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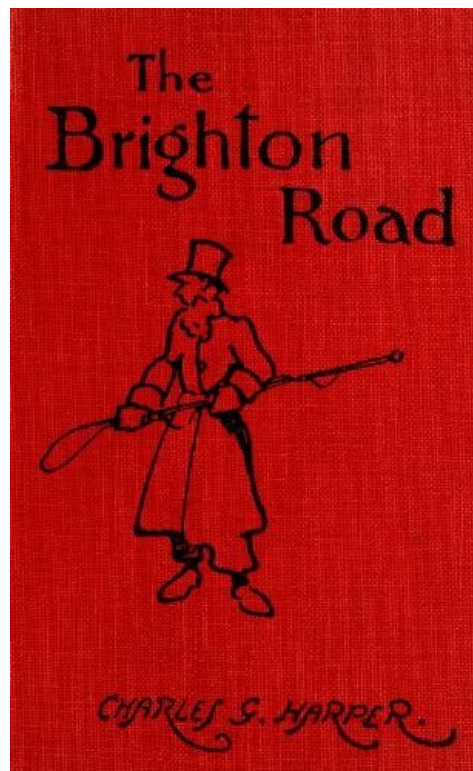
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BRIGHTON ROAD: THE CLASSIC HIGHWAY TO THE SOUTH ***



THE BRIGHTON ROAD

HISTORIES OF THE ROADS

—BY—

CHARLES G. HARPER.

THE BRIGHTON ROAD: The Classic Highway to the South.

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD: London to York.

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD: York to Edinburgh.

THE DOVER ROAD: Annals of an Ancient Turnpike.

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

THE MANCHESTER AND GLASGOW ROAD: London to Manchester.

THE MANCHESTER ROAD: Manchester to Glasgow.

THE HOLYHEAD ROAD: London to Birmingham.

THE HOLYHEAD ROAD: Birmingham to Holyhead.

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

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

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

THE NORWICH ROAD: An East Anglian Highway.

THE NEWMARKET, BURY, THETFORD AND CROMER ROAD.

THE EXETER ROAD: The West of England Highway.

THE PORTSMOUTH ROAD.

THE CAMBRIDGE, KING'S LYNX AND ELY ROAD.



GEORGE THE FOURTH.

From the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, R.A.

The
BRIGHTON ROAD

The Classic Highway to the South

By CHARLES G. HARPER

*Illustrated by the Author, and from old-time
Prints and Pictures*



LONDON:
CECIL PALMER
OAKLEY HOUSE, BLOOMSBURY STREET, W.C. 1

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*M*ANY years ago it occurred to this writer that it would be an interesting thing to write and illustrate a book on the Road to Brighton. The genesis of that thought has been forgotten, but the book was written and published, and has long been out of print. And there might have been the end of it, but that (from

no preconceived plan) there has since been added a long series of books on others of our great highways, rendering imperative re-issues of the parent volume.

Two considerations have made that undertaking a matter of considerable difficulty, either of them sufficiently weighty. The first was that the original book was written at a time when the author had not arrived at a settled method; the second is found in the fact of the BRIGHTON ROAD being not only the best known of highways, but also the one most susceptible to change.

When it is remembered that motor-cars have come upon the roads since then, that innumerable sporting "records" in cycling, walking, and other forms of progression have since been made, and that in many other ways the road is different, it was seen that not merely a re-issue of the book, but a book almost entirely re-written and re-illustrated was required. This, then, is what was provided in a second edition, published in 1906. And now another, the third, is issued, bringing the story of this highway up to date.

CHARLES G. HARPER.

March, 1922.

THE ROAD TO BRIGHTON

	MILES
Westminster Bridge (Surrey side) to—	
St. Mark's Church, Kennington	1½
Brixton Church	3
Streatham	5½
Norbury	6¾
Thornton Heath	8
Croydon (Whitgift's Hospital)	9½
Purley Corner	12
Smitham Bottom	13½
Coulsdon Railway Station	14¼
Merstham	17¾
Redhill (Market Hall)	20½
Horley ("Chequers")	24
Povey Cross	25¾
Kimberham Bridge (Cross River Mole)	26
Lowfield Heath	27
Crawley	29
Pease Pottage	31¼
Hand Cross	33½
Staplefield Common	34¾
Slough Green	36¼
Whiteman's Green	37¼
Cuckfield	37½
Ansty Cross	38
Bridge Farm (Cross River Adur)	40¼
St. John's Common	40¾
"Friar's Oak" Inn	42¾
Stonepound	43½

Clayton	44½
Pyecombe	45½
Patcham	48
Withdean	48¾
Preston	49¾
Brighton (Aquarium)	51½

THE SUTTON AND REIGATE ROUTE

St. Mark's, Kennington	1½
Tooting Broadway	6
Mitcham	8¼
Sutton ("Greyhound")	11
Tadworth	16
Lower Kingswood	17
Reigate Hill	19¼
Reigate (Town Hall)	20½
Woodhatch ("Old Angel")	21½
Povey Cross	26
Brighton	51⅝

THE BOLNEY AND HICKSTEAD ROUTE

Hand Cross	33½
Bolney	39
Hickstead	40½
Savers Common	42
Newtimber	44½
Pyecombe	45
Brighton	50½

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I

The road to Brighton—the main route, pre-eminently *the* road—is measured from the south side of Westminster Bridge to the Aquarium. It goes by Croydon, Redhill, Horley, Crawley, and Cuckfield, and is (or is supposed to be) 51½ miles in length. Of this prime route—the classic way—there are several longer or shorter variations, of which the way through Clapham, Mitcham, Sutton, and Reigate, to Povey Cross is the chief. The modern “record” route is the first of these two, so far as Hand Cross, where it branches off and, instead of going through Cuckfield, proceeds to Brighton by way of Hickstead and Bolney, avoiding Clayton Hill and rejoining the initial route at Pyecombe.

VARIOUS ROUTES

The oldest road to Brighton is now but little used. It is not to be indicated in few words, but may be taken as the line of road from London Bridge, along the Kennington Road, to Brixton, Croydon, Godstone Green, Tilburstow Hill, Blindley Heath, East Grinstead, Maresfield, Uckfield, and Lewes; some fifty-nine miles. This is without doubt the most picturesque route. A circuitous way, travelled by some coaches was by Ewell, Leatherhead, Dorking, Horsham, and Mockbridge (doubtless, bearing in mind the ancient mires of Sussex, originally “Muckbridge”), and was 57½ miles in length. An extension of this route lay from Horsham through Steyning, bringing up the total mileage to sixty-one miles three furlongs.

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This multiplicity of ways meant that, in the variety of winding lanes which led to the Sussex coast, long before the fisher village of Brighthelmstone became that fashionable resort, Brighton, there were places on the way quite as important to the old waggoners and carriers as anything at the end of the journey. They set out the direction, and roads, when they began to be improved, were often merely the old routes widened, straightened, and metalled. They were kept very largely to the old lines, and it was not until quite late in the history of Brighton that the present “record” route in its entirety existed at all.

Among the many isolated roads made or improved, which did not in the beginning contemplate getting to Brighton at all, the pride of place certainly belongs to the ten miles between Reigate and Crawley, originally made as a causeway for horsemen, and guarded by posts, so that wheeled traffic could not pass. This was constructed under the Act 8th William III., 1696, and was the first new road made in Surrey since the time of the Romans.

It remained as a causeway until 1755, when it was widened and thrown open to all traffic, on paying toll. It was not only the first road to be made, but the last to maintain toll-gates on the way to Brighton, the Reigate Turnpike Trust expiring on the midnight of October 31st, 1881, from which time the Brighton Road became free throughout.

Meanwhile, the road from London to Croydon was repaired in 1718; and at the same time the road from London to Sutton was declared to be “dangerous to all persons, horses, and other cattle,” and almost impassable during five months of the year, and was therefore repaired, and toll-gates set up along it.

Between 1730 and 1740 Westminster Bridge was building, and the roads in South London, including the Westminster Bridge Road and the Kennington Road, were being made. In 1755 the road (about ten miles) across the heaths and downs from Sutton to Reigate, was authorised, and in 1770 the Act was passed for widening and repairing the lanes from Povey Cross to County Oak and Brighthelmstone, by Cuckfield. By this time, it will be seen, Brighton had begun to be the goal of these improvements.

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The New Chapel and Copthorne road, on the East Grinstead route, was constructed under the Act of 1770, the route across St. John’s Common and Burgess Hill remodelled in 1780, and the road from South Croydon to Smitham Bottom, Merstham, and Reigate was engineered out of the narrow lanes formerly existing on that line in 1807-8, being opened, “at present toll-free,” June 4th. 1808.

In 1813 the Bolney and Hickstead road, between Hand Cross and Pyecombe, was opened, and in 1816 the slip-road, avoiding Reigate, through Redhill, to Povey Cross. Finally, sixty yards were saved on the Reigate route by the cutting of the tunnel under Reigate Castle, in 1823. In this way the Brighton road, on its several branches, grew to be what it is now.

The Brighton Road, it has already been said, is measured from the south side of Westminster Bridge, which is the proper starting-point for record-makers and breakers; but it has as many beginnings as Homer had birthplaces. Modern coaches and motor-car services set out from the barrack-like hotels of Northumberland Avenue, or other central points, and the old carriers came to and went from the Borough High Street; but the Corinthian starting-point in the brave old days of the Regency and of George the Fourth was the "White Horse Cellar"—Hatchett's "White Horse Cellar"—in Piccadilly. There, any day throughout the year, the knowing ones were gathered—with those green goslings who wished to be thought knowing—exchanging the latest scandal and sporting gossip of the road, and rooking and being rooked; the high-coloured, full-blooded ancestors of the present generation, which looks upon them as a quite different order of beings, and can scarce believe in the reality of those full habits, those port-wine countenances, those florid garments that were characteristic of the age.

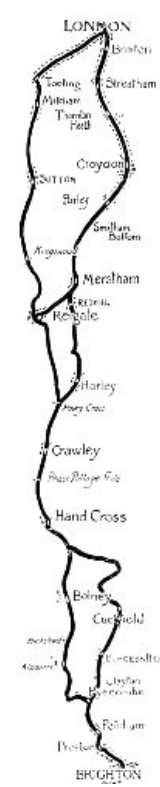
No one now starts from the "White Horse Cellar," for the excellent reason that it does not now exist. The original "Cellar" was a queer place. Figure to yourself a basement room, with sanded floor, and an odour like that of a wine-vault, crowded with Regency bucks drinking or discussing huge beef-steaks.

It was situated on the south side of Piccadilly, where the Hotel Ritz now stands, and is first mentioned in 1720, when it was given its name by Williams, the landlord, in compliment to the House of Hanover, the newly-established Royal House of Great Britain, whose cognizance was a white horse. Abraham Hatchett first made the Cellar famous, both as a boozing-ken and a coach-office, and removed it to the opposite side of the street, where, as "Hatchett's Hotel and White Horse Cellar." it remained until 1884, when the present "Albemarle" arose on its site, with a "White Horse" restaurant in the basement.

SPORTSMEN

What Piccadilly and the neighbourhood of the "White Horse Cellar" were like in the times of Tom and Jerry, we may easily discover from the contemporary pages of "Real Life in London," written by one "Bob Tallyho," recounting the adventures of himself and "Tom Dashall." A prize-fight was to be held on Cophorne Common between Jack Randall, "the Nonpareil"—called in the pronunciation of that time the "Nunparell"—and Martin, endeared to "the Fancy" as the "Master of the Rolls."^[1] Naturally, the roads were thronged, and "Piccadilly was all in motion—coaches, carts, gigs, tilburies, whiskies, buggies, dogcarts, sociables, dennets, curricles, and sulkies were passing in rapid succession, intermingled with tax-carts and waggons decorated with laurel, conveying company of the most varied description. Here was to be seen the dashing *Corinthian* tickling up his *tits*, and his *bang-up set-out of blood and bone*, giving the go-by to a *heavy drag* laden with eight brawny, bull-faced blades, smoking their way down behind a skeleton of a horse, to whom, in all probability, a good feed of corn would have been a luxury; *pattering* among themselves, occasionally *chaffing* the more elevated drivers by whom they were surrounded, and pushing forward their nags with all the ardour of a British merchant intent upon disposing of a valuable cargo of foreign goods on 'Change. There was a waggon full of *all sorts* upon the *lark*, succeeded by a *donkey-cart* with four insides: but *Neddy*, not liking his burthen, stopped short in the way of a dandy, whose horse's head, coming plump up to the back of the crazy vehicle at the moment of its stoppage, threw the rider into the arms of a dustman, who, hugging his *customer* with the determined grasp of a bear, swore, d—n his eyes, he had saved his life, and he expected he would stand something handsome for the Gemmen all round, for if he had not pitched into their cart he would certainly have broke his neck; which being complied with, though reluctantly, he regained his saddle, and proceeded a little more cautiously along the remainder of the road, while groups of pedestrians of all ranks and appearances lined each side."

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SKETCH-MAP SHOWING PRINCIPAL ROUTES TO BRIGHTON.

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On their way they pass Hyde Park Corner, where they encounter one of a notorious trio of brothers, friends of the Prince Regent and companions of his in every sort of excess—the Barrymores, to wit, named severally Hellgate, Newgate, and Cripplegate, the last of this unholy trinity so called because of his chronic limping; the two others' titles, taken with the characters of their bearers, are self-explanatory.

Dashall points his lordship out to his companion, who is new to London life, and requires such explanations.

LORD CRIPPLEGATE

"The driver of that tilbury," says he, "is the celebrated Lord Cripplegate,^[2] with his usual equipage; his blue cloak with a scarlet lining hanging loosely over the vehicle gives an air of importance to his appearance, and he is always attended by that boy, who has been denominated his Cupid: he is a nobleman by birth, a gentleman by courtesy (oh, witty Dashall!), and a gamester by profession. He exhausted a large estate upon *odd and even*, *seven's the main*, etc., till, having lost sight of the *main chance*, he found it necessary to curtail his establishment and enliven his prospects by exchanging a first floor for a second, without an opportunity of ascertaining whether or not these alterations were best suited to his high notions or exalted taste; from which, in a short time, he was induced, either by inclination or necessity, to take a small lodging in an obscure street, and to sport a gig and one horse, instead of a curricle and pair, though in former times he used to drive four-in-

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hand, and was acknowledged to be an excellent whip. He still, however, possessed money enough to collect together a large quantity of halfpence, which in his hours of relaxation he managed to turn to good account by the following stratagem:—He distributed his halfpence on the floor of his little parlour in straight lines, and ascertained how many it would require to cover it. Having thus prepared himself, he invited some wealthy spendthrifts (with whom he still had the power of associating) to sup with him, and he welcomed them to his habitation with much cordiality. The glass circulated freely, and each recounted his gaming or amorous adventures till a late hour, when, the effects of the bottle becoming visible, he proposed, as a momentary suggestion, to name how many halfpence, laid side by side, would carpet the floor, and offered to lay a large wager that he would guess the nearest.

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“‘Done! done!’ was echoed round the room. Every one made a deposit of £100, and every one made a guess, equally certain of success; and his lordship declaring he had a large stock of halfpence by him, though perhaps not enough, the experiment was to be tried immediately. ‘Twas an excellent hit!

“The room was cleared; to it they went; the halfpence were arranged rank and file in military order, when it appeared that his lordship had certainly guessed (as well he might) nearest to the number. The consequence was an immediate alteration of his lordship’s residence and appearance: he got one step in the world by it. He gave up his second-hand gig for one warranted new; and a change in his vehicle may pretty generally be considered as the barometer of his pocket.”

And so, with these piquant biographical remarks, they betook themselves along the road in the early morning, passing on their way many curious itinerants, whose trades have changed and decayed, and are now become nothing but a dim and misty memory; as, for instance, the sellers of warm “salop,” the forerunners of the early coffee-stalls of our own day.

II

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But hats off to the Prince of Wales, the Prince Regent, the King! Never, while the Brighton Road remains the road to Brighton, shall it be dissociated from George the Fourth, who, as Prince, had a palace at either end, and made these fifty-odd miles in a very special sense a *Via Regia*. It was in 1782, when but twenty years of age, that he first knew Brighton, and until the last—for close upon forty-eight years—it retained his affections. He is thus the presiding genius of the way; and because, when we speak or think of the Brighton Road, we cannot help thinking of him, I have appropriately placed the portrait of George the Fourth, by the courtly Lawrence, in this book.

The Prince and King was the inevitable product of his times and of his upbringing: we mostly are. Only the rarest and most forceful figures can mould the world to their own form.

THE
PRINCE

The character of George the Fourth has been the theme of writers upon history and sociology, of essayists, diarists, and gossip-mongers without number, and most of them have pictured him in very dark colours indeed. But Horace Walpole, perhaps the clearest-headed of this company, shows in his “Last Journals” that from his boyhood the Prince was governed in the stupidest way—in a manner, indeed, but too well fitted to spoil a spirit so high and so impetuous, and impulses so generous as then were his.

He proves what we may abundantly learn from other sources, that the narrow-minded and obstinate George the Third, petty and parochial in public and in private, was jealous of his son’s superior parts, and endeavoured to hide his light beneath the bushel of seclusion and inadequate training. It was impossible for such a father to appreciate either the qualities or the defects of such a son. “The uncommunicative selfishness and pride of George the Third confined him to domestic virtues,” says Walpole, and adds, “Nothing could equal the King’s attention to seclude his son and protract his nonage. It went so absurdly far that he was made to wear a shirt with a frilled collar like that of babies. He one day took hold of his collar and said to a domestic, ‘See how I am treated!’”

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The Duke of Montagu, too, was charged with the education of the Prince, and “he was utterly incapable of giving him any kind of instruction.... The Prince was so good-natured, but so uninformed, that he often said, ‘I wish anybody would tell me what I ought to do; nobody gives me any instruction for my conduct.’” The absolute poverty of the instruction afforded him, the false and narrow ways of the royal household, and the evil example and low companionship of his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, did much to spoil the Prince.

To quote Walpole again: “It made men smile to find that in the palace of piety and pride his Royal Highness had learnt nothing but the dialect of footmen and grooms.... He drunk hard, swore, and passed every night in[3] ...; such were the fruits of his being locked up in the palace of piety.”

He proved, too, an intractable and undutiful son; but that was the result to be expected, and

we cannot join Thackeray in his sentimental snivel over George the Third.

He was a faithless husband, but his wife was impossible, and even the mob who supported her quailed when the Marquis of Anglesey, baited in front of his house and compelled to drink her health, did so with the bitter rider, "And may all your wives be like her!"

All high-spirited young England flocked to the side of the Prince of Wales. He was the Grand Master of Corinthianism and Tom-and-Jerryism. It was he who peopled these roads with a numerous and brilliant concourse of whirling travellers, where before had been only infrequent plodders amidst the Sussex sloughs. To his princely presence, radiant by the Old Steyne, hastened all manner of people; prince and prizefighter, statesman and nobleman; beauties noble and ignoble, and all who *lived* their lives. There he made incautious guests helplessly drunk on the potent old brandy he called "Diabolino," and then exposed them in embarrassing situations; and there—let us remember it—he entertained, and was the beneficent patron of, the foremost artists and literary men of his age. The *Zeitgeist* (the Spirit of the Time) resided in, was personified in, and radiated from him. He was the First Gentleman in Europe, but is to us, in the perspective of a hundred years or so, something more: the type and exemplar of an age.

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He should have been endowed with perennial youth, but even his splendid vitality faded at last, and he grew stout. Leigh Hunt called him a "fat Adonis of fifty," and was flung into prison for it; and prison is a fitting place for a satirist who is stupid enough to see a misdemeanour in those misfortunes. No one who could help it would be fat, or fifty. Besides, to accuse one royal personage of being fat is to reflect upon all: it is an accompaniment of royalty.

Thackeray denounced his wig; but there is a prejudice in favour of flowing locks, and the King gracefully acknowledged it. One is not damned for being fat, fifty, and wearing a wig; and it seems a curious code of morality that would have it so; for although we may not all lose our hair nor grow fat, we must all, if we are not to die young, grow old and pass the grand climacteric.

There has been too much abuse of the Regency times. Where modern moralists, folded within their little sheep-walks from observation of the real world, mistake is in comparing those times with these, to the disadvantage of the past. They know nothing of life in the round, and seeing it only in the flat, cannot predicate what exists on the other side. To them there is, indeed, no other side, and things, despite the poet, *are* what they seem, and nothing else.

They lash the manners of the Regency, and think they are dealing out punishment to a bygone state of things; but human nature is the same in all centuries. The fact is so obvious that one is ashamed to state it. The Regency was a terrible time for gambling; but Tranby Croft had a similar repute when Edward the Seventh was Prince of Wales. Bridge is a fine game, and what, think you, supports the evening newspapers? The news? Certainly: the Betting News. Cock-fighting was a brutal sport, and is now illegal, but is it dead? Oh dear, no. Virtue was not general in the picturesque times of George the Fourth. Is it now? Study the Cause Lists of the Divorce Courts. Worse offences are still punished by law, but are later condoned or explained by Society as an eccentricity. Society a hundred years ago did not plumb such depths.

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In short, behind the surface of things, the Regency riot not only exists, but is outdone, and Tom and Jerry, could they return, would find themselves very dull dogs indeed. It is all the doing of the middle classes, that the veil is thrown over these things. In times when the middle class and the Nonconformist Conscience traditionally lived at Clapham, it mattered comparatively little what excesses were committed; but that class has so increased that it has to be subdivided into Upper and Lower, and has Claphams of its own everywhere. It is—or they are—more wealthy than before, and they read things, you know, and are a power in Parliament, and are something in the dominie sort to those other classes above and below.

III

SOCIETY:
THEN
AND
NOW

The coaching and waggoning history of the road to BRIGHTHELMSTONE (as it then was called) emerges dimly out of the formless ooze of tradition in 1681. In De Laune's "Present State of Great Britain," published in that year, in the course of a list of carriers, coaches, and stage-waggons in and out of London, we find Thomas Blewman, carrier, coming from "Bredhempstone" to the "Queen's Head," Southwark, on Wednesdays, and, setting forth again on Thursdays, reaching Shoreham the same day: which was remarkably good travelling for a carrier's waggon in the seventeenth century. Here, then, we have the Father Adam, the great original, so far as records can tell us, of all the after charioteers of the Brighton Road. It is not until 1732, that, from the pages of "New Remarks on London," published by the Company of Parish Clerks, we hear anything further. At that date a coach

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set out on Thursdays from the "Talbot," in the Borough High Street, and a van on Tuesdays from the "Talbot" and the "George." In the summer of 1745 the "Flying Machine" left the "Old Ship," Brighthelmstone at 5.30 a.m., and reached Southwark in the evening.

But the first extended and authoritative notice is found in 1746, when the widow of the Lewes carrier advertised in *The Lewes Journal* of December 8th that she was continuing the business:

THOMAS SMITH, the OLD LEWES CARRIER, being dead, THE BUSINESS IS NOW CONTINUED BY HIS WIDOW, MARY SMITH, who gets into the "George Inn," in the Borough, Southwark, EVERY WEDNESDAY in the afternoon, and sets out for Lewes EVERY THURSDAY morning by eight o'clock, and brings Goods and Passengers to Lewes, Fletching, Chayley, Newick and all places adjacent at reasonable rates.

Performed (*if God permit*) by
MARY SMITH.

We may perceive by these early records that the real original way down to the Sussex coast was by the Croydon, Godstone, East Grinstead and Lewes route, and that its outlet must have been Newhaven, which, despite its name, is so very ancient a place, and was a port and harbour when Brighthelmstone was but a fisher-village.

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STAGE WAGGON, 1808.
From a contemporary drawing.

That is the only glimpse we get of the widow Smith and her waggon; but the "George Inn, in the Borough," that she "got into," is still in the Borough High Street. It is a fine and flourishing remnant of an ancient galleried hostelry of the time of Chaucer, and it is characteristic of the continuity of English social, as well as political history that, although waggons and coaches no longer come to or set out from the "George," its spacious yard is now a railway receiving-office for goods, where the railway vans, those descendants of the stage-waggon, thunderously come and go all day.

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It will be observed that the traffic in those days went to and from Southwark, which was then the great business centre for the carriers. Not yet was the Brighton road measured from Westminster Bridge, for the adequate reason that there was no bridge at Westminster until 1749: only the ferry from the Horseferry Road to Lambeth.

Widow Smith's waggon halted at Lewes, and it is not until ten years later than the date of her advertisement that we hear of the Brighthelmstone conveyance. The first was that announced by the pioneer, James Batchelor, in *The Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, May 12th, 1756:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the LEWES ONE DAY STAGE COACH or CHAISE sets out from the Talbot Inn, in the Borough, on Saturday next, the 19th instant.

When likewise the Brighthelmstone Stage begins.

Performed (*if God permit*) by
JAMES BATCHELOR.

The "Talbot" inn, which stood on the site of the ancient "Tabard," of Chaucerian renown, disappeared from the Borough High Street in 1870. What its picturesque yard was like in 1815, with the waggons of the Sussex carriers, let the illustration tell.

Let us halt awhile, to admire the courage of those coaching and waggoning pioneers who, in the days before "the sea-side" had been invented, and few people travelled, dared the awful roads for what must then have been a precarious business. Sussex roads in especial had a

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most unenviable name for miriness, and wheeled traffic was so difficult that for many years after this period the farmers and others continued to take their womenkind about in the pillion fashion here caricatured by Henry Bunbury.

Horace Walpole, indeed, travelling in Sussex in 1749, visiting Arundel and Cowdray, acquired a too intimate acquaintance with their phenomenal depth of mud and ruts, inasmuch as he—finicking little gentleman—was compelled to alight precipitately from his overturned chaise, and to foot it like any common fellow. One quite pities his daintiness in the narration of his sorrows, picturesquely set forth by that accomplished letter-writer arrived home to the safe seclusion of Strawberry Hill. He writes to George Montagu, and dates August 26th, 1749:

“Mr. Chute and I returned from our expedition miraculously well, considering all our distresses. If you love good roads, conveniences, good inns, plenty of postilions and horses, be so kind as never to go into Sussex. We thought ourselves in the northest part of England; the whole county has a Saxon air, and the inhabitants are savage, as if King George the Second was the first monarch of the East Angles. Coaches grow there no more than balm and spices: we were forced to drop our post-chaise, that resembled nothing so much as harlequin’s calash, which was occasionally a chaise or a baker’s cart. We journeyed over alpine mountains” (Walpole, you will observe, was, equally with the evening journalist of these happy times, not unaccustomed to exaggerate) “drenched in clouds, and thought of harlequin again, when he was driving the chariot of the sun through the morning clouds, and was so glad to hear the *aqua vitæ* man crying a dram.... I have set up my staff, and finished my pilgrimages for this year. Sussex is a great damper of curiosity.”

Thus he prattles on, delightfully describing the peculiarities of the several places he visited with this Mr. Chute, “whom,” says he, “I have created *Strawberry King-at-Arms*.” One wonders what that mute, inglorious Chute thought of it all; if he was as disgusted with Sussex sloughs and moist unpleasent “mountains” as his garrulous companion. Chute suffered in silence, for the sight of pen, ink, and paper did not induce in *him* a fury of composition; and so we shall never know what he endured.

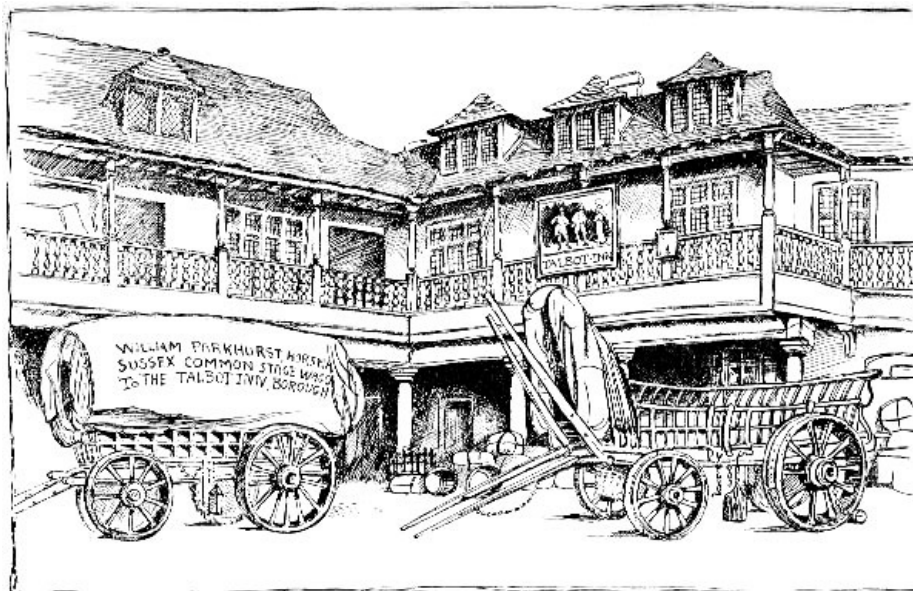
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Then the pedantic Doctor John Burton, who journeyed into Sussex in 1751, had no less unfortunate acquaintance with these miry ways than our *dilettante* of Strawberry Hill. To those who have small Latin and less Greek, this traveller’s tale must ever remain a sealed book; for it is in those languages that he records his views upon ways and means, and men and manners, in Sussex. As thus, for example:

“I fell immediately upon all that was most bad, upon a land desolate and muddy, whether inhabited by men or beasts a stranger could not easily distinguish, and upon roads which were, to explain concisely what is most abominable, Sussexian. No one would imagine them to be intended for the people and the public, but rather the byways of individuals, or, more truly, the tracks of cattle-drivers; for everywhere the usual footmarks of oxen appeared, and we too, who were on horseback, going along zigzag, almost like oxen at plough, advanced as if we were turning back, while we followed out all the twists of the roads.... My friend, I will set before you a kind of problem in the manner of Aristotle:—Why comes it that the oxen, the swine, the women, and all other animals(!) are so long-legged in Sussex? Can it be from the difficulty of pulling the feet out of so much mud by the strength of the ankle, so that the muscles become stretched, as it were, and the bones lengthened?”

A doleful tale. Presently he arrives at the conclusion that the peasantry “do not concern themselves with literature or philosophy, for they consider the pursuit of such things to be only idling,” which is not so very remarkable a trait, after all, in the character of an agricultural people.

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Our author eventually, notwithstanding the terrible roads, arrived at Brighthelmstone, by way of Lewes, "just as day was fading." It was, so he says, "a village on the sea-coast; lying in a valley gradually sloping, and yet deep. It is not, indeed, contemptible as to size, for it is thronged with people, though the inhabitants are mostly very needy and wretched in their mode of living, occupied in the employment of fishing, robust in their bodies, laborious, and skilled in all nautical crafts, and, as it is said, terrible cheats of the custom-house officers." As who, indeed, is not, allowing the opportunity?

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Batchelor, the pioneer of Brighton coaching, continued his enterprise in 1757, and with the coming of spring, and the drying of the roads, his coaches, which had been laid up in the winter, after the usual custom of those times, were plying again. In May he advertised, "for the convenience of country gentlemen, etc.," his London, Lewes, and Brighthelmstone stage-coach, which performed the journey of fifty-eight miles in two days; and exclusive persons, who preferred to travel alone, might have post-chaises of him.

EARLY
COACHING

Brighthelmstone had in the meanwhile sprung into notice. The health-giving qualities of its sea air, and the then "strange new eccentricity" of sea-bathing, advocated from 1750 by Dr. Richard Russell, had already given it something of a vogue among wealthy invalids, and the growing traffic was worth competing for. Competitors therefore sprang up to share Batchelor's business. Most of them merely added stage-coaches like his, but in May, 1762, a certain "J. Tubb," in partnership with "S. Brawne," started a very superior conveyance, going from London one day and returning from Brighthelmstone the next. This was the:

LEWES and BRIGHTELMSTONE new FLYING MACHINE (by Uckfield), hung on steel springs, very neat and commodious, to carry FOUR PASSENGERS, sets out from the Golden Cross Inn, Charing Cross, on Monday, the 7th of June, at six o'clock in the morning, and will continue MONDAY'S, WEDNESDAY'S, and FRIDAY'S to the White Hart, at Lewes, and the Castle, at Brightelmstone, where regular Books are kept for entering passenger's and parcels; will return to London TUESDAY'S, THURSDAY'S, and SATURDAY'S Each Inside Passenger to Lewes, Thirteen Shillings; to Brighthelmstone, Sixteen; to be allowed Fourteen Pound Weight for Luggage, all above to pay One Penny per Pound; half the fare to be paid at Booking, the other at entering the machine. Children in Lap and Outside Passengers to pay half-price.

Performed by J. TUBB.
S. BRAWNE.

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ME AND MY WIFE AND DAUGHTER.

From a caricature by Henry Bunbury.

Batchelor saw with dismay this coach performing the whole journey in one day, while his

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took two. But he determined to be as good a man as his opponent, if not even a better, and started the next week, at identical fares, "a new large FLYING CHARIOT, with a Box and four horses (by Chailey) to carry two Passengers only, except three should desire to go together." The better to crush the presumptuous Tubb, he later on reduced his fares. Then ensued a diverting, if by no means edifying, war of advertisements; for Tubb, unwilling to be outdone, inserted the following in *The Lewes Journal*, November, 1762:

THIS IS TO INFORM THE PUBLIC that, on Monday, the 1st of November instant, the LEWES and BRIGHTHELMSTON FLYING MACHINE began going in *one day*, and continues twice a week during the Winter Season to Lewes only; sets out from the White Hart, at Lewes, MONDAYS and THURSDAYS at Six o'clock in the Morning, and returns from the Golden Cross, at Charing Cross, TUESDAYS and SATURDAYS, at the same hour.

Performed by J. TUBB.

N.B.—Gentlemen, Ladies, and others, are desired to look narrowly into the Meanness and Design of the other Flying Machine to Lewes and Brighthelmston, in lowering his prices, whether 'tis thro' conscience or an endeavour to suppress me. If the former is the case, think how you have been used for a great number of years, when he engrossed the whole to himself, and kept you two days upon the road, going fifty miles. If the latter, and he should be lucky enough to succeed in it, judge whether he wont return to his old prices, when you cannot help yourselves, and use you as formerly. As I have, then, been the remover of this obstacle, which you have all granted by your great encouragement to me hitherto, I, therefore, hope for the continuance of your favours, which will entirely frustrate the deep-laid schemes of my great opponent, and lay a lasting obligation on,—Your very humble Servant,

J. TUBB.

To this replies Batchelor, possessed with an idea of vested interests pertaining to himself:

WHEREAS, Mr. TUBB, by an Advertisement in this paper of Monday last, has thought fit to cast some invidious Reflections upon me, in respect of the lowering my Prices and being two days upon the Road, with other low insinuations, I beg leave to submit the following matters to the calm Consideration of the Gentlemen, Ladies, and other Passengers, of what Degree soever, who have been pleased to favour me, viz.:

That our Family first set up the Stage Coach from London to Lewes, and have continued it for a long Series of Years, from Father to Son and other Branches of the same Race, and that even before the Turnpikes on the Lewes Road were erected they drove their Stage, in the Summer Season, in one day, and have continued to do ever since, and now in the Winter Season twice in the week. And it is likewise to be considered that many aged and infirm Persons, who did not chuse to rise early in the Morning, were very desirous to be two Days on the Road for their own Ease and Conveniency, therefore there was no obstacle to be removed. And as to lowering my prices, let every one judge whether, when an old Servant of the Country perceives an Endeavour to suppress and supplant him in his Business, he is not well justified in taking all measures in his Power for his own Security, and even to oppose an unfair Adversary as far as he can. 'Tis, therefore, hoped that the descendants of your very ancient Servants will still meet with your farther Encouragement, and leave the Schemes of our little Opponent to their proper Deserts.—I am, Your old and present most obedient Servant,

J. BATCHELOR.

December 13, 1762.

The rivals both kept to the road until the death of Batchelor, in 1766, when his business was sold to Tubb, who took into partnership a Mr. Davis. Together they started, in 1767, the first service of a daily coach in the "Lewes and Brighthelmstone Flys," each carrying four passengers, one to London and one to Brighton every day.

Tubb and Davis had in 1770 one "machine" and one waggon on this road, fare by "machine" 14s. The machine ran daily to and from London, starting at five o'clock in the morning. The waggon was three days on the road. Another machine was also running, but with the coming of winter these machines performed only three double journeys each a week.

In 1777 another stage-waggon was started by "Lashmar & Co." It loitered between the "King's Head," Southwark, and the "King's Head," Brighton, starting from London every Tuesday at the unearthly hour of 3 a.m., and reaching its destination on Thursday afternoons.

On May 31st, 1784, Tubb and Davis put a "light post-coach" on the road, running to Brighton one day returning to London the next, in addition to their already running

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"machine" and "post-coach." This new conveyance presumably made good time, four "insides" only being carried.

Four years later, when Brighton's sun of splendour was rising, there were on the road between London and the sea three "machines," three light post-coaches, two coaches, and two stage-waggon. Tubb now disappears, and his firm becomes Davis & Co. Other proprietors were Ibberson & Co., Bradford & Co., and Mr. Wesson.

On May 1st, 1791, the first Brighton Mail coach was established. It was a two-horse affair, running by Lewes and East Grinstead, and taking twelve hours to perform the journey. It was not well supported by the public, and as the Post Office would not pay the contractors a higher mileage, it was at some uncertain period withdrawn.

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About 1796 coach offices were opened in Brighton for the sole despatch of coaching business, the time having passed away for the old custom of starting from inns. Now, too, were different tales to tell of these roads, after the Pavilion had been set in course of building. Royalty and the Court could not endure to travel upon such evil tracks as had hitherto been the lot of travellers to Brighthelmstone. Presently, instead of a dearth of roads and a plethora of ruts, there became a choice of good highways and a plenty of travellers upon them.

Numerous coaches ran to meet the demands of the travelling public, and these continually increased in number and improved in speed. About this time first appear the firms of Henwood, Crossweller, Cuddington, Pockney & Harding, whose office was at No. 44, East Street: and Boulton, Tilt, Hicks, Baulcomb & Co., at No. 1, North Street. The most remarkable thing, to my mind, about those companies is their long-winded names. In addition to the old service, there ran a "night post-coach" on alternate nights, starting at 10 p.m. in the season. One then went to or from London generally in "about" eleven hours, if all went well. If you could afford only a ride in the stage-waggon, why then you were carried the distance by the accelerated (!) waggon of this line in two days and one night.

IV

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Erredge, the historian of Brighton, tells something of the social side of Brighton Road coaching at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Social indeed, as you shall see:

"In 1801 two pair-horse coaches ran between London and Brighton on alternate days, one up, the other down, driven by Messrs. Crossweller and Hine. The progress of these coaches was amusing. The one from London left the Blossoms Inn, Lawrence Lane, at 7 a.m., the passengers breaking their fast at the Cock, Sutton, at 9. The next stoppage for the purpose of refreshment was at the Tangier, Banstead Downs—a rural little spot, famous for its elderberry wine, which used to be brought from the cottage 'roking hot,' and on a cold wintry morning few refused to partake of it. George IV. invariably stopped here and took a glass from the hand of Miss Jeal as he sat in his carriage. The important business of luncheon took place at Reigate, where sufficient time was allowed the passengers to view the Baron's Cave, where, it is said, the barons assembled the night previous to their meeting King John at Runymeade. The grand halt for dinner was made at Staplefield Common, celebrated for its famous black cherry-trees, under the branches of which, when the fruit was ripe, the coaches were allowed to draw up and the passengers to partake of its tempting produce. The hostess of the hostelry here was famed for her rabbit-puddings, which, hot, were always waiting the arrival of the coach, and to which the travellers never failed to do such ample justice, that ordinarily they found it quite impossible to leave at the hour appointed; so grogs, pipes, and ale were ordered in, and, to use the language of the fraternity, 'not a wheel wagged' for two hours. Handcross was a little resting-place, celebrated for its 'neat' liquors, the landlord of the inn standing, bottle in hand, at the door. He and several other bonifaces at Friars' Oak, etc., had the reputation of being on pretty good terms with the smugglers who carried on their operations with such audacity along the Sussex coast.

