached from Smithfield by an inconspicuous arch, which leads to a narrow walk close beside brick walls. At the further end is the façade of the church, which boasts of having been erected in 1123, by Rahere, who also founded the neighboring Hospital of St. Bartholomew.

Once inside the doorway, the visitor feels as though he had actually stepped back many centuries, for, as Baedeker says, "the existing church, consisting merely of the choir, the crossing, and one bay of the nave of the original Priory Church, is mainly pure Norman work, as left by Rahere." Here again, the visitor encounters that strange atmosphere which belongs to the place pervaded by great age.

"You see," explained Mrs. Pitt, "the church which we see is only a very small part of the original edifice as Rahere built it. The entrance from Smithfield was probably the door to the nave, which was where the grave-yard now stands. It's curious, isn't it, how the centuries alter things! Now, step over here, out of the way of the door, and let me tell you a bit about this old church and its founder. This Rahere was the King's jester, who came to see the error of his ways, grew very religious, and went on a pilgrimage. While on his journey back, he became seriously ill, and turned to St. Bartholomew for healing, promising to build a hospital for poor men if his petition were granted. He was cured, and on his return to London, he built the hospital and also this church, in which he is himself buried."

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They were all delighted with this story, and went immediately to find Rahere's tomb, of which the ancient effigy is covered by a fine canopy of much later date. One other tomb is that of Sir Walter Mildmay, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer to Queen Elizabeth, and founder of Emmanuel College, Oxford. John discovered the following quaint epitaph, which greatly amused the entire party:

"Shee first deceased, Hee for a
little Tryd,
To live without her, likd it not, and
dyd."

This adorns the tomb of John and Margaret Whiting, in the north transept.

Some time was passed in this wonderful church,—climbing the tiny, spiral stairs up to the clerestory, and going cautiously along the bit of a walk at this dizzy height above the floor of the church.

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It needs time and much study to appreciate this sad old church, which, in spite of its broken pieces of marble, and ruined splendor and perfection of form, still bravely stands,—a lonely and pathetic relic of its grand past. A young person can scarcely understand it at all; it needs a grown man or woman whose experience enables him to read in the crumbling pillars and walls, stories of the times when England was young, the Church was the great glory and power, and there still lived men who were "fair and fortunate."

In the vicinity of Smithfield are a number of quaint nooks and corners of old London. Many consider that the very best idea of the ancient city may now be had in Cloth Fair and Bartholomew Close, both of which are in this neighborhood. Here are still standing genuine Sixteenth Century houses amid much darkness and dirt.

"Here in Bartholomew Close," stated Mrs. Pitt, "Benjamin Franklin learned his trade of printing, and Washington Irving, John Milton, and the painter Hogarth, all lived."

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From Smithfield they hastily betook themselves, by means of hansoms, to Crosby Hall, there to have luncheon. Mrs. Pitt laughed heartily when John said how glad he was to be able to eat amid ancient surroundings. He declared that he had been spending the entire morning so very far back in the Middle Ages, that it would have been too great a shock had he been taken immediately to a vulgar, modern restaurant.

When they had finished their luncheon and were waiting on a street corner for the arrival of a certain bus, suddenly a thrill of excitement went through the crowd, all traffic was quickly drawn up at the sides of the street where it halted, and a weird cry of "Hi-yi-yi-yi-yi" was heard in the distance.

"It's the fire-brigade," cried Philip, whereupon he and John were tense with anticipation.

Down the cleared street came the galloping horses with the fire-engines, the men clinging to them wearing dark-blue uniforms with red bindings, big brass helmets, which gleamed in the sunshine, and hatchets in their belts.

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It happened that the fire was very near where our friends were standing, so at the eager solicitations of the two boys, Mrs. Pitt consented to follow on and watch operations.

"So it really is a fire this time," she said to Betty, as they hurried along. "We have very, very few in London, and when the brigade is out, it is generally only for exercise or practice. But, it will interest you and John to see how we fight a fire, and to observe whether the methods differ from yours."

A building on Bishopsgate Street was really very much on fire when the party reached the spot, and the firemen were hard at work. Although the buildings are not high (or at least not according to American standards), the men use very strong ladders, which can be pulled out so that they will reach to great heights. But the queerest thing of all in John's estimation was the way in which the people on the top floor of the building were rescued.