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"After walking up Clayton Hill, a cup of tea was sometimes found to be necessary at Patcham, after which Brighton was safely reached at 7 p.m. It must be understood that it was the custom for the passengers to walk up all the hills, and even sometimes in heavy weather to give a push behind to assist the jaded horses."

COMPETITION But it was not always so ideal or so idyllic. That there were discomforts and accidents is evident from the wordy warfare of advertisements that followed upon the starting of the Royal Brighton Four Horse Company in 1802. As a competitor with older firms, it seems to have aroused much jealousy and slander, if we may believe the following contemporary advertisement:

THE ROYAL BRIGHTON Four Horse Coach Company beg leave to return their

sincere thanks to their Friends and the Public in general for the very liberal support they have experienced since the starting of their Coaches, and assure them it will always be their greatest study to have their Coaches safe, with good Horses and sober careful Coachmen.

They likewise wish to rectify a report in circulation of their Coach having been overturned on Monday last, by which a gentleman's leg was broken, &c., no such thing having ever happened to either of their Coaches. The Fact is it was one of the BLUE COACHES instead of the Royal New Coach.

✱ As several mistakes have happened, of their friends being BOOKED at other Coach offices, they are requested to book themselves at the ROYAL NEW COACH OFFICE, CATHERINE'S HEAD, 47, East Street.

The coaching business grew rapidly, and in an advertisement offering for sale a portion of the coaching business at No. 1, North Street, it was stated that the annual returns of this firm were more than £12,000 per annum, yielding from Christmas, 1794, to Christmas, 1808, seven and a half per cent. on the capital invested, besides purchasing the interest of four of the partners in the concern. In this last year two new businesses were started, those of Waldegrave & Co., and Pattenden & Co. Fares now ruled high—23s. inside; 13s. outside.

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The year 1809 marked the beginning of a new and strenuous coaching era on this road. Then Crossweller & Co. commenced to run their "morning and night" coaches, and William "Miller" Bradford formed his company. This was an association of twelve members, contributing £100 each, for the purpose of establishing a "double" coach—that is to say, one up and one down, each day. The idea was to "lick creation" on the Brighton Road by accelerating the speed, and to this end they acquired some forty-five horses then sold out of the Inniskilling Dragoons, at that time stationed at Brighton. On May Day, 1810, the Brighton Mail was re-established. These "Royal Night Mail Coaches" as they were grandiloquently announced, were started by arrangement with the Postmaster-General. The speed, although much improved, was not yet so very great, eight hours being occupied on the way, although these coaches went by what was then the new cut *via* Croydon. Like the Dover, Hastings, and Portsmouth mails, the Brighton Mail was two-horsed. It ran to and from the "Blossoms" Inn, Lawrence Lane, Cheapside, and never attained a better performance than 7 hours 20 minutes, a speed of 7½ miles an hour. It had, however, *this* distinction, if it may so be called: it was the slowest mail in the kingdom.

It was on June 25th, 1810, that an accident befell Waldegrave's "Accommodation" coach on its up journey. Near Brixton Causeway its hind wheels collapsed, owing to the heavy weight of the loaded vehicle. By one of those strange chances when truth appears stranger than fiction, there chanced to be a farmer's waggon passing the coach at the instant of its overturning. Into it were shot the "outsiders," fortunate in this comparatively easy fall. Still, shocks and bruises were not few, and one gentleman had his thigh broken.

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A COACH
ROBBERY

By June, 1811, traffic had so increased that there were then no fewer than twenty-eight coaches running between Brighton and London. On February 5th in the following year occurred the only great road robbery known on this road. This was the theft from the "Blue" coach of a package of bank-notes representing a sum of between three and four thousand pounds sterling. Crosswellers were proprietors of the coach, and from them Messrs. Brown, Lashmar & West, of the Brighton Union Bank, had hired a box beneath the seat for the conveyance of remittances to and from London. On this day the Bank's London correspondents placed these notes in the box for transmission to London, but on arrival the box was found to have been broken open and the notes all stolen. It would seem that a carefully planned conspiracy had been entered into by several persons, who must have had a thorough knowledge of the means by which the Union Bank sent and received money to and from the metropolis. On this morning six persons were booked for inside places. Of this number two only made an appearance—a gentleman and a lady. Two gentlemen were picked up as the coach proceeded. The lady was taken suddenly ill when Sutton was reached, and she and her husband were left at the inn there. When the coach arrived at Reigate the two remaining passengers went to inquire for a friend. Returning shortly, they told the coachman that the friend whom they had supposed to be at Brighton had returned to town, therefore it was of no use proceeding further.

Thus the coachman and guard had the remainder of the journey to themselves, while the cash-box, as was discovered at the journey's end, was minus its cash. A reward of £300 was immediately offered for information that would lead to recovery of the notes. This was subsequently altered to an offer of 100 guineas for information of the offender, in addition to £300 upon recovery of the total amount, or "ten per cent. upon the amount of so much thereof as shall be recovered." No reward money was ever paid, for the notes were never recovered, and the thieves escaped with their booty.

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In 1813 the "Defiance" was started, to run to and from Brighton and London in the daytime, each way six hours. This produced the rival "Eclipse," which belied the suggestion of its name and did not eclipse, but only equalled, the performance of its model. But competition had now grown very severe, and fares in consequence were reduced to—inside, ten shillings; outside, five shillings. Indeed, in 1816, a number of Jews started a coach to run from London to Brighton in six hours: or, failing to keep time, to forfeit all fares. Needless to say, under such Hebrew management, and with that liability, it was punctuality itself; but Nemesis

awaited it, in the shape of an information laid for furious driving.

The Mail, meanwhile, maintained its ancient pace of a little over six miles an hour—a dignified, no-hurry, governmental rate of progression. There was, in fact, no need for the Brighton Mail to make speed, for the road from the General Post Office is only fifty-three miles in length, and all the night and the early morning, from eight o'clock until five or six o'clock a.m., lay before it.

V

We come now to the "Era of the Amateur," who not only flourished pre-eminently on the Brighton Road, but may be said to have originated on it. The coaching amateur and the nineteenth century came into existence almost contemporaneously. Very soon after 1800 it became "the thing" to drive a coach, and shortly after this became such a definite ambition, there arose that contradiction in terms, that horsey paradox, the Amateur Professional, generally a sporting gentleman brought to utter ruin by Corinthian gambols, and taking to the one trade on earth at which he could earn a wage. That is why the Golden Age of coaching won on the Brighton Road a refinement it only aped elsewhere.

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ARISTOCRATIC
COACHMEN It is curious to see how coaching has always been, even in its serious days, before steam was thought of, the chosen amusement of wealthy and aristocratic whips. Of those who affected the Brighton Road may be mentioned the Marquis of Worcester, who drove the "Duke of Beaufort," Sir St. Vincent Cotton of the "Age," and the Hon. Fred Jerningham, who drove the Day Mail. The "Age," too, had been driven by Mr. Stevenson, a gentleman and a graduate of Cambridge, whose "passion for the *bench*," as "Nimrod" says, superseded all other worldly ambitions. He became a coachman by profession, and a good professional he made; but he had not forgotten his education and early training, and he was, as a whip, singularly refined and courteous. He caused, at a certain change of horses on the road, a silver sandwich-box to be handed round to the passengers by his servant, with an offer of a glass of sherry, should any desire one. Another gentleman, "connected with the first families in Wales," whose father long represented his native county in Parliament, horsed and drove one side of this ground with Mr. Stevenson.

This was "Sackie," Sackville Frederick Gwynne, of Carmarthenshire, who quarrelled with his relatives and took to the road; became part proprietor of the "Age," broke off from Stevenson, and eventually lived and died at Liverpool as a cabdriver. He drove a cab till 1874, when he died, aged seventy-three.

Harry Stevenson's connection with the Brighton Road began in 1827, when, as a young man fresh from Cambridge, he brought with him such a social atmosphere and such full-fledged expertness in driving a coach that Cripps, a coachmaster of Brighton and proprietor of the "Coronet," not only was overjoyed to have him on the box, but went so far as to paint his name on the coach as one of the licensees, for which false declaration Cripps was fined in November, 1827.

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The parentage and circumstances of Harry Stevenson are alike mysterious. We are told that he "went the pace," and was already penniless at twenty-two years of age, about the time of his advent upon the Brighton Road. In 1828 his famous "Age" was put on the road, built for him by Aldebert, the foremost coach-builder of the period, and appointed in every way with unexampled luxury. The gold- and silver-embroidered horse-cloths of the "Age" are very properly preserved in the Brighton Museum. Stevenson's career was short, for he died in February, 1830.

Coaching authorities give the palm for artistry to whips of other roads: they considered the excellence of this as fatal to the production of those qualities that went to make an historic name. This road had become "perhaps the most nearly perfect, and certainly the most fashionable, of all."

With the introduction of this sporting and irresponsible element, racing between rival coaches—and not the mere conveying of passengers—became the real interest of the coachmen, and proprietors were obliged to issue notices to assure the timid that this form of rivalry would be discouraged. A slow coach, the "Life Preserver," was even put on the road to win the support of old ladies and the timid, who, as the record of accidents tells us, did well to be timorous. But accidents *would* happen to fast and slow alike. The "Coburg" was upset at Cuckfield in August, 1819. Six of the passengers were so much injured that they could not proceed, and one died the following day at the "King's Head." The "Coburg" was an old-fashioned coach, heavy, clumsy, and slow, carrying six passengers inside and twelve outside. This type gave place to coaches of lighter build about 1823.

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THE "DUKE OF BEAUFORT" COACH STARTING FROM THE
"BULL AND MOUTH" OFFICE, PICCADILLY CIRCUS, 1826.

From an aquatint after W. J. Shayer.

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In 1826 seventeen coaches ran to Brighton from London every morning, afternoon, or evening. They had all of them the most high-sounding of names, calculated to impress the mind either with a sense of swiftness, or to awe the understanding with visions of aristocratic and court-like grandeur. As for the times they individually made, and for the inns from which they started, you who are insatiable of dry bones of fact may go to the Library of the British Museum and find your Cary (without an "e") and do your gnawing of them. That they started at all manner of hours, even the most uncanny, you must rest assured; and that they took off from the (to ourselves) most impossible and romantic-sounding of inns, may be granted, when such examples as the strangely incongruous "George and Blue Boar," the Herrick-like "Blossoms" Inn, and the idyllic-seeming "Flowerpot" are mentioned.

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NAMES
OF THE
COACHES

They were, those seventeen coaches, the "Royal Mail," the "Coronet," "Magnet," "Comet," "Royal Sussex," "Sovereign," "Alert," "Dart," "Union," "Regent," "Times," "Duke of York," "Royal George," "True Blue," "Patriot," "Post," and the "Summer Coach," so called, and they nearly all started from the City and Holborn, calling at West End booking-offices on their several ways. Most of the old inns from which they set out are pulled down, and the memory of them has faded.

The "Golden Cross" at Charing Cross, from whose doors started the "Comet" and the "Regent" in this year of grace 1826, and at which the "Times" called on its way from Holborn, has been wholly remodelled; the "White Horse," Fetter Lane, whence the "Duke of York" bowled away, has been demolished; the "Old Bell and Crown" Inn, Holborn, where the "Alert," the "Union," and the "Times" drew up daily in the old-fashioned galleried courtyard, is swept away. Were Viator to return to-morrow, he would surely want to return to Hades, or Paradise, wherever he may be, at once. Around him would be, to his senses, an astonishing whirl and noise of traffic, despite the wood-paving that has superseded macadam, which itself displaced the granite setts he knew. Many strange and horrid portents he would note, and Holborn would be to him as an unknown street in a strange town.

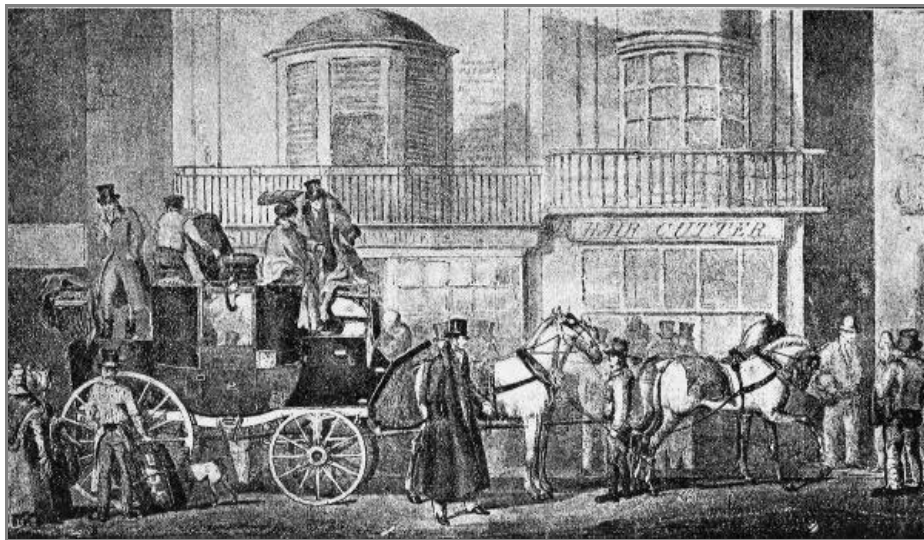
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Than 1826 the informative Cary goes no further, and his "Itinerary," excellent though it be, and invaluable to those who would know aught of the coaches that plied in the years when it was published, gives no particulars of the many "butterfly" coaches and amateur drags that cut in upon the regular coaches during the rush and scour of the season.

In 1821 it was computed that over forty coaches ran to and from London and Brighton daily; in September, 1822, there were thirty-nine. In 1828 it was calculated that the sixteen permanent coaches then running, summer and winter, received between them a sum of £60,000 per annum, and the total sum expended in fares upon coaching on this road was taken as amounting to £100,000 per annum. That leaves the very respectable amount of £40,000 for the season's takings of the "butterflies."

An accident happened to the "Alert" on October 9th, 1829, when the coach was taking up passengers at Brighton. The horses ran away, and dashed the coach and themselves into an area sixteen feet deep. The coach was battered almost to pieces, and one lady was seriously injured. The horses escaped unhurt. In 1832, August 25th, the Brighton Mail was upset near Reigate, the coachman being killed.

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THE "AGE," 1829, STARTING FROM CASTLE SQUARE, BRIGHTON.

From an engraving after C. Cooper Henderson.

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STEAM
CARRIAGES

This was the era of those early motor-cars, the steam-carriages, which, in spite of their clumsy construction and appalling ugliness, arrived very nearly to a commercial success. Many inventors were engaged from 1823 to 1838 upon this subject. Walter Hancock, in particular, began in 1824, and in 1828 proposed a service of his "land-steamers" between London and Brighton, but did not actually appear upon this road with his "Infant" until November, 1832. The contrivance performed the double journey with some difficulty and in slower time than the coaches: but Hancock on that eventful day confidently declared that he was perfecting a newer machine by which he expected to run down in three and a half hours. He never achieved so much, but in October, 1833, his "Autopsy," which had been successfully running as an omnibus between Paddington and Stratford, went from the works at Stratford to Brighton in eight and a half hours, of which three hours were taken up by a halt on the road.

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No artist has preserved a view of this event for us, but a print may still be met with depicting the start of Sir Charles Dance's steam-carriage from Wellington Street, Strand, for Brighton on some eventful morning of that same year. A prison-van is, by comparison with this fearsome object, a thing of beauty; but in the picture you will observe enthusiasm on foot and on horseback, and even four-legged, in the person of the inevitable dog. In the distance the discerning may observe the old toll-house on Waterloo Bridge, and the gaunt shape of the Shot Tower.

By 1839 the coaching business had in Brighton become concentrated in Castle Square, six of the seven principal offices being situated there. Five London coaches ran from the Blue Office (Strevens & Co.), five from the Red Office (Mr. Goodman's), four from the "Spread Eagle" (Chaplin & Crunden's), three from the Age (T. W. Capps & Co.), two from Hine's, East Street; two from Snow's (Capps & Chaplin), and two from the "Globe" (Mr. Vaughan's).

To state the number of visitors to Brighton on a certain day will give an idea of how well this road was used during the decade that preceded the coming of steam. On Friday, October 25th, 1833, upwards of 480 persons travelled to Brighton by stage-coach. A comparison of this number with the hordes of visitors cast forth from the Brighton Railway Station to-day would render insignificant indeed that little crowd of 1833; but in those times, when the itch of excursioning was not so acute as now, that day's return was remarkable; it was a day that fully justified the note made of it. Then, too, those few hundreds benefited the town more certainly than perhaps their number multiplied by ten does now. For the Brighton visitor of a hundred years ago, once set down in Castle Square, had to remain the night at least in Brighton; for him there was no returning to London the same day. And so the Brighton folks had their wicked will of him for a while, and made something out of him; while in these times the greater proportion of a day's excursionists find themselves either at home in London already, when evening hours are striking from Westminster Ben, or else waiting with what patience they may the collecting of tickets at the bleak and dismal penitentiary platforms of Grosvenor Road Station; and, after all, Brighton is little or nothing advantaged by their visit.

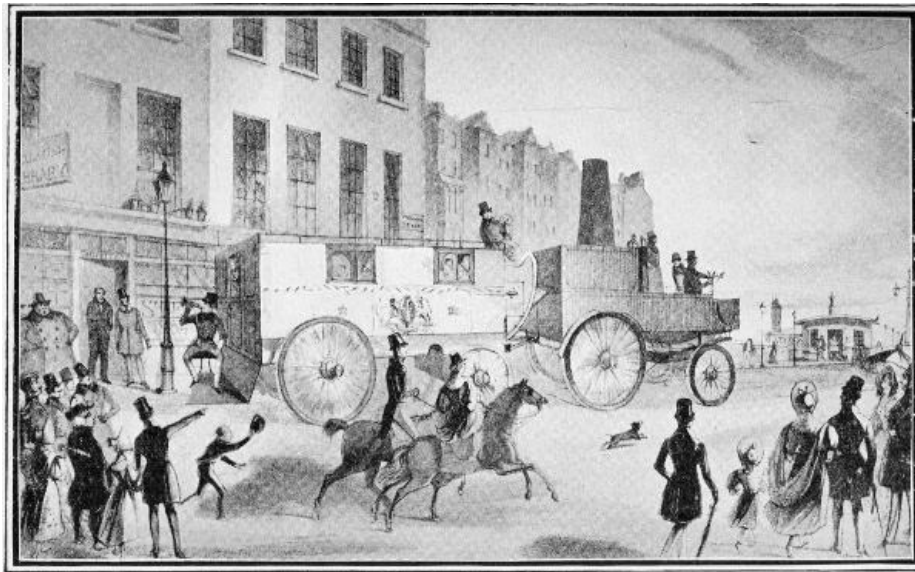
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But though the tripper of the coaching era found it impracticable to have his morning in London, his day upon the King's Road, and his evening in town again, yet the pace at which the coaches went in the '30's was by no means despicable. Ten miles an hour now became slow and altogether behind the age.

In 1833 the Marquis of Worcester, together with a Mr. Alexander, put three coaches on the road: an up and down "Quicksilver" and a single coach, the "Wonder." The "Quicksilver," named probably in allusion to its swiftness (it was timed for four hours and three-quarters), ran to and from what was then a favourite stopping-place, the "Elephant and Castle." But on

July 15th of the same year an accident, by which several persons were very seriously injured, happened to the up "Quicksilver" when starting from Brighton. Snow, who was driving, could not hold the team in, and they bolted away, and brought up violently against the railings by the New Steyne. Broken arms, fractured arms and ribs, and contusions were plenty. The "Quicksilver," chameleon-like, changed colour after this mishap, was repainted and renamed, and reappeared as the "Criterion"; for the old name carried with it too great a spice of danger for the timorous.

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SIR CHARLES DANCE'S STEAM-CARRIAGE LEAVING LONDON FOR BRIGHTON, 1833.

From a print after G. E. Madeley.

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COACHING
RECORDS

On February 4th, 1834, the "Criterion," driven by Charles Harbour, outstripping the old performances of the "Vivid," and beating the previous wonderfully quick journey of the "Red Rover," carried down King William's Speech on the opening of Parliament in 3 hours and 40 minutes, a coach record that has not been surpassed, nor quite equalled, on this road, not even by Selby on his great drive of July 13th, 1888, his times being out and in respectively, 3 hours 56 minutes, and 3 hours 54 minutes. Then again, on another road, on May Day, 1830, the "Independent Tally-ho," running from London to Birmingham, covered those 109 miles in 7 hours 39 minutes, a better record than Selby's London to Brighton and back drive by eleven minutes, with an additional mile to the course. Another coach, the "Original Tally-ho," did the same distance in 7 hours 50 minutes. The "Criterion" fared ill under its new name, and gained an unenviable notoriety on June 7th, 1834, being overturned in a collision with a dray in the Borough. Many of the passengers were injured; Sir William Cosway, who was climbing over the roof when the collision occurred, was killed.

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In 1839, the coaching era, full-blown even to decay, began to peck and wither before the coming of steam, long heralded and now but too sure. The tale of coaches now decreased to twenty-three; fares, which had fallen in the cut-throat competition of coach proprietors with their fellows in previous years to 10s. inside, 5s. outside for the single journey, now rose to 21s. and 12s. Every man that horsed a coach, seeing now was the shearing time for the public, ere the now building railway was opened, strove to make as much as possible ere he closed his yards, sold his stock, broke his coach up for firewood, and took himself off the road.

Sentiment hung round the expiring age of coaching, and has cast a halo on old-time ways of travelling, so that we often fail to note the disadvantages and discomforts endured in those days; but, amid regrets which were often simply maudlin, occur now and again witticisms true and tersely epigrammatic, as thus:

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For the neat wayside inn and a dish of cold meat
You've a gorgeous saloon, but there's nothing to eat;

and a contributor to the *Sporting Magazine* observes, very happily, that "even in a 'case' in a coach, it's 'there you are'; whereas in a railway carriage it's 'where are you?'" in case of an accident.

On September 21st, 1841, the Brighton Railway was opened throughout, from London to Brighton, and with that event the coaching era for this road virtually died. Professional coach proprietors who wished to retain the competencies they had accumulated were well advised to shun all competition with steam, and others had been wise enough to cut their losses; for the Road for the next sixty years was to become a discarded institution and the Rail was entering into a long and undisputed possession of the carrying trade.

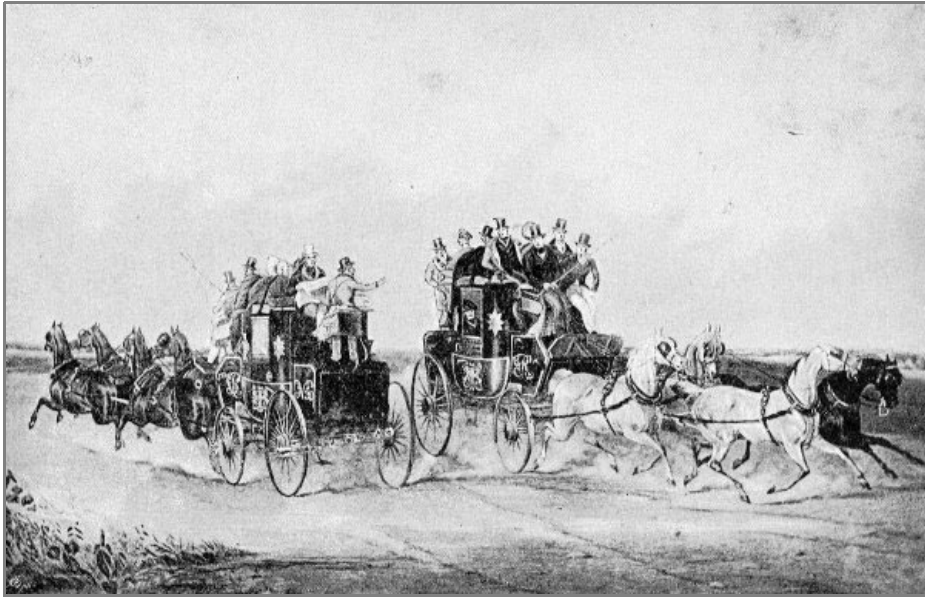
The Brighton Mail, however—or mails, for Chaplin had started a Day Mail in 1838—

continued a few months longer. The Day Mail ceased in October, 1841, but the Night Mail held the road until March, 1842.

VI

Between 1841, when the railway was opened all the way from London, and 1866, during a period of twenty-five years, coaching, if not dead, at least showed but few and intermittent signs of life. The "Age," which then was owned by Mr. F. W. Capps, was the last coach to run regularly on the direct road to and from London. The "Victoria," however, was on the road, *via* Dorking and Horsham, until November 8th, 1845.

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The BRIGHTON DAY MAILS CROSSING HOOKWOOD COMMON, 1838.

From an engraving after W. J. Shayer.

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THE COACHING AMATEURS

The "Age" had been one of the best equipped and driven of all the smart drags in that period when aristocratic amateur dragsmen frequented this road, when the Marquis of Worcester drove the "Beaufort," and when the Hon. Fred Jerningham, a son of the Earl of Stafford, a whip of consummate skill, drove the day-mail; a time when the "Age" itself was driven by that sportsman of gambling memory, Sir St. Vincent Cotton, and by that Mr. Stevenson who was its founder, mentioned more particularly on page 37. When Mr. Capps became proprietor, he had as coachman several distinguished men. For twelve years, for instance, Robert Brackenbury drove the "Age" for the nominal pay of twelve shillings per week, enough to keep him in whips. It was thus supremely fitting that it should also have been the last to survive.

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In later years, about 1852, a revived "Age," owned and driven by the Duke of Beaufort and George Clark, the "Old" Clark of coaching acquaintance, was on the road to London, *via* Dorking and Kingston, in the summer months. It was discontinued in 1862. A picture of this coach crossing Ham Common *en route* for Brighton was painted in 1852 and engraved. A reproduction of it is shown here.

From 1862 to 1866 the rattle of the bars and the sound of the guard's yard of tin were silent on every route to Brighton; but in the latter year of horsey memory and the coaching revival, a number of aristocratic and wealthy amateurs of the whip, among whom were representatives of the best coaching talent of the day, subscribed a capital, in shares of £10, and a little yellow coach, the "Old Times," was put on the highway. Among the promoters of the venture were Captain Haworth, the Duke of Beaufort, Lord H. Thynne, Mr. Chandos Pole, Mr. "Cherry" Angell, Colonel Armytage, Captain Lawrie, and Mr. Fitzgerald. The experiment proved unsuccessful, but in the following season, commencing in April, 1867, when the goodwill and a large portion of the stock had been purchased from the original subscribers, by the Duke of Beaufort, Mr. E. S. Chandos Pole, and Mr. Angell, the coach was doubled, and two new coaches built by Holland & Holland.

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The Duke of Beaufort was chief among the sportsmen who horsed the coaches during this season. Mr. Chandos Pole, at the close of the summer season, determined to carry on by himself, throughout the winter, a service of one coach. This he did, and, aided by Mr. Pole-

Gell, doubled it the next summer.

The following year, 1869, the coach had so prosperous a season that it showed never a clean bill, *i.e.*, never ran empty, all the summer, either way. The partners this year were the Earl of Londesborough, Mr. Pole-Gell, Colonel Stracey Clitherow, Mr. Chandos Pole, and Mr. G. Meek.

From this season coaching became extremely popular on the Brighton Road, Mr. Chandos Pole running his coach until 1872. In the following year an American amateur, Mr. Tiffany, kept up the tradition with two coaches. Late in the season of 1874 Captain Haworth put in an appearance.

In 1875 the "Age" was put upon the road by Mr. Stewart Freeman, and ran in the season up to and including 1880, in which year it was doubled. Captain Blyth had the "Defiance" on the road to Brighton this year by the circuitous route of Tunbridge Wells. In 1881 Mr. Freeman's coach was absent from the road, but Edwin Fownes put the "Age" on, late in the season. In the following year Mr. Freeman's coach ran, doubled again, and single in 1883. It was again absent in 1884-5-6, in which last year it ran to Windsor; but it reappeared on the Brighton Road in 1887 as the "Comet," and in the winter of that year was continued by Captain Beckett, who had Selby and Fownes as whips. In 1888 Mr. Freeman ran in partnership with Colonel Stracey-Clitherow, Lord Wiltshire, and Mr. Hugh M'Calmont, and in 1889 became partner in an undertaking to run the coach doubled. The two "Comets" therefore served the road in this season supported by two additional subscribers, the Honourable H. Sandys and Mr. Randolph Wemyss.

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THE "AGE," 1852, CROSSING HAM COMMON.

From an engraving after C. Cooper Henderson.

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JIM
SELBY

In 1888 the "Old Times," forsaking the Oatlands Park drive, had appeared on the Brighton Road as a rival to the "Comet," and continued throughout the winter months, until Selby met his death in that winter.

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The "Comet" ran single in the winter season of 1889-90, and in April was again doubled for the summer, running single in 1891-2-3, when Mr. Freeman relinquished it.

Mention has already been made of the "Old Times," which made such a fleeting appearance on this road; but justice was not done to it, or to Selby, in that incidental allusion. They require a niche to themselves in the history of the revival—a niche to which shall be appended this poetic excerpt:

Here's the "Old Times," it's one of the best,
Which no coaching man will deny,
Fifty miles down the road with a jolly good load,
Between London and Brighton each day.
Beckett, M'Adam, and Dickey, the driver, are there,
Of old Jim's presence every one is aware,
They are all nailing good sorts,
And go in for all sports,
So we'll all go a-coaching to-day.

It is poetry whose like we do not often meet. Tennyson himself never attempted to capture such heights of rhyme. He could, and did, rhyme "poet" with "know it," but he never drove such a Cockney team as "deny" and "to-dy" to water at the Pierian springs.

"Carriages without horses shall go," is the "prophecy" attributed to that mythical fifteenth century pythoness, Mother Shipton; really the *ex post facto* forgery of Charles Hindley, the second-hand bookseller, in 1862. It should not be difficult, on such terms, to earn the reputation of a seer.

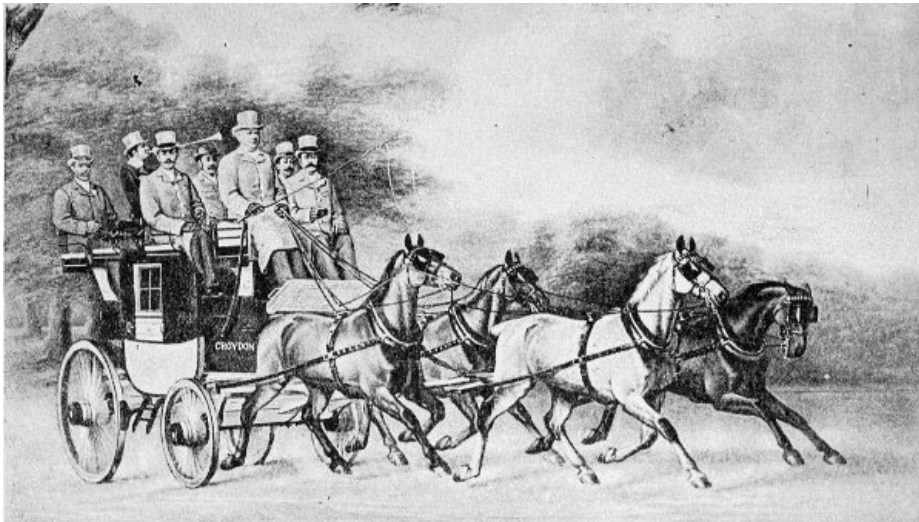
Between 1823 and 1838, the era of the steam-carriages, that prognostication had already been fulfilled: and again, in another sense, with the introduction of railways. But it was not until the close of 1896 that the real horseless era began to dawn. Railways, extravagantly discriminative tolls, and restrictions upon weight and speed killed the steam-carriages, and for more than fifty years the highways knew no other mechanical locomotion than that of the familiar traction-engines, restricted to three miles an hour and preceded by a man with a red flag. It is true that a few hardy inventors continued to waste their time and money on devising new forms of steam-carriages, and were only fined for their pains when they were rash enough to venture on the public roads, as when Bateman, of Greenwich, invented a steam-tricycle, and Sir Thomas Parkyn, Bart., was fined at Greenwich Police Court, April 8th, 1881, for riding it.

That incident appears to have finally quenched the ardour of inventive genius in this country; but a new locomotive force already existing unsuspected was about this period being experimented with on the Continent by one Gottlieb Daimler, whose name—generally mispronounced—is now sufficiently familiar to all who know anything of motor-cars.

Daimler was at that time connected with the Otto Gas Engine Works in Germany, where the adaptive Germans were exploiting the gas-engine principle invented by Crossley many years before.

In 1886 Daimler produced his motor-bicycle, and by 1891 his motor engine was adapted by Panhard and Levassor to other types of vehicles. The French were thus the first to perceive the great possibilities of it, and by 1894 the motor-cars already in use in France were so numerous that the first sporting event in the history of them—the 760 miles' race from Paris to Bordeaux and back—was run.

MOTOR-
CARS



THE "OLD TIMES," 1888.
From a painting by Alfred S. Bishop.

The following year Mr. Evelyn Ellis brought over the first motor-car to reach England, a 4 h.-p. Panhard, and a little later, Sir David Salomons, of Tunbridge Wells, imported a Peugeot. In that town, October 15th, 1895, he held the first show of cars—four or five at most—in this country. Then began an agitation raised by a few enthusiasts for the removal of the existing restrictions upon road traffic. A deputation waited upon the Local Government Board, and the Light Locomotives Act of 1896 was passed in August, legalising mechanical traction up to a speed of fourteen miles an hour, the Act to come into operation on November 14th.

For whatever reason, the Light Locomotives Act was passed so quietly, under the ægis of the Local Government Board, as to almost wear the aspect of an organised secrecy, and the coming of what is now known as Motor-car Day was utterly unsuspected by the bulk of the public. It even caught the newspapers unprepared, until the week before.

But the financiers and company-promoters had been busy. They at least fully realised the importance of the era about to dawn; and the extravagant flotations of the Great Horseless Carriage Company and of many others long since bankrupt and forgotten, together with the phenomenal over-valuation of patents, very soon discredited the new movement. Never has there been a new industry so hardly used by company-promoting sharks as that of motor-cars.

"MOTOR-CAR DAY"

No inkling of subsequent financial disasters clouded Motor-car Day, and as at almost the last moment the Press had come to the conclusion that it was an occasion to be written up and enlarged upon, a very great public interest was aroused in the Motor-car Club's proposed celebration of the event by a great procession of the newly-enfranchised "light locomotives" from Whitehall to Brighton, on November 14th.

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The Motor-car Club is dead. It was not a club in the proper sense of the word, but an organisation promoted and financed by the company-promoters who were interested in advertising their schemes. The run to Brighton was itself intended as a huge advertisement, but the unprepared condition of many of the cars entered, together with the miserable weather prevailing on that day, resulted in turning the whole thing into ridicule.

The newspapers had done their best to advertise the event; but no one anticipated the immense crowds that assembled at the starting-point, Whitehall Place, by nine o'clock on that wet and foggy morning. By half-past ten, the hour fixed for the start, there was a maddening chaos of hundreds of thousands of sightseers such as no Lord Mayor's Show or Royal Procession had ever attracted. Everybody in the crowd wanted a front place, and those who got one, being both unable and unwilling to "parse away," were nearly scragged by the police, who on the Embankment set upon individuals like footballers on the ball; while snap-shotters wasted plates on them from the secure altitudes of omnibuses or other vehicles.

Those whose journalistic duties took them to see the start had to fight their way down from Charing Cross, up from Westminster, or along from the Embankment; contesting inch by inch, and wondering if the starting-point would ever be gained.

At length the Metropole hove in sight, but the motor-cars had yet to be found. To accomplish this feat it was necessary to hurl oneself into a surging tide of humanity, and surge with it. The tide carried the explorer away and eventually washed him ashore on the neck of a policeman. Rumour got around that an organised massacre of cab-horses was contemplated, and myriads of mounted police appeared and had their photographs taken from the tops of cabs and other envied positions occupied by amateur photographers, who paid dearly to take pictures of the fog, which they could have done elsewhere for nothing.

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THE "COMET," 1890.

From a painting by Alfred S. Bishop.

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Time went on, the crowd grew bigger, the mud was churned into slush, and everybody was treading upon everybody else.

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"Ain't this bloomin' fun, sir?" asked the driver of a growler, his sides shaking with laughter, "Even my ole 'oss 'as bin larfin'."

"Very intelligent horse," we said, thinking of Mr. Pickwick, and determining to ask some searching questions as to his antecedents.

"Interleck's a great p'int, sir. Which 'ud you sooner be in: a runaway mortar-caw or a keb?"

"Neither."

"No, I ain't jokin', strite. I've just bin argying wif a bloke as said he'd sooner be in a caw. I said I pitied 'is choice, and wouldn't give 'im much for his charnce. 'Cos why? 'Cos mortar-caws ain't got no interleck. They cawn't tell the dif'rence 'tween nothink an' a brick wall. Now a 'os can. If 'e don't turn orf 'e tries ter jump th' wall, but yer mortar simply goes fer it, and then where are yer? In 'eaven, if yer lucky, or in——"

But the rest of his sentence was lost in the roar that ascended from the crowd as the cars commenced their journey to Brighton.

They went beautifully for a few yards, chased the mounted police right into the crowd, and then stopped.

"It's th' standin' still as does it—not the standin' still, I mean the not going forrard, 'cos they don't stand still," said the cabby, excitedly.

"Don't they hum?" he cried.

"They certainly do make a little noise."

"But I mean, don't they whiff?"

"Whiff?"

He held his nose.

"I say, guv'nor." shouted cabby to a fur-coated foreigner, "wot is it smells so?"

Meanwhile there was a certain "something lingering with oil in it," permeating the fog, while a sound as of many humming-tops filled the air.

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Then the cars moved on a bit, amid the cheers and chaff of a good-humoured crowd. Presently another stoppage and more shivering.

"As thet cove there got th' Vituss dance?" inquired the elated cabby, indicating a gentleman who was wobbling like a piece of jelly.

"That's the vibration," explained another.

"Ow does the vibration agree w' the old six yer 'ad last night?" cabby inquired immediately. "I say, Chawlie, don't it make yer sea-sick? Oh my! th' smell!" and he gasped and sat on his box, looking bilious.

When all the carriages had wended their way to Westminster we asked cabby what he thought of the procession.

"Arsk my 'os," said he, with a look of disgust on his face. "What's yer opinion of it, old gal? Failyer? My sentiments. British public won't pay to be choked with stinks one moment and shut up like electricity t' next. Failyer? Quite c'rect."

Meanwhile the guests of the Motor-car Club were breakfasting at the Hotel Metropole, where appropriate speeches were made, the Earl of Winchilsea concluding his remarks with the dramatic production of a red flag, which, amid applause, he tore in half, to symbolise the passing of the old restrictions.

There had been fifty-four entries for this triumphal procession, but not more than thirty-three cars put in an appearance. It is significant of the vast progress made since then that no car present was more than 6 h.p., and that all, except the Bollée three-wheeled car, were precisely what they were frequently styled, "horseless carriages," vehicles built on traditional lines, from which the horses and the customary shafts were painfully missed. There had not yet been time sufficient for the evolution of the typical motor-car body.

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With the combined strategy of a Napoleon, the patience of Job, and the strength of Samson, the guests were at length piloted through the crowd and inducted into their seats, and the "procession"—which, it was sternly ordained, was not to be a "race"—set out.

THE
FIRST
CARS

The President of the Motor-car Club, Harry J. Lawson, since convicted of fraud and sentenced to some months' imprisonment, led the way in his pilot-car, bearing a purple-and-gold banner, more or less suitably inscribed, himself habited in a strange costume, something between that of a yachtsman and the conductor of a Hungarian band.

Reigate was reached at 12.30 by the foremost ear, through twenty miles of crowded country, when rain descended once more upon the hapless day, and late arrivals splashed through in all the majesty of mud.

The honours of the occasion belong to the little Bollée three-wheeler, of a type long since obsolete. The inventor, disregarding all rules and times, started at 11.30, and, making no stop at Reigate, drove on to Brighton, which he reached in the record time of two hours fifty-five minutes. The President's car was fourth, in seven hours twenty-two minutes thirty

seconds.

At Preston Park, on the Brighton boundary, the Mayor was to have welcomed the procession, which, headed by the President, was to proceed triumphantly into the town. A huge crowd assembled under the dripping elms and weeping skies, and there, at five o'clock, in the light of the misty lamps, stood and vibrated that presidential equipage and its banner with the strange device. By five o'clock only three other cars had arrived; and so, wet and miserable, they, the Mayor and Council, and the mounted police all splashed into Brighton amid a howling gale.

The rest should be silence, for no one ever knew the number of cars that completed the journey. Some said twenty-two, others thirteen; but it is certain that the conditions were too much for many, and that while some reposed in wayside stables, others, broken down in lonely places, remained on the road all through that awful night. The guests, who in the morning had been unable to find seats on the "horseless carriages," and so had journeyed by special train or by coach, in the end had much to congratulate themselves upon.

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But, after all, looking back upon the hasty enthusiasm that organised so long a journey at such a time of year, at so early a stage in the motor-car era, it seems remarkable, not that so many broke down, but that so large a proportion reached Brighton at all.

The logical outcome of years of experiment and preparation was reached, in the supersession of the horsed London and Brighton Parcel Mail on June 2nd, 1905, by a motor-van, and in the establishment, on August 30th, of the "Vanguard" London and Brighton Motor Omnibus Service, starting in summer at 9.30 a.m., and reaching Brighton at 2 p.m.; returning from Brighton at 4 p.m., and finally arriving at its starting-point, the "Hotel Victoria," Northumberland Avenue, at 9 p.m. With the beginning of November, 1905, that summer service was replaced by one to run through the winter months, with inside seats only, and at reduced fares.

The first fatality on the Brighton Road in connection with motor-cars occurred in 1901, at Smitham Bottom, when a car just purchased by a retired builder and contractor of Brighton was being driven by him from London. The steering-gear failed, the car turned completely round, ran into an iron fence and pinned the owner's leg against it and a tree. The leg was broken and had to be amputated, and the unfortunate man died of the shock.

But the motor-omnibus accident of July 12th, 1906, was a really spectacular tragedy. On that day a "Vanguard" omnibus, chartered by a party of thirty-four pleasure seekers at Orpington for a day at Brighton, was proceeding down Hand Cross Hill at twelve miles an hour when some essential part of the gear broke and the heavy vehicle, dashing down-hill at an ever-increasing pace, and swerving from side to side, struck a great oak. The shock flung the passengers off violently. Ten were killed and all the others injured, mostly very seriously.

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Meanwhile, amateur coaching had, in most of the years since the professional coaches had been driven off the road, flourished in the summer season. The last notable amateur was the American millionaire, Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, who for several seasons personally drove his own "Venture" coach between London and Brighton; at first on the main "classic" road, and afterwards on the Dorking and Horsham route. He met his death on board the *Lusitania*, when it was sunk by the Germans, May 7th. 1915.

VIII

THE
ROAD OF
RECORDS

Robinson Crusoe, weary of his island solitude, sighed, so the poet tells us, for "the midst of alarms." He should have chosen the Brighton Road; for ever since it has been a road at all it has fully realised the Shakespearian stage-direction of "alarums and excursions." Particularly the "excursions," for it is the chosen track for most record-breaking exploits; and thus it comes to pass that residents fortunate or unfortunate enough to dwell upon the Brighton Road have the whole panorama of sport unfolded before their eyes, whether they will or no, throughout the whirling year, and see strange sights, hear odd noises, and (since the coming of the motor-car) smell weird smells.

The Brighton Road has ever been a course upon which the enthusiastic exponents of different methods of progression have eagerly exhibited their prowess. But to-day, although it affords as good going as, or better than, ever, it is not so suitable as it was for these displays of speed. Traffic has grown with the growth of villages and townships along these fifty-two miles, and sport and public convenience are on the highway antipathetic. Yet every kind of sport has its will of the road.

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The reasons of this exceptional sporting character are not far to seek. They were chiefly sportsmen who travelled it in the days when it began to be a road: those full-blooded sportsmen, ready for any freakish wager, who were the boon companions of the Prince; and they set a fashion which has not merely survived into modern times, but has grown

amazingly.

But it would never have been the road for sport it is, had its length not been so conveniently and alluringly near an even fifty miles. So much may be done or attempted along a fifty miles' course that would be impossible on a hundred.

SPORTING
EVENTS

The very first sporting event on the Brighton Road of which any record survives is (with an astonishing fitness) the feat accomplished by the Prince of Wales himself on July 25th, 1784, during his second visit to Brighthelmstone. On that day he mounted his horse there and rode to London and back. He went by way of Cuckfield, and was ten hours on the road: four and a half hours going, five and a half hours returning. On August 21st of the same year, starting at one o'clock in the morning, he drove from Carlton House to the "Pavilion" in four hours and a half. The turn-out was a phaeton drawn by three horses harnessed tandem-fashion—what in those days was called a "random."

One may venture the opinion that, although these performances were in due course surpassed, they were not altogether bad for a "simulacrum," as Thackeray was pleased to style him.

Twenty-five years passed before any one arose to challenge the Prince's ride, and then only partially and indirectly. In May, 1809, Cornet J. Wedderburn Webster, of the 10th (Prince of Wales's Own) Light Dragoons, accepted and won a wager of 300 to 200 guineas with Sir B. Graham about the performance in three and a half hours of the journey from Brighton to Westminster Bridge, mounted upon one of the blood horses that usually ran in his phaeton. He accomplished the ride in three hours twenty minutes, knocking the Prince's up record into the proverbial cocked hat. The rider stopped a while at Reigate to take a glass or two of wine, and compelled his horse to swallow the remainder of the bottle.

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This spirited affair was preceded in April, 1793, by a curious match which seems to deserve mention. A clergyman at Brighton betted an officer of the Artillery quartered there 100 guineas that he would ride his own horse to London sooner than the officer could go in a chaise and pair, the officer's horses to be changed *en route* as often as he might think proper. The Artilleryman accordingly despatched a servant to provide relays, and at twelve o'clock on an unfavourable night the parties set out to decide the bet, which was won by the clergyman with difficulty. He arrived in town at 5 a.m., only a few minutes before the chaise, which it had been thought was sure of winning. The driver of the last stage, however, nearly became stuck in a ditch, which mishap caused considerable delay. The Cuckfield driver performed his nine-miles' stage, between that place and Crawley, within the half-hour.

The next outstanding incident was the run of the "Red Rover" coach, which, leaving the "Elephant and Castle" at 4 p.m. on June 19th, 1831, reached Brighton at 8.21 that evening: time, four hours twenty-one minutes. The fleeting era of those precursors of motor-cars, the steam-carriages, had by this time arrived, and after two or three had managed, at some kind of a slow pace, to get to and from Brighton, the "Autopsy" achieved a record of sorts in October, 1833. "Autopsy" was an unfortunate name, suggestive of *post-mortem* examinations and "crownor's quests," but it proved not more dangerous than the "Mors" or "Hurtu" cars of to-day. The "Autopsy" was Walter Hancock's steam-carriage, and ran from his works at Stratford. It reached Brighton in eight hours thirty minutes; from which, however, must be deducted three hours for a halt on the road.

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In the following year, February 4th, the "Criterion" coach, driven by Charles Harbour, took the King's Speech down to Brighton in three hours forty minutes—a coach record that not only quite eclipsed that of the "Red Rover," but has never yet been equalled, not even by Selby, on his great drive of July 13th, 1888; his times being, out and home respectively, three hours fifty-six minutes and three hours fifty-four minutes.

In March, 1868, the first of the walking records was established, the sporting papers of that age chronicling what they very rightly described as a "Great Walking Feat": a walk, not merely to Brighton, but to Brighton *and back*. This heroic undertaking, which was not repeated until 1902, was performed by one "Mr. Benjamin B. Trench, late Oxford University." On March 20th, for a heavy wager, he started to walk the hundred miles from Kennington Church to Brighton and back in twenty-five hours. Setting out on the Friday, at 6 p.m., he was back at Kennington Church at 5 p.m. Saturday, having thus won his wager with two hours to spare. It will be observed, or guessed, from the absence of odd minutes and seconds that in 1868, timing, as an exact science, had not been born; but it is evident that this stalwart walked his hundred miles on ordinary roads at an average rate of a little over four and a quarter miles an hour. "He then," concludes the report, "walked round the Oval several times, till seven o'clock."

To each age the inventions it deserves. Cycling would have been impossible in the mid-eighteenth century, when Walpole and Burton travelled with such difficulty.

When roads began to deserve the name, the Mail Coach was introduced; and when they grew hard and smooth, out of their former condition of ruts and mud, the quaint beginnings of the bicycle are noticed. The Hobby Horse and McAdam, the man who first preached the modern gospel of good roads, were contemporary.

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I have said the beginnings of the bicycle were quaint, and I think no one will be concerned to dispute this alleged quaintness of the Hobby Horse, which had a certain strictly limited

popularity from 1819 to 1830. I do not think any one ever rode from London to Brighton on one of these machines; and, when you come to consider the build and the limitations of them, and then think of the hills on the way, it is quite impossible that any one should so ride. It was perhaps within the limits of human endurance to ride a Hobby Horse along the levels, to walk it up the rises, and then to madly descend the hills, and so reach Brighton, very sore; but records do not tell us of such a stern pioneer. The Hobby Horse, it should be said, was an affair of two wooden wheels with iron tyres. A heavy timber frame connected these wheels, and on it the courageous rider straddled, his feet touching the ground. The Hobby Horse had no pedals, and the rider propelled his hundredweight or so of iron and timber by running in this straddling position and thus obtaining a momentum which only on the down grade would carry him any distance.

Thus, although the Hobby Horse was a favourite with the "bucks" of George the Fourth's time, they exercised upon it in strictly limited doses, and it was not until it had experienced a new birth and was born again as the "velocipede" of the '60's, that to ride fifty miles upon an ancestor of the present safety bicycle, and survive, was possible.[4]

The front-driving velocipede—the well-known "boneshaker"—was invented by one Pierre Lallement, in Paris, in 1865-6, and exhibited at the Paris Exhibition of 1867. It was to the modern pneumatic-tyred "safety" what the roads of 1865 are to those of 1906. It also, like the Hobby Horse, had iron-shod wooden wheels, but had cranks and pedals, and could be ridden uphill. On such a machine the first cycle ride to Brighton was performed in 1869. This pioneer's fame on the Brighton Road belongs to John Mayall, junior, a well-known photographer of that period, who died in the summer of 1891.

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This marks the beginning of so important an epoch that the circumstances attending it are worthy a detailed account. They were felt, so long ago as 1874, to be deserving of such a record, for in the first number of an athletic magazine, *Ixion*, published in that year, "J. M., jun.," who, of course, was none other than Mayall himself, began to tell the wondrous tale. He set out to narrate it at such length that, as an editorial note tells us, the concluding portion was reserved for the second number. But *Ixion* never reached a second number, and so Mayall's own account of his historic ride was never completed.

He began, as all good chroniclers should, at the very beginning, telling how, in the early part of 1869, he was at Spencer's Gymnasium in Old Street, St. Luke's. There he saw a packing-case being followed by a Mr. Turner, whom he had seen at the Paris Exhibition of 1868, and witnessed the unpacking of it. From it came a something new and strange, "a piece of apparatus consisting mainly of two wheels, similar to one I had seen, not long before, in Paris." It was the first velocipede to reach England.

It is a curious point that, although Mayall rode a "velocipede," and although these machines were generally so-called for a year or two after their introduction, the word "bicycle" is claimed to have been first used in the *Times* in the early part of 1868; and certainly we find in the *Daily News* of September 7th in that year an allusion, in grotesque spelling, to "bysicles and trisicles which we saw at the Champs Elysées and the Bois de Boulogne this summer."

But to return to the "velocipede" which had found its way to England at the beginning of 1869.

The two-wheeled mystery was helped out of its wrappings and shavings, the Gymnasium was cleared, and Mr. Turner, taking off his coat, grasped the handles of the machine, and with a short run, to Mayall's intense surprise, vaulted on to it. Putting his feet on what were then called the "treadles," Turner, to the astonishment of the beholders, made the circuit of the room, sitting on this bar above a pair of wheels in line that ought to have collapsed so soon as the momentum ceased; but, instead of falling down, Turner turned the front wheel at an angle to the other, and thus maintained at once a halt and a balance.

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Mayall was fired with enthusiasm. The next day (Saturday) he was early at the Gymnasium, "intending to have a day of it," and I think, from his account of what followed, that he *did*, in every sense, have such a day.

As Spencer had hurt himself by falling from the machine the night before, Mayall had it almost wholly to himself, and, after a few successful journeys round the room, determined to try his luck in the streets. Accordingly, at one o'clock in the afternoon, amid the plaudits of a hundred men of the adjacent factory, engaged in the congenial occupation of lounging against the blank walls in their dinner-hour, the velocipede was hoisted on to a cab and driven to Portland Place, where it was put on the pavement, and Mayall prepared to mount. Even nowadays the cycling novice requires plenty of room, and as Portland Place is well known to be the widest street in London, and nearly the most secluded, it seems probable that this intrepid pioneer deliberately chose it in order to have due scope for his evolutions.

It was a raw and muddy day, with a high wind. Mayall sprang on to the velocipede, but it slipped on the wet road, and he measured his length in the mud. The day-out was beginning famously.

Spencer, who had been worsted the night before, contented himself with giving Mayall a start when he made another attempt, and this time that courageous person got as far as the Marylebone Road, and across it on to the pavement of the other side, where he fell with a

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crash as though a barrow had been upset. But again vaulting into the saddle, he lumbered on into Regent's Park, and so to the drinking-fountain near the Zoological Gardens, where, in attempting to turn round, he fell over again. Mounting once more, he returned. Looking round, "there was the park-keeper coming hastily towards me, making indignant signs. I passed quickly out of the Park gate into the roadway." Thus early began the long warfare between Cycling and Authority.

Thence, sometimes falling into the road, with Spencer trotting after him, he reached the foot of Primrose Hill, and then, at Spencer's home, staggered on to a sofa, and lay there, exhausted, soaked in rain and perspiration, and covered with mud. It had been in no sense a light matter to exercise with that ninety-three pounds' weight of mingled timber and ironmongery.

On the Monday he trundled about, up to the "Angel," Islington, where curious crowds assembled, asking the uses of the machine and if the falling off and grovelling in the mud was a part of the pastime. The following day, very sore, but still undaunted, he re-visited the "Angel," went through the City, and so to Brixton and Clapham, where, at the house of a friend, he looked over maps, and first conceived the "stupendous" idea of riding to Brighton.

The following morning he endeavoured to put that plan into execution, and toiled up Brixton Hill, and so through Croydon, up the "never-ending" rise, as it seemed, of Smitham Bottom to the crest of Merstham Hill. There, tired, he half plunged into the saddle, and so thundered and clattered down hill into Merstham. At Redhill, seventeen and a half miles, utterly exhausted, he relinquished the attempt, and retired to the railway station, where he lay for some time on one of the seats until he revived. Then, to the intense admiration and amusement of the station-master and his staff, he rode about the platform, dodging the pillars, and narrowly escaping a fall on to the rails, until the London train came in.

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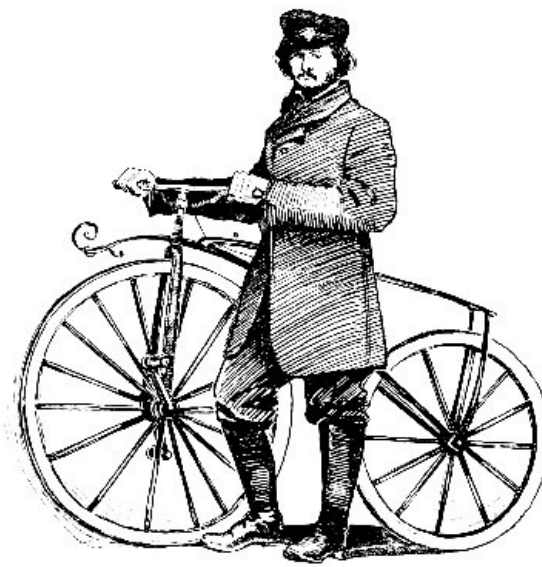
On Wednesday, February 17th, Mayall, Rowley B. Turner, and Charles Spencer, all three on velocipedes, started from Trafalgar Square for Brighton. The party kept together until Redhill was reached, when Mayall took the lead, and eventually reached Brighton alone. The time occupied was "about" twelve hours. Being a photographer, Mayall of course caused himself to be photographed standing beside the instrument of torture on which he made that weary ride, and thus we have preserved to us the weird spectacle he presented; more like that of a Russian convict than an athletic young Englishman. A peaked cap, an attenuated frock-coat, very tight in the waist, and stiff and shiny leather leggings, completed a costume strange enough to make a modern cyclist shudder. Fearful whiskers and oily-looking long hair add to the strangeness of this historic figure.

RECORDS

With this exploit athletic competition began, and the long series of modern "records" on the Brighton Road were set a-going, for during the March of that year two once well-known amateur pedestrian members of the Stock Exchange, W. M. and H. J. Chinnery, *walked* down to Brighton in 11 hrs. 25 mins., and on April 14th C. A. Booth bettered Mayall's adventure, riding down on a velocipede in 9 hrs. 30 mins.

Then came the Amateur Bicycle Club's race, September 19th, 1872. By that time not only had the word "velocipede" been discarded for "bicycle," and "treadles" become "pedals," but the machine itself, although in general appearance very much the same, had been improved in detail. The 36-inch front wheel had been increased to 44 inches, the wooden spokes had given place to wire, and strips of rubber, nailed on, replaced the iron tyres. Probably as a result of these refinements the winner, A. Temple, reached Brighton in 5 hrs, 25 mins.

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JOHN MAYALL, JUNIOR, 1869.

By 1872 the bicycle had advanced a further stage towards the giraffe-like altitude of the "ordinary," and already there were many clubs in existence. On August 16th of that year six members of the Surrey and six of the Middlesex Bicycle Clubs rode from Kennington Oval to Brighton and back, Causton captain of the Surrey, being the first into Brighton. Riding a 50-inch "Keen" bicycle he reeled off the fifty miles in 4 hrs. 51 mins. The new machine was something to be reckoned with.

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On February 9th. 1874, a certain John Revel, junr., backed himself in heavy sums to ride a bicycle the whole distance from Brighton to London quicker than a Mr. Gregory could walk the 22½ miles from Reigate to London. Revel was to leave Brighton at the junction of the London and Montpellier roads at the same time as Gregory started from a point between the twenty-second and twenty-third milestones. The pedestrian won, finishing in 3 hrs. 27 mins. 47 secs., Revel taking 5 hrs. 57 mins. for the whole journey.

The bicycle had by this time firmly established itself. It grew more and more of an athletic exercise to mount the steadily growing machines, but once seated on them the going was easier. April 27th, 1874, found Alfred Howard cycling from Brighton to London in 4 hrs. 25 mins., a speed which works out at eleven miles an hour.

In 1875 the Brighton Road seems to have been left severely alone, and 1876 was signalled only by two of the fantastic wagers that have been numerous decided on this half-century of miles. In that year, we are told, a Mr. Frederick Thompson staked one thousand guineas that Sir John Lynton would not wheel a barrow from Westminster Abbey to the "Old Ship" at Brighton in fifteen hours; and the knight, accepting the bet, made his appearance airily clothed in the "shorts" of the recognised running costume and wheeling a barrow made of bamboo, and provided with handles six feet long. He won easily, but whether the loser paid the thousand guineas, or lodged a protest with referees, does not appear. He should have specified the make of barrow, for the kinds range through quite a number of varieties, from the coster's barrow to the navy's and the gardener's. But the wager did not contemplate the fancy article with which Sir John Lynton made his journey. At any rate, I have my doubts about the genuineness of the whole affair, for, seeking this "Sir John Lynton" in the usual books of reference of that period, there is no such knight or baronet to be discovered.

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According to the Sussex newspapers of 1876, over fifteen thousand people assembled in the King's Road at Brighton to witness the finish of the sporting event between Major Penton and an unnamed competitor. Major Penton agreed to give his opponent a start of twenty-seven miles in a pedestrian match to Brighton, on the condition that he was allowed a "go-as-you-please" method, while the other man was to walk in the fair "heel-and-toe" style. The major won by a yard and a half in the King's Road, through the excitement of his competitor, who was disqualified at the last minute by breaking into a trot.

Freakish sport was at this time decidedly in the ascendant, for the sole event of 1877 was the extraordinary escapade of two persons who on September 11th undertook to ride, dressed as clowns, on donkeys, from London to Croydon, seated backwards with their faces towards the animals' tails. From Croydon to Redhill they were to walk the three-legged walk—*i.e.*, tied together by right and left legs—and thence to Crawley (surely a most appropriate place) on hands and knees. From that place to the end their pilgrimage was to be made walking in boots each weighted with 15 lb. of lead. This last ordeal speedily finished them, for they had failed to accomplish more than half a mile when they broke down.

John Granby was another of these fantastic persons, whose proper place would be a lunatic ward. He essayed to walk to Brighton with 50 lb. weight of sand round his shoulders, in a bag, but he sank under the weight by the time of his arrival at Thornton Heath.

MORE
RECORDS

In 1878 P. J. Burt bettered the performance of the Chinnerys, ten years earlier, by thirty-three minutes, walking to the Aquarium in 10 hrs. 52 mins. Most authorities agree in making his starting-point the Clock Tower on the north side of Westminster Bridge. 52¼ miles, and thus we can figure out his speed at about five miles an hour. All the athletic world wondered, and when, in 1884, C. L. O'Malley (pedestrian, swimmer, steeplechaser, and boxer), walking against B. Nickels, junr., lowered that record by so much as 1 hr. 4 mins., every one thought finality in long-distance padding the hoof had been reached.

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Meanwhile, however, 1882 had witnessed another odd adventure on the way to Brighton. A London clubman declared, while at dinner with a friend, that the bare-footed tramps sometimes to be seen in the country were not to be pitied. Boots, he said, were after all conventions, and declared it an easy matter to walk, say, fifty miles without them. He challenged his friend, and a walk to Brighton was arranged. The friend retired on his blisters in twelve miles; the challenger, however, with the soles of his stockings long since worn away, plodded on until he fainted with pain when only four miles from Brighton.

On April 6th. 1886, J. A. M'Intosh, of the London Athletic Club, walked to Brighton in 9 hrs. 25 mins. 8 secs., improving upon O'Malley's best by 22 mins. 52 secs.

The year 1888 was notable. On January 1st the horse "Ginger," in a match against time, was driven at a trot to Brighton in 4 hrs. 16 mins. 30 secs., and another horse, "The Bird,"

trotted from Kennington Cross to Brighton in 4 hrs. 30 mins. On July 13th Selby drove the "Old Times" coach from the White Horse Cellar, in Piccadilly, to Brighton and back in ten minutes under eight hours, thus arousing that competition of cyclists which, first directed towards beating his performance, has been continued to the present day.

IX

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Selby's drive was very widely chronicled. The elaborate reports and extensive preliminary arrangements compare oddly with the early sporting events undertaken on the spur of the moment and recorded only in meagre, unilluminating paragraphs. What would we not give for a report of the Prince of Wales's ride in 1784, so elaborated.

A great drive, and a great coachman, worthily carrying on the good old traditions of the road. It has, however, been already pointed out that neither on his outward journey (3 hrs. 56 mins.), nor on the return (3 hrs. 54 mins.), did he quite equal the record of the "Criterion" coach, which on February 4th, 1834, took the King's Speech from London to Brighton in 3 hrs. 40 mins.

Selby did not live long to enjoy the world-wide repute his great drive gained him. He died, only forty-four years of age, at the end of the same year that saw this splendid feat.

Selby's memorable drive put cyclists upon their mettle, but not at once was any determined attempt made to better it. The dwarf rear-driving "safety" bicycle, the "Rover," which, introduced in 1885, set the existing pattern, was not yet perfected, and cyclists still rode solid or cushion tyres, instead of the now universal pneumatic kind.

THE CYCLISTS

It was, therefore, not until August, 1889, that after several unsuccessful attempts had been made to better the coach-time on that double journey of 108 miles, a team of four cyclists—E. J. Willis, G. L. Morris, C. W. Schafer, and S. Walker, members of the Polytechnic Cycling Club—did that distance in 7 hrs. 36 mins. 19 $\frac{3}{5}$ secs.; or 13 mins. 40 $\frac{3}{5}$ secs. less; and even then the feat was accomplished only by the four cyclists dividing the journey between them into four relays. Two other teams, on as many separate occasions, reduced the figures by a few minutes, and M. A. Holbein and P. C. Wilson singly made unsuccessful attempts.

It was left to F. W. Shorland, a very young rider, to be the first of a series of single-handed breakers of the coaching time. He accomplished the feat in June, 1890, upon a pneumatic-tyred "Geared Facile" safety, and reduced the time to 7 hrs. 19 mins., being himself beaten on July 23rd by S. F. Edge, riding a cushion-tyred safety. Edge put the time at 7 hrs. 2 mins. 50 secs., and, in addition, first beat Selby's outward journey, the times being—coach, 3 hrs. 36 mins.; cycle, 3 hrs. 18 mins. 25 secs. Then came yet another stalwart, C. A. Smith, who on September 3rd of the same year beat Edge by 10 mins. 40 secs. Even a tricyclist—E. P. Moorhouse— essayed the feat on September 30th, but failed, his time being 8 hrs. 9 mins. 24 secs.

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To the adventitious aid of pacemakers, fresh and fresh again, to stir the record-breaker's flagging energies, much of this success was at first due; but at the present day those times have been exceeded on many unpaced rides.

Selby's drive had the effect of creating a new and arbitrary point of departure for record-making, and "Hatchett's" has thus somewhat confused the issues with the times and distances associated with Westminster Bridge.

The year 1891 was a blank, so far as cycling was concerned, but on March 20th an early Stock Exchange pedestrian to walk to Brighton set out to cover the distance between Hatchett's and the "Old Ship" in 11 hrs. 15 mins. This was E. H. Cuthbertson, who backed himself to equal the Chinnerys' performance of 1869. Out of this undertaking arose the additional and subsidiary match between Cuthbertson and another Stock Exchange member, H. K. Paxton, as to which should quickest walk between Hatchett's and the "Greyhound," Croydon. Paxton, a figure of Brobdingnagian proportions, 6 ft. 4 in. in height, and scaling 17 stone, received a time allowance of 23 minutes. Both aspirants went into three weeks' severe training, and elaborate arrangements were made for attendance, timing, and refreshment on the road. Paxton, urged to renewed efforts in the ultimate yards by the strains of a more or less German band, which seeing the competitors approach, played "See the Conquering Hero Comes," [5] won the match to Croydon by 1 min. 18 secs., but did not stop here, continuing with Cuthbertson to Brighton. Although Cuthbertson won his wager, and walked down in 10 hrs. 6 mins. 18 secs. (9 hrs. 55 mins. 34 secs, from Westminster) and won several heavy sums by this performance, he did not equal that of McIntosh in 1886. The old-timer, deducting a proportionate time for the difference between the finishing-points, the Aquarium and the "Old Ship," was still half an hour to the good.

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The next four years were exclusively cyclists' years. On June 1st, 1892, S. F. Edge made a great effort to regain the record that had been wrested from him by C. A. Smith in 1890, and

did indeed win it back, but only by the fractional margin of 1 min. 3 secs., and only held that advantage for three months, Edward Dance, in the last of three separate attempts, succeeding on September 6th in lowering Edge's time, but only by 2 mins. 6 secs. Then three days later, R. C. Nesbit made a "record" for the high "ordinary" bicycle, of 7 hrs. 42 mins. 50 secs., the last appearance of the now extraordinary "ordinary" on this stage.

The course was from 1893 considerably varied, the Road Record Association being of opinion that as the original great object—the breaking of the coach time—had been long since attained, there was no need to maintain the Piccadilly end, or the Cuckfield route. The course selected, therefore, became from Hyde Park Corner to the Aquarium at Brighton, by way of Hickstead and Bolney. On September 12th of this year Edge tried for and again recaptured this keenly-contested prize, this time by the respectable margin of 35 mins. 13 secs., only to have it snatched away on September 17th by A. E. Knight, who knocked off 3 mins. 19 secs. Again, in another couple of days, the figures were revised, C. A. Smith, on one of the few occasions on which he deserted the tricycle for the two-wheeler, accomplishing the double journey in 6 hrs. 6 mins. 46 secs. On the 22nd of the same busy month Edge for the fourth and last time took the record, on this occasion by the margin of 14 mins. 16 secs. The road then knew him no more as a record-breaking cyclist, and his achievement lasted—not days, but hours, for on the *same day* Dance lowered it by the infinitesimal fraction of 12 seconds. On October 4th W. W. Robertson set up a tricycle record of 7 hrs. 24 mins. 2 secs. for the double journey, and then a crowded year ended.

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The much-worried records of the Brighton Road came in for another turn in 1894, W. R. Toft, on June 11th, reducing the tricycle time, and C. G. Wridgway on September 12th lowering that for the bicycle. This year was also remarkable for the appearance of women speed cyclists, setting up records of their own, Mrs. Noble cycling to Brighton and back in 8 hrs. 9 mins., followed on September 20th by Miss Reynolds in 7 hrs. 48 mins. 46 secs., and on September 22nd by Miss White in 42 mins. shorter time.

The season of 1895 was not very eventful, with the ride by A. A. Chase in 5 hrs. 34 mins. 58 secs.; 34 secs. better than the previous best, and the lowering by J. Parsley of the tricycle record by over an hour; but it was notable for an almost incredible eccentricity, that of cycling backwards to Brighton. This feat was accomplished by J. H. Herbert in November, as an advertising sensation on behalf of the inventor of a new machine exhibited at the Stanley Show. He rode facing the hind wheel and standing on the pedals. Punctures, mud, rain, and wind delayed him, but he reached Brighton in 7 hrs. 45 mins.

On June 26th, 1896, E. D. Smith and C. A. Greenwood established a tandem-cycle record of 5 hrs. 37 mins. 34 secs., demolished September 15th; while on July 15th C. G. Wridgway regained his lost single record, beating Chase's figures by 12 mins. 25 secs. In this year W. Franks, a professional pedestrian in his forty-fifth year, beat all earlier walks to Brighton, eclipsing McIntosh's walk of 1886 by 18 mins. 18 secs. But, far above all other considerations, 1896 was notable for the legalising of motor-cars. On Motor-Day, November 14th, a great number of automobiles were to go in procession—not a race—from Westminster to Brighton. Most of them broke down, but a 6 h.-p. Bollée car (a three-wheeled variety now obsolete) made a record journey in 2 hrs. 55 mins.

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The year 1897 opened on April 10th with the open London to Brighton walk of the Polytechnic Harriers. The start was made from Regent Street, but time was taken separately, from that point and from Westminster Clock Tower. There were thirty-seven starters. E. Knott, of the Hairdressers' A.C.—a quaint touch—finished in 8 hrs. 56 mins. 44 secs. Thirty-one of the competitors finished well within twelve hours.

On May 4th W. J. Neason, cycling to Brighton and back, made the distance in 5 hrs. 19 mins. 39 secs., and on July 12th Miss M. Foster beat Miss White's 1894 record by 20 mins. 37 secs., while on the following day Richard Palmer made a better run than Neason's by 9 mins. 45 secs. Neason, however, got his own again in the following September, by 3 mins. 3 secs., and on October 27th P. Wheelock and G. J. Fulford improved the tandem record of 1896 by 25 mins. 41 secs.

By this time the thoroughly artificial character of most of these later cycling records had become glaringly apparent. It was not only seen in the fact that their heavy cost was largely borne by cycle and tyre-makers, who found advertisement in them, but it was obvious also in the arbitrary selection of the starting-points, by which a record run to Brighton and back might be begun at Purley, run to Brighton, then back to Purley, and thence to London and back again, with any variation that might suit the day and the rider. It was evident, too, that the growing elaboration of pace-making, first by relays of riders and latterly by motors, had reduced the thing to an absurdity in which there was no credit and—worse still—no advertisement. Then, therefore, a new order of things was set agoing, and the era of unpaced records was begun.

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On September 27th, 1898, E. J. Steel established a London to Brighton and back unpaced cycling record of 6 hrs. 23 mins. 55 secs.; and on the same day the new unpaced tricycle record of 8 hrs. 11 mins. 10 secs. for the double journey was set up by P. F. A. Gomme.

The South London Harriers' open "go-as-you-please" walking or running match of May 6th, 1899, attracted the attention of the athletic world in a very marked degree. Cyclists, in especial, were in evidence, to make the pace, to judge, to sponge down the competitors or to

refresh them by the wayside. The start was made from Big Ben soon after seven o'clock in the morning, when fourteen aspirants, all clad in the regulation running costumes and sweaters, went forth to win the modern equivalent of the victor's laurelled crown in the ancient Olympian games. F. D. Randall, who won, got away from his most dangerous opponent on the approach to Redhill, and, increasing that advantage to a hundred yards' lead when in the midst of the town, was not afterwards seriously challenged. He finished in the splendid time of 6 hrs. 58 mins. 18 secs. Saward, the second, completed it in 7 hrs. 17 mins. 50 secs., and the veteran E. Ion Pool in another 4 mins.

As if to show the superiority of the cycle over mere pedestrian efforts, H. Green on June 30th cycled from London to Brighton and back, unpaced, in 5 hrs. 50 mins. 23 secs., and on August 12th, 1902, reduced his own record by 20 mins. 1 sec. Meanwhile, Harry Vowles, a blind musician of Brighton, who had for some years made an annual walk from Brighton to London, on October 15th, 1900, accomplished his ambition to walk the distance in one day. He left Brighton at 5 a.m. and reached the Alhambra, in Leicester Square, at ten o'clock that night.

On October 31st, 1902, the Surrey Walking Club's 104 miles contest to Brighton and back resulted in J. Butler winning: time, 21 hrs. 36 mins. 27 secs., Butler performing the single journey on March 14th the following year in 8 hrs. 43 mins. 16 secs. For fair heel-and-toe walking, that was considered at the time the ultimate achievement; but it was beaten on April 9th, 1904, in the inter-club walk of the Blackheath and Ranelagh Harriers, when T. E. Hammond established the existing record of 8 hrs. 26 mins. 57½ secs.—the astonishing speed of six miles an hour.

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STOCK- EXCHANGE WALKS

This event was preceded by the famous Stock Exchange Walk of May Day, 1903. Every one knows the Stock Exchange to be almost as great on sport as it is in finance, but no one was prepared for the magnitude finally assumed by the match idly suggested on March 16th, during a dull hour on the Kaffir Market. Business had long been in a bad way, not in that market alone, but in the House in general. The trail of the great Boer War and its heritage of debt, taxation, and want of confidence lay over all departments, and brokers, jobbers, principals, and clerks alike were so heartily tired of going to "business" day after day when there was no business—and when there calculating how much longer they could afford annual subscriptions and office rent—that any relief was eagerly accepted. In three days twenty-five competitors had entered for the proposed walk to Brighton, and the House found itself not so poverty-stricken but that prize-money to the extent of £35, for three silver cups, was subscribed. And then the Press—that Press which is growing daily more hysterical and irresponsible—got hold of it and boomed it, and there was no escaping the Stock Exchange Walk. By the morning of March 25th, when the list was closed, there were 107 competitors entered and the prize-list had grown to the imposing total of three gold medals, valued, one at £10 10s. and two at £5 5s., with two silver cups valued at £10 10s., two at £5 5s., and silver commemoration medals for all arriving at Brighton in thirteen hours.

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Long before May Day the Press had worked the thing up to the semblance of a matter of Imperial importance, and London talked of little else. April 13th had been at first spoken of for the event, but many of the competitors wanted to get into training, and in the end May Day, being an annual Stock Exchange holiday, was selected.

There were ninety-nine starters from the Clock Tower at 6.30 on that chill May morning: not middle-aged stockbrokers, but chiefly young stockbrokers' clerks. All the papers had published particulars of the race, together with final weather prognostications; hawkers sold official programmes; an immense crowd assembled; a host of amateur photographers descended upon the scene, and the police kept Westminster Bridge clear. Although by no means to be compared with Motor-car Day, the occasion was well honoured.

Advertisers had, as usual, seized the opportunity, and almost overwhelmed the start; and among the motor-cars and the cyclists who followed the competitors down the road the merits of Somebody's Whisky, and the pills, boots, bicycles, beef-tea, and flannels of some other bodies impudently obtruded.

"What went ye out for to see?" The public undoubtedly expected to see a number of pursy, plethoric City men, attired in frock-coats and silk-hats, walking to Brighton. What they *did* see was a crowd of apparently professional pedestrians, lightly clad in the flannels and "shorts" of athletics, trailing down the road, with here and there an "unattached" walker, such as Mr. Pringle, who, fulfilling the conditions of a wager, walked down in immaculate silk hat, black coat, and spats—"immaculate," that is to say, at the start: as a chronicler adds, "things were rather different later." They were: for thirteen hours' (more or less) rain and mud can work vast changes. The day was, in fact, as unpleasant as well could be imagined, and it is said much for the sporting enthusiasm of the countryside that the whole length of the road to Brighton was so crowded with spectators that it resembled a thronged City thoroughfare.

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It said still more for the pluck and endurance of those who undertook the walk that of the ninety-nine starters no fewer than seventy-eight finished within the thirteen hours' limit qualifying them for the commemorative medal. G. D. Nicholas, the favourite, heavily backed by sportsmen, led from the beginning, making the pace at the rate of six miles an hour. He reached Streatham, six miles, in 59 mins.

And then a craze for walking to Brighton set in. On June 6th the butchers of Smithfield Market walked, and doubtless, among the many other class-races, the bakers, and the candlestick-makers as well, and the proprietors of baked-potato cans and the roadmen, and indeed the Lord alone knows who not. Of the sixty butchers, who had a much more favourable day than the stockbrokers, the winner, H. F. Otway, covered the distance in 9 hrs. 21 mins. 1½ secs., thus beating Broad by some 9 minutes.

Whether the dairymen of London ever executed their proposed daring feat of walking to Brighton, each trundling an empty churn, does not appear; but it seems likely that many a fantastic person walked down carrying an empty head. A German, one Anton Hauslian, even set out on the journey pushing a perambulator containing his wife and six-year-old daughter; and on June 16th an American, a Miss Florence, an eighteen-year-old music-hall equilibrist, started to "walk" the distance on a globe. She used for the purpose two globes, each made of wood covered with sheepskin, and having a diameter of 26 in.; one weighing 20 lb., for uphill work; the other weighing 75 lb., for levels and descents. Starting at an early hour on June 16th, and "walking" ten hours a day, she reached the Aquarium at the unearthly hour of 2.40 on the morning of the 21st.

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THE STOCK EXCHANGE WALK: E. F. BROAD AT HORLEY.

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Those who could not rehearse the epic flights of these fifty-two miles walked shorter distances; and, while the craze lasted, not only did the "midinettes" of Paris take the walking mania severely, but the waitresses of various London teashops performed ten-mile wonders.

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MORE
PEDESTRIANISM

On June 20th the gigantic "go-as-you-please" walking or running match to Brighton organised by the *Evening News* took place, in that dismal weather so generally associated, whatever the season of the year, with sport on the Brighton Road. Two hundred and thirty-eight competitors had entered, but only ninety actually faced the starter at 5 o'clock a.m. They were a very miscellaneous concourse of professional and amateur "peds"; some with training and others with no discoverable athletic qualifications at all; some mere boys, many middle-aged, one in his fifty-second year, and even one octogenarian of eighty-five. Among them was a negro, F. W. Craig, known to the music-halls by the poetic name of the "Coffee Cooler"; and labouring men, ostlers, and mechanics of every type were of the number. It was as complete a contrast from the Stock Exchange band as could be well imagined.

The wide difference in age, and the fitness and unfitness of the many competitors, resulted in the race being won by the foremost while the rearmost were struggling fifteen miles behind. The intrepid octogenarian was still wearily plodding on, twenty miles from Brighton, six hours after the winner, Len Hurst, had reached the Aquarium in the record time—26 mins. 18 secs. better than Randall's best of May 6th, 1899—of 6 hrs. 32 mins. Some amazing figures were set up by the more youthful and incautious, who reached Croydon, 9½ miles, in 54 mins., but were eventually worn down by those who were wise enough to save themselves for the later stages.