A long canvas tube was carried up a ladder by a fireman, who attached it to the frame of an upper window. The occupants of that floor were then slid one by one to the ground through this tube, being caught at the bottom by the firemen.

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"Well, did you ever see anything like that!" cried John, amazed at the funny sight. "It's great, I say! I'd like to try it!"

All the way up town, the talk was of fires. John had been tremendously interested in the English methods, and was planning to introduce the use of the canvas tube to his own city through a good Irish friend of his at a Boston fire-station.

"Honor bright, don't you have many fires over here?" he demanded of Mrs. Pitt. "We have 'em all the time at home. It must be stupid here without 'em!"

"No, we really have very few," Mrs. Pitt responded. "In winter, there are a number of small outbreaks, but those are very slight. You see, we burn soft coal, and if the chimney is not swept out quite regularly, the soot which gathers there is apt to get afire. When a chimney does have a blaze, the owner has to pay a fine of one pound, or five dollars, to make him remember his chimney. In olden times, perhaps two hundred and fifty years ago, there used to be a tax levied on every chimney in a house. There's a curious old epitaph in a church-yard at Folkestone, which bears upon this subject. It reads something like this:

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'A house she hath, 'tis made in such
good fashion,
That tenant n're shall pay for
reparation,
Nor will her landlord ever raise her
rent,
Nor turn her out-of-doors for non-
payment,
From chimney-money too, this house is
free,
Of such a house who would not tenant
be.'"

They all joined in a good laugh over this, but Betty remarked that she thought it was "more of an advertisement for a house than an epitaph."

Their particular bus had been slowly making its way down Ludgate Hill, along Fleet Street, into the Strand, through Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus, into Piccadilly itself, and had now reached Hyde Park Corner, where our friends climbed down the stairs and swung themselves off.

Betty was grumbling just a little. "I never can get down those tiny stairs," she exclaimed, "without almost bumping my head and catching my umbrella in the stair-rail!"

Mrs. Pitt smiled. "That shows you are not a true Londoner, my dear. We are never troubled. But, never mind; they don't have buses in Switzerland."

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At this, Betty was instantly herself again. "London wouldn't be London without the funny, inconvenient buses, I know. And it's dear, every inch of it,—buses and all!"

Mrs. Pitt pointed out Apsley House, where lived the great Duke of Wellington. A curious fact about this stately old mansion is that on fine afternoons, the shadow of a nearby statue of this hero is thrown full upon the front of his former home.



Old gentlemen, stout ladies, young people, and small children, all ride in England. Page [287](#).

As they were about to enter Hyde Park through the imposing gate, Mrs. Pitt said:—

“When we stand here and gaze at this scene before us,—the crowd, beautiful park, fine hotels, houses, and shops,—it is hard to realize that this was a dangerous, remote district as recently as 1815. That was the time of many daring robberies, you know, when it was not safe walking, riding, or even traveling in a big coach, because of the highwaymen. Even so late as the year I just mentioned, this vicinity from Hyde Park to Kensington was patrolled, and people went about in companies so as to be comparatively secure.”

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The remainder of that lovely afternoon was spent in Hyde Park, watching the riding and driving. Having paid the fee of threepence each for the use of their chairs, it was pleasant to sit and look on at the gay sight. Old gentlemen, stout ladies, young people, and small children, all ride, in England, and at certain times of the day, during “the season” (May and June), Hyde Park is always filled with a merry company. In midsummer it is rather more deserted, and yet the walks stretching between the flower-beds, and the Serpentine stream, are always flocking with people on summer Sundays or “bank holidays.”

And so passed the last days which John and Betty spent in London. All the favorite spots—Westminster Abbey, the Tower, Kensington Palace, and many others—had to be revisited, just as though the young people never thought to see them again; and then, at last came the day when the father and mother were expected. They all trooped to Euston Station to meet the train, and in triumph escorted the American friends back to Cavendish Square. There they remained for two short days and then carried the almost reluctant John and Betty away with them. Mrs. Pitt, Philip, and Barbara remained behind on the platform, waving a last good-by, and still hearing the many thanks and expressions of gratitude which John and Betty had repeatedly poured into their ears, in return for their delightful visit to England.

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THE END.

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- [B] This has just recently been restored and presented to Harvard College. The old house will in the future serve as a rendezvous for visiting Americans.

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*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JOHN AND BETTY'S HISTORY VISIT ***

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