In the following August Miss M. Foster repeated her ride of July 12th, 1897, and cycled to Brighton and back, on this occasion, with motor-pacing, reducing her former record to 5 hrs. 33 mins. 8 secs.

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MISS M. FOSTER, PACED BY MOTOR-BICYCLE,
PASSING COULSDON.

PEDESTRIAN
RECORDS

On November 7th the Surrey Walking Club's Brighton and back match was won by H. W. Horton, in 20 hrs. 31 mins. 53 secs., disposing of Butler's best of October 31st, 1902, by a margin of 1 hr. 4 mins. 34 secs.

With 1904 a decline in Brighton Road sport set in, for it was memorable only for the Blackheath and Ranelagh Harriers' inter-club walk to Brighton of April 9th. But that was indeed a memorable event, for T. E. Hammond then abolished Butler's remaining record, of 8 hrs. 43 mins. 16 secs. for the single trip, and replaced it by his own of 8 hrs. 26 mins. 57½ secs.

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Even the efforts of cyclists seem to for a time have spent themselves, for 1905 witnessed only the new unpaced record made July 19th by R. Shirley, who cycled there and back in 5 hrs. 22 mins. 5 secs., thus shearing off a mere 8 mins. 5 secs. from Green's performance of so long as three years before. What the future may have in store none may be so hardy as to prophesy. Finality has a way of ever receding into the infinite, and when the unpaced cyclist shall have beaten the paced record of 5 hrs. 6 mins. 42 secs. made by Neason in 1897, other new fields will arise to be conquered. And let no one say that speed and sport on the Brighton Road have finally declined, for, as we have seen, it is abundantly easy in these days for a popular Press to "call spirits from the vasty deep," and arouse sporting enthusiasm almost to frenzy, whenever and wherever it is "worth the while."

Thus, in pedestrianism, other new times have since been set up. On September 22nd, 1906, J. Butler, in the Polytechnic Harriers' Open Walk, finished to Brighton in 8 hrs. 23 mins. 27 secs. On June 22nd, 1907, Hammond performed the double journey, London to Brighton and back, in 18 hrs. 13 mins. 37 secs. And on May 1st, 1909, he regained the single journey record by his performance of 8 hrs. 18 mins. 18 secs. On September 4th of the same year H. L. Ross further reduced the figures to 8 hrs. 11 mins. 14 secs.

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BRIGHTON ROAD RECORDS.

RIDING, DRIVING, CYCLING, RUNNING, WALKING, ETC.

Date.		Time.		
		h.	m.	s.
1784, July 25.	Prince of Wales rode horseback from the "Pavilion," Brighton, to Carlton House, London, and returned	10	0	0
	Going	4	30	0
	Returning	5	30	0
" Aug. 21.	Prince of Wales drove phaeton, three horses tandem, from Carlton House to "Pavilion"	4	30	0
1809, May.	Cornet Webster of the 10th Light Dragoons, rode horseback from Brighton to Westminster Bridge	3	20	0
1831, June 19.	The "Red Rover" coach, leaving the "Elephant			

1833, Oct.	and Castle" at 4 p.m., reached Brighton 8.21 Walter Hancock's steam-carriage "Autopsy" performed the distance between Stratford and Brighton (Halted 3 hours on road. Actual running time, 5 hrs. 30 mins.)	4 21 0	
1834, Feb. 4.	"Criterion" coach, London to Brighton	3 40 0	
1868, Mar. 20.	Benjamin B. Trench walked Kennington Church to Brighton and back (100 miles)	23 0 0	
1869, Feb. 17.	John Mayall, jun., rode a velocipede from Trafalgar Square to Brighton in "about"	12 0 0	
" Mar. 6.	W. M. and H. J. Chinnery walked from Westminster Bridge to Brighton	11 25 0	
" April 14.	C. A. Booth rode a velocipede London to Brighton	9 30 0	
1872, Sept. 19.	Amateur Bicycle Club's race, London to Brighton; won by A. Temple, riding a 44-in. wheel	5 25 0	
1873, Aug. 16.	Six members of the Surrey B.C. and six of the Middlesex B.C. rode to Brighton and back, starting from Kennington Oval at 6.1 a.m. Causton, captain of the Surrey, reached the "Albion," Brighton, in 4 hrs. 51 mins., riding a 50-in. Keen bicycle. W. Wood (Middlesex) did the 100 miles	11 8 0	
1874, April 27.	A. Howard cycled Brighton to London	4 25 0	
1878, —.	P. J. Burt walked from Westminster Clock Tower to Aquarium, Brighton	10 52 0	
1884, —.	C. L. O'Malley walked from Westminster Clock Tower to Aquarium, Brighton	9 48 0	
1886, April 10.	J. A. McIntosh walked from Westminster Clock Tower to Aquarium, Brighton	9 25 8	
1888, Jan. 1.	Horse "Ginger" trotted to Brighton	4 16 30	
1888, July 13.	James Selby drove "Old Times" coach from "Hatchett's," Piccadilly, to "Old Ship," Brighton, and back Going Returning	7 50 0 3 56 0 3 54 0	
1889, Aug. 10.	Team of four cyclists—E. J. Willis, G. L. Morris, C. W. Schafer, and S. Walker—dividing the distance between them, cycled from "Hatchett's," Piccadilly, to "Old Ship," Brighton, and back	7 36 19½	
1890, Mar. 30.	Another team—J. F. Shute, T. W. Girling, R. Wilson, and A. E. Griffin—reduced first team's time by 4 mins. 19½ secs.	7 32 0	
" April 13.	Another team—E. R. and W. Scantlebury, W. W. Arnott, and J. Blair	7 25 15	
" June.	F. W. Shorland cycled from "Hatchett's" to "Old Ship" and back ("Geared Facile" bicycle, pneumatic tyres)	7 19 0	
" July 23.	S. F. Edge cycled from "Hatchett's" to "Old Ship" and back (safety bicycle, cushion tyres)	7 2 50	
" Sept. 3.	C. A. Smith cycled from "Hatchett's" to "Old Ship" (safety bicycle, pneumatic tyres) and back	6 52 10	
" " 30.	E. P. Moorhouse cycled (tricycle) from "Hatchett's" to "Old Ship"	8 9 24	
1891, Mar. 20.	E. H. Cuthbertson walked from "Hatchett's" to "Old Ship" From Westminster Clock Tower	10 6 18 9 55 34	
1892, June 1.	S. F. Edge cycled from "Hatchett's" to "Old Ship" and back	6 51 7	
" Sept. 6.	E. Dance cycled to Brighton and back	6 49 1	
" " 9.	R. C. Nesbit cycled (high bicycle) to Brighton and back	7 42 50	
1893, Sept. 12.	S. F. Edge cycled to Brighton and back	6 13 48	
" " 17.	A. E. Knight " "	6 10 29	
" " 19.	C. A. Smith " "	6 6 46	
" " 22.	S. F. Edge " "	5 52 30	
" "	E. Dance " "	5 52 18	
" Oct. 4.	W. W. Robertson (tricycle) "	7 24 2	
1894, June 11.	W. R. Toft " "	6 21 30	
" Sept. 12.	C. G. Wridgway " "	5 35 32	
" " 20.	Miss Reynolds cycled to Brighton and back	7 48 46	

" " 22.	Miss White cycled to Brighton and back	7	6	46
1895, Sept. 26.	A. A. Chase, Brighton and back	5	34	58
" Oct. 17.	J. Parsley (tricycle)	6	18	28
" Nov.	J. H. Herbert cycled backwards to Brighton	7	45	0
1896, June 26.	E. D. Smith and C. A. Greenwood (tandem)	5	37	34
" —.	W. Franks walked from south side of Westminster Bridge to Brighton	9	7	7
" July 15.	C. G. Wridgway	5	22	33
" Sept. 15.	H. Green and W. Nelson (tandem)	5	20	35
" Nov. 14.	"Motor-car Day." A 6 h.p. Bollée motor started from Hotel Metropole, London, at 11.30 a.m., and reached Brighton at 2.25 p.m.	2	55	0
1897, April 10.	Polytechnic Harriers' walk, Westminster Clock Tower to Brighton. E. Knott	8	56	44
" May 4.	W. J. Neason cycled to Brighton and back	5	19	39
" July 12.	Miss M. Foster cycled from Hyde Park Corner to Brighton and back	6	45	9
" " 13.	Richard Palmer cycled to Brighton and back	5	9	45
" Sept. 11.	W. J. Neason cycled from London to Brighton and back	5	6	42
" Oct. 27.	P. Wheelock and G. J. Fulford (tandem)	4	54	54
" —.	L. Franks and G. Franks (tandem safety)	5	0	56
1898, Sept. 27.	E. J. Steel cycled London to Brighton and back (unpaced)	6	23	55
" " "	P. F. A. Gomme, London to Brighton and back (tricycle, unpaced)	8	11	10
1899, May 6.	South London Harriers' "go-as-you-please" running match, Westminster Clock Tower to Brighton. Won by F. D. Randall	6	58	18
" June 30.	H. Green cycled from London to Brighton and back (unpaced)	5	50	23
1902, Aug. 21.	H. Green cycled from London to Brighton and Brighton and back (unpaced)	5	30	22
" Oct. 31.	Surrey Walking Club's match, Westminster Clock Tower to Brighton and back. J. Butler	21	36	27
1903, Mar. 14.	J. Butler walked from Westminster Clock Tower to Brighton	8	43	16
" May 1.	Stock Exchange Walk, won by E. F. Broad	9	30	1
" June 20.	Running Match, Westminster Clock Tower to Brighton. Won by Len Hurst	6	32	0
" Aug.	Miss M. Foster cycled to Brighton and back (motor-paced)	5	33	8
" Nov. 7.	Surrey Walking Club's match, Westminster Clock Tower to Brighton and back. H. W. Horton	20	31	53
" —.	P. Wheelock and G. Fulford (tandem safety)	4	54	54
" —.	A. C. Gray and H. L. Dixon (tandem safety, unpaced)	5	17	18
1904, April 9.	Blackheath and Ranelagh Harriers, inter-club walk, Westminster Clock Tower to Brighton. T. E. Hammond	8	26	57½
1905, July 19.	R. Shirley, Polytechnic C.C., cycled Brighton and back (unpaced)	5	22	5
1905, —.	J. Parsley (tricycle)	6	18	28
" —.	H. S. Price (tricycle, unpaced)	6	53	5
1906, Sept. 22.	J. Butler walked to Brighton	8	23	27
" —.	S. C. Paget and M. R. Mott (tandem safety, unpaced)	5	9	20
" —.	H. Green (safety cycle, unpaced)	5	20	22
" —.	R. Shirley " "	5	15	29
" —.	L. Dralce (tricycle, unpaced)	6	24	56
" —.	J. D. Daymond " "	6	19	48
1907, June 22.	T. E. Hammond walked to Brighton and back	18	13	37
" —.	C. and A. Richards (tandem-safety, unpaced)	5	5	25
" —.	G. H. Briault and E. Ward (tandem-safety, unpaced)	4	53	48
1908, —.	G. H. Briault (tricycle, unpaced)	6	8	24
1909, May 1.	T. E. Hammond walked to Brighton	8	18	18
" Sept. 4.	H. L. Ross " "	8	11	14
" —.	Harry Green cycled Brighton and back (unpaced)	5	12	14
1910, —.	L. S. Leake and G. H. Spencer (tandem tricycle, unpaced)			

1912, June 19.	Fredk. H. Grubb cycled (paced) Brighton and back	5	59	51
" —.	E. H. and S. Hulbert (tandem tricycle, unpaced)	5	9	41
1913, —.	H. G. Cook (tricycle, unpaced)	5	42	21
		6	7	4
NOTE.—The fastest L. B. & S. C. R. train, the 5 p.m. Pulman Express from London Bridge, reaches Brighton (51 miles) at 6.0 p.m.		1	0	0

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We may now, somewhat belatedly, after recounting these varied annals of the way to Brighton, start along the road itself, coming from the south side of Westminster Bridge to Kennington.

No one scanning the grey vista of the Kennington Road would, on sight, accuse Kennington of owning a past; but, as a sheer matter of fact, it is an historic place. It is the "Chenintun" of Domesday Book, and the Cyningtun or Köningtun—the King's town—of an even earlier time. It was indeed a royal manor belonging to Canute, and the site of the palace where his son, Hardicanute, died, mad drunk, in 1042. Edward the Third annexed it to his Duchy of Cornwall, and even yet, after the vicissitudes of nine hundred years, the Prince of Wales, as Duke of Cornwall, owns house property here. Kennington Park, too, has its own sombre romance, for it was an open common until 1851, and a favourite place of execution for Surrey malefactors. Here the minor prisoners among the Scottish rebels captured by the Duke of Cumberland in the '45 were executed, those of greater consideration being beheaded on Tower Hill. It is an odd coincidence that, among the lesser titles of "Butcher Cumberland" himself was that of Earl of Kennington.

At this junction of roads, where the Kennington Road, the Kennington Park Road, the Camberwell New Road, and the Brixton Road, all pool their traffic, there stood, in times not so far removed but that some yet living can remember it, Kennington Gate, an important turnpike at any time, and one of very great traffic on Derby Day, when, I fear, the pikeman was freely bilked of his due at the hands of sportsmen, noble and ignoble. There is a view of this gate on such a day drawn by James Pollard, and published in 1839, which gives a very good idea of the amount of traffic and, incidentally, of the curious costumes of the period. You shall also find in the "Comic Almanack" for 1837 an illustration by George Cruikshank of this same place, one would say, although it is not mentioned by name, in which is an immense jostling crowd anxious to pass through, while the pikeman, having apparently been "cheeked" by the occupants of a passing vehicle, is vulgarly engaged, I grieve to state, in "taking a sight" at them. That is to say, he has, according to the poet, "Put his thumb unto his nose and spread his fingers out."

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KENNINGTON GATE Kennington Gate was swept away, with other purely Metropolitan turnpike gates, October 31st. 1865, and is now to be found in the yard of Clare's Depository at the crest of Brixton Hill. It was one of nine that barred this route from London to the sea in 1826. The others were at South End, Croydon: Foxley Hatch, or Purley Gate, which stood near Purley Corner, by the twelfth milestone, until 1853; and Frenches, 19 miles 4 furlongs from London—that is to say, just before you come into Redhill streets. Leaving Redhill behind, another gate spanned the road at Salfords, below Earlswood Common, while others were situated at Horley, Ansty Cross, Stonepound, one mile short of Clayton; and at Preston, afterwards removed to Patcham.^[6]

Not the most charitable person could lay his hand upon his heart and declare, honestly, that the church of St. Mark, Kennington, which stands at this beginning of the Brixton Road, is other than extremely hideous. Fortunately, its pagan architecture, once fondly thought to revive the glories of old Greece, is largely screened from sight by the thriving trees of its churchyard, and so nervous wayfarers are spared something of the inevitable shock.

The story of Kennington Church does not take us very far back, down the dim alleys of history, for it was built so recently as the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when it was thought possible to emulate the marble beauties of the Parthenon and other triumphs of classic architecture in plebeian brick and stone. Those materials, however, and the architects themselves, were found to be somewhat inferior to their models, and eventually the public taste became so outraged with the appalling ugliness of the pagan temples arising on every hand that at length the Gothic revival of the mid-nineteenth century set in.

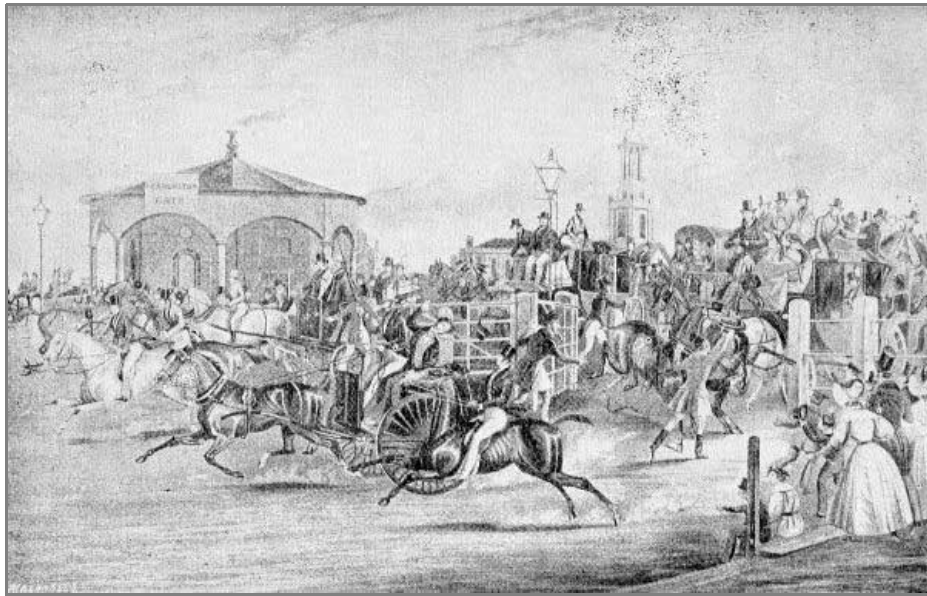
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But if its history is not long, its site has a horrid kind of historic association, for the building stands on what was a portion of Kennington Common, the exact spot where the unhappy Scottish rebels were executed in 1746, and where Jerry Abershawe, the highwayman, was hanged in 1795. The remains of the gibbet on which the bodies of some of his fellow knights

of the road were exposed were actually found when the foundations for the church were being dug out.

The origin of Kennington Church, like that of Brixton, is so singular that it is very well worth while to inquire into it. It was a direct outcome of the Napoleonic wars. England had been so long engaged in those European struggles, and was so wearied and impoverished by them, that Parliament could think of nothing better than to celebrate the peace of 1815 by voting a million and a half of money to the clergy as a "thank-offering." This sum took the shape of a church-building fund. Wages were low, work was scarce, and bread was so dear that the people were starving. That good paternal Parliament, therefore, when they asked for bread gave them stone and brick, and performed the heroic feat of picking their impoverished pockets as well. It was accomplished in this wise. There was that Lucky Bag, the million and a half sterling of the Thanksgiving Fund; but it could not be dipped into unless you gave an equal sum to that you took out, and then expended the whole on building churches. And yet it has been said that Parliament has no sense of the ridiculous! Why, it was the most stupendous of practical jokes!

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KENNINGTON GATE: DERBY DAY, 1839.
From an engraving after J. Pollard.

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HALF-
PRICE
CHURCHES

Lambeth was at that time a suburban and a greatly expanding parish, and was one of those that accepted this offer, and took what came eventually to be called Half Price Churches. It gave a large order, and took four: those of Kennington, Waterloo, Brixton, and Norwood, all ferociously hideous, and costing £15,000 apiece; the Government granting one moiety and the other being raised by a parish rate on all, without distinction of creed. The Government also remitted the usual taxes on the building materials, and in some instances further helped the people to rejoice by imposing a compulsory rate of twopence in the pound, to pay the rector or vicar. All this did more to weaken the Church of England than even a century of scandalous inefficiency:

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Abuse a man, and he may brook it,
But keep your hands out of his breeches pocket.

The major part of these grievances was adjusted by the Act of 1868, abolishing all Church rates, excepting those levied under special Acts; but the eyesores will not be redressed until the temples are pulled down and rebuilt.

Brixton appears in Domesday as "Brixistan," which in later ages became "Brixtow"; and the Brixton Road follows the line of a Roman way on which Streatham stood. Both the Domesday name of Brixton and the name of Streatham are significant, indicating their position on the stones and the street, *i.e.*, the paved thoroughfare alluded to in "Brixton causeway," marked on old suburban maps.

The Brixton Road, even down to the middle of the nineteenth century, was a pretty place. On the left-hand side, as you made for Streatham, ran the river Effra. It was a clear and sparkling stream, twelve feet wide, which, rising at Norwood, eventually found its way into the Thames at Vauxhall. Its course ran where the front gardens of the houses on that side of the road are now situated, and at that period every house was fronted by its little bridge; but the unfortunate Effra has long since been thrust underground in a sewer-pipe, and the sole reminiscence of it to be seen is the name of Effra Road, beside Brixton Church.

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The "White Horse" public-house, where the omnibuses halt, was in those times a lonely inn, neighboured only by a farm; but with the dawn of the nineteenth century a new suburb

began to spring up, where Angell Road now stands, called "Angell Town," and then the houses of Brixton Road began to arise. It is curious to note that the last of the old watchmen's wooden boxes was standing in front of Claremont Lodge, 168, Brixton Road, until about 1875.

There is little in the Lower Brixton Road that is reminiscent of the Regency, but a very great deal of early suburban comfort evident in the old mansions of the Rise and the Hill, built in days when by a "suburban villa" you did not mean a cheap house in a cheap suburban road, but—to speak in the language of auctioneers—a "commodious residence situate in its own ornamental grounds, replete with every convenience," or something in that eloquent style. For when you ascend gradually, past the Bon Marché, and come to the hill-top, you leave for awhile the shops and the continuous, conjoined houses, and arrive, past the transitional stage of semi-detachedness, at the wholly blest condition of splendid isolation in the rear of fences and carriage entrances, with gentility-balls on the gate-posts, a circular lawn in front of the house, skirted by its gravel drive, and perhaps even a stone dog on either side of the doorway! Solid comfort resides within those four-square walls, and reclines in saddle-bag armchairs, thinking complacently of big bank balances, all derived from wholesale dealing in the City, and now enjoyed, and added to, in the third and fourth generations; for these solid houses were built a century ago, or thereby. They are not beautiful, nor indeed are they ugly. Built of good yellow stock brick, grown decorously neutral-tinted with age, and sparsely relieved, it may be, with stucco pilasters picked out with raised medallions or plaster wreaths. Supremely unimaginative, admirably free from tawdry affectations of Art, unquestionably permanent—and large. They are, indeed, of such spaciousness and commodious quality that an auctioneer who all his life long has been ascribing those characteristics to houses which do not possess them feels a vast despair possess his soul when it falls to his lot to professionally describe such an one. And yet I think few ever realise the scale of these villas and their grounds until the houses themselves are pulled down and the grounds laid out as building plots for what we now understand by "villas"—a fate that has lately befallen a few. When it is realised that the site lately occupied by one of these staid mansions and its surrounding gardens will presently harbour thirty or forty little modern houses—why, then an unwonted respect is felt for it and its kind.

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BRIXTON HILL

Brixton Hill brings one up out of the valley of the Thames. The hideous church of Brixton stands on the crest of it, with the hulking monument of the Budd family, all scarabei and classic emblems of death, prominent at the angle of the roads—a *memento mori*, ever since the twenties, for travellers down the road.

Among the mouldering tombstones, whose neglect proves that grief, as well as joy and everything else human, passes, is one in shape like a biscuit-box, to John Miles Hine, who died, aged seventeen, in 1824. A verse, plainly to be read by the wayfarer along the pavements of Brixton Hill, accompanies name and date:

O Miles! the modest, learned and sincere
Will sigh for thee, whose ashes slumber here;
The youthful bard will pluck a floweret pale
From this sad turf whene'er he reads the tale,
That one so young and lovely—died—and last,
When the sun's vigour warms, or tempests rave,
Shall come in summer's bloom and winter's blast,
A Mother, to weep o'er this hopeless grave.

An inscription on another side shows us that her weeping was ended in 1837, when she died, aged fifty-two; and now there is no turf and no flowerets, and the tomb is neglected, and the cats make their midnight assignations on it when the electric trams have gone to bed and Brixton snores.

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On the right hand side, at the summit of Brixton Hill, there still remains an old windmill. It is in Cornwall Road. True, the sails of its tall black tower are gone, and the wind-power that drove the machinery is now replaced by a gas-engine; but in the old building corn is yet ground, as it has been since in 1816 John Ashby, the Quaker grandfather of the present millers, Messrs. Joshua & Bernard Ashby, built that tower. Here, unexpectedly, amid typical modern suburban developments, you enter an old-world yard, with barns, stables and cottage, pretty much the same as they were over a hundred years ago, when the mill first arose on this hill-top, and London seemed far away.

And so to Streatham, once rightly "Streatham, Surrey," in the postal address, but now merely "Streatham, S.W." A world of significance lies in that apparently simple change, which means that it is now in the London Postal District. Even so early as 1850 we read in Brayley's "History of Surrey" that "the village of Streatham is formed by an almost continuous range of villas and other respectable dwellings." Respectable! I should think so, indeed! Conceive the almost impious inadequacy of calling the Streatham Hill mansions of City magnates "respectable." As well might one style the Alps "pretty"!

But this spot was not always of such respectability, for about 1730 there stood a gibbet on Streatham Hill, by the fifth milestone, and from it hung in chains the body of one "Jack Gutteridge," a highwayman duly executed for robbing and murdering a gentleman's servant here. The place was long afterwards known as "Jack Gutteridge's Gate."



Streatham Common

Streatham—the Ham (that is to say the home, or the hamlet) on the Street—emphatically in those Saxon times when it first obtained its name, *the Street*—was probably so named to distinguish it from some other settlement situated in the mud. In that era, when hard roads were few, a paved way could be, and very often was, made to stand godfather to a place, and thus we find so many Streatleys, Stratfords, Strattons, Streets, and Stroods on the map. Those “streets” were Roman roads. The particular “street” on which Streatham stood seems to have been a Roman road which came up from the coast by Clayton, St. John’s Common, Godstone, and Caterham, a branch of the road to *Portus Adurni*, the Old Shoreham of to-day. Portions of it were discovered in 1780, on St. John’s Common, when the Brighton turnpike road through that place was under construction. It was from 18 to 20 feet wide, and composed of a bed of flints, grouted together, 8 inches thick. Narrowly avoiding Croydon, it reached Streatham by way of Waddon (where there is one of the many “Cold Harbours” associated so intimately with Roman roads) and joined the present Brighton Road midway between Croydon and Thornton Heath Pond, at what used to be Broad Green.

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DOCTOR
JOHNSON

There are no Roman remains at twentieth-century Streatham, and there are very few even of the eighteenth century. The suburbs have absorbed the village, and Dr. Johnson himself and Thrale Place are only memories. “All flesh is grass,” said the Preacher, and therefore Dr. Johnson, whose bulky figure we may put at the equivalent of a truss of hay, is of course but an historic name; but bricks and mortar last immeasurably longer than those who rear them, and his haunts might have been still extant but for the tragical nearness of Streatham to London and that “ripeness” of land for building which has abolished many a pleasant and an historic spot.

But while the broad Common of Streatham remains unfenced, the place will keep a vestige of its old-time character of roadside village. A good deal earlier than Dr. Samuel Johnson’s visits to Streatham and Thrale Place, the village had quite a rosy chance of becoming another Tunbridge Wells or Cheltenham, for in the early years of the eighteenth century it became known as a Spa, and real and imaginary invalids flocked to drink the disagreeable waters issuing from what quaint old Aubrey calls the “sower and weeping ground” by the Common. Whether the waters were too nasty, or not nasty enough, does not appear, but it is certain that the rivalry of Streatham to those other Spas was neither long-continued nor serious.

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Streatham is content to forget its waters, but the memory of Dr. Johnson will not be dropped, for if it were, no one knows to what quarter Streatham could turn for any history or traditions at all. As it is, the mind’s-eye picture is cherished of that grumbling, unwieldy figure coming down from London to Thrale’s house, to be lionised and indulged, and in return to give Mrs. Thrale a reflected glory. The lion had the manners of a bear, and, like a dancing bear, performed clumsy evolutions for buns and cakes; but he had a heart as tender as a child’s, and a simple vanity as engaging, beneath that unpromising exterior and those pompous ways. Wig awry and singed in front from his short-sighted porings over the midnight oil, clothes shabby, and linen that journeyed only at long intervals to the wash-tub, his was not the aspect of a carpet-knight, and those he met at the literary-artistic tea-table of Thrale Place murmured that he was an “original.”

He met a brilliant company over those teacups: Reynolds and Garrick, and Fanny Burney—the readiest hand at the “management” of one so difficult and intractable—and many lesser lights, and partook there of innumerable cups of tea, dispensed at that hospitable board by Mrs. Thrale. That historic teapot is still extant, and has a capacity of three quarts; specially chosen, doubtless, in view of the Doctor’s visits. Ye gods! what floods of Bohea were consumed within that house in Thrale Park!

They even seated the studious Johnson on horseback and took him hunting; and, strange to say, he does not merely seem to have only just saved himself from falling off, but is said to have acquitted himself as well as any country squire on that notable occasion.

But all things have an end, and the day was to come when Johnson should bid a last farewell to Streatham. He had broken with the widowed Mrs. Thrale on the subject of her marriage with Piozzi, and he could no longer bear to see the place. So, in one endearing touch of sentiment, he gave it good-bye, as his diary records:

“Sunday, went to church at Streatham. *Templo valedixi cum osculo.*” Thus, kissing the old porch of St. Leonard’s, the lexicographer departed with heavy heart. Two years later he died.

This Church of St. Leonard still contains the Latin epitaph he wrote to commemorate the easy virtues of his friend Henry Thrale, who died in 1781, but alterations and restorations have changed almost all else. It is, in truth, a dreadful example, externally, of the Early Compo Period, and internally of the Late Churchwarden, or Galleried, Style.

It is curious to note the learned Doctor’s indignation when asked to write an English epitaph for setting up in Westminster Abbey. The great authority on the English language, the compiler of that monumental dictionary, exclaimed that he would not desecrate its walls with an inscription in his own tongue. Thus the pedant!

There is one Latin epitaph at Streatham that reads curiously. It is on a tablet by Richard Westmacott to Frederick Howard, who *in pugna Waterlooensi occiso*. The battle of Waterloo looks strange in that garb.

But Latin is frequent here, and free. The tablets that jostle one another down the aisles are abounding in that tongue, and the little brass to an ecclesiastic, nailed upon the woodwork toward the west end of the north aisle, is not free from it. So the shade of the Doctor, if ever it revisits these scenes, might well be satisfied with the quantity, although it is not inconceivable he would cavil at the quality.

XI

Thrale Park has gone the way of all suburban estates in these days of the speculative builder. The house was pulled down so long ago as 1863, and its lands laid out in building plots. Lysons, writing of its demesne in 1792, says that “Adjoining the house is an enclosure of about 100 acres, surrounded with a shrubbery and gravel-walk of nearly two miles in circumference.” Trim villas and a suburban church now occupy the spot, and the memory of the house itself has faded away. Save for its size, the house made no brave show, being merely one of many hundreds of mansions built in the seventeenth century, of a debased classic type.

GIBBETS
BY THE
WAY

Streatham Common and Thornton Heath were still, in Johnston’s time, and indeed for long after, good places for the highwaymen and for the Dark Lurk of the less picturesque, but infinitely more dangerous, foot-pad. Law-abiding people did not care to travel them after nightfall, and when compelled to do so went escorted and armed. Ogilby, in his “Britannia” of 1675, showed the pictures of a gallows on the summit of Brixton Hill and another (a very large one) at Thornton Heath; and according to a later editor, who issued an “Ogilby Improv’d” in 1731, they still decorated the wayside. They were no doubt retained for some time longer, in the hope of affording a warning to those who robbed upon the highway.

At Norbury railway station the railway crosses over the road, and eminently respectable suburbs occupy that wayside where the foot-pads used to await the timorous traveller. Trim villas rise in hundreds, and where the extra large and permanent gallows stood, like a football goal, at what used to be a horse-pond, there is to-day the prettily-planted garden and pond of Thornton Heath, with a Jubilee fountain which has in later years been persuaded to play.

Midway between Norbury and Thornton Heath stands, or stood, Norbury Hall, the delightful park and mansion where J. W. Hobbs, ex-Mayor of Croydon, resided until he was convicted of forgery at the Central Criminal Court in March, 1893, and sentenced to twelve years penal servitude. “T 180,” as he was known when a convict, was released on licence on January 18th, 1898, and returned to his country-seat. Meanwhile, the Congregational Chapel he had presented to that sect was paid for, to remove the stigma of being his gift; just as the Communion-service presented to St. Paul’s Cathedral by the company-promoting Hooley was returned when his bankruptcy scandalised commercial circles.

The estate of Norbury Hall has since T 180’s release become “ripe for building,” and the mansion, the lake, and the beautiful grounds have been “developed” away. Soon all memory of the romantic spot will have faded.

Prominently over the sea of roofs in the valley, and above the white hillside villas of Sydenham and Gipsy Hill, rise the towers and the long body of the Crystal Palace; that bane and obsession of most view-points in South London, "for ever spoiling the view in all its compass," as Ruskin truly says in "Præterita."

I do not like the Crystal Palace. The atmosphere of the building is stuffily reminiscent of half a century's stale teas and buttered toast, and the views of it, near or distant, are very creepily and awfully like the dreadful engravings after Martin, the painter of such scriptural scenes as "Belshazzar's Feast" and horribly-conceived apocalyptic subjects from Revelation.

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STREATHAM.

At Thornton Heath—where there has been nothing in the nature of a heath for at least eighty years past—the electric trams of Croydon begin, and take you through North End into and through Croydon town, along a continuous line of houses. "Broad Green" once stood by the wayside, but nowadays the sole trace of it is the street called Broad Green Avenue. At Thornton Heath, however, there is just one little vestige of the past left, in "Colliers' Water Lane." The old farmhouse of Colliers' Water, reputed haunt of the phenomenally ubiquitous Dick Turpin, was demolished in 1897. Turpin probably never knew it, and the secret staircase it possessed was no doubt intended to hide fugitives much more respectable than highwaymen.

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The name of that lane is now the only reminder of the time when Croydon was a veritable Black Country.

The "colliers of Croydon," whose black trade gave such employment to seventeenth-century wits, had no connection with what our ancestors of very recent times still called "sea-coal"—that is to say, coal shipped from Newcastle and brought round by water, in days before railways. The Croydon coal was charcoal, made from the wood of the dense forests that once overspread the counties of Surrey and Sussex, and was supplied very largely to London from the fifteenth century down to the beginning of the nineteenth.

Grimes, the collier of Croydon, first made the Croydon colliers famous. We are not to suppose that his name was really Grimes: that was probably a part of the wit already hinted at. He was a master collier, who in the time of Edward the Sixth made charcoal on so large a scale that the smoke and the grime of it became offensive to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury in his palace of Croydon, who made an unsuccessful attempt to abolish the kilns. I think we may sympathise with his Grace and his soiled lawn-sleeves.

We first find Croydon mentioned in A.D. 962, when it was "Crogdoene." In Domesday Book it is "Croindene." Whether the name means "crooked vale," "chalk vale," or "town of the cross," I will not pretend to say, and he would be rash who did. The ancient history of the place is bound up with the archbishopric of Canterbury, for the manor was given by the Conqueror to Lanfranc, who is supposed to have been the founder of the palace, which still stands next the parish church, and was a residence of the Primate until 1750.

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GROWTH
OF
CROYDON

By that time Croydon had begun to grow, and not only had the old buildings become inconvenient, but a population surrounded those dignified churchmen, who, after the manner of archbishops, retired to a more secluded home. They not only fled from contact with the people, whose spiritual needs might surely have anchored them to the spot, but by the promotion of the Enclosure Act of 1797 they robbed the people of the far-spreading common lands in the parish. Croydon by that time numbered between five and six thousand inhabitants, and was thought quite a considerable place. A hundred and ten years have added a hundred and twenty-five thousand more to that considerable population, and still Croydon grows.

In those times the woodlands closely encircled the little town. In 1620 they came up to the parish church and the palace, which was then said to be a "very obscure and darke place." Archbishop Abbot "expounded" it by felling the timber. It was in those times surrounded by a moat, fed by the headspring of the Wandle; but the moat is gone, and the first few yards of the Wandle are nowadays made to flow underground.

The explorer of the Brighton Road who comes, by whatever method of progression he pleases, into Croydon, finds its busy centre at what is still called North End. The name survives long after the circumstances that conferred it have vanished into the limbo of forgotten things. It was the North end of the town, and here, on what was then a country site, the good Archbishop Whitgift founded his Hospital of the Holy Trinity in 1593. It still stands, although sorely threatened in these last few years; but it is now the one quiet and unassuming spot in a narrow, a busy, and a noisy street. Fronting the main thoroughfare, it blocks "improvement"; occupying a site grown so valuable, its destruction, and the sale of the ground for building upon, would immensely profit the good Whitgift's noble charity. What would Whitgift himself do? When we have advanced still farther into the Unknown and can communicate with the sane among the departed, instead of the idiot spirits who can do nothing better than levitate chairs and tables, rap silly messages, and play monkey-tricks—when we can ring up whom we please at the Paradise or the Inferno Exchange, as the case may be, we shall be able to ascertain the will of Pious Benefactors, and much bitterness will cease out of the land.

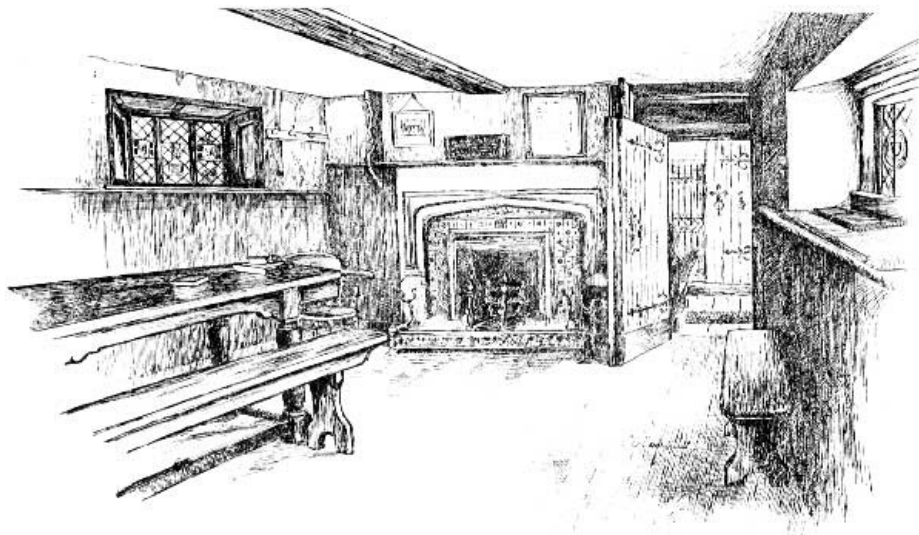
[Pg 110]

Meanwhile the old building for the time survives, and its name, "The Hospital of the Holy Trinity," inscribed high up on the wall, seems strange and reverend amid the showy shop-signs of a latter-day commerce.

There is, of course, no reason why, if widening is to take place, the *opposite* side of the street should not be set back, and, indeed, any one standing in that street will readily perceive it to be that side which should be demolished, to make a straighter and a broader thoroughfare. It is therefore quite evident that the agitation for demolishing the Hospital is unreal and artificial, and only prompted by greed for the site.

It is a solitude amid the throng, remarkable in the collegiate character of its walls of dark and aged red brick, pierced only by the doorway and as jealously as possible by the few mullioned windows. Once within the outer portal, ornamented overhead with the arms of the See of Canterbury and eloquent with the motto *Qui dat pauperi non indigebit*, the stranger has entered from a striving into a calm and equable world. It is, as old Aubrey quaintly puts it, "a handsome edifice, erected in the manner of a college, by the Right Reverend Father in God, John Whitgift, late Archbishop of Canterbury." The dainty quadrangle, set about with grass lawns and bright flowers, is formed on three sides by tiny houses of two floors, where dwell the poor brothers and sisters of this old foundation: twenty brothers and sixteen sisters, who, beside lodging, receive each £40 and £30 a year respectively. They enjoy all the advantages of the Hospital so long as of good behaviour, but "obstinate heresy, sorcery, any kinde of charmmynge, or witchcrafte" are punished by the statutes with expulsion.

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THE DINING HALL, WHITGIFT HOSPITAL.

The fourth side of the quadrangle is occupied by the Hall, the Warden's rooms, and the Chapel, all in very much the same condition as at their building. The old oak table in the Hall is dated 1614, and much of the stained glass is of sixteenth century date.

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But it is in the Warden's rooms, above, that the eye is feasted with old woodwork, ancient panelling, black with lapse of time, quaint muniment chests, curious records, and the like. These were the rooms specially reserved for his personal use during his lifetime by the pious Archbishop Whitgift.

Here is a case exhibiting the original titles to the lands on which the Hospital is built, and with which it is endowed; formidable sheets of parchment, bearing many seals, and, what does duty for one, a gold angel of Edward VI.

These are ideal rooms; rooms which delight with their unspoiled sixteenth-century air. The sun streams through the western windows over their deep embrasures, lighting up so finely the darksome woodwork into patches of brilliance that there must be those who envy the Warden his lodging, so perfect a survival of more spacious days.

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The CHAPEL, Hospital of the Holy Trinity.

A little chapel duly completes the Hospital, and here is not pomp of carving nor vanity of blazoning, for the good Archbishop, mindful of economy, would none of these. The seats and benches are contemporary with the building, and are rough-hewn. On the western wall hangs the founder's portrait, black-framed and mellow, rescued from the boys of the Whitgift schools ere quite destroyed, and on the other walls are the portrait of a lady, supposed to be the Archbishop's niece, and a ghastly representation of Death as a skeleton digging a grave. But all these things are seen but dimly, for the light is very feeble.

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XII

The High Street of Croydon really *is* high, for it occupies a ridge and looks down on the right hand on the Old Town and the valley of the Wandle, or "Wandel." The centre of Croydon has, in fact, been removed from down below, where the church and palace first arose, on the line of the old Roman road, to this ridge, where within the historic period the High Street was only a bridle-path avoiding the little town in the valley.

The High Street, incidentally the Brighton Road as well, is nowadays a very modern and commercial-looking thoroughfare, and owes that appearance, and its comparative width, to the works effected under the Croydon Improvement Act of 1890. Already Croydon, given a Mayor and Town Council in 1883, had grown so greatly that the narrow street was incapable of accommodating the traffic; while the low-lying, and in other senses low, quarter of Market Street and Middle Row offended the dignity and self-respect of the new-born Corporation. The Town Hall stood at that time in the High Street: a curious example of bastard classic architecture, built in 1808. Near by was the "Greyhound," an old coaching and posting inn, with one of those picturesque gallows signs straddling across the street, of which those of the "George" at Crawley and the "Greyhound" at Sutton are surviving examples. That of the "Cock" at Sutton disappeared in 1898, and the similar signs of the "Crown," opposite the Whitgift Hospital, and of the "King's Arms" vanished many years ago.

The "Greyhound" was the principal inn of Croydon in the old times. The first mention of it is found in 1563, the parish register of that year containing the entry, "Nicholas Vode (Wood) the son of the good wyfe of the grewond was buryed the xxix day of January." The voluminous John Taylor mentions it in 1624 as one of the two Croydon inns, and it was the headquarters of General Fairfax in 1645, when Cromwell vehemently disputed with him under its roof on the conduct of the campaign, urging more severe measures.

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Following upon the alteration, the "Greyhound" was rebuilt. Its gallows sign disappeared at the same time, when a curious point arose respecting the post supporting it on the opposite pavement. Erected in the easy-going times when such a matter was nothing more than a little friendly and neighbourly concession, the square foot of ground it occupied had by lapse of time become freehold property, and as such it was duly scheduled and purchased by the Improvements Committee. A sum of £400 was claimed for freehold and loss of advertisement, and eventually £350 was paid.

RUSKIN

I suppose there can be no two opinions about the slums cleared away under that Improvement Act; but they were very picturesque, if also very dirty and tumble-down: all nodding gables, cobblestoned roads, and winding ways. I sorrow, in the artistic way, for those slums, and in the literary way for a house swept away at the same time, sentimentally associated with John Ruskin. It was the inn kept by his maternal grandmother, and is referred to in "Præterita":

"... Of my father's ancestors I know nothing, nor of my mother's more than that my maternal grandmother was the landlady of the 'Old King's Head' in Market Street, Croydon; and I wish she were alive again, and I could paint her Simone Memmi's 'King's Head' for a sign." And he adds: "Meantime my aunt had remained in Croydon and married a baker.... My aunt lived in the little house still standing—or which was so four months ago^[7]—the fashionabest in Market Street, having actually two windows over the shop, in the second story" (*sic*).

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There are slums at Croydon even now, for Croydon is a highly civilised progressive place, and slums and slum populations are the exclusive products of civilisation and progress, and a very severe indictment of them. But they are new slums; those poverty-stricken districts created *ad hoc*, which seem more hopeless than the ancient purlieus, and appear to be as inevitable to and as inseparable from modern great towns as a hem to a handkerchief.

The old quarter of Croydon began to fall into the slum condition at about the period of Croydon's first expansion, when the οἱ πολλοί impinged too closely upon the archiepiscopal precincts, and their Graces, neglecting their obvious duty in the manner customary to Graces spiritual and temporal, retired to the congenial privacy of Addington.

Here stands the magnificent parish church of Croydon; its noble tower of the Perpendicular period, its body of the same style, but a restoration, after the melancholy havoc caused by the great fire of 1867. It is one of the few really satisfactory works of Sir Gilbert Scott; successful because he was obliged to forget his own particular fads and to reproduce exactly what had been destroyed. Another marvellous replica is the elaborate monument of Archbishop Whitgift, copied exactly from pictures of that utterly destroyed in the fire. Archbishop Sheldon's monument, however, still remains in its mutilated condition, with a scarred and horrible face calculated to afflict the nervous and to be remembered in their dreams.

The vicars of Croydon have in the long past been a varied kind. The Reverend William Clewer, who held the living from 1660 until 1684, when he was ejected, was a "smiter," an extortioner, and a criminal; but Roland Phillips, a predecessor by some two hundred years, was something of a seer. Preaching in 1497, he declared that "we" (the Roman Catholics) "must root out printing, or printing will root out us." Already, in the twenty years of its existence, it had undermined superstition, and was presently to root out the priests, even as he foresaw.

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THE
ARCHBISHOP'S
PALACE

Unquestionably the sight best worth seeing in Croydon is that next-door neighbour of the Church, the Archbishop's Palace. Comparatively few are those who see it, because it is just a little way off the road and is private property and shown only by favour and courtesy. When the Archbishops deserted the place it was sold under the Act of Parliament of 1780 and became the factory of a calico-printer and a laundry. Some portions were demolished, the moat was filled up, the "minnows and the springs of Wandel" of which Ruskin speaks, were moved on, and mean little streets quartered the ground immediately adjoining. But, although all those facts are very grim and grey, it remains true that the old palace is a place very well worth seeing.

It was again sold in 1887, and purchased by the Duke of Newcastle, who made it over to the so-called "Kilburn Sisters," who maintain it as a girls' school. I do not know, nor seek to inquire, by what right, or with what object, the "Sisters" who conduct the school affect the dress of Roman Catholics, while professing the tenets of the Church of England; but under their rule the historic building has been well treated, and the chapel and other portions repaired, with every care for their interesting antiquities, under the eyes of expert and jealous anti-restorers. The Great Hall, chief feature of the place, still maintains its fifteenth century chestnut hammerbeam roof and armorial corbels; the Long Gallery, where Queen Elizabeth danced, the State bedroom where she slept, the Guard Room, quarters of the Archbishops' bodyguard, are all existing; and the Chapel, with oaken bench-ends bearing

the sculptured arms of Laud, of Juxon, and others, and the Archbishops' pew, has lately been brought back to decent condition. Here, too, is the exquisite oaken gallery at the western end, known as "Queen Elizabeth's Pew."

That imperious queen and indefatigable tourist paid several visits to Croydon Palace, and her characteristic insolence and freedom of speech were let loose upon the unoffending wife of Archbishop Parker when she took her leave. "Madam," she said, "I may not call you; mistress I am ashamed to call you; and so I know not what to call you; but, however, I thank you." It seems evident that the daughter of Henry the Eighth had, despite her Protestantism, an historic preference for a celibate clergy.

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XIII

Down amid what remains of the old town is a street oddly named "Pump Pail." Its strange name causes many a visit of curiosity, but it is a common-place street, and contains neither pail nor pump, and nothing more romantic than a tin tabernacle. But this, it appears, is not an instance of things not being what they seem, for in the good old days before the modern water-supply, one of the parish pumps stood here, and from it a woman supplied a house-to-house delivery of water in pails. The explanation seems too obvious to be true, and sure enough, a variant kicks the "pail" over, and tells us that it is properly Pump Pale, the Place of the Pump, "pale" being an ancient word, much used in old law-books to indicate a district, limit of jurisdiction, and so forth.

JABEZ
BALFOUR

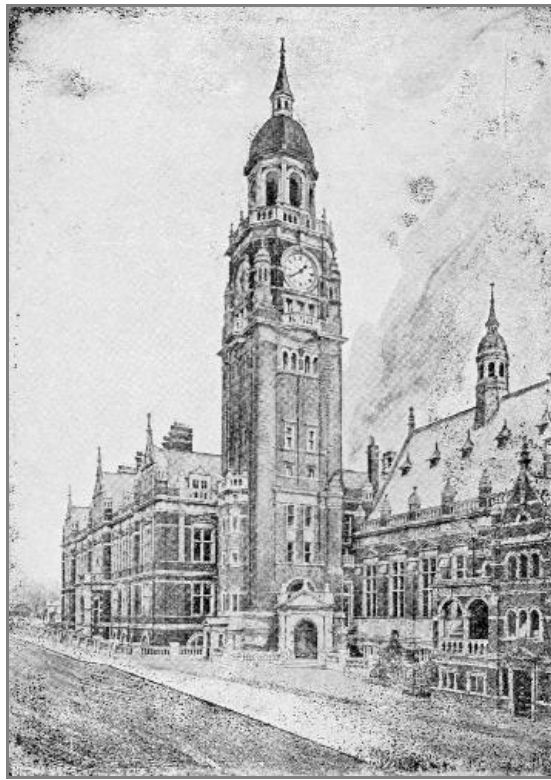
The modern side of all these things is best exemplified by the beautiful Town Hall which Croydon has provided for itself, in place of the ugly old building, demolished in 1893. It is a noble building, and stands on a site worthy of it, with broad approaches that permit good views, without which the best of buildings is designed in vain. It marks the starting point of the history of modern Croydon, and is a far cry from the old building of the bygone Local Board days, when the traffic of the High Street was regulated—or supposed to be regulated—by the Beadle, and the rates were low, and Croydon was a country town, and everything was dull and humdrum. It was a little unfortunate that the first Mayor of Croydon and Liberal Member of Parliament for Tamworth, that highly imaginative financier Jabez Spencer Balfour, should have been wanted by the police, a fugitive from justice brought back from the Argentine, and a criminal convicted of fraud as a company promoter; but accidents will happen, and the Town Council did its best, by turning his portrait face to the wall, and by subsequently (as it is reported) losing it. He was sent in 1895, a little belatedly, to fourteen years' penal servitude, and the victims of his "Liberator" frauds went into the workhouse for the most part, or died. He ceased to be V 460 on release on licence, and became again Jabez Spencer Balfour, and so died, obscurely.

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The Liberal Party in the Government had, over Jabez Balfour, one of its several narrow escapes from complete moral ruin; for Balfour was on extremely friendly terms with the members of Gladstone's ministry, 1892-94, and was within an ace of being given a Cabinet post. Let us pause to consider the odd affinity between Jabez Balfour and Trebitsch Lincoln and Liberal politics.

The Town Hall—ahem! Municipal Buildings—stands on the site of the disused and abolished Central Croydon station, and the neighbourhood of it is glimpsed afar off by the fine tower, 170 ft. in height. All the departments of the Corporation are housed under one roof, including the fine Public Library and its beautiful feature, the Braithwaite Hall. The Town Council is housed in that municipal splendour without which no civic body can nowadays deliberate in comfort, and even the vestibule is worthy of a palace. I take the following "official" description of it.

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CROYDON TOWN HALL.

“On either side of the vestibule are rooms for Porter and telephone. Beyond are the hall and principal staircase, the shafts of the columns and the pilasters of which are of a Spanish marble, a sort of jasper, called Rose d’Andalusia; the bases and skirtings are of grand antique. The capitals, architrave, cornices, handrails, etc., are of red Verona marble; the balusters, wall-lining and frieze of the entablature of alabaster, and the dado of the ground floor is gris-rouge marble. The flooring is of Roman mosaic of various marbles, purposely kept simple in design and quiet in colouring. One of the windows has the arms of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, and the other the Borough arms, in stained glass. Above the dado at the first floor level the walls are painted a delicate green tint, relieved by a powdering of C’s and Civic Crowns. The doors and their surroundings are of walnut wood.”

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THE
RATEPAYER’S
HOME


Very beautiful indeed. Now let us see the home of one of Croydon’s poorer ratepayers:

On one side of the hall are two rooms, called respectively the parlour and the kitchen. Beyond is the scullery. The walls of the staircase are covered with a sort of plaster called stucco, but closely resembling road-scrappings: the skirtings are of pitch-pine, the balusters of the same material. The floorings are of deal. The roof lets in the rain. One of the windows is broken and stuffed with rags, the others are cracked. The walls are stained a delicate green tint relieved by a film of blue mould, owing to lack of a damp-course. None of the windows close properly, the flues smoke into the rooms instead of out of the chimney-pots, the doors jam, and the surroundings are wretched beyond description.

Electric tramways now conduct along the Brighton Road to the uttermost end of the great modern borough of Croydon, at Purley Corner. Here the explorer begins to perceive, despite the densely packed houses, that he is in that “Croydene,” or crooked vale, of Saxon times from which, we are told, Croydon takes its name; and he can see also that nature, and not man, ordained in the first instance the position and direction of what is now the road to Brighton, in the bottom, alongside where the Bourne once flowed, inside the fence of Haling Park. It is, in fact, the site of a prehistoric track which led the most easy ways across the bleak downs, severally through Smitham Bottom and Caterham.

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Beside that stream ran from 1805 until about 1840 the rails of that long-forgotten pioneer of railways in these parts, the “Surrey Iron Railway.” This was a primitive line constructed for the purpose of affording cheap and quick transport for coals, bricks, and other heavy goods, originally between Wandsworth and Croydon, but extended in 1805 to Merstham, where quarries of limestone and beds of Fuller’s earth are situated.

This railway was the outcome of a project first mooted in 1799, for a canal from Wandsworth to Croydon. It was abandoned because of the injury that might have been caused to the wharves and factories already existing numerous along the course of the Wandle, and a railway substituted. The Act of Parliament was obtained in 1800, and the line constructed to Croydon in the following year, at a cost of about £27,000. It was not a railway in the modern sense, and the haulage was by horses, who dragged the clumsy waggons along at the rate of about four miles an hour. The rails, fixed upon stone blocks, were quite different from those of modern railways or tramways, being just lengths of angle-iron into which the wheels of the waggons fitted: . Thus, in contradistinction from all other railway or tramway

practice, the flanges were not on the wheels, but on the rails themselves. The very frugal object of this was to enable the waggons to travel on ordinary roads, if necessity arose.

From the point where the Wandle flows into the Thames, at Wandsworth, along the levels past Earlsfield and Garratt, the railway went in double track; continuing by Merton Abbey, Mitcham (where the present lane called "Tramway Path" marks its course) and across Mitcham Common into Croydon by way of what is now called Church Street, but was then known as "Iron Road." Thence along Southbridge Lane and the course of the Bourne, it was continued to Purley, whence it climbed Smitham Bottom and ran along the left-hand side of the Brighton Road in a cutting now partly obliterated by the deeper cutting of the South Eastern line. The ideas of those old projectors were magnificent, for they cherished a scheme of extending to Portsmouth; but the enterprise was never a financial success, and that dream was not realised. Nearly all traces of the old railway are obliterated.

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The marvel-mongers who derive the name of Waddon from "Woden" find that Haling comes from the Anglo-Saxon "halig," or holy; and therefrom have built up an imaginary picture of ancient heathen rites celebrated here. The best we can say for those theories is that they *may* be correct or they may not. Of evidence there is, of course, none whatever; and certainly it is to be feared that the inhabitants of Croydon care not one rap about it; nor even know—or knowing, are not impressed—that here, in 1624, died that great Lord High Admiral of England, Howard of Effingham. It is much more real to them that the tramcars are twopence all the way.

At the beginning of Haling Park, immediately beyond the "Swan and Sugarloaf," the Croydon toll-gate barred the road until 1865. Beyond it, all was open country. It is a very different tale to-day, now the stark chalk downs of Haling and Smitham are being covered with houses, and the once-familiar great white scar of Haling Chalk Pit is being screened behind newly raised roofs and chimney-pots.

The beginning of Purley is marked by a number of prominent public-houses, testifying to the magnificent thirst of the new suburb. You come past the "Swan and Sugarloaf" to the "Windsor Castle," the "Purley Arms," the "Red Deer," and the "Royal Oak"; and just beyond, round the corner, is the "Red Lion." At the "Royal Oak" a very disreputable and stony road goes off to the left. It looks like, and is, a derelict highway: once the main road to Godstone and East Grinstead, but now ending obscurely in a miserable modern settlement near the newly built station of Purley Oaks, so called by the Brighton Railway Company to distinguish it from the older Purley station—ex "Caterham Junction"—of the South Eastern line.

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It was here, at Purley House, or Purley Bury as it is properly styled, close by the few poor scrubby and battered remains of the once noble woodland of Purley Oaks, that John Horne Tooke, contentious partisan and stolid begetter of seditious tracts, lived—when, indeed, he was not detained within the four walls of some prison for political offences.

HORNE
TOOKE

Tooke, whose real name was Horne, was born in 1736, the son of a poulterer. At twenty-four years of age he became a clergyman, and was appointed to the living of New Brentford, which he held until 1773, when, clearly seeing how grievously he had missed his vocation, he studied for the Bar. Thereafter his life was one long series of battles, hotly contested in Parliament, in newspapers, books and pamphlets, and on platforms. He was in general a wrong-headed, as well as a hot-headed, politician; but he was sane enough to oppose the American War when King and Government were so mad as to provoke and continue it. Describing the Americans killed and wounded by the troops at Lexington and Concord as "murdered," he was the victim of a Government prosecution for libel, and was imprisoned for twelve months and fined £200. He took—no! that will not do—he "assumed" the name of Tooke in 1782, in compliment to his friend William Tooke, who then resided here in this delightful old country house of Purley. The idea seems to have been for them to live together in amity, and that William Tooke, the elder of the two, should leave his property to his friend. But quarrels arose long before that, and Horne at his friend's death received only £500, while other disputed points arose, leading to bitter law-suits.

In 1801 he was Member of Parliament for Old Sarum; but how he reconciled the representation of that rottenest of rotten boroughs with his profession of reforming Whig does not appear.

He was a many-sided man, of fierce energies and strong prejudices, but a scholar. While his political pamphlets are forgotten, his "ΕΠΙΕΑ ΠΙΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ; or, the Diversions of Purley," which is not really a book of sports, is still remembered for its philological learning. It is a disquisition on the affinities of prepositions, the relationships of conjunctions, and the intimacies of other parts of speech. His other diversions appear to have been less reputable, for he was the father of one illegitimate son and two daughters.

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His intention was to have been buried in the grounds of Purley House, but when he died, in 1812, at Wimbledon, his mortal coil was laid to rest at Ealing; and so it chanced that the vault he had constructed in his garden remained, after all, untenanted, with the unfinished epitaph:

JOHN HORNE TOOKE,
Late Proprietor and now Occupier
of this spot,

was born in June 1736,
Died in
Aged years,
Contented and Grateful.

Purley House is still standing, though considerably altered, and presents few features reminiscent of the eighteenth-century politician, and fewer still of the Puritan Bradshaw, the regicide, who once resided here. It stands in the midst of tall elms, and looks as far removed from political dissensions as may well be imagined, its trim lawn and trellised walls overgrown in summer by a tangle of greenery.

But suburban expansion has at last reached Tooke's rural retreat from political strife, and the estate is now "developed," with roads driven through and streets of villas planned, leaving only the old house and some few acres of gardens around it.

XIV

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Returning to the main road, we come, just before reaching Godstone Corner, to the site of the now-forgotten Foxley Hatch, a turnpike-gate, which stood at this point until 1865. Paying toll here "cleared," or made the traveller free of, the gates and bars to Merstham, on the main road, and as far as Wray Common, on the Reigate route, as the following copy of a contemporary turnpike-ticket, shows:

Foxley Hatch Gate
R
clears Wray common,
Gatton,
Merstham and Hooley lane
gates and bars

"To Riddlesdown, the prettiest spot in Surrey," says a sign-post on the left hand. It is not true that it is the prettiest place, but, of course (as the proverb truly says), "every eye forms its own beauty," and Riddlesdown is a Beanfeasters' Paradise, where tea-gardens, swings, and I know not what temerarious delights await the tripper who accepts the invitation, boldly displayed, "Up the Steps for Home Comforts."

MILESTONES

Here an aged milestone, in addition, proclaims it to be "XIII Miles from the Standard in Cornhill, London, 1743," and "XII Miles From Westminster Bridge." This is, doubtless, one of the stones referred to in the *London Evening Post* of September 10th, 1743, which says: "On Wednesday they began to measure the Croydon Road from the Standard in Cornhill and stake the places for erecting milestones, the inhabitants of Croydon having subscribed for 13, which 'tis thought will be carried on by the Gentlemen of Sussex."

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I know nothing of what those Sussex gentlemen did, but that the milestones *were* carried on is evident enough to all who care to explore the old Brighton Road through Godstone, up Tilburstow Hill, and so on to East Grinstead, Uckfield, and Lewes, where this fine bold series, dated 1744, is continued. What, however, has become of the series so liberally provided in 1743 by the "inhabitants of Croydon"? What indeed? Only this one, the thirteenth, remains; the other twelve, marking the distance from the "Standard" in Cornhill, in addition to Westminster Bridge, have been spirited away, and their places have been taken by others, themselves old, but chiefly marking the mileage from Whitehall and the Royal Exchange.

We all know that the Brighton Road is nowadays measured from the south side of Westminster Bridge, but it is not generally known—nor possibly known to one person in every ten thousand of those who consider they have worn the Brighton Road threadbare—that it was measured from "Westminster Bridge" before ever there was a bridge. No bridge existed across the Thames anywhere between London Bridge and Putney until November 10th, 1750, when Westminster Bridge, after being for many years under construction, was opened, superseding the ancient ferry which from time immemorial had plied between Horseferry Stairs, Westminster, and Stangate on the Surrey side, the site of the present Lambeth Bridge. The way to Brighton (and to all southern roads) lay across London Bridge.

The old stones dated 1743 and 1744, and giving the mileage from the bridge, were thus displaying that "intelligent anticipation of events" which is, perhaps, even more laudable in statesmen than in milestones—and as rarely found.

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To this day no man knoweth the distance between London and Brighton. Convention fixes the distance as 51½ miles from the south side of Westminster Bridge to the Aquarium, by the classic route; but where is he who has chained it in proper surveyorly manner? The

milestones themselves are a curious miscellany, and form an interesting study. They might profitably have been made a subject for the learned deliberations of the Pickwick Club, but the opportunity was unfortunately missed, and the world is doubtless the loser of much curious lore.

Where is he who can, offhand, describe the first milestone on the Brighton Road, and tell where it stands? It ought to be no difficult matter, for miles are not—or should not be—elastic.

It stands, in fact, on the kerb at the right-hand side of Kennington Road, between Nos. 230 and 232, just short of Lower Kennington Lane, and is a poor old battered relic, set anglewise and with the top broken away, bearing the legend, in what was once bold lettering:

. MILE
HORSEGUARDS
WHITEHALL

That is the first milestone on the Brighton Road. Sterne, were he here to-day, would shed salt tears of sentiment upon it, we may be sure. It says nothing whatever about Brighton, and is probably the one and only stone that takes the Horseguards as a datum.

About forty yards beyond this initial landmark is another “first” milestone: a tall, upstanding affair, certainly a century old, with three blank sides, and a fourth inscribed:

I
MILE
FROM
WESTMINSTER
BRIDGE

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This is followed by a long series of stones of one pattern, probably dating from 1800, marking every *half* mile. The series starts with the stone on the kerb close by the tramway office at the triangle, where the Brixton Road begins. It records on two sides “Royal Exchange 2½ miles,” and on a third “Whitehall 2 miles,” and is followed, opposite No. 158, Brixton Road, by a stone carrying on the tale by another half a mile. These silent witnesses may be traced nearly into Croydon, with sundry gaps where they have been removed. Those recording the 4th, 6th, 8½th, 9½th, and 10th miles from Whitehall are missing, the last of the series now extant being that at the corner of Broad Green Avenue, making “Whitehall 9 miles, Royal Exchange 9½ miles.” The 10th from Whitehall, ending the series, stood at the corner of the Whitgift Hospital.

These were succeeded by one of the old eighteenth-century series, marking eleven miles from Westminster Bridge and twelve from the “Standard,” but neither new nor old stone is there now, and the only one of the thirteen mentioned by the *London Evening Post* of 1743 is this near Purley Corner.

This, marking the 13th mile from the “Standard” and the 12th from Westminster Bridge is common to both routes, but is followed by the first of a new series some way along Smitham Bottom, on which Brighton is for the first time mentioned:

XIII
MILES
FROM
WESTMINSTER
BRIDGE
—
38½
MILES
TO
BRIGHTON

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The character of the lettering and the general style of this series would lead to the supposition that they are dated about 1820. There are three stones in all of this kind, the third marking 15 miles from Westminster Bridge and 36½ to Brighton, followed by a series of triangular cast-iron marks, continued through Redhill, of which the first bears the legend, “Parish of Merstham.” On the north side is “16 from Westminster Bridge, 35 to Brighton,” and on the south “35 from Brighton, 16 to Westminster Bridge.” It will be observed that in this first one of a new series half a mile is dropped, and henceforward the mileage to Brighton becomes by authority 51 miles. Like the confectioner who “didn’t make ha’porths,” the turnpike trust which erected these mile-“stones” refused to deal in half miles.

The tramway terminus at Purley Corner is now a busy place. Those are only the "old crocks" who can remember the South Eastern railway-station of Caterham Junction and the surrounding lonely downs; and to them the change to "Purley" and the appearance in the wilderness of a mushroom town, with its parade of brilliantly lighted shops, its Queen Victoria memorial, its public garden and penny-squirt fountain, and—not least—its hideous waterworks, are things for wonderment. "How strange it seems, and new," as Browning—not writing of Purley—remarks. Even the ghastly loneliness of the long straight road ascending the pass of Smitham Bottom is no more, for little villas, with dank little dungeons of gardens, line the way, and tradesmen's carts calling for orders compete with the motorists who shall kill and maim most travellers along the highway.

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The numerous railway-bridges, embankments, cuttings, and retaining-walls that disfigure the crest of Smitham Bottom are chiefly the results of latter-day activities. The first bridge is that of the Chipstead Valley Railway—now merged in the South Eastern and Chatham—from South Croydon to Chipstead and Epsom, 1897-1900, with its wayside station of "Smitham." This is immediately followed by the London, Brighton, and South Coast's station of Stoa's Nest, a transformed and transported version of the old station of the same name some distance off, and beyond it are the bridges and embankments of the same company's works of 1896-8; themselves almost inextricably confused, to the non-technical mind, with the adjoining South Eastern roadside station of Coulsdon.

The chapters of railway history which produced all this unlvely medley of engineering works are in themselves extremely interesting, and have an additional interest to those who trace the story of the Brighton Road, for they are concerned with the solution of the old problem which faced the coach proprietors—how best and quickest to reach Brighton.

RAILWAY
POLITICS

Few outside those intimately concerned with railway politics know that although the Brighton line was opened throughout in 1842, it was not until 1898 that the company owned an uninterrupted route between London and Brighton. The explanation of that singular condition of affairs is found in the curious reluctance of Parliament, two generations ago, to give any one railway company the sole control of any particular route. Few in those times thought the increase of population, and still more the increase of travelling, would be so great that competitive railways would be established to many places; and thus to sanction the making of a railway to be owned by one company throughout seemed like the granting of a perpetual monopoly.

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Following this reasoning, a break was made in the continuity of the Brighton Railway between Stoa's Nest and Redhill, a distance of five miles, and that stretch of territory given to the South Eastern Railway, with running powers only over it granted to the Brighton Company. Similarly, between Croydon and Stoa's Nest, the South Eastern had only running powers over that interval owned by the Brighton.

In 1892 and 1894, however, the Brighton Company approached Parliament and, proving the growing confusion, congestion, and loss of time at Redhill Junction, owing to this odd condition of things, obtained powers to complete that missing link by the construction of an entirely new railway between Stoa's Nest and a point just within a quarter of a mile of Earlswood Station, beyond Redhill, and also to double the existing line between East and South Croydon and Purley. The works were completed and opened for traffic in 1898, when for the first time the Brighton Railway had a complete and uninterrupted route of its own to the sea.

The hamlet of Smitham Bottom, which paradoxically stands at the top of the pass of that name, in this ancient way across the North Downs, can never have been beautiful. It was lonely when Jackson and Fewterel fought their prize-fight here, before that distinguished patron of sport the Prince of Wales and a more or less distinguished company, on June 9th, 1788; when the only edifice of "Smith-in-the-Bottom," as the sporting accounts of that time style it, appears to have been the ominous one of a gibbet. The Jackson who that day fought, and won, his first battle in the prize-ring was none other than that Bayard of the noble art, "Gentleman Jackson," afterwards the friend of Byron and of the Prince Regent himself, and subsequently landlord of the "Cock" at Sutton. On this occasion Major Hanger rewarded the victor with a bank-note from the enthusiastic Prince.

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SMITHAM

Until 1898 Smitham Bottom remained a fortuitous concourse of some twenty mean houses on a windswept natural platform, ghastly with the chalky "spoil-banks" thrown up when the South Eastern Railway engineers excavated the great cuttings in 1840; but when the three railway-stations within one mile were established that serve Smitham Bottom—the stations of Coulsdon, Stoa's Nest, and Smitham—the place, very naturally, began to grow with the magic quickness generally associated with Jonah's Gourd and Jack's Beanstalk, and now Smitham Bottom is a town. Most of the spoil-banks are gone, and those that remain are planted with quick-growing poplars; so that, if they can survive the hungry soil, there will presently be a leafy screen to the ugly railway sidings. Showy shops, all plate-glass and nightly glare of illumination, have arisen; the old "Red Lion" inn has got a new and very saucy front; and, altogether, "Smitham" has arrived. The second half of the name is now in process of being forgotten, and the only wonder is that the first part has not been changed into "Smytheham" at the very least, or that an entirely new name, something in the way of

“ville” or “park,” suited to its prospects, has not been coined. For Smitham, one can clearly see, has a Future, with a capital F, and the historian confidently expects to see the incorporation of Smitham, with Mayor, Town Council, and Town Hall, all complete.

It is here, at Marrowfat, now “Marlpit,” Lane, that the new link of the Brighton line branches off from Stoa’s Nest.^[8] One of the first trials of the engineers was the removal of three-quarters of a million cubic yards of the “spoil,” dumped down by the roadside over half a century earlier; and then followed the spanning of the Brighton Road by a girder-bridge. The line then entered the grounds of the Cane Hill Lunatic Asylum, through which it runs in a covered way, the London County Council, under whose control that institution is carried on, obtaining a clause in the Company’s Act, requiring the railway to be covered in at this point, in case the lunatics might find means of throwing themselves in front of passing trains.

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Leaving the asylum grounds, the railway re-crosses the road by a hideous skew girder bridge of 180 feet span, supported by giant piers and retaining-walls, and then crosses the deep cutting of the South Eastern, to enter a cutting of its own leading into a tunnel a mile and a quarter in length—the new Merstham tunnel—running parallel with the old tunnel of the same name through which the South Eastern Railway passes. At the southern end of this gloomy tunnel is the pretty village of Merstham, where the hillside sinks down to the level lands between that point and Redhill.

At Merstham one of the odd problems of the new line was reached, for there it had to be constructed over a network of ancient tunnels made centuries ago in the hillside—quarry-tunnels whence came much of the limestone that went towards the building of Henry VII.’s Chapel at Westminster Abbey. The old workings are still accessible to the explorer who dares the accumulation of gas in them given off by the limestone rock.

The geology of these five miles of new railway is peculiarly varied, limestone and chalk giving place suddenly to the gault of the levels, and followed again by a hillside bed of Fuller’s earth, succeeded in turn by red sand. The Fuller’s earth, resting upon a slippery substratum of gault, only required a little rain and a little disturbance to slide down and overwhelm the railway works, and retaining-walls of the heaviest and most substantial kind were necessary in the cuttings where it occurred. Tunnelling for a quarter of a mile through the sand that gives Redhill its name, the railway crosses obliquely under the South Eastern, and then joins the old Brighton line territory just before reaching Earlswood station.

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CHIPSTEAD CHURCH.

All these engineering manifestations give the old grim neighbourhood of Smitham Bottom a new grimness. The trains of the Brighton line boom, rattle, and clank overhead into the covered way, whose ventilators spout steam like some infernal laundry, and from the 80-foot deep cuttings close beside the road, steamy billows arise very weirdly. Presiding over all are the beautiful grounds and vast ranges of buildings of the Cane Hill Lunatic Asylum, housing an ever-increasing population of lunatics, now numbering some three thousand. Sometimes the quieter members of that unfortunate community are seen, being given a walk along the road, outside their bounds, and the sight and the thoughts they engender are not cheering.

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Along the road, where the walls of the cutting descend perpendicularly, is the severely common-place hamlet of Hooley, formerly Howleigh, consisting of the “Star” inn and some twenty square brick cottages. Just beyond it, where a modern Cyclists’ Rest and tea-rooms building stands to the left of the road, the first traces of the old Surrey Iron Railway, which crossed the highway here, are found, in the shallower cutting, still noticeable, although disused seventy years ago. Alders, hazels, and blackberry brambles grow on the side of it, and its bridges are ivy-grown: primroses and violets, too, grow there wondrously profuse.

And here we will, by way of interlude, turn aside, up a lane to the right hand, toward the village of Chipstead, in whose churchyard lies Sir Edward Banks, who began life in the humblest manner, working as a navvy upon this same forgotten railway, afterwards rising, as partner in the firm of Jolliffe & Banks, to be an employer of labour and contractor to the Government: in short, another Tom Brassey. All these things are recorded of him upon a memorial tablet in the church of Chipstead—a tablet which lets nothing of his worth escape you, so prolix is it.^[9]

It was while delving amid the chalk of this tramway cutting that Edward Banks first became acquainted with this village, and so charmed with it was he that he expressed a desire, when his time should come, to be laid at rest in its quiet graveyard. When he died, after a singularly successful career, his wish was carried out, and here, in this quiet spot overlooking the highway, you may see his handsome tomb, begirt with iron railings, and overshadowed with ancient trees.

The little church of Chipstead is of Norman origin, and still shows some interesting features of that period, with some unusual Early English additions that have presented architectural puzzles even to the minds of experts. Many years ago the late Mr. G. E. Street, the architect of the present Royal Courts of Justice in London, read a paper upon this building, advancing the theory that the curious pedimental windows of the chancel and the transept door were not the Saxon work they appeared to be, but were the creation of an architect of the Early English period who had a fancy for reviving Saxon features, and who was the builder and designer of a series of Surrey churches, among which is included that of Merstham.

Within the belfry here is a ring of fine bells, some of them of a respectable age, and three bearing the inscription, with variations:

“OUR HOPE IS IN THE LORD, 1595.”

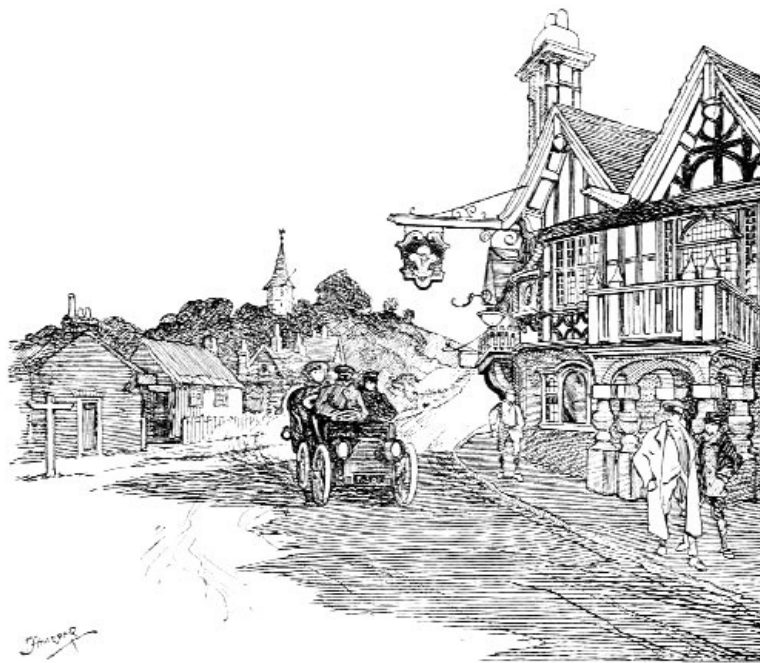
R ♫ E

From here a bye-lane leads steeply once more into the high road, which winds along the valley, sloping always towards the Weald. Down the long descent into Merstham village tall and close battalions of fir-trees lend a sombre colouring to the foreground, while “southward o’er Surrey’s pleasant hills” the evening sunlight streams in parting radiance. On the left hand as we descend are the eerie-looking blow-holes of the Merstham tunnel, which here succeeds the cutting. Great heaps of chalk, by this time partly overgrown with grass, also mark its course, and in the distance, crowned as many of them are with telegraph poles, they look by twilight curiously and awfully like so many Calvarys.

Beside the descent into Merstham was situated the terminus of the old Iron Railway, in the great excavated hollow of the Greystone lime-works, where the lime-burners still quarry the limestone and the smoke of their burning ascends day and night. The old “Hylton Arms,” down below, that served the turn of the lime-burners when they wanted to slake their thirst, has been ornately rebuilt in the modern-Elizabethan Public House Style, alongside the road, to catch the custom of the world at large, and is named the “Jolliffe Arms.” Both signs reflect the ownership of Merstham, for Jolliffe has long been the family name of the holders of the modern Barony of Hylton. Formerly “Jolly,” it was presumably too bacchanalian and not sufficiently aristocratic, and so it was changed, just as your “Smythe” was once Smith, and “Johnes” Jones.

XVI

Merstham is as pretty a village as Surrey affords, and typically English. Railways have not abated, nor these turbid times altered in any great measure, its fine air of aristocratic and old-time rusticity. At one end of its one clearly-defined street, set at an angle to the high-road, are the great ornamental gates of Merstham Park, setting their stamp of landed aristocracy upon the place. To their right is a tiny gate leading to the public right-of-way through the park, which presently crosses over the pond where rise fitfully the springs of Merstham Brook, a congener of the Kentish “Nailbournes,” and one of the many sources of the River Mole. To the marshy ground by this brook, and to its stone-quarries, the place owes its name. It was in Domesday Book “Merstán” = Mere-stan, the stone (house) by the lake.



MERSTHAM.

Beyond the brook, above the tall trees, is seen the shingled spire of the church, an Early English building dedicated to St. Catherine, not yet spoiled, despite restorations and the scraping which its original lancet windows have undergone, in misguided efforts to endue them with an air of modernity.

The church is built of that limestone or "firestone" found so freely in the neighbourhood—a famed speciality which entered largely into the building and ornamentation of Henry the Seventh's Chapel at Westminster. Those wondrously intricate and involved carvings and traceries, whose decadent Gothic delicacy is the despair of present-day architects and stone-carvers, were possible only in this stone, which, when quarried, is of exceeding softness, but afterwards, on exposure to the air, assumes a hardness equalling that of any ordinary building-stone, and has, in addition, the merit of resisting fire, whence its name. From the softer layers comes that article of domestic use, the "hearthstone," used to whiten London hearths and doorsteps.

Merstham Church is even yet of considerable interest. It contains brasses to the Newdegate, Best, and Elmebrygge families, one recording in black letter:

**"Hic iacet Johēsi Elmebrygge, armiger, qui obiit biij die
f februarij; A^o Dñi M^occcc^olxxij, et Isabella uxor eius
quae fuit filia Nichi Jamys quondā Maioris et
Alderman London: quae obiit bij^o die Septembris
A^o Dñi M^occcc^olxxij^o et Annae uxor ei: quae
fuit filia Johēs Prophete Gentilman quae obiit ...
A^o Dñi M^occc^o ... quorū animabus
ppicietur Deus."**

The date of the second wife's death has never been inserted, showing that the brass was engraved and set during her lifetime, as in so many other examples of monumental brasses throughout the country. The figure of John Elmebrygge is wanting, it having been at some time torn from its matrix, but above his figure's indent remains a label inscribed *Sancta Trinitas*, and from the mouths of the remaining figures issue labels inscribed *Unus Deus—Miserere nobis*. Beneath is a group of seven daughters; the group of four sons is long since lost.

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A transitional Norman font of grey Sussex marble remains at the western end of the church, and on an altar-tomb in the southern chapel are the poor remains of an ancient stone figure of the fifteenth century, presumably the effigy of a merchant civilian, as he is represented wearing the *gypcière*. It is hacked out of almost all significance at the hands of some iconoclasts; their chisel-marks are even now distinct and bear witness against the Puritan rage that defaced and buried it face downwards, the reverse side of the stone forming part of the chapel pavement until 1861, when it was discovered during the restoration of the church.

Before that restoration this was an interior of Georgian high pews. Among them the "squire's parlour" was pre-eminent, with its fireplace, its well-carpeted floor, its chairs and tables: a snuggerly wherein that good man snored unobserved, or partook critically of his snuff during the parson's discreet discourse. But now the parlour is gone, and the squire must slumber, if he can, with the other sinners.

In Merstham village, just beyond the "Feathers" inn, stood Merstham toll-gate, followed by that of Gatton, at Gatton Point, a mile distant, where the old route through Reigate goes off to the right, and the new—the seven miles between Gatton Point and Povey Cross, through Redhill—continues, straight as an arrow, ahead. The way is bordered on the right hand by Gatton Park, a spot the country folk rightly describe as an "old armshunt place." The history of Gatton, in truth, goes back to immemorial times, and has no beginning: for where history thins out and becomes a mere scatter of disjointed scraps purporting to be facts, tradition carries back the tale into a very fog of legend and conjecture. It was "Gatone" when the Domesday survey was made: the Saxon "Geat-ton," the town in the "gate," passage, or road through the North Downs, just as Reigate is the Saxon "Rige-geat," the road over the ridge. The "ton" or town in the place-name does not necessarily mean what we moderns would understand by the word, and here doubtless indicated an enclosed, hedged, or walled-in tract of land redeemed and cultivated out of the then encompassing wilderness of the Downs.

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Who first broke the land of Gatton to the plough? History and tradition are silent. No voice speaks out of the grave of the centuries. But both Reigate and Gatton are older than Anglo-Saxon times, for a Roman way, itself following the course of an even earlier savage trail, came up out of the stodgy clay of Holmesdale, over the chalky hills, to Streatham and London. It was a branch of the road leading from *Portus Adurni*—the present Old Shoreham, on the river Adur—and doubtless, in the long centuries of Romano-British civilisation, it was bordered here and there by settlements and villas. Prominent among them was Gatton. There can scarcely be a doubt of it, for, although Roman relics are not found here now, Camden, writing in the time of Henry the Eighth, tells of "Roman Coynes digged forth of the Ground." It was ever a desirable site, for here unfailing springs well out of the chalk and give an abounding fertility, while another road—the ancient Pilgrims' Way—running west and east, crossed the other highway, and thus gave ready communication on every side.

Gatton has, within the historic period, never been more than a manorial park, but an unexplained something, like the echo of a vanished greatness, has caused strangely unmerited honours to be granted it. Who shall say what induced Henry the Sixth in 1451 to make this mere country park a Parliamentary borough, returning two members? There must have been some adequate reason or excuse, even if only the one of its ancient renown; for there *must* always be an apology of sorts for corruption; no job is jobbed without at least some shadowy semblance of legality. But no one will ever pluck out the heart of its mystery.

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THE
ROTTEN
BOROUGH

A Parliamentary borough Gatton remained until 1832, when the first Reform Act swept away the representation of it, together with that of many another "rotten borough." Rightly had Cobbett termed it "a very rascally spot of earth," for certainly from 1541, when Sir Roger Copley owned the property and was the sole elector of the place, the election was a scandalous farce, and never at any time did the "burgesses" exceed twenty. They were always tenants of the lord of the manor and the mere marionettes that danced to his will.

Gatton, returning its two members to Parliament, as of old, was early in the nineteenth century purchased by Mark Wood, Esq., who was soon after created a Baronet. It was then recorded that in this borough there were six houses and only one freeholder: Sir Mark Wood himself. The other five houses he let by the week; and thus, paying the taxes, he was the only elector of the two representatives. At the election, he and his son Mark were the candidates, and the father duly elected himself and his son! Scandalous, no doubt; but those members must have represented the constituency better than could those of a larger electorate.

The landowner who possessed such a pocket-borough as this, and could send whomsoever he liked to Parliament, to vote as he wished, was, of course, a very important personage. His opposition was a serious matter to Governments; his support of the highest value, both politically and in a pecuniary sense; and thus place, honours, riches, could be, and were, secured. The manor of Gatton actually, in the cynical recognition of these things, was valued at twice its worth without that Parliamentary representation, and Lord Monson, who purchased the property in 1830, gave as much as £100,000 for it, solely as an investment in jobbery and corruption, by which he hoped, in the course of shrewd political wire-pulling, to obtain a cent per cent return.

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GATTON HALL AND "TOWN HALL."

He was a humorist of a cynical turn who built in front of the great mansion in midst of the park a "Town Hall" for the non-existent town, and inscribed on the urn which stands by this freakish, temple-like structure the motto, satirical in this setting, "*Salus populi suprema lex esto*," together with other sardonic Latin, to the effect that no votes sullied by bribery should be given.

Less than two years after Lord Monson's purchase of the estate, Reform had destroyed the value of Gattton Park, for it was disfranchised. We can only wonder that he did not claim compensation for the abolition of his "vested interests."

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MUSTARD

There is a remarkable appropriateness in Gattton Hall being designed in the classic style, for its marble hall and Corinthian hexastyle colonnade no doubt revive the glories of the Roman villa of sixteen hundred years ago. It is magnificence itself, being indeed designed something after the manner of the Vatican at Rome, and decorated with rare and costly marbles and frescoes; but perhaps, to any one less than an emperor or a pope, a little unhomely and uncomfortable to live in. Since 1888 it has been the seat of Sir Jeremiah Colman, of Colman's Mustard, created a Baronet, 1907:

Mother, get it if you're able,
See the trade mark on the label,
Colman's Mustard is the Best—[Advt.],

as some unlaurelled bard of the grocery trade once sang, in deathless verse.

XVII

Half a mile short of what is now Redhill town, there once stood yet another toll-gate. "Frenches" Gate took its title from the old manor on which it stood, and the manor itself probably derived its name from the unenclosed or free (*franche*) land of which it was wholly or largely composed.

Redhill town has not existed long enough to have accumulated any history. When the more direct route was made this way, avoiding Reigate, in 1816, Redhill was—a hill. The hill is still here, as the cyclist well enough knows, and we will take on trust that red gravel whence its name comes; but since that time the town of Redhill, now numbering some 16,000 persons, has come into existence, and when we speak of Redhill we mean—not the height up which the coaches laboured, but a certain commonplace town lying at the foot of it, with a busy railway junction where there are always plenty of trains, but never the one you want, and quite a number of public institutions of the asylum and reformatory type.

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The railway junction has, of course, created Redhill town, which is really in the parish of Reigate. When the land began to be built upon, in the '40's, it was called "Warwick Town," after the then Countess of Warwick, the landowner, and the names of a road and a public-house still bear witness to that somewhat lickspittle method of nomenclature. But there is, and can be, only one possible Warwick in England, and "Redhill" this "Warwick Town," by

natural selection, became.

There could have been no more certain method of inviting the most odious of comparisons than that of naming Redhill after the fine old feudal town of Warwick, which first arose beneath the protecting walls of its ancient castle. Either town has an origin typical of its era, and both *look* their history and circumstances. Redhill, within the memory of those still living, sprang up around a railway platform, and the only object that may be said to frown in it is the great gas-holder, built on absolutely the most prominent and desirable site in the whole town; and that not only frowns, but stinks as well, and is therefore not a desirable substitute for a castle keep. Here, at any rate, "Mrs. Partington's" remark that "comparisons is odorous" would be altogether in order.

Prominent above all other buildings in the town, in the backward view from that godfatherly hill, is the huge St. Anne's Asylum, housing between four and five hundred children of the poor.

"The Cutting" through the brow of the hill, enclosed on either side by high brick walls, leads presently upon Redhill and Earlswood Commons, where movement is unrestrained and free as air, and the vision is bounded only by Leith Hill in one direction and the blue haze of distance in another.

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It is Holmesdale—the vale of holms, or oak woods—upon which you gaze from here; that

Vale of Holmesdall
Never wonne, ne never shall,

as the braggart old couplet has it, in allusion to the defeat and slaughter of the invading Danes at Ockley A.D. 851.

In one of its periodic funks, the War Office, terrified for the safety of London more than for that of Holmesdale, purchased land on this hill-top for the erection of a fort, and—in a burst of confidence—sold it again. The time is probably near when the War Office, like another "Sister Anne," will "see somebody coming," when this or another site will be re-purchased at a much enhanced, or scare, price.

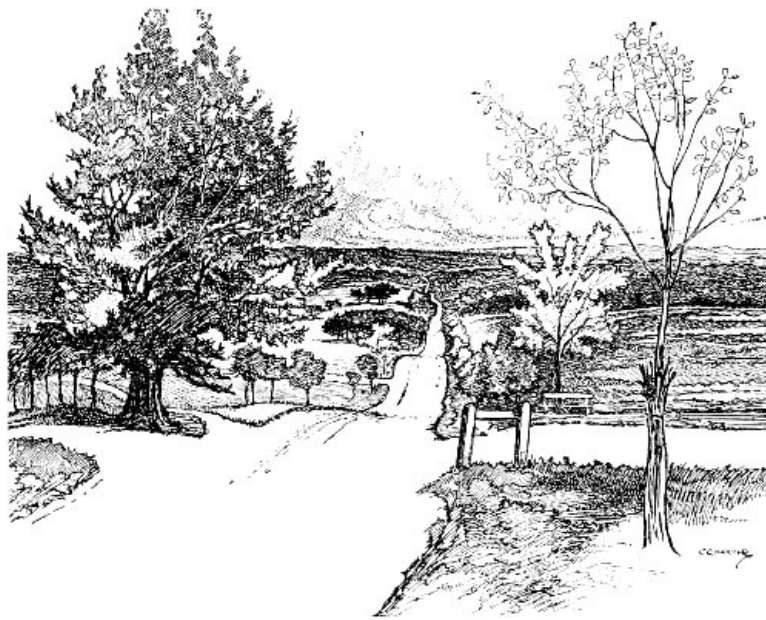
EARLSWOOD

Earlswood Common is a welcome change after Redhill. It gives sensations of elbow-room, of freedom and vastness, not so much from its own size as from the expanse of that view across the Weald of Surrey and Sussex. The road across Earlswood Common is an almost perfect "switchback," as the cyclist who is not met with a southerly wind will discover. You can see it from this view-point, going undulating away until in the dim woody perspective it seems to end in some tangled and trackless forest, so densely grown do the trees look from this distance.

It was here, at a wayside inn, that the present historian fell in with a Sussex peasant of the ancient and vanishing kind.

He was drinking from a tankard of the pea-soup which they call ale in these parts, sitting the while upon a bench whose like is usually found outside old country inns. Ruddy of face, with clean-shaven lips and chin, his grizzled beard kept rigidly upon his wrinkled dewlap, his hands gnarled and twisted with toil and rheumatism, he sat there in smock-frock and gaiters, as typical a countryman as ever on London stage brought the scent of the hay across the footlights. That smock of his, the "round frock" of Sussex parlance, was worked about the yoke of it, fore and aft, with many and curious devices, whose patterns, though he, and she who worked them, knew it not, derived from centuries of tradition and precept, had been handed down from Saxon times, aye, and before them, to the present day, when, their significance lost, they excite merely a mild wonder at their oddity and complication.

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THE SWITCHBACK ROAD, EARLSWOOD COMMON.

He was, it seemed, a “hedger and ditcher,” and his leathern gauntlets and billhook lay beside him on the ale-house bench.

“I’ve worked at this sort o’ thing,” said he, in conversation, “for the last twenty year. Hard work? yes, onaccountable hard, and small pay for’t too. Two and twopence a day I gets, an’ works from seven o’mornings to half-past five in the afternoon for that. You’ll be gettin’ more than two and twopence a day when you’re at work, I reckon.”

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To evade that remark by an opinion that a country life was preferable to existence in a town was easy. The old man agreed with the proposition, for he had visited London, and “a dirty place it was, sure-ly.” Also he had been atop of the Monument, to the Tower, and to the resort he called “Madame Two Swords”: places that Londoners generally leave to provincials. Thus, the country cousin within our gates is more learned in the stock sights of town than townfolk themselves.

From here the road slopes gently to the Weald past Pettridge Wood and Salfords, where a tributary of the Mole crosses, and where the last turnpike-gate was abolished, with cheers and a hip-hip-hooray, at the midnight of October 31st, 1881.

At Horley, the left-hand road, forming an alternative way to Brighton by Worth, Balcombe, and Wivelsfield, touches the outskirts of Thunderfield Castle.

THUNDERFIELD CASTLE Thunderfield Castle should—if tremendous names go for aught—be a stupendous keep of the Torquilstone type, but it is, sad to say, nothing of the kind, being merely a flat circular grassy space, approached over the Mole and doubly islanded by two concentric moats. It stands upon the estate of Harrowslea—“Harsley,” as the countryfolk call it—supposed to have once belonged to King Harold.

There seems to be no doubt whatever that the Anglo-Saxons *did* name the place after the god Thunor. It was known by that name in the time of Alfred the Great, but no one knows what it was like then; nor, for that matter, what the appearance of it was when the Norman de Clares owned it. It seems never to have been a castle built of stone, but an adaptation of the primitive savage idea of surrounding a position with water and palisading it. Thunderfield was a veritable stronghold of the woods and bogs, and the defenders of it were like Hereward the Wake, who could often remain a “passive resister” and see the invaders struggling with the sloughs, the odds overwhelmingly in favour of the forces of nature.

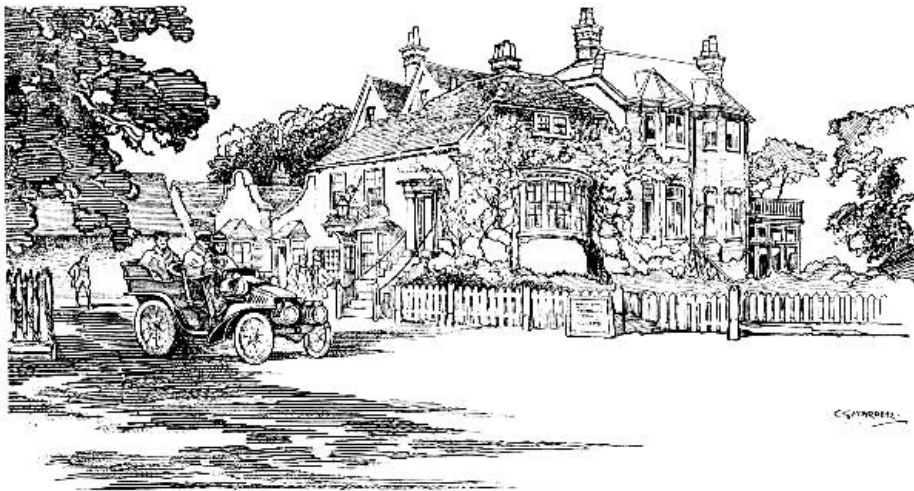
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THUNDERFIELD CASTLE.

The history of Thunderfield will never be written, but if a guess may be hazarded, the final catastrophe, which was the prime cause of the half-burnt timbers and the many human remains discovered here long ago, was a storming of the place by the forces of the neighbouring de Warennes, ancient and bitter enemies of the de Clares; probably in the wars of the twelfth century, between King Stephen and the Empress Maud.

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THE "CHEQUERS," HORLEY.

It is an eminently undesirable situation for a residence, however suitable it may have been for defence; and the Saxons who occupied it must have known what rheumatism is. Dark woods now enclose the place, and clattering wildfowl form its garrison.

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The "Chequers" at Horley is not quite half way to Brighton, but in default of another it is the halfway house. Its name derives from the old chequy, or chessboard, arms of the Earls of Warren, chequered in gold and blue. They were not only great personages in this vale, but enjoyed in mediæval times the right of licensing ale-houses: hence the many "Chequers" throughout the country. The newer portions of the house are typically suburban, but the old-world front, with its quaint portico, the whole shaded by a group of ancient oaks, remains untouched.

Horley—the "Hurle" of old maps—is very scattered: a piece here, another there, and the parish church standing isolated at the extreme southern end of the wide parish. It is situated on an extensive flat, reeking like a sponge with the waters of the Mole, but, although so entirely undesirable a place, is under exploitation for building purposes. A stranger first arriving at Horley late at night, and seeing its long lines of lighted streets radiating in several directions, would think he had come to a town; but morning would show him that long perspectives of gas-lamps do not necessarily mean houses to correspond. Evidently those responsible for the lamps expect a coming expansion of Horley; but that expectation is not very likely to be realised.

Much of Horley belongs to Christ's Hospital, which is said to be under obligation to educate two children of poor widows, in return for the great tithes long since bequeathed to it, and is additionally accused of having consistently betrayed that trust.

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THE "SIX BELLS," HORLEY.

The parish church, chiefly of the Early English and Decorated periods of Gothic architecture, contains some brasses and a poor old stone effigy of a bygone lord of the manor, broken-nosed and chipped, but not without its interest. The double-headed eagle on his shield is still prominent, and the crowded detail of his mailed armour and the lacings of his surcoat are as distinct as when sculptured six centuries ago. He wears the little misericorde, or dagger, at his belt, the "merciful" instrument with which gentle knights finished off their wounded enemies in the chivalric days of old.

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Many years ago some person unknown stole the old churchwardens' account-book, dating from the sixteenth century. After many wanderings in the land, it was at length purchased at a second-hand bookseller's and presented to the British Museum, in which mausoleum of literature, in the Department of Manuscripts, it is now to be found. It contains a curious item, showing that even in the rigid times that produced the great Puritan upheaval, congregations were not unapt for irreverence. Thus in 1632 "John Ansty is chosen by the consent of y^e minister and parishioners to see y^t y^e younge men and boyes behave themselves decently in y^e church in time of divine service and sermon, and he is to have for his paines ij^s."

The nearest neighbour to the church is the almost equally ancient "Six Bells" inn, which took its title from the ring of bells in the church tower. Since 1839, however, when two bells were added, there have been eight in the belfry.

The stranger, foregathering with the rustics at the "Six Bells," and missing the old houses that once stood near the church and have been replaced by new, very quickly has his regrets for them cut short by those matter-of-fact villagers, who declare that "ye wooden tark so ef ye had to live in un." A typical rustic had "comic brown-titus" acquired in one of those damp old cottages, and has "felt funny" ever since. One with difficulty resisted the suggestion that, if he could be as funny as he felt, he should set up for a humorist, and oust some of the dull dogs who pose as jesters.

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Opposite Horley church is Gatwick Park, since 1892 converted into a racecourse, with a railway station of its own. Less than a mile below it, at Povey Cross, the Sutton and Reigate route to Brighton joins the main road.

XVIII

The Sutton and Reigate route to Brighton, instead of branching off along the Brixton Road, pursues a straight undeviating course down the Clapham Road, through Balham and Upper and Lower Tooting, where it turns sharply to the left at the Broadway, and in half a mile right again, at Amen Corner. Thence it goes, by Figg's Marsh and Mitcham, to Sutton.

It is not before Mitcham is reached that, in these latter days, the pilgrim is conscious of travelling the road to anywhere at all. It is all modern "street"—and streets, to this commentator at least, have a strong resemblance to rows of dog-kennels. They are places where citizens live on the chain. They lack the charm of obviously leading elsewhere: and even although electric tramcars speed multitudinously along them, to some near or distant terminus, they do but arrive there at other streets.

Mitcham is at present beyond these brick and mortar tentacles, and is grouped not unpicturesquely about a village green and along the road to the Wandle. Pleasant, ruddy-faced seventeenth and eighteenth-century mansions look upon that green, notable in the early days of Surrey cricket; and away at the further end of it is the vast flat of Mitcham Common, that dreary, long-drawn expanse which is at once the best illustration of eternity and of a Shakespearian "blasted heath" that can readily be thought of.

"Mitcham lavender" brings fragrant memories, and indeed the only thing that serves to render the weary length of Mitcham Common at all endurable is the scent of it, borne on the breeze from the distillery, midway across: the distillery that no one would remember to be Jakson's, except for the eccentricity of spelling the name.

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This by the way; for one does not cross Mitcham Common to reach Sutton. But there is, altogether, a sweet savour pervading Mitcham, a scent of flowers that will not be spoiled even by the linoleum works, which are apt to be offensive; for Mitcham is still a place where those sweet-smelling and other "economic" plants, lavender, mint, chamomile, aniseed, peppermint, rosemary, and liquorice, are grown for distillation. The place owes this distinction to no mere chance, but to its peculiar black mould, found to be exceptionally suited to this culture.

Folk-rhymes are often uncomplimentary, and that which praises Sutton for its mutton and Cheam for juicy beef, is more severe than one cares to quote on Epsom; and, altogether ignoring the mingled fragrances of Mitcham, declares it the place "for a thief." We need not, however, take the matter seriously: the rhymester was only at his wit's end for a rhyme to "beef."

Mitcham station, beside the road, is a curious example of what a railway company can do in its rare moments of economy; for it is an early nineteenth-century villa converted to railway purposes by the process of cutting a hole through the centre. It is a sore puzzle to a stranger in a hurry.

SUTTON

From Mitcham one ascends a hill past the woodland estate of Ravensbury, crossing the abundantly-exploited Wandle; and then, along a still rural road, to the modern town of Sutton.

On the fringe of that town, at the discreet "residential" suburb of Benhilton, is a scenic surprise in the way of a deep cutting in the hilly road. Spanned by a footbridge, graced with trees, and neighboured by the old "Angel" inn, "Angel Bridge," as it is called, is a pretty spot. The rise thus cut through was once known as Been Hill, and on that basis was fantastically reared the name of Benhilton. One cannot but admire the ingenuity of it.

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THE "COCK," SUTTON 1789.

From an aquatint after Rowlandson.

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"Sutton for mutton": so ran the old-time rhyme. The reason of that ancient repute is found in the downs in whose lap the place is situated; those thymy downs that afforded such splendid pasturage for sheep. Sutton Common is gone, enclosed in 1810, but the downs remain; and

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yet that rhyme has lost its reason, and Sutton is no longer celebrated for anything above its fellow towns. Even the famous "Cock" is gone—that old coaching-inn kept by the ex-pugilist, "Gentleman Jackson." Long threatened, it was at last demolished in 1898, and with the old house went the equally famous sign that straddled across the road. The similar sign of the "Greyhound" still remains; the last relic of narrower streets and times more spacious.

Leaving Sutton "town," as we call it nowadays, the road proceeds to climb steadily uphill to the modern suburb of "Belmont," where stands an old, but very well cared-for, milestone setting forth that it is distant "XIII. miles from the Standard in Cornhill, London, 1745," from the Royal Exchange the same distance, and from Whitehall twelve miles and a half. The neighbourhood is now particularly respectable, but I grieve to say that the spot is marked on the maps of 1796 as "Little Hell," which seems to indicate that the character of the people living in the three houses apparently then standing here would not bear close inspection. With the "Angel" placed at one end, and this vestibule into Inferno situated at the other, Sutton seems to have been accorded exceptional privileges.

"Cold Blow," which succeeds to Little Hell, is a tremendous transition, and well deserves its name, perched as it is on the shivery, bare, and windy heights that lead to Burgh Heath and Banstead Downs "famous," says an annotated map of 1716, "for its wholesome Air, once prescribed by Physicians as the Patients' last refuge." The feudal-looking wrought-iron gates newly built beside the road here, surmounted by a gorgeous shield of arms crested with a helmet and enveloped in mantling, form the entrance to Nork Park, the seat of one of the Colman family, who have mustered very strongly in Surrey of late years.

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At the right-hand turning, in midst of a group of fir-trees, stands the prehistoric tumulus known to the rustics as "Tumble Beacon." "Tumble" is probably the rural version of "tumulus."

Beyond this point, on a site now occupied by a cottage, stood the once-famed "Tangier" inn. Originally a private residence, the seat of Admiral Buckle,^[10] who named it "Tangier," in memory of his cruises on the north coast of Africa, it became a house of call for coaches, and especially for post-chaises. Here, we are told, George the Fourth invariably halted for a glass of Miss Jeal's celebrated "alderbury"—that is to say elderberry-wine—"roking hot," to keep out the piercing cold, and Miss Jeal brought it forth with her own fair hands. Other travellers, who were merely persons, and not personages, had to be content with the less fair hands of the waiter.

The "Tangier" was burnt down about 1874. For some years after its destruction a platform that led from the house to the roadside, on a level with the floors of the coaches and post-chaises, survived; but only the cellars now remain. The woods at the back are, however, still locally known as "Tangier Woods."

Burgh Heath, at the summit of these downs, is a curious place called usually "Borough" Heath: it is in Domesday "Berge." As its name not obscurely hints, and the half-obliterated barrows show, it is a place of ancient habitation and sepulture; but nowadays it is chiefly remarkable for the descendants of the original squatters of about a century ago, who, braving the cold of these heights, settled on what was then an exceedingly lonely heath and stole whatever land they pleased. That was the origin of the hamlet of Burgh Heath. The descendants of those filibusters have in most cases rebuilt the original hovels, but it is still a somewhat forlorn place, made sordid by the tumbledown pigsties and sheds on the heath in which they have acquired a prescriptive freehold.

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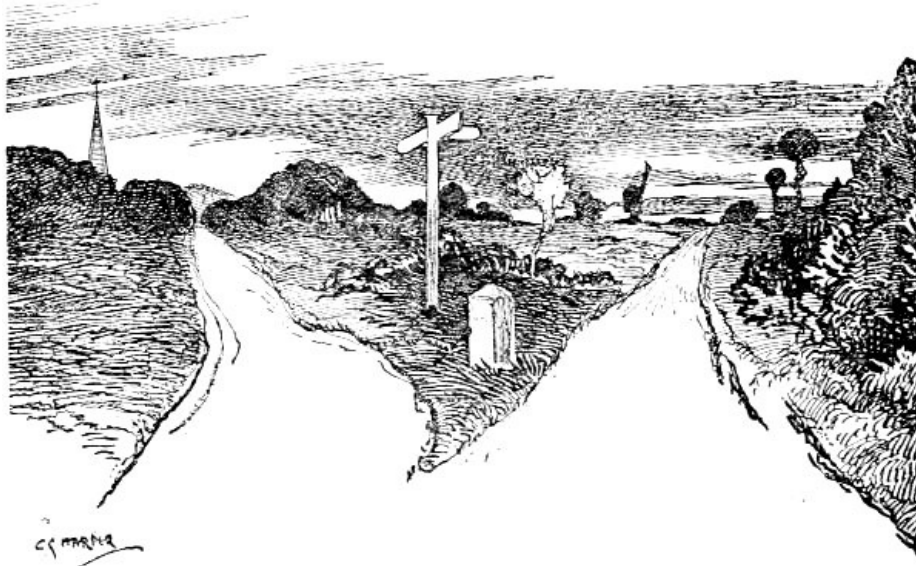
RUSSELL
OF
KILLOWEN

Passing Lion Bottom, or Wilderness Bottom, we come to Tadworth Corner, past the grounds of Tadworth Court, late the seat of Lord Russell of Killowen, better known as Sir Charles Russell. He was created a Baron in 1894, on his becoming Lord Chief Justice: but the title was—at his own desire—limited to a life-peerage, and consequently at his death in 1900 became extinct. At Tadworth, in the horsey neighbourhood of Epsom, he was as much at home as in the Law Courts, and neither so judicial nor restrained, as those who remember his peppery temper and the oburgatory language of his "Here, you, where the — — are you — — coming to, you — —, you!" will admit. There seems, in fact, an especial fitness in his residence on this Regency Road, for his speech was the speech rather of that, than of the more mealy mouthed Victorian, period.

At Tadworth Court, where the ways divide, and a most picturesque view of long roads, dark fir trees, and a weird-looking windmill unfolds itself, formerly stood a toll-gate. A signpost directs on the right to Headley and Walton, and on the left to Reigate and Redhill, and a battered milestone which no one can read stands at the foot of it. The church spire on the left is that of Kingswood.

From London to Reigate, through Sutton, is, according to Cobbett, "about as villainous a tract as England contains. The soil is a mixture of gravel and clay, with big yellow stones in it, sure sign of really bad land." The greater part of this is, of course, now covered by the suburbs of "the Wen," as Cobbett delighted to style London; and it is both unknown to and immaterial to most people what manner of soil their houses are built on; but the truth of Cobbett's observations is seen readily enough here, on these warrens, which owe their preservation as open spaces to that mixture, worthless to the farmer, and not worth the stealing in those times when land could be stolen with impunity.

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KINGSWOOD WARREN.

REIGATE
HILL

Past the modern village of Kingswood, almost lost in, and certainly entirely overshadowed by, the wild heaths of Walton and Kingswood Warren the road comes at last to Reigate Hill, where, immediately past the suspension bridge that overhangs the cutting, it tilts very suddenly and alarmingly over the edge of the Downs. The suddenness of it makes the stranger gasp with astonishment; the beauty of that wonderful view from this very rim and edge of the hills compels his admiration. It is the climax up to which he has been toiling all these long, ascending gradients from Sutton; and it is worth the toil.

The old writers of road-books do more justice to this view than any modern writer dare. To them it was "a remarkably bold elevation, from whence is a delightful prospect of the South Downs in Sussex. But near the road, which is scooped out of the hill, the declivity is so steep and abrupt that the spectator cannot help being struck with terror, though softened by admiration. The Sublime and the Beautiful are here perfectly united; imagination is fully exercised, and the mind delighted."

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How would this person have described the Alps?

A milestone just short of this drop—one of a series starting at Sutton Downs and dealing in fractions of miles—says, very curtly: "London 19, Sutton 8, Brighton $32\frac{5}{8}$, Reigate $1\frac{3}{8}$."



THE SUSPENSION BRIDGE, REIGATE HILL.

The suspension bridge, carried overhead, spanning the cutting made through the crest of the hill, is known to the rustics—who will always invent simple English words of one syllable, whenever possible, to take the place of difficult three-syllabled words of Latin extraction—as the "Chain Pier." It does not, as almost invariably is the case with these bridges, connect

two portions of an estate severed by the cutting, but forms part of a public path which was cut through. It is very well worth the traveller's attention, for it joins the severed ends of no less a road than the ancient Pilgrims' Way, and is a very curious instance of modernity helping to preserve antiquity. The Way is clearly seen above, coming from Box Hill as a hollow road, crossing the bridge and going in the direction of Gatton Park, through a wood of beech trees.

The roadway of Reigate Hill is made to wind circuitously, in an attempt to mitigate the severity of the gradient; but for all the care taken, it remains one of the steepest hills in England, and is one of the very few provided with granite kerbs intended to ease the pull-up for horses. None but a very special fool among cyclists in the old days attempted to ride down the hill; and many, even in these times of more efficient brakes, prefer to walk down. Only motor-cars, like the Gadarene swine of the Scriptures, "rushing violently down a steep place," attempt it; and those who are best acquainted with the hill live in daily expectation of a recklessly driven car spilling over the rim.

XIX

Reigate town lies at the foot, sheltered under this great shoulder of the downs: a little town of considerable antiquity and inconsiderable story. It is mentioned in Domesday Book, but under the now forgotten name of "Cherchefelle," and did not begin to assume the name of Reigate until nearly two hundred years later.

Churchfield was at the time of the Norman conquest a manor in the possession of the widowed Queen, and was probably little more than an enclosed farm and manor-house situated in a clearing of the Holmesdale woods; but it had not long passed into the hands of William de Varennes, who had married Gundrada the Conqueror's daughter and was one of his most intimate henchmen at the Battle of Hastings, before it became the site of the formidable Reigate, or Holm, Castle. The manors granted to William de Varennes comprehended nearly the whole of Surrey, and included others in Sussex, Yorkshire, and Norfolk. Such were the splendours that fell to the son-in-law and the companion-in-arms of a successful invader. He became somewhat Anglicised under the title of Earl of Warenne, and the ancestor of a line of seven Earls, of whom the last died in 1347, when the family became firstly merged in that of the Fitzalans, then of the Mowbrays, and finally in that of the alternately absorbent and fissiparous Howards.

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Holm, or Reigate Castle, had little history of the warlike sort. It frowned terribly upon its sandstone ridge, but tamely submitted in 1216 when the foreign allies of the discontented subjects of King John approached: and when the seventh Earl, who had murdered Baron de la Zouche at Westminster, was attacked here by Prince Edward, he promptly made a grovelling surrender and paid the fine of 12,000 marks (equal to £24,000) demanded. In 1550, when Lambarde wrote, only "the ruyns and rubbishe of an old castle which some call Homesdale" were left, and even those were cleared away by order of the Parliament in 1648. Now, after many centuries of change in ownership, the hill on which that fortress stood is contemptuously tunnelled, to give a more direct road through the town.

REIGATE
HILL

In this connection, Cobbett, coming to Reigate through Sutton in 1823, is highly entertaining. The tunnel was then being made, and it did not please him. "They are," he vociferates, "in order to save a few hundred yards' length of road, cutting through a hill. They have lowered a little hill on the London side of Sutton. Thus is the money of the country actually thrown away: the produce of labour is taken from the industrious and given to the idlers. Mark the process; the town of Brighton, in Sussex, fifty miles from the Wen, is on the seaside, and is thought by the stockjobbers to afford a *salubrious air*. It is so situated that a coach which leaves it not very early in the morning reaches London by noon; and, starting to go back in two hours and a half afterwards, reaches Brighton not very late at night. Great parcels of stockjobbers stay at Brighton with the women and children. They skip backward and forward on the coaches, and actually carry on stock-jobbing in Change Alley, though they reside at Brighton. The place is, besides, a great resort with the *whiskered gentry*. There are not less than about twenty coaches that leave the Wen every day for this place; and, there being three or four different roads, there is a great rivalry for the custom. This sets the people to work to shorten and to level the roads; and here you see hundreds of men and horses constantly at work to make pleasant and quick travelling for the Jews and jobbers. The Jews and jobbers pay the turnpikes, to be sure; but they get the money from the land and labourers. They drain these, from John o' Groat's House to the Land's End, and they lay out some of the money on the Brighton roads."

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Cobbett is dead, and the Reform Act is an old story, but the Jews and the jobbers swarm more than ever.

THE
CASTLE

The tunnel through the castle hill was made by consent of the then owner, Earl Somers, as a

tablet informs all who care to know. The entrance towards the town is faced with white brick, in a style supposed to be Norman. Above are the grounds, now public, where a would-be mediæval gateway, erected in 1777, quite illegitimately impresses many innocents, and below is the so-called Barons' Cave, an ancient excavation in the soft sandstone where the Barons are (quite falsely) said to have assembled in conclave before forcing their will upon King John at Runnymede. Unhappily for that tradition, the then Earl Warenne was a supporter of the tyrant king, and any reforming barons he might possibly have entertained at Reigate Castle would have been kept on the chain as enemies, and treated to the cold comfort of bread and water.

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THE TUNNEL, REIGATE.

There are deeper depths than these castle caves, for dungeon-like excavations exist beside and underneath the tunnel; but they are not so very terrible, exuding as they do strong vinous and spirituous odours, proving that the only prisoners languishing there are hogsheds and kilderkins.

Reigate, dropping its intermediate name of Cherchefelle on Ridgigate, became variously Reigate, Riggate, and Reygate in the thirteenth century. The name obviously indicates a gate—that is to say, a road—over the ridge of the downs; presumably that road upon which Gatton, the “gate-town,” stood. Strongly supporting this theory, Wray Common and Park are found on the line of road between Reigate and Gatton. If we select “Reygate” from the many variants of the place-name, and place it beside that of Wray Common, we get at once the phonetic link.

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When Reigate lost the two members it sent to Parliament, it lost much more than the mere distinction of being represented. It lost free drinks and money to jingle in its pockets, for it was openly corrupt—in fact, neither better nor worse than most other constituencies. What else, when you consider it, could be expected when the franchise was so limited that the electors were a mere handful, and votes by consequence were individually valuable. In short, the best safeguard against bribery is to so increase the electorate that the purchase of votes is beyond the capacity of a candidate's pockets.

Modern circumstances have, indeed, so wrought with country towns of the Reigate type that they are merely the devitalised spooks of their former selves, and Reigate would long ere this have been on the verge of extinction, had it not been within the revivifying influence of the suburban area. It is due to the Wen, as Cobbett would call it, that Reigate is still at once so old-world and so prosperous. It is surrounded by semi-suburban estates, but is in its centre still the Reigate of that time when the coaches came through, when royalty and nobility lunched at the still-existing “White Hart,” and when fifty miles made a long day's journey.

Reigate town was the property, almost exclusively, of the late Lady Henry Somerset. By direction of her heir, Somers Somerset, it was, in October, 1921, sold at auction in several lots.

There are some in Reigate who dwell in imagination upon old times. Not by any means the

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obvious people, the clergy and the usual kidney; they find existence there a vast yawn. The antiquarian taste revealed itself by chance to the present inquirer in the person of a policeman on duty by the tunnel, who knew all about Reigate's one industry of digging silver-sand, who could speak of the "Swan" inn having once possessed a gallows sign that spanned the road, and knew all about the red brick market-house or town hall being built in 1708 on the site of a pilgrims' chapel dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket. He could tell, too, that wonderful man, of a bygone militant parson of Reigate, who, warming to some dispute, took off his coat in the street and saying, "Lie there, divinity," handsomely thrashed his antagonist. "I like them old antidotes," said my constable; and so do I.

XX

REIGATE
CHURCH

Reigate Church has been many times restored, and every time its monuments have suffered a general post; so that scarce an one remains where it was originally placed, and very few are complete.

The most remarkable monument of all, after having been removed from its original place in the chancel to the belfry, has now utterly vanished. It is no excuse that its ever having been placed in the church at all was a scandal and an outrage, for, being there, it should have been preserved, as in some sort an illustration of bygone social conditions. But the usual obliterators of history and of records made their usual clean sweep, and it has disappeared.

It was a heart-shaped monument, inscribed, "Near this place lieth Edward Bird, Esq., Gent. Dyed the 23rd of February, 1718/9. His age 26," and was surmounted by a half-length portrait effigy of him in armour, with a full flowing wig; a truncheon in his right hand, and in the background a number of military trophies.

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The especial scandal attaching to the fact of this monument ever having been placed in the church arises from the fact that Edward Bird was hanged for murder. Some particulars are gleaned from one of the many catchpenny leaflets issued at the time by the Ordinary—that is to say, the Chaplain—of Newgate, who was never averse from adding to his official salary by writing the "last dying words" of interesting criminals; but his flaring front pages were, at the best—like the contents bills of modern sensational evening newspapers—indifferent honest, and his account of Bird is meagre.

It seems, collating this and other authorities, that this interesting young man had been given the advantages of "a Christian and Gentlemanlike Education," which in this case means that he had been a Westminster boy under the renowned Dr. Busby, and afterwards a scholar at Eton. This finished Christian then became a lieutenant in the Marquis of Winchester's Horse. He married when twenty years of age, and his wife died a year later, when he plunged into a dissolute life in London.

One evening in September, 1718, he was driven "with a woman in a coach and a bottle of Champain wine" to a "bagnio" in Silver Street, Golden Square, and there "had the misfortune" to run a waiter, one Samuel Loxton, through the body with his sword. "G—d d—n you, I will murder you all," he is reported to have threatened, and a farrier of Putney, called at the subsequent trial, deposed to having once been run through the body by this martial spirit.

Greatly to the surprise of himself and friends, Lieutenant Bird was not only arrested and tried, but found guilty and sentenced to death. The historian of these things is surprised, too; for gentlemen of fashion were in those times very much what German officers became—privileged murderers—and waiters were earthworms. I cannot understand it at all.

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AN EXIT
AT
TYBURN

At any rate, Edward Bird took it ill and declined the ministrations of the Ordinary, saying "He was very busy, was to write Letters, expected Company, and such-like frivolous Excuses." The Ordinary does not tell us in so many words, but we may suspect that the condemned man told him to go to the Devil. He was, indeed, an altogether hardened sinner, and would not even go to chapel, and was so poor a sportsman that he tried to do the rabble of Tyburn out of the entertaining spectacle of his execution, taking poison and stabbing himself in several places on the eve of that interesting event.

He seems to have been afraid of hurting himself, for he died neither of poison nor of wounds, and was duly taken to Tyburn in a handsome mourning coach, accompanied by his mother, by other Christians and gentlemen, by the Ordinary, and three other clergymen, to see him duly across the threshold into the other world. He stood an hour under the fatal tree, talking with his mother, and no hour of his life could have sped so swiftly. Then the chaplain sang a penitential psalm and the other divines prayed, and the candidate for the rope was made to repeat the Apostles' Creed, after which he called for a glass of wine. No wine being available, he took a pinch of snuff, bowed, and said, "Gentlemen, I wish your health," and then "was ty'd up, turned off, and bled very much at the Mouth or Nose, or

both.”

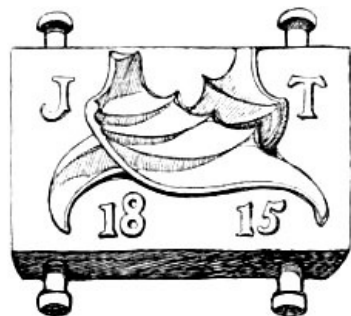
The mystery of his being accorded a monument in Reigate Church is explained when we learn that his uncle, the Rev. John Bird, was both patron and vicar. A further inscription beyond that already quoted was once in existence, censuring the judge and jury who condemned him. Traditions long survived of his mother, on every anniversary of his execution, passing the whole day in the church, sorrowing.

The date of the monument’s disappearance is not clearly established, but old inhabitants of Reigate have recollections of the laughing workmen, during the rebuilding of the tower in 1874, throwing marble figures out of the windows, and speak of the fragments being buried in the churchyard.

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For the rest, Reigate Church is only of mild interest; excepting, indeed, the parish library, housed over the vestry, containing among its seventeen hundred books many of great interest and variety. The collection was begun in 1701 by the then vicar.

A little-known fact about Reigate is that the notorious Eugene Aram for a year lived here, in a cottage oddly named “Upper Repentance.”



TABLET: BATSWING COTTAGES.

The road leaving Reigate, by Parkgate and the Priory, passes a couple of cottages not in themselves remarkable but bearing a curious device intended to represent bats’ wings, and inscribed “J. T. 1815.” They are known as “Batswing Cottages,” but what induced “J. T.” to call them so, and even who he was, seems to be unknown.

Over the rise of Cockshut Hill and through a wooded cutting the road comes to Woodhatch and the “Old Angel” inn, where the turnpike-gate stood, and where a much earlier gate, indicated in the place-name, existed.

Woodhatch, the gate into the woods, illustrates the ancient times when the De Warennes held the great Reigate, or Holm, Castle and much of the woodlands of Holmesdale. The name of

Earlswood, significant to modern ears only of the great idiot asylum there, derives from them. Place-names down in these levels ending in “wood” recall the dense forests that once overspread Holmesdale: Ewood, Norwood, Charlwood, Hartswood, Hookwood—vast glades of oak and beech, where the hogs roamed and the prototypes of Gyrth, the swineherd, tended them, in the consideration of the Norman lords of little more value than the pigs they herded. The scattered “leys”—Horley, Crawley, Kennersley, and the like—allude to the clearings or pastures amid the forest. Many other entrances into those old bosquets may be traced on the map—Tilgate, Fay Gate, Monk’s Gate and Newdigate among them; but the woodlands have long been nothing but memories, and fields and meadows, flatness itself, stretch away on either side of the level road to, and beyond, Horley, with the river Mole sluggishly winding through them—a scene not unbeautiful in its placid way.

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The little hamlet of Sidlow Bridge, with its modern church, built in 1862, marks the point where the road, instead of continuing straight, along the flat, went winding off away to the right, seeking a route secure from the Mole floods, up Black Horse Hill. When the route was changed, and the “Black Horse” inn, by consequence, lost its custom, a newer inn of the same name was built at the cross-roads in the levels; and there it stands to-day, just before one reaches Povey Cross and the junction of routes.

LOWFIELD
HEATH

Povey Cross, of whose name no man knows the derivation, leads direct past the tiny Kimberham, or Timberham, Bridge over the Mole, to Lowfield Heath, referred to in what, for some inscrutable reason, are styled the “Statutes at Large,” as “Lovell” Heath. The place is in these days a modern hamlet, and the heath, in a strict sense, is to seek. It has been improved away by enclosure and cultivation, utterly and without remorse; but the flat, low-lying land remains eloquent of the past, and accounts for the humorous error of some old maps which style it “Level Heath.”

The whole district, from Salfords, through Horley, to near Crawley, is at times little more than an inland sea, for here ooze and crawl the many tributaries of the Mole. The memorable floods of October, 1891, following upon a wet summer and autumnal weeks of rain, swelled the countless arteries of the Mole, and the highways became rushing torrents. Along the nut-brown flood floated the remaining apples from drowned orchards, with trees, bushes, and hurdles. Postmen on their rounds were reduced to wading, and thence to horseback and wheeled conveyances; and Horley churchyard was flooded.

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The Floods at Horley.

A repetition of this state of things occurred in February, 1897, when the dedication of the new organ in the church of Lowfield Heath could not be performed, the roads being four feet under water.

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XXI

CHARLWOOD The traveller does not see the true inwardness of the Weald from the hard high road. Turn we, then at Povey Cross for a rustic interlude into the byways, making for Charlwood and Ifield.

Few are those who find themselves in these lonely spots. Hundreds, nay, thousands are continually passing almost within hail of their slumberous sites, and have been passing for hundreds of years, yet they and their inhabitants doze on, and ever and again some cyclist or pedestrian blunders upon them by a fortunate accident, as, one may say, some unconscious Livingstone or Speke, discovering an unknown Happy Valley, and disturbs with a little ripple of modernity their uneventful calm.

The emptiness of the three miles or so of main road between Povey Cross and Crawley is well exchanged for these devious ways leading along the valley of the Mole. A prettier picture than that of Charlwood Church, seen from the village street through a framing of two severely-cropped elms forming an archway across the road, can rarely be seen in these home counties, and the church itself is an ancient building of the eleventh century, with later windows, inserted when the Norman gloom of its interior assorted less admirably with a more enlightened time. In plan cruciform, with central tower and double nave, it is of an unusual type of village church, and presents many features of interest to the archæologist, whose attention will immediately be arrested by the fragments of an immense and hideous fresco seen on the south wall. A late brass, now mural, in the chancel, dated 1553, is for Nicholas Sander and Alys his wife. These Sanders, or, as they spelled their name variously, Saunder, held for many years the manor of Charlwood, and from an early period those of Purley and Sandersted—Sander's-stead, or dwelling. Sir Thomas Saunder, Remembrancer of the Exchequer in Queen Elizabeth's time, bequeathed his estates to his son, who sold the reversion of Purley in 1580. Members of the family, now farmers, still live in the parish where, in happier times, they ruled.

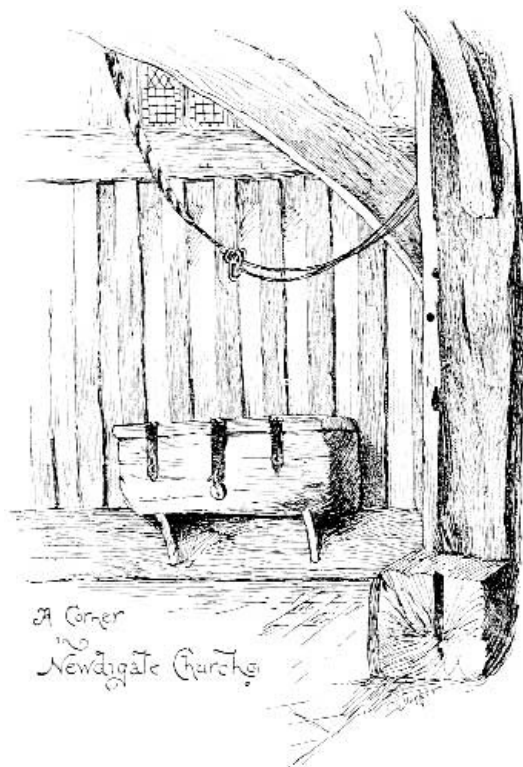
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Charlwood.

NEWDIGATE One of the prettiest spots in Surrey is the tiny village of Newdigate, on a secluded winding road leading past a picturesque little inn, the "Surrey Oaks," fronted with aged trees. It is, perhaps, the loneliest place in the county, and is worth visiting, if only for a peep into the curious timber belfry of its little church, which contains a hoary chest, contrived out of a solid block of oak, and fastened with three ancient padlocks.

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A Corner in Newdigate Church.

But few go so far, and indeed the way by Ifield has its own interests and attractions. Here a primitive pavement or causeway is very noticeable, formed of a row of large flat blocks of stone, along the grassy margins of the ditches. This is a survival (not altogether without its uses, even now) of the time when

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Essex full of good housewyfes,
 Middlesex full of stryves,
 Kentshire hoot as fire,

was a saying with plenty of current meaning to it. In those days the Wealden clay asserted itself so unpleasantly that stepping-stones for pedestrians were necessities.

The stones themselves have a particular interest, coming as they did from local quarries long since closed. They are of two varieties: one of a yellowish-grey; the other, greatly resembling Purbeck marble, fossiliferous and of a light bluish tint. Charlwood Church itself is built of Charlwood stone.

Ifield is just within the Sussex boundary. A beautiful way to it lies through the park, in whose woody drives the oak and holly most do grow. It has been remarked of this part of the Weald, that its soil is particularly favourable to the growth of the oak. Cobbett indeed says, "It is a county where, strictly speaking, only three things will grow well—grass, wheat, and oak-trees;" and it was long a belief that Sussex alone could furnish forth oak sufficient to build all the navies of Europe, notwithstanding the ravages among the forests made by the forges and furnaces.

IFIELD In the church of St. Margaret, Ifield, whose somewhat unprepossessing exterior gives no hint of its inward beauty, is an oaken screen made from the wood of an old tree which stood for centuries on the Brighton Road at Lowfield Heath, where the boundary lines of Surrey and Sussex meet, and was cut down in the "forties." The tree was known far and wide as "County Oak."

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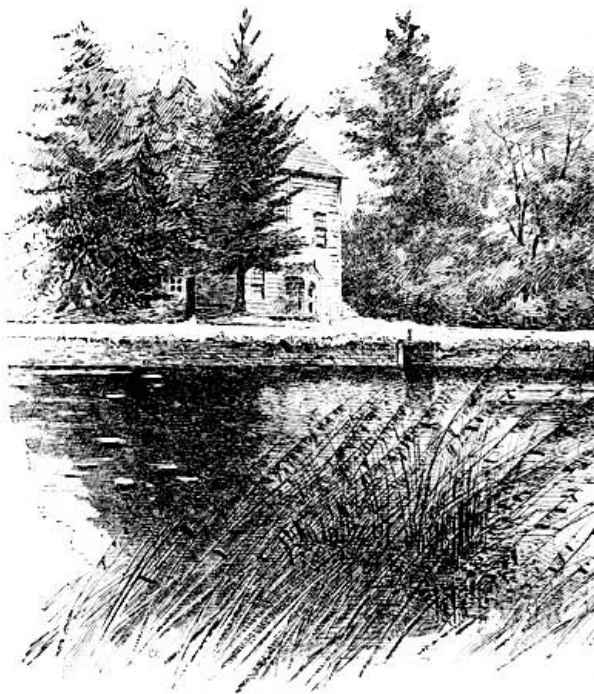


On the Road to Newdigate.

For the rest, the church is interesting enough by reason of its architecture to warrant some lingering here, but it is, beside this legitimate attraction, also very much of a museum of sepulchral curiosities. A brass for two brothers, with a curious metrical inscription, lurks in the gloom of the south aisle on the wall, and sundry grim and ghastly relics, in the shape of engraved coffin-plates, grubbed up by ghoulish antiquaries from the vaults below, form a perpetual *memento mori* from darksome masonry. On either side the nave, by the chancel, beneath the graceful arches of the nave arcade, are the recumbent effigies of Sir John de Ifield and his lady. The knight died in 1317. He is represented as an armed Crusader, cross-legged, "a position," to quote "Thomas Ingoldsby," "so prized by Templars in ancient and tailors in modern days." The old pews came from St. Margaret's, Westminster. But so dark is the church that details can only with difficulty be examined, and to emerge from the murk of this interior is to blink again in the light of day, however dull that day may be.

From Ifield Church, a long and exceeding straight road leads in one mile to Ifield Hammer Pond. Here is one of the many sources of the little river Mole, whose trickling tributaries spread over all the neighbouring valley. The old mill standing beside the hatch bears on its brick substructure the date 1683, but the white-painted, boarded mill itself is evidently of much later date.

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IFIELD MILL POND.

SUSSEX
IRON

Before a mill stood here at all, this was the site of one of the most important ironworks in Sussex, when Sussex iron paid for the smelting.

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Ironstone had been known to exist here even in the days of the Roman occupation, when Anderida, extending from the sea to London, was all one vast forest. Heaps of slag and cinders have been found, containing Roman coins and implements of contemporary date, proving that iron was smelted here to some extent even then. But it was not until the latter part of the Tudor period that the industry attained its greatest height. Then, according to Camden, "the Weald of Sussex was full of iron-mines, and the beating of hammers upon the iron filled the neighbourhood round about with continual noise." The ironstone was smelted with charcoal made from the forest trees that then covered the land, and it was not until the first year or two of the last century that the industry finally died out. The last remaining ironworks in Sussex were situated at Ashburnham, and ceased working about 1820, owing to the inability of iron-masters to compete with the coal-smelted ore of South Wales.

By that time the great forest of Anderida had almost entirely disappeared, which is not at all a wonderful thing to consider when we learn that one ironworks alone consumed 200,000 cords of wood annually. Even in Drayton's time the woods were already very greatly despoiled.

Relics of those days are plentiful, even now, in the ancient farmhouses; relics in the shape of cast-iron chimney-backs and andirons, or "fire-dogs," many of them very effectively designed; but, of course, in these days of appreciation of the antique, numbers of them have been sold and removed.

The water-power required by the ironworks was obtained by embanking small streams, to form ponds; as here at Ifield, where a fine head of water is still existing. Very many of these "Hammer Ponds" remain in Sussex and Surrey, and were long so called by the rustics, whose unlettered and traditional memories were tenacious, and preserved local history much better than does the less intimate book-learning of the reading classes. But now that every ploughboy reads his "penny horrible," and every gaffer devours his Sunday paper, they have no memories for "such truck," and local traditions are fading.

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Ifield ironworks became extinct at an early date, but from a very arbitrary cause. During the conflicts of the Civil War the property of Royalists was destroyed by the Puritan soldiery wherever possible; and after the taking of Arundel Castle in 1643, a detachment of troops under Sir William Waller wantonly wrecked the works then situated here, since when they do not appear to have been at any time revived.

It is a pretty spot to-day, and extremely quiet.

From here Crawley is reached through Gossop's Green.

The way into Crawley along the main road, passing the modern hamlet of Lowfield Heath, is uneventful. The church, the "White Lion," and a few attendant houses stand on one side of the road, and on the other, by the farm or mansion styled Heath House, a sedgy piece of ground alone remains to show what the heath was like before enclosure. Much of the land is now under cultivation as a nursery for shrubs, and a bee-farm attracts the wayfarers' attention nearer Crawley, where another hamlet has sprung up. A mean little house called "Casa querca"—by which I suppose the author means Oak House—is "refinement," as imagined in the suburbs, and excites the passing sneer, "Is not the English language good enough?" If the Italians will only oblige, and call their own "Bella Vistas" "Pretty View," and so forth, while we continue the reverse process here, we shall effect a fair exchange, and find at last an Old England over-sea.

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CRAWLEY: LOOKING SOUTH.

At the beginning of Crawley stands the "Sun" inn, and away at the other end is the "Half Moon"; trivial facts not lost upon the guards and coachmen of the coaching age, who generally propounded the stock conundrum when passing through, "Why is Crawley the longest place in existence?" Every one unfamiliar with the road "gave it up"; when came the answer, "Because the sun is at one end and the moon at the other." It is evident that very small things in the way of jokes satisfied the coach-passengers.

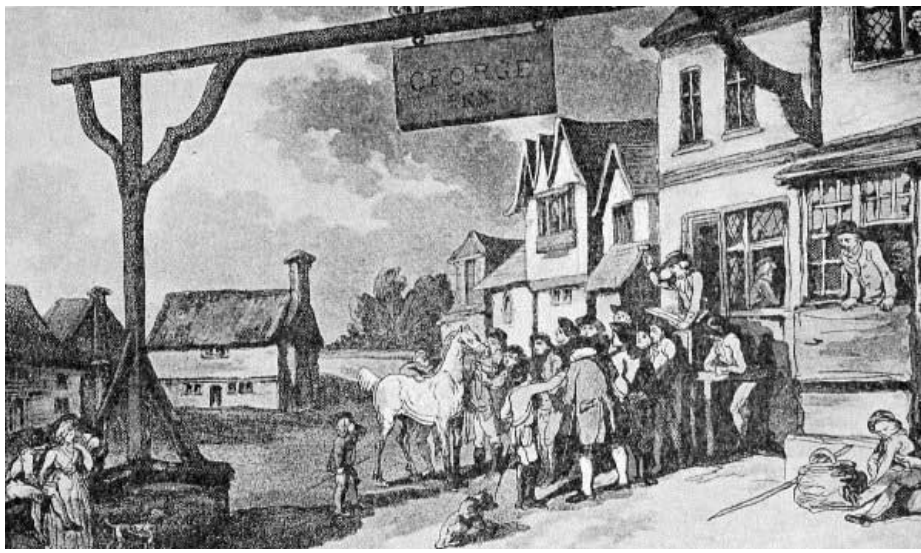
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We have it, on the authority of writers who fared this way in early coaching days, that Crawley was a "poor place," by which we may suppose that they meant it was a village. But what did they expect—a city?

Crawley in these times still keeps some old-world features, but it has grown, and is still growing. Its most striking peculiarity is the extraordinary width of the road in midst of what I do not like to call a town, and yet can scarce term a village; and the next most remarkable thing is the bygone impudence of some forgotten land-snatchers who seized plots in midst of this street, broad enough for a market-place, and built houses on them. By what slow, insensible degrees these sites, doubtless originally those of market-stalls, were stolen, records do not tell us; but we may imagine the movable stalls replaced by fixed wooden ones, and those in course of time giving place to more substantial structures, and so forth, in the time-honoured way, until the present houses, placed like islands in the middle of the street, sealed and sanctified the long-drawn tale of grab.

Even Crawley's generous width of roadway cannot have been an inch too wide for the traffic that crowded the village when it was a stage at which every coach stopped, when the air resounded with the guards' winding of their horns, or the playing of the occasional key-bugle to the airs of "Sally in our Alley" or "Love's Young Dream." Then the "George" was the scene of a continual bustling, with the shouting of the ostlers, the chink and clashing of harness, and all the tumults of travelling, when travelling was no light affair of an hour and a fraction, railway time, but a real journey, of five hours.

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CRAWLEY, 1789.

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Now there is little to stir the pulses or make the heart leap. Occasionally some great cycle "scorch" is in progress, when whirling enthusiasts speed through the village on winged wheels beneath the sign of the "George" spanning the street and swinging in the breeze; a sign on which the saintly knight wages eternal warfare with a blurred and very invertebrate dragon. Sometimes a driving match brings down sportsmen *and* bookmakers, and every now and again some one has a record to cut, be it in cycling, coaching, walking, or in wheelbarrow trundling; and then the roads are peopled again.

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There yet remain a few ancient cottages in Crawley, and the grey, embattled church tower lends an assured antiquity to the view; but there is, in especial, one sixteenth-century cottage worthy notice. Its timbered frame stands as securely, though not so erect, as ever, and is eloquent of that spacious age when the Virgin Queen (Heaven help those who named her so!) rules the land. It is Sussex, realised at a glance.

They are conservative folks at Crawley. When that ancient elm of theirs that stood directly below this old cottage had become decayed with lapse of years and failure of sap, they did not, even though its vast trunk obtrudes upon the roadway, cut it down and scatter its remains abroad. Instead, they fenced it around with as decorative a rustic railing as might well be contrived out of cut boughs, all innocent of the carpenter and still retaining their bark, and they planted the enclosure with flowers and tender saplings, so that this venerable ruin became a very attractive ruin indeed.

Rowlandson has preserved for us a view of Crawley as it appeared in 1789, when he toured the road and sketched, while his companion, Henry Wigstead, took notes for his book, "An Excursion to Brightelmstone." It is a work of the dreadfulest ditch-water dulness, saved only by the artist's illustrations. That *they* should have lived, you who see the reproduction will not wonder. The old sign spans the way, as of yore, but Crawley is otherwise greatly changed.

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AN OLD COTTAGE AT CRAWLEY.

An odd fact, unknown to those who merely pass through the place, is that the greater part of "Crawley" is not in that parish at all, but in the adjoining parish of Ifield. Only the church and a few houses on the same side of the street belong to Crawley.

In these later years the church, once kept rigidly locked, is generally open, and the celebrated inscription carved on one of the tie-beams of the nave is to be seen. It is in old English characters, gilded, and runs in this admonitory fashion:

**Man yn wele bewar, for worldly good makyth man blynde
He war be for whate comyth be hynde.**

When the stranger stands puzzling it out, unconscious of not being alone, it is sufficiently startling to hear the unexpected voice of the sexton, "be hynde," remarking that it is "arnshunt."

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THE "GEORGE," CRAWLEY.

The sturdy old tower is crowned with a gilded weather vane representing Noah's dove returning to the Ark with the olive-leaf, when the waters were abated from off the earth: a device peculiarly appropriate, intentionally or not, to Crawley, overlooking the oft-flooded valley of the Mole.

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But the most interesting feature of this church is the rude representation of the Trinity carved on the western face of the tower: three awful figures of very ancient date, on a diminishing scale, built into fifteenth-century niches. Above, on the largest scale, is the Supreme Being, holding what seems to be intended for a wheel, one of the ancient symbols of eternity. The sculptor, endeavouring to realise the grovelling superstition of his remote age, has put his "fear of God," in a very literal sense, into the grim, truculent, merciless, all-judging smile of the image; and thus, in enduring stone, we have preserved to us the terrified minds of the dark ages, when God, the loving Father, was non-existent, and was only the Judge, swift to punish. The other figures are merely like infantile grotesques.

XXIII

There is but one literary celebrity whose name goes down to posterity associated with Crawley. At Vine Cottage, near the railway station, resided Mark Lemon, editor of *Punch*, who died here on May 20th, 1870. Since his time the expansion of Crawley has caused the house to be converted into a grocer's shop.

PRIZE-
FIGHTS

The only other inhabitant of Crawley whose deeds informed the world at large of his name and existence was Tom Cribb, the bruiser. But though I lighted upon the statement of his residence here at one time, yet, after hunting up details of his life and of the battles he fought, after pursuing him through the classic pages of "Boxiana" and the voluminous records of "Pugilistica," after consulting, too, that sprightly work "The Fancy"; after all this I find no further mention of the fact. It was fitting, though, that the pugilist should have his home near Crawley Downs, the scene of so many of the Homeric

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combats witnessed by thousands upon thousands of excited spectators, from the Czar of Russia and the great Prince Regent, downwards to the lowest blackguards of the metropolis. An inspiring sight those Downs must have presented from time to time, when great multitudes—princes, patricians, and plebeians of every description—hung with beating hearts and bated breath upon the performances of two men in a roped enclosure battering one another for so much a side.

It is thus no matter for surprise that the Brighton Road, on its several routes, witnessed brilliant and dashing turn-outs, both in public coaches and private equipages, during that time when the last of the Georges flourished so flamboyantly as Prince, Prince Regent, and King. How else could it have been with the Court at one end of it and the metropolis at the other, and between them the rendezvous of all such as delighted in the “noble art”?

Many were the merry “mills” which “came off” at Crawley Downs, Copthorne Common, and Blindley Heath, attended by the Prince and his merry men, conspicuous among whom at different times were Fox, Lord Barrymore, Lord Yarmouth (“Red Herrings”), and Major George Hanger. As for the tappings of claret, the punchings of conks and bread-baskets, and the tremendous sloggings that went on in this neighbourhood in those virile times, are they not set forth with much circumstantial detail in the pages of “Fistiana” and “Boxiana”? There shall you read how the Prince Regent witnessed with enthusiasm such merry sets-to as this between Randall and Martin on Crawley Downs. “Boxiana” gives a full account of it, and is even moved to verse, in this wise:

THE FIGHT AT CRAWLEY
BETWEEN
THE NONPAREIL
AND
THE OUT-AND-OUTER.

Come, won't you list unto my lay
About the fight at Crawley, O!...

with the refrain—

With his filaloo trillaloo,
Whack, fal lal de dal di de do!

For the number of rounds and such technical details the curious may be referred to the classic pages of “Boxiana” itself.

Martin, originally a baker, and thus of course familiarly known as the “Master of the Rolls,” one of the heroes whom all these sporting blades went out to see contend for victory in the ring, died so recently as 1871. He had long retired from the P.R., and had, upon quitting it, followed the usual practice of retired pugilists, that is to say, he became a publican. He was landlord successively of the “Crown” at Croydon, and the “Horns” tavern, Kennington.

As for details of this fight or that upon the same spot from which Hickman, “The Gas-Light Man,” came off victor, they are not for these pages. How the combatants “fibbed” and “countered,” and did other things equally abstruse to the average reader, you may, who care to, read in the pages of the enthusiastic authorities upon the subject, who spare nothing of all the blows given and received.

This was fine company for the Heir-apparent to keep at Crawley Downs; but see how picturesque he and the crowds that followed in his wake rendered those times. What diversions went forward on the roads—such roads as they were! One chronicler of a fight here says, in all good faith, that on the morning following the “battle,” the remains of several carriages, phaetons, and other vehicles were found bestrewing the narrow ways where they had collided in the darkness.

THE
REGENCY

The House of Hanover, which ended with the death of Queen Victoria, was not at any time largely endowed with picturesqueness, saving only in the gruesome picture afforded by the horrid legend which accounts for the family name of Guelph; but the Regent was the great exception. He, at least, was picturesque; and if there be any who choose to deny it, I will ask them how it comes that so many novelists dealing with historical periods have chosen the period of the Regency as so fruitful an era of romance? The Prince endowed his time with a glamour that has lasted, and will continue unimpaired. It was he who gave a devil-me-care connotation to the words “Regent” and “Regency”; and his wild escapades have sufficed to redeem the Georgian Era from the reproach of unrelieved dulness and greasy vulgarity.

The reign of George the Third was the culmination of smug and unctuous *bourgeois* respectability at Court, from whose weary routine the Prince's surroundings were entirely different. Himself and his *entourage* were dissolute indeed, roystering, drinking, cursing, dicing, visiting prize-fights on these Downs of Crawley, and hail-fellow-well-met with the



SCULPTURED EMBLEM
OF THE HOLY TRINITY,
CRAWLEY CHURCH.

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blackguards there gathered together. But whatever his surroundings, they were never dull, for which saving grace many sins may be excused him.

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Thackeray, in his "Four Georges," has little that is pleasant to say of any one of them, but is astonishingly severe upon this last, both as Prince and King. For a thorough-going condemnation, commend me to that book. To the faults of George the Fourth the author is very wide-awake, nor will he allow him any virtues whatsoever. He will not even concede him to be a man, as witness this passage: "To make a portrait of him at sight seemed a matter of small difficulty. There is his coat, his star, his wig, his countenance simpering under it: with a slate and a piece of chalk, I could at this very desk perform a recognisable likeness of him. And yet, after reading of him in scores of volumes, hunting him through old magazines and newspapers, having him here at a ball, there at a public dinner, there at races, and so forth, you find you have nothing, nothing but a coat and a wig, and a mask smiling below it; nothing but a great simulacrum."

Poor fat Adonis!

But Thackeray was obliged reluctantly to acknowledge the grace and charm of the Fourth George, and to chronicle some of the kind acts he performed, although at these last he sneered consumedly, because, forsooth, those thus benefited were quite humble persons. It was not without reason that Thackeray wrote so intimately of snobs: in those unworthy sneers speaks one of the race.

One curious little item of praise the author of the "Four Georges" was constrained to allow the Regent: "Where my Prince did actually distinguish himself was in driving. He drove once in four hours and a half from Brighton to Carlton House—fifty-six miles."^[11]

So the altogether British love of sport compelled this little interlude in the abuse levelled at the "simulacrum."

XXIV

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Modern Crawley is disfigured by the abomination of a busy railway level-crossing that bars the main road and causes an immeasurable waste of public time and a deplorable flow of bad language. It affords a very good idea of the delays and annoyances at the old turnpike-gates, without their excuse for existence. Beyond it is the Park Lane or Belgravia of Crawley—the residential and superior modern district of country houses, each in midst of its own little pleasance.

PEASE
POTTAGE

The cutting in the rise at Hog's Hill passed, the road goes in a long incline up to Hand Cross, by Pease Pottage, where there is now a post-office which spells the name wrongly, "Peas." No one *knows* how the place-name originated; but legends explain where facts are wanting, and tell variously how soldiers in the old days were halted here on their route-marching and fed with "pease-pottage," the old name for pease-pudding; or describe how prisoners on the cross-roads, on their way to trial at the assizes, once held at Horsham and East Grinstead alternately, were similarly refreshed. Formerly called Pease Pottage Gate, from a turnpike-gate that spanned the Horsham road, the "Gate" has latterly been dropped. It is a pretty spot, with a triangular green and the old "Black Swan" inn still standing at the back. The green is not improved by the recent addition of a huge and ugly signboard, advertising the inn as an "hotel." The inquiring mind speculates curiously as to whether the District Council (or whatever the local governing body may be) is doing its duty in allowing such a flagrant vulgarity, apart from any question of legal rights, on common land. Indeed, the larger question arises, in the gross abuse of advertising notice-boards on this road in particular, and along others in lesser degree, as to whether the shameful defacement of natural scenery by such boards erected on land public or private ought not to be suppressed by law. Nearer Brighton, the beautiful distant views of the South Downs are utterly damned by gigantic black hoardings painted in white letters, trumpeting the advantages of the motor garage of an hotel which here, at least, shall not be named. Much has been written about the abuse of advertising in America, but Englishmen, sad to say, have in these latter days outdone, and are outdoing, those crimes, while America itself is retrieving its reputation.

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This is the Forest Ridge of Sussex, where the Forest of St. Leonards still stretches far and wide. Away for miles on the left hand stretch the lovely beechwoods and the hazel undergrowths of Tilgate, Balcombe, and Worth, and on the right the little inferior woodlands extending to Horsham. The ridge is, in addition, a great watershed. From it the Mole and the Medway flow north, and the Arun, the Adur, and the Sussex Ouse south, towards the English Channel. Hand Cross is the summit of the ridge, and the way to it is coming either north or south, a toilsome drag.

At Tilgate Forest Row the scenery becomes park-like, laurel hedges lining the way, giving occasional glimpses of fine estates to right and left. Here the coachmen used to point out,

with becoming awe, the country house where Fauntleroy, the banker, lived, and would tell how he indulged in all manner of unholy orgies in that gloomy-looking mansion in the forest.

Henry Fauntleroy was only thirty-nine years of age when he met the doom then meted out to forgers. As partner in the banking firm of Marsh, Sibbald & Co., of Berners Street, he had entire control of the firm's Stock Exchange business, and, unknown to his partners, had for nine years pursued a consistent course of illegally selling the securities belonging to customers—forging their signatures to transfers. Paying the interest and dividends as usual, the frauds, amounting in all to £70,000, might have remained undiscovered for many years longer; but the credit of the bank, long in a tottering condition, was exhausted in September, 1824, when all was disclosed. Fauntleroy was arrested on the 11th, and on the 14th the bank suspended payment.

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PEASE POTTAGE.

The failure of the bank was largely due to the extravagance of the partners, Fauntleroy himself living in fine style as a country gentleman; but the scandalous stories current at the time as to his mode of life were quite disproved, while the partners were clearly shown to have been entirely ignorant of the state of their affairs, which acquits them of complicity, though it does not redound to their credit as business men. Fauntleroy readily admitted his guilt, and added that he acted thus to prop up the long-standing instability of the firm. He was tried at the Old Bailey October 30th, 1824, sentenced to death, and executed November 30th, in the presence of a crowd of 200,000 persons. He was famed among connoisseurs for the excellence of his claret, and would never disclose its place of origin. Friends who visited him in the condemned cell begged him to confide in them, but he would never do so, and when he died the secret died with him.

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No one has ever claimed acquaintance with the ghost of Fauntleroy, with or without his rope; but the road to Hand Cross has long enjoyed—or been afflicted with—the reputation of being haunted. The Hand Cross ghost is, by all accounts, an extremely eccentric, but harmless spook, with peculiar notions in the matter of clothes, and given, when the turnpike-gate stood here, to monkey-tricks with bolts and bars, whereby pikemen were not only scared, but were losers of sundry tolls. Evidently that sprite was the wayfarers' friend.

"Squire Powlett" is another famous phantom of this forest-side, and is more terrifying, being headless, and given to the hateful practice of springing up behind the horseman who ventures this way when night has fallen upon the glades, riding with him to the forest boundary. Motorists and cyclists, however, do not seem to have been troubled. Possibly they have a turn of speed quite beyond the powers of such an old-fashioned spook.

Why "Squire Powlett" should haunt these nocturnal glades is not so easily to be guessed. He was not, so far as can be learned, an evildoer, and he certainly was not beheaded. He was that William Powlett, a captain in the Horse Grenadiers and a resident in the Forest of St. Leonards, who seems to have led an exemplary life, and died in 1746, and is buried under an elaborate monument in West Grinstead Church.

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Hand Cross is a settlement of forty or fifty houses, situated where several roads meet, in this delightful land of forests. Its name derives, of course, from some ancient signpost, or combination of signpost and wayside cross, existing here in pre-Reformation times, on the lonely cross-roads. No houses stood here then, and Slaugham village, the nearest habitation of man, was a mile distant, at the foot of the hill, where, very little changed or not at all, it may still be sought. Slaugham parish is very extensive, stretching as far as Crawley; and the hamlet of Hand Cross, within it, although now larger than the parent village itself, is only a mere mushroom excrescence called into existence by the road travel of the last two centuries.

It is the being on the main road, and on the junction of several routes, that has made Hand Cross what it is to-day and has deposed Slaugham itself; just as in towns a by-street being made a main thoroughfare will make the fortunes of the shops in it and perhaps ruin those of some other route.

Not that Hand Cross is great, or altogether pleasing to the eye; for, after all, it is a *parvenu* of a place, and lacks the Domesday descent of, for instance, Cuckfield. Now, the *parvenu*, the man of his hands, may be a very estimable fellow, but his raw prosperity grates upon the nerves. So it is with Hand Cross, for its prosperity, which has not waned with the coaching era, has incited to the building of cottages of that cheap and yellow brick we know so well and loathe so much. Also, though there is no church, there are two chapels; one of retiring position, the other conventicle of aggressive and red, red brick. One could find it in one's heart to forgive the yellow brick; but this red, never. In this ruddy building is a harmonium. On Sundays the wail of that instrument and the hooting and ting, tinging of cyclorns and cycling gongs, as cyclists foregather by the "Red Lion," are the most striking features of the place.

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The "Red Lion" is of greater interest than all other buildings at Hand Cross. It stood here in receipt of coaching custom through all the roystering days of the Regency as it stands now, prosperous at the hands of another age of wheels. Shergold tells us that its landlords in olden times knew more of smuggling than hearsay, and dispensed from many an anker of brandy that had not rendered duty.

At Hand Cross the ways divide, the Bolney and Hickstead route, opened in 1813, branching off to the right and not merely providing a better surface, but, with a straighter course, saving from one and a half to two miles, and avoiding some troublesome rises, becoming in these times the "record route" for cyclists, pedestrians, and all who seek to speed between London and Brighton in the quickest possible time. It rejoins the classic route at Pyecombe.

For the present we will follow the older way, by Cuckfield, down to Staplefield Common. A lovely vale opens out as one descends the southern face of the watershed, with an enchanting middle distance of copses, cottages, and winding roads, the sun slanting on distant ponds, or transmuting commonplace glazier's work into sparkling diamonds.

At the foot of the hill is Staplefield Common, bisected by the highway, with recent cottages and modern church, and in the foreground the "Jolly Farmers" inn. But where are the famous cherry-trees of Staplefield, under whose boughs the coach passengers of a century ago feasted off the "black-hearts"; where are the "Dun Cow" and its equally famous rabbit-puddings and its pretty Miss Finch? Gone, as utterly as though they had never been.

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THE "RED LION," HAND CROSS.

Three miles of oozy hollows and rises covered with tangled undergrowths of hazels lead past

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Slough Green and Whiteman's Green to Cuckfield. From the hillsides the great Ouse Valley Viaduct of the Brighton line, down towards Balcombe and Ardingly, is seen stalking across the low-lying meadows, mellowed by distance to the romantic similitude of an aqueduct of ancient Rome.

Plentiful traces are yet visible of the rugged old hollow lane that was the precursor of the present road. In places it is a wayside pool; in others a hollow, grown thickly with trees, with tree-roots, gnarled and fanglike, clutching in desperate hold its crumbling banks. The older rustics know it, if the younger and the passing stranger do not: they tell you "'tis wheer th' owd hroad tarned arff."

XXVI

The pleasant old town of Cuckfield stands on no railway, and has no manufactures or industries of any kind; and since the locomotive ran the coaches off the road has been a veritable Sleepy Hollow. It was not always thus, for in those centuries—from the fourteenth until the early part of the eighteenth—when the beds of Sussex iron-ore were worked and smelted on the spot, the neighbourhood of Cuckfield was a Black Country, given over to the manufacture of ironware, from cannon to firebacks.

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CUCKFIELD, 1789.

From an aquatint after Rowlandson.

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All this was so long ago that nature has healed the scars made by that busy time. Wooded hills replace the uplands made bare by the smelters, the cinder-heaps and mounds of slag are hidden under pastures, the "hammer-ponds" of the smelteries and foundries have become the resorts of artists seeking the picturesque, and the descendants of the old iron-masters, the Burrells and the Sergisons, have for generations past been numbered among the county families.

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CUCKFIELD

Cuckfield very narrowly escaped being directly on the route of the Brighton railway, but it pleased the engineers to bring their line no nearer than Hayward's Heath, some two miles distant. They built a station there, on the lone heath, "for Cuckfield," with the result, sixty years later, that the sometime solitude is a town and still growing, while Cuckfield declines. Hayward's Heath, curiously enough, is, or was until December, 1894, in the parish of Cuckfield, but the time is at hand when the two will be joined by the spread of that railway upstart; and then will be the psychological moment for abolishing the name of Hayward's Heath—which is a shocking stumbling-block for the aitchless—and adopting that of the parental "Cookfield."

Meanwhile, I shall drop no sentimental tears over the chance that Cuckfield lost, sixty years ago, of becoming a railway junction and a modern town. Of junctions and mushroom towns we have a sufficiency, but of surviving sweet old country townlets very few.

To see Cuckfield thoroughly demands some little leisure, for although it is small one must needs have time to assimilate the atmosphere of the place, if it is to be appreciated at its worth; from the grey old church with its tall shingled spire and its monuments of Burrells and Sergisons of Cuckfield Place, to the staid old houses in the quiet streets, and those two

fine old coaching inns, the "Talbot" and the "King's Head." Rowlandson made a picture of the town in 1789, and it is not wholly unlike that, even now, but where is that Fair we see in progress in his spirited rendering? Gone, together with the smart fellow driving the curricle, and all the other figures of that scene, into the forgotten. There, in one corner, you see the Recruiting Sergeant and the drummer, impressing with military glory a typical smock-frocked Hodge, gaping so outrageously that he seems to be opening his face rather than merely his mouth; the artist's idea seems to have been that, like a dolphin, he would swallow anything, either in the way of food or of stories. There are no full-blooded Sergeant Kites and gaping yokels nowadays.

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Cuckfield is evidently feeling, more and more, the altered condition of affairs. Motorists, who are supposed to bring back prosperity to the road, do nothing of the kind on the road to Brighton; for those who live at Brighton or London merely want to reach the other end as quickly as possible, and, with a legal limit up to twenty miles an hour, can cover the distance in two hours and a half, and, with an occasional illegal interval, easily in two hours. Except in case of a breakdown, the wayside hostelries do not often see the colour of the motorists' money, but they smell the stink, and are choked with the dust of them, and landlords and every one else concerned would be only too glad if the project for building a road between London and Brighton, exclusively for motor traffic, were likely to be realised. Then ordinary users of the highway might once more be able to discern the natural scenery of the road, at present obscured with dust-clouds.

The text for these remarks is furnished by the recent closing, after a hundred and fifty years or more, of the once chief inn of Cuckfield: the fine and stately "Talbot," now empty and "To Let"; the hospitable quotation "You're welcome, what's your will," from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* on its fanlight, reading like a bitter mockery.

The interior of Cuckfield Church is crowded with monuments of the Sergisons and the Burrells. Pride of place is given in the chancel to the monument of Charles Sergison, who died in 1732, aged 78. It is a very fine white marble monument, with a figure of Truth gazing into her mirror, and holding with one hand a medallion partly supported by a Cupid, displaying a portrait of the lamented Sergison, who, we learn from a sub-acid inscription, was "Commissioner of the Navy forty-eight years, till 1719, to the entire satisfaction of the King and his Ministers." "The civil government of the Navy then being put into military hands, he was esteemed by them not a fit person to serve any longer." He was, in short, like those "rulers of the Queen's (or King's) Navee" satirised by Sir W. S. Gilbert in modern times, and "never went to sea." At the period of his compulsory retirement it seems to have rather belatedly occurred to the authorities that such an one could not be well acquainted with the needs of the Navy; so the "Capacity, Penetration, exact Judgment" of this "true patriot" were shelved; but, at any rate, he had had his whack, and it was surely high time for the exact judgment, true patriotism, capacity and penetration of others to have a chance of making something out of the nation.

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THE ROAD OUT OF CUCKFIELD.

A few monuments are hidden behind the organ, among them one to Guy Carleton, "son of George, Lord Bishop of Chichester." He, it seems, "died of a consumption, clōcxcxiv," which appears to be the highly esoteric way of writing 1624. "*Mors vitæ initium*" he tells us, and illustrates it with the pleasing fancy of a skull mounted on an hour-glass, with ears of wheat sprouting from the eyeless sockets. Other equally pleasant devices, encircled with fragments of Greek, are plentiful, the whole concluding with the announcement that "The end of all things is at hand." Holding that opinion, it would seem to have been hardly worth while to erect the monument, but in the result it survives to show what a very gross mistake he made.

Two illustrations of the quiet annals of Cuckfield, widely different in point of time, are the old clock and the wall-plate memorial to one Frank Bleach of the Royal Sussex Volunteer Company, who died at Bloemfontein in 1901. The ancient hand-wrought clock, made in 1667 by Isaac Leney, probably of Cuckfield, finally stopped in 1867, and was taken down in 1873. After lying as lumber in the belfry for many years, it was in 1904 fixed on the interior wall of the tower.

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XXVII

“ROOKWOOD” Cuckfield Place, acknowledged by Harrison Ainsworth to be the original of his “Rookwood,” stands immediately outside the town, and is visible, in midst of the park, from the road. That romantic home of ghostly tradition is fittingly approached by a long and lofty avenue of limes, where stands the clock-tower entrance-gate, removed from Slaugham Place.

Beyond it the picturesquely broken surface of the park stretches, beautifully wooded and populated with herds of deer, the grey, many-gabled mansion looking down upon the whole.

AINSWORTH “Rookwood,” the fantastic and gory tale that first gave Harrison Ainsworth a vogue, was commenced in 1831, but not completed until 1834. Ainsworth died at Reigate, January 3, 1882. Thus in his preface he acknowledges his model:

“The supernatural occurrence forming the groundwork of one of the ballads which I have made the harbinger of doom to the house of Rookwood, is ascribed by popular superstition to a family resident in Sussex, upon whose estate the fatal tree (a gigantic lime, with mighty arms and huge girth of trunk, as described in the song) is still carefully preserved. Cuckfield Place, to which this singular piece of timber is attached, is, I may state for the benefit of the curious, the real Rookwood Hall; for I have not drawn upon imagination, but upon memory in describing the seat and domains of that fated family. The general features of the venerable structure, several of its chambers, the old garden, and, in particular, the noble park, with its spreading prospects, its picturesque views of the hall, ‘like bits of Mrs. Radcliffe’ (as the poet Shelley once observed of the same scene), its deep glades, through which the deer come lightly tripping down, its uplands, slopes, brooks, brakes, coverts, and groves are carefully delineated.”

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CUCKFIELD PLACE.

“Like Mrs. Radcliffe!” That romance is indeed written in the peculiar convention which obtained with her, with Horace Walpole, with Maturin, and “Monk” Lewis; a convention of Gothic gloom and superstition, delighting in gore and apparitions, responsible for the “Mysteries of Udolpho,” “The Italian,” “The Monk,” and other highly seasoned reading of the early years of the nineteenth century. Ainsworth deliberately modelled his manner upon Mrs. Radcliffe, changing the scenes of his desperate deeds from her favourite Italy to our own land. His pages abound in apparitions, death-watches, highwaymen, “pistols for two and breakfasts for one,” daggers, poison-bowls, and burials alive, and, with a little literary ability added to his horrors, his would be a really hair-raising romance. But the blood he ladles

out so plentifully is only coloured water; his spectres are only illuminated turnips on broomsticks; his verses so deplorable, his witticisms so hobnailed that even schoolboys refuse any longer to be thrilled. He “wants to make yer blood run cold,” but he not infrequently raises a hearty laugh instead. It would be impossible to burlesque “Rookwood”; it burlesques itself, and shall be allowed to do so here, from the point where Alan Rookwood visits the family vault, to his tragic end:

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THE CLOCK-TOWER AND HAUNTED AVENUE,
CUCKFIELD PLACE.

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HARRISON AINSWORTH.
From the Fraser portrait.

“He then walked beneath the shadow of one of the yews, chanting an odd stanza or so of one of his wild staves, wrapped the while, it would seem, in affectionate contemplation of the subject-matter of his song:

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THE CHURCHYARD YEW.

‘—Metuendaque succo
Taxus.’

A noxious tree is the churchyard yew,
As if from the dead its sap it drew;
Dark are its branches, and dismal to see,
Like plumes at Death's latest solemnity.
Spectral and jagged, and black as the wings
Which some spirit of ill o'er a sepulchre flings:
Oh! a terrible tree is the churchyard yew;
Like it is nothing so grimly to view.

Yet this baleful tree hath a core so sound,
Can nought so tough in a grove be found:
From it were fashioned brave English bows,
The boast of our isle, and the dread of its foes.
For our sturdy sires cut their stoutest staves
From the branch that hung o'er their fathers' graves;
And though it be dreary and dismal to view,
Staunch at the heart is the churchyard yew.

"His ditty concluded, Alan entered the church, taking care to leave the door slightly ajar, in order to facilitate his grandson's entrance. For an instant he lingered in the chancel. The yellow moonlight fell upon the monuments of his race; and, directed by the instinct of hate, Alan's eye rested upon the gilded entablature of his perfidious brother Reginald, and muttering curses, 'not loud, but deep,' he passed on. Having lighted his lantern in no tranquil mood, he descended into the vault, observing a similar caution with respect to the portal of the cemetery, which he left partially unclosed, with the key in the lock. Here he resolved to abide Luke's coming. The reader knows what probability there was of his expectations being realised.

FARCICAL
ROMANCE

"For a while he paced the tomb, wrapped in gloomy meditation, and pondering, it might be, upon the result of Luke's expedition, and the fulfilment of his own dark schemes, scowling from time to time beneath his bent eyebrows, counting the grim array of coffins, and noticing, with something like satisfaction, that the shell which contained the remains of his daughter had been restored to its former position. He then bethought him of Father Checkley's midnight intrusion upon his conference with Luke, and their apprehension of a supernatural visitation, and his curiosity was stimulated to ascertain by what means the priest had gained admission to the spot unperceived and unheard. He resolved to sound the floor, and see whether any secret entrance existed; and hollowly and dully did the hard flagging return the stroke of his heel as he pursued his scrutiny. At length the metallic ringing of an iron plate, immediately behind the marble effigy of Sir Ranulph, resolved the point. There it was that the priest had found access to the vault; but Alan's disappointment was excessive when he discovered that this plate was fastened on the under-side, and all communication thence with the churchyard, or to wherever else it might conduct him, cut off; but the present was not the season for further investigation, and tolerably pleased with the discovery he had already made, he returned to his silent march around the sepulchre.

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"At length a sound, like the sudden shutting of the church door, broke upon the profound stillness of the holy edifice. In the hush that succeeded a footstep was distinctly heard threading the aisle.

"'He comes—he comes!' exclaimed Alan joyfully; adding, an instant after, in an altered voice, 'but he comes alone.'

"The footstep drew near to the mouth of the vault—it was upon the stairs. Alan stepped forward to greet, as he supposed, his grandson, but started back in astonishment and dismay as he encountered in his stead Lady Rookwood. Alan retreated, while the lady advanced, swinging the iron door after her, which closed with a tremendous clang. Approaching the statue of the first Sir Ranulph she passed, and Alan then remarked the singular and terrible expression of her eyes, which appeared to be fixed upon the statue, or upon some invisible object near it. There was something in her whole attitude and manner calculated to impress the deepest terror on the beholder, and Alan gazed upon her with an awe which momentarily increased. Lady Rookwood's bearing was as proud and erect as we have formerly described it to have been, her brow was as haughtily bent, her chiselled lip as disdainfully curled; but the staring, changeless eye, and the deep-heaved sob which occasionally escaped her, betrayed how much she was under the influence of mortal terror. Alan watched her in amazement. He knew not how the scene was likely to terminate, nor what could have induced her to visit this ghostly spot at such an hour and alone; but he resolved to abide the issue in silence—profound as her own. After a time, however, his impatience got the better of his fears and scruples, and he spoke.

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"'What doth Lady Rookwood in the abode of the dead?' asked he at length.

"She started at the sound of his voice, but still kept her eye fixed upon the vacancy.

"'Hast thou not beckoned me hither, and am I not come?' returned she, in a hollow tone. 'And now thou askest wherefore I am here. I am here because, as in thy life I feared thee not, neither in death do I fear thee. I am here because—'

“What seest thou?” interrupted Alan, with ill-suppressed terror.

“What see I—ha—ha!” shouted Lady Rookwood, amidst discordant laughter; ‘that which might appal a heart less stout than mine—a figure anguish-writhen, with veins that glow as with a subtle and consuming flame. A substance, yet a shadow, in thy living likeness. Ha—frown if thou wilt; I can return thy glances.’

MELODRAMA
POUR
RIRE

“Where dost thou see this vision?” demanded Alan.

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“Where?” echoed Lady Rookwood, becoming for the first time sensible of the presence of a stranger. ‘Ha—who are you that question me?—what are you?—speak!’

“No matter who or what I am,’ returned Alan; ‘I ask you what you behold?’

“Can you see nothing?’

“Nothing,’ replied Alan.

“You knew Sir Piers Rookwood?’

“Is it he?’ asked Alan, drawing near her.

“It is,’ replied Lady Rookwood; ‘I have followed him hither, and I will follow him whithersoever he leads me, were it to—’

“What doth he now?’ asked Alan; ‘do you see him still?’

“The figure points to that sarcophagus,’ returned Lady Rookwood—‘can you raise up the lid?’

“No,’ replied Alan; ‘my strength will not avail to lift it.’

“Yet let the trial be made,’ said Lady Rookwood; ‘the figure points there still—my own arm shall aid you.’

Alan watched her in dumb wonder. She advanced towards the marble monument, and beckoned him to follow. He reluctantly complied. Without any expectation of being able to move the ponderous lid of the sarcophagus, at Lady Rookwood’s renewed request he applied himself to the task. What was his surprise when, beneath their united efforts, he found the ponderous slab slowly revolve upon its vast hinges, and, with little further difficulty, it was completely elevated, though it still required the exertion of all Alan’s strength to prop it open and prevent its falling back.

“What does it contain?’ asked Lady Rookwood.

“A warrior’s ashes,’ returned Alan.

“There is a rusty dagger upon a fold of faded linen,’ cried Lady Rookwood, holding down the light.

“It is the weapon with which the first dame of the house of Rookwood was stabbed,’ said Alan, with a grim smile:

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‘Which whoso findeth in the tomb
Shall clutch until the hour of doom;
And when ’tis grasped by hand of clay
The curse of blood shall pass away.

So saith the rhyme. Have you seen enough?’

“No,’ said Lady Rookwood, precipitating herself into the marble coffin. ‘That weapon shall be mine.’

“Come forth—come forth,’ cried Alan. ‘My arm trembles—I cannot support the lid.’

“I will have it, though I grasp it to eternity,’ shrieked Lady Rookwood, vainly endeavouring to wrest away the dagger, which was fastened, together with the linen upon which it lay, by some adhesive substance to the bottom of the shell.

“At this moment Alan Rookwood happened to cast his eye upward, and he then beheld what filled him with new terror. The axe of the sable statue was poised above its head, as in the act to strike him. Some secret machinery, it was evident, existed between the sarcophagus lid and this mysterious image. But in the first impulse of his alarm Alan abandoned his hold of the slab, and it sunk slowly downwards. He uttered a loud cry as it moved. Lady Rookwood heard this cry. She raised herself at the same moment—the dagger was in her hand—she pressed it against the lid, but its downward force was too great to be withstood. The light was within the sarcophagus and Alan could discern her features. The expression was terrible. She uttered one shriek, and the lid closed for ever.

“Alan was in total darkness. The light had been enclosed with Lady Rookwood. There was something so horrible in her probable fate that even *he* shuddered as he thought upon it. Exerting all his remaining strength, he essayed to raise the lid; but now it was more firmly closed than ever. It defied all his power. Once, for an instant, he fancied that it yielded to his straining sinews, but it was only his hand that slid upon the surface of the marble. It was

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fixed—immovable. The sides and lid rang with the strokes which the unfortunate lady bestowed upon them with the dagger's point; but these sounds were not long heard. Presently all was still; the marble ceased to vibrate with her blows. Alan struck the lid with his knuckles, but no response was returned. All was silent.

FRENZY

"He now turned his attention to his own situation, which had become sufficiently alarming. An hour must have elapsed, yet Luke had not arrived. The door of the vault was closed—the key was in the lock, and on the outside. He was himself a prisoner within the tomb. What if Luke should *not* return? What if he were slain, as it might chance, in the enterprise? That thought flashed across his brain like an electric shock. None knew of his retreat but his grandson. He might perish of famine within this desolate vault.

"He checked this notion as soon as it was formed—it was too dreadful to be indulged in. A thousand circumstances might conspire to detain Luke. He was sure to come. Yet the solitude, the darkness, was awful, almost intolerable. The dying and the dead were around him. He dared not stir.

"Another hour—an age it seemed to him—had passed. Still Luke came not. Horrible forebodings crossed him; but he would not surrender himself to them. He rose, and crawled in the direction, as he supposed, of the door—fearful even of the stealthy sound of his own footsteps. He reached it, and his heart once more throbbed with hope. He bent his ear to the key; he drew in his breath; he listened for some sound, but nothing was to be heard. A groan would have been almost music in his ears.

"Another hour was gone! He was now a prey to the most frightful apprehensions, agitated in turns by the wildest emotions of rage and terror. He at one moment imagined that Luke had abandoned him, and heaped curses upon his head; at the next, convinced that he had fallen, he bewailed with equal bitterness his grandson's fate and his own. He paced the tomb like one distracted; he stamped upon the iron plate; he smote with his hands upon the door; he shouted, and the vault hollowly echoed his lamentations. But Time's sand ran on, and Luke arrived not.

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"Alan now abandoned himself wholly to despair. He could no longer anticipate his grandson's coming—no longer hope for deliverance. His fate was sealed. Death awaited him. He must anticipate his slow but inevitable stroke, enduring all the grinding horrors of starvation. The contemplation of such an end was madness, but he was forced to contemplate it now; and so appalling did it appear to his imagination, that he half resolved to dash out his brains against the walls of the sepulchre, and put an end at once to his tortures; and nothing, except a doubt whether he might not, by imperfectly accomplishing his purpose, increase his own suffering, prevented him from putting this dreadful idea into execution. His dagger was gone, and he had no other weapon. Terrors of a new kind now assailed him. The dead, he fancied, were bursting from their coffins, and he peopled the darkness with grisly phantoms. They were round about him on each side, whirling and rustling, gibbering, groaning, shrieking, laughing, and lamenting. He was stunned, stifled. The air seemed to grow suffocating, pestilential; the wild laughter was redoubled; the horrible troop assailed him; they dragged him along the tomb, and amid their howls he fell, and became insensible.

TORMENT

"When he returned to himself, it was some time before he could collect his scattered faculties; and when the agonising consciousness of his terrible situation forced itself upon his mind, he had nigh relapsed into oblivion. He arose. He rushed towards the door: he knocked against it with his knuckles till the blood streamed from them; he scratched against it with his nails till they were torn off by the roots. With insane fury he hurled himself against the iron frame: it was in vain. Again he had recourse to the trap-door. He searched for it; he found it. He laid himself upon the ground. There was no interval of space in which he could insert a finger's point. He beat it with his clenched hand; he tore it with his teeth; he jumped upon it; he smote it with his heel. The iron returned a sullen sound.

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"He again essayed the lid of the sarcophagus. Despair nerved his strength. He raised the slab a few inches. He shouted, screamed, but no answer was returned; and again the lid fell.

"'She is dead!' cried Alan. 'Why have I not shared her fate? But mine is to come. And such a death!—oh, oh!' And, frenzied at the thought, he again hurried to the door, and renewed his fruitless attempts to escape, till nature gave way, and he sank upon the floor, groaning and exhausted.

"Physical suffering now began to take the place of his mental tortures. Parched and consumed with a fierce internal fever, he was tormented by unappeasable thirst—of all human ills the most unendurable. His tongue was dry and dusty, his throat inflamed; his lips had lost all moisture. He licked the humid floor; he sought to imbibe the nitrous drops from the walls; but, instead of allaying his thirst, they increased it. He would have given the world, had he possessed it, for a draught of cold spring-water. Oh, to have died with his lips upon some bubbling fountain's marge! But to perish thus!

"Nor were the pangs of hunger wanting. He had to endure all the horrors of famine as well as the agonies of quenchless thirst.

"In this dreadful state three days and nights passed over Alan's fated head. Nor night nor day had he. Time, with him, was only measured by its duration, and that seemed

interminable. Each hour added to his suffering, and brought with it no relief. During this period of prolonged misery reason often tottered on her throne. Sometimes he was under the influence of the wildest passions. He dragged coffins from their recesses, hurled them upon the ground, striving to break them open and drag forth their loathsome contents. Upon other occasions he would weep bitterly and wildly; and once—once only—did he attempt to pray; but he started from his knees with an echo of infernal laughter, as he deemed, ringing in his ears. Then, again, would he call down imprecations upon himself and his whole line, trampling upon the pile of coffins he had reared; and, lastly, more subdued, would creep to the boards that contained the body of his child, kissing them with a frantic outbreak of affection.

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“At length he became sensible of his approaching dissolution. To him the thought of death might well be terrible; but he quailed not before it, or rather seemed, in his latest moments, to resume all his wonted firmness of character. Gathering together his remaining strength, he dragged himself towards the niche wherein his brother, Sir Reginald Rookwood, was deposited, and, placing his hand upon the coffin, solemnly exclaimed, ‘My curse—my dying curse—be upon thee evermore!’

“Falling with his face upon the coffin, Alan instantly expired. In this attitude his remains were discovered.”

How to repress a smile at the picture conjured up of Lady Rookwood “precipitating herself into the marble coffin”! How not to refrain from laughing at the fantastic description of Alan piling up coffins in the vault and jumping upon them!

XXVIII

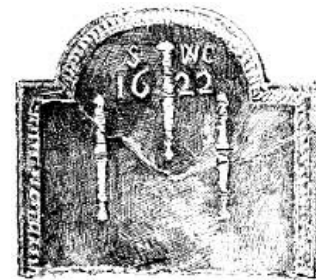
Half a mile below Cuckfield stands Ansty Cross, (the “Handstay” of old road-books, and said to derive from the Anglo-Saxon, *Heanstige*, meaning highway), a cluster of a few cottages and the “Green Cross” inn, once old and picturesque, now rebuilt in the Ready-made Picturesque order of architecture. Here stood one of the numerous turnpike-gates.

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Close by is Riddens Farm, a picturesque little homestead, with tile-hung front and clustered chimneys. It still contains one of those old Sussex cast-iron firebacks mentioned in an earlier page, dated 1622.

Below Ansty, two miles or thereby down the road, the little river Adur is passed at Bridge Farm, and the twin towns of St. John’s Common and Burgess Hill are reached.

Before 1820 their sites were fields and common land, wild and gorse-covered, free and open. Few houses were then in sight; the “Anchor” inn, by Burgess Hill, the reputed haunt of smugglers, who stored their contraband in the woods and heaths close by; and the “King’s Head,” at St. John’s Common, with two or three cottages—these were all.

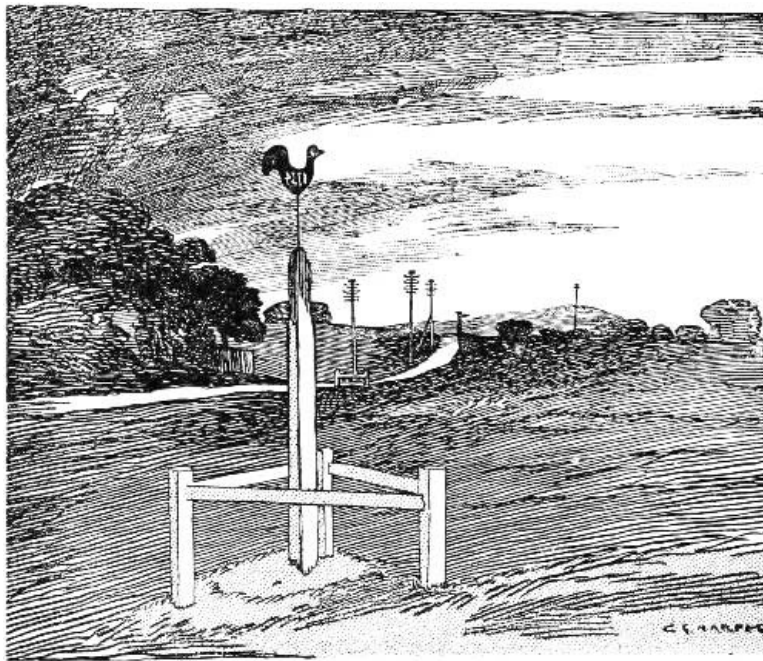


OLD SUSSEX FIREBACK,
RIDDENS FARM.

BURGESS
HILL

St. John’s Common, partly in Keymer and partly in Clayton parishes, was enclosed piecemeal, between 1828 and 1855, by an arrangement between the lords of the manors and the copyholders, who divided the plunder between them, when this large tract of land resently became the site of these towns of St. John’s Common and Burgess Hill, which sprang up, if not with quite the rapidity of a Californian mining-town, at least with a celerity previously unknown in England. Their rapid rise was of course due to the Brighton Railway and its station. There are, however, nowadays not wanting signs, quite apart from the condition of the brick and tile and drainpipe-making industry, on which the two mushroom towns have come into being, that the unlovely places are in a bad way. Shops closed and vainly offered “to let” tell a story of artificial expansion and consequent depression: the inevitable Nemesis of discounting the future.

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JACOB'S POST.

I will show you what the site of these uninviting modern places was like, a hundred years ago. It is not far, geographically, from the sorry streets of Burgess Hill to the wild, wide commons of Wivelsfield and Ditchling; but such a change is wrought in two miles and a half as would be considered impossible by any who have not made the excursion into those beautiful regions. They show us, in survival, what the now hackneyed main roads were like three generations ago.

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JACOB'S
POST

In every circumstance Ditchling Common recalls the "Crackskull Commons" of the eighteenth-century comedies, for it has a little horror of its own in the shape of an authentic fragment of a gibbet. This is the silent reminder of a crime committed near at hand, at the "Royal Oak" inn, Wivelsfield, in 1734. In that year Jacob Harris, a Jew pedlar, came to the inn and, stabling his horse, attacked Miles, the landlord, while he was grooming the animal down, and cut his throat. The servant-maid, hearing a disturbance in the stable, and coming downstairs to see the cause of it, was murdered in the same way, and then the Jew calmly walked upstairs and slaughtered the landlord's wife, who was lying ill in bed. None of these unfortunate people died at once. The two women expired the same night, but Miles lived long enough to identify the assassin, who was hanged at Horsham, his body being hung in chains from this gibbet, ever since known as Jacob's Post.

Pieces of wood from this gallows-tree were long and highly esteemed by country-folk as charms, and were often carried about with them as preventatives of all manner of accidents and diseases; indeed, its present meagre proportions are due to this practice and belief.

The post is fenced with a wooden rail, and is surmounted by the quaint iron effigy of a rooster, pierced with the date, 1734, in old-fashioned figures.

It is a lonely spot, with but one cottage near at hand: the common undulating away for miles until it reaches close to the grey barrier of the noble South Downs, rising magnificently in the distance.

XXIX

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Returning to the exploited main road. Friar's Oak is soon reached. It was selected by Sir Conan Doyle as one of the scenes of his Regency story, "Rodney Stone"; but since the year 1900, when the old inn was rebuilt, the spot has become an eyesore to those who knew it of old.

No one knows why Friar's Oak is so called, and "Nothing is ever known about anything on the roads," is the intemperate exclamation that rises to the lips of the disappointed explorer. But wild legends, as usual, supply the place of facts, and the old oak that stands opposite the inn is said to have been the spot where a friar, or friars, distributed alms. To any one who knows even the least about friars, this story would at once carry its own condemnation; but a friar, or a hermit, may have solicited alms here. At any rate, the old inn used to exhibit a

very forbidding "friar of orders grey" as its sign, dancing beneath the oak. Stolen many years ago, it was subsequently discovered in London by the merest accident, was purchased for a trifling sum, and restored to its bereft signpost. The innkeeper, however, thinking that what befell once might happen again, hung the cherished panel within the house, where it remains to this day.

From Friar's Oak it is but a step to that newest creation among Brighton's suburbs, Clayton Park, its clustering red-brick villas, building estates, and half-formed roads adjoining the station of Hassocks Gate, which, by the way, the railway authorities have long since reduced to "Hassocks." The name recalls certain dusty contrivances of straw and carpeting artfully contrived for the devout to stumble over in church. But, not to incur the suspicion of tripping over the name as here applied, it may be mentioned that "hassock" is the Anglo-Saxon name for a coppice or small wood; and there are really many of these at and around Hassocks Gate to this day.

TURNPIKE
GATES

At Stonepound a road leads on the right to Hurstpierpoint, which is too big a mouthful for general use, and so is locally "Hurst." The Pierpoints, whose name is embedded in that of the place, like an ammonite in a geological stratum, were long since as extinct as those other Normans, the Monceaux of Hurstmonceaux, and are what Americans would term a "back number."

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Stone Pound Gate
Clears Patcham Gate
St. John's and Ansty Gates
Y

Patcham Gate
Clears Stone Pound Gate,
St. John's and Ansty Gates
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Stonepound Gate was one of the nine that at one time barred the Brighton Road, and the last but one on the way. It will be seen, by the specimens of turnpike-tickets reprinted here, that at one time, at least, the burden of the tolls was not quite so heavy as the mere number of the gates would lead a casual observer to suppose, a ticket taken at Ansty "clearing" the remaining distance, through three other gates, to Brighton. But it was necessary for the traveller to know his way about, and, if he were going through, to ask for a ticket to clear to Brighton; else the pikeman would issue a ticket, which cost just as much, to the next gate only, when another payment would be demanded. These were "tricks upon travellers" familiar to every road, and they earned the pikemen, as a class, a very unenviable reputation.

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It was here, in the great Christmas Eve snowstorm of 1836, that the London mail was snowed up. Its adventures illustrate the uncertainty of travelling the roads.

In those days you took your seat on your particular fancy in coaches, and paid your sixteen-shilling fare from London to Brighton, or *vice versa*, trusting (yet with heaviness of heart) in Providence to bring you to a happy issue from all the many dangers and discomforts of travelling. Occasionally it was brought home, by storm and flood, to those learned enough to know it, that "travelling" derived originally from "travail," and the discomforts of leaving one's own fireside in the winter are emphasized and underscored in the particulars of what befell at Stonepound in the great snowstorm of December 24th, 1836—a storm that paralysed communications throughout the kingdom.

"The Brighton up-mail of Sunday had travelled about eight miles from that town, when it fell into a drift of snow, from which it was impossible to extricate it without assistance. The guard immediately set off to obtain all necessary aid, but when he returned no trace whatever could be found, either of the coach, coachman or passengers, three in number. After much difficulty the coach was found, but could not be extricated from the hollow into which it had got. The guard did not reach London until seven o'clock on Tuesday night, having been obliged to travel with the bags on horseback, and in many instances to leave the main road and proceed across fields in order to avoid the deep drifts of snow.

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"The passengers, coachman, and guard slept at Clayton, seven miles from Brighton. The road from Hand Cross was quite impassable. The non-arrival of the mail at Crawley induced the postmaster there to send a man in a gig to ascertain the cause on Monday afternoon, and no tidings being heard of man, gig, or horse for several hours, another man was despatched on horseback. After a long search he found horse and gig completely built up in the snow. The man was in an exhausted state. After considerable difficulty the horse and gig were extricated, and the party returned to Crawley. The man had learned no tidings of the mail, and refused to go out again on any such exploring mission."

The Brighton mail from London, too, reached Crawley, but was compelled to return.

CLAYTON

Such were the incidents upon which the Christmas stories, of the type brought into favour

by Dickens, were built, but the stories are better to read than the incidents to experience. I am retrospectively sorry for those passengers who thus lost their Christmas dinners; but after all, it was better to miss the turkey and the Christmas pudding than to be "mashed into a pummy" in railway accidents, such as the awful heart-shaking series of collisions which took place on Sunday, August 25th, 1861, in the railway tunnel through Clayton Hill. On that day, in that gloomy place, twenty-four persons lost their lives, and one hundred and seventy-five were injured.

Three trains were timed to leave Brighton station on that fatal morning, two of them filled to crowding with excursionists; the other, an ordinary train, well filled and bound for London. Their times for starting were 8, 8.5, and 8.30 respectively, but owing to delays occasioned by press of traffic, they did not set out until considerably later, at 8.28, 8.31, and 8.35. At such terribly short intervals were they started, in times when no block system existed to render such close following comparatively safe.

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Clayton Tunnel was already considered a dangerous place, and there was situated at either end (north and south entrances) a signal-cabin furnished with telegraphic instruments and signal apparatus, by which the signalman at one end of the tunnel could communicate with his fellow at the other, and could notify "train in" or "train out" as might happen. This practically formed a primitive sort of "block system," especially devised for use in this mile and a quarter's dark burrow.

A "self-acting" signal placed in the cutting some distance from the southern entrance was supposed, upon the passage of every train, to set itself at "danger" for any following, until placed at "line clear" from the nearest cabin, but on this occasion the first train passed in, and the self-acting signal failed to act.

The second train, following upon the heels of the first, passed all unsuspecting, and dashed from daylight into the tunnel's mouth, the signalman, who had not received a message from the other end of the tunnel being clear, frantically waving his red flag to stop it. This signal apparently unnoticed by the driver, the train passed in.

At this moment the third train came into view, and at the same time the signalman was advised of the tunnel being clear of the first. Meanwhile, the driver of the second train, who *had* noticed the red flag, was, unknown to the signalman, backing his train out again. A message was sent to the north cabin for it, "train in"; but the man there, thinking this to be a mere repetition of the first, replied, "train out," referring, of course, to the first train.

The tunnel being to the southern signalman apparently clear, the third train was allowed to proceed, and met, midway, away from daylight, the retreating second train. The collision was terrible; the two rearward carriages of the second train were smashed to pieces, and the engine of the third, reared upon their wreck, poured fire and steam and scalding water upon the poor wretches who, wounded but not killed by the impact, were struggling to free themselves from the splintered and twisted remains of the two carriages.

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The heap of wreckage was piled up to the roof of the tunnel, whose interior presented a dreadful scene, the engine fire throwing a wild glare around, but partly obscured by the blinding, scalding clouds of steam; while this suddenly created Inferno resounded with the prayers, shrieks, shouts, and curses of injured and scatheless alike, all fearful of the coming of another train to add to the already sufficiently hideous ruin.

Fortunately no further catastrophe occurred; but nothing of horror was wanting, neither in the magnitude nor in the circumstances of the disaster, which long remained in the memories of those who read and was impossible ever to be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

XXX

From these levels at Stonepound the South Downs come full upon the view, crowned at Clayton Hill with windmills. Ditchling Beacon to the left, and the more commanding height of Wolstonbury to the extreme right, flank this great wall of earth, chalk, and grass—Wolstonbury semicircular in outline and bare, save only for some few clumps of yellow gorse and other small bushes.

Just where the road bends, and, crossing the railway, begins to climb Clayton Hill, the Gothic, battlemented entrance to Clayton Tunnel looms with a kind of scowling picturesqueness, well suited to its dark history, continually vomiting steam and smoke, like a hell's mouth.

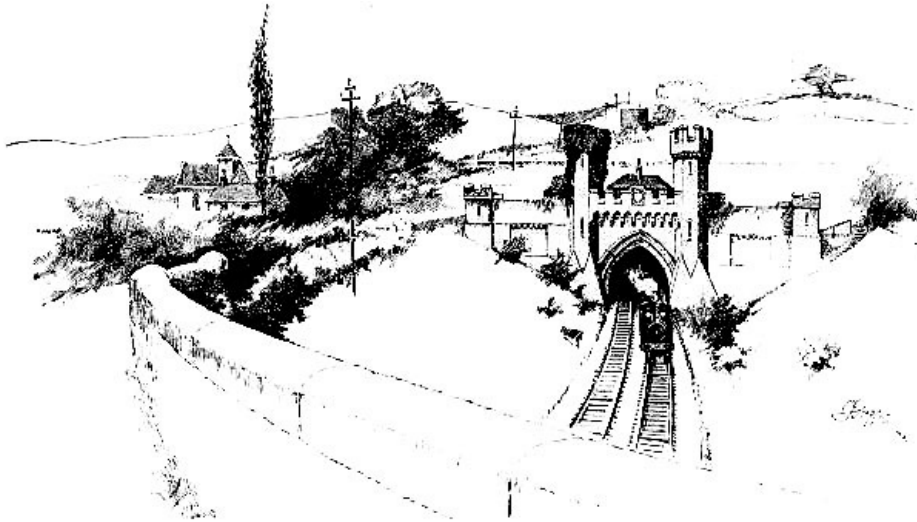
Above it rises the hill, with telegraph-poles and circular brick ventilating-shafts going in a long perspective above the chalky cutting in the road; and on the left hand the little rustic church of Clayton, humbly crouching under the lee of the downs.

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"Clayton Hill!" It was a word of dread among cyclists until, say, the year 1900, when rim-and-back-peddalling brakes superseded the inefficient spoon-brake, acting on the front tyre. Coming from Brighton, the hill drops steeply into the Weald of Sussex, and not only steeply, but the road takes a sudden and perilous turn over the railway bridge, at the foot of the descent, precisely where descending vehicles not under control attain their greatest speed. Here many a cyclist has been flung against the brick wall of the bridge, and his machine broken and himself injured; and seven have met their death here. Even in these days of good brakes a fatality has occurred, a cyclist being killed in November, 1902, in a collision with a trap.

From the summit of the downs the Weald is seen, spread out like a pictorial map, the little houses, the little trees, the ribbon-like roads looking like dainty models; the tiny trains moving out of Noah's Ark stations and vehicles crawling the highways like objects in a miniature land of make-believe. Looking southward, Brighton is seen—a pillar of smoke by day, a glowing, twinkling light at evening: but for all it is so near, it has very little affected the old pastoral country life of the downland villages. The shepherds, carrying as of yore their Pyecombe crooks, still tend huge flocks of sheep, and the dull and hollow music of the sheep-bells remains as ever the characteristic sound of the district. Next year the sheep will be shorn, just as they were when the Saxon churls worked for their Norman masters, and, unless a cataclysm of nature happens, they will continue so to be shorn centuries hence.

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CLAYTON TUNNEL.

But the shepherds have ceased to be vocal with the sheep-shearing songs of yore; it seems that their modern accomplishment of being able to read has stricken them dumb. Neither the words nor the airs of the old shearing-songs will ever again awaken the echoes in the daytime, nor make the roomy interiors of barns ring o' nights, as they were wont to do lang-syne, when the convivial shearing supper was held, and the ale hummed in the cup, and, later in the evening, in the head also.

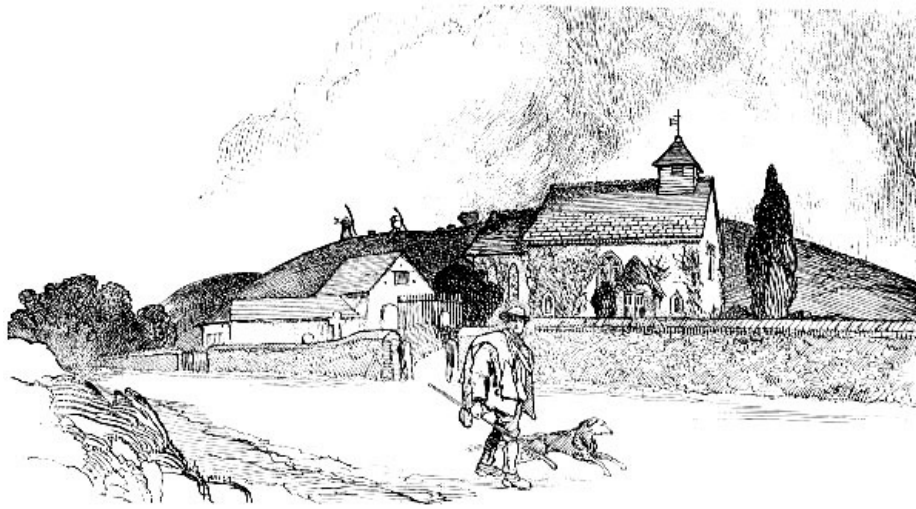
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But the Sussex peasant is by no means altogether bereft of his ancient ways. He is, in the more secluded districts, still a South Saxon; for the county, until comparatively recent times remote and difficult, plunged in its sloughs and isolated by reason of its forests, has no manufactures, and the rural parts do not attract immigrants from the shires, to leaven his peculiarities. The Sussex folk are still rooted firmly in what Drayton calls their "queachy ground." Words of Saxon origin are still the staple of the country talk; folk-tales, told in times when the South Saxon kingdom was yet a power of the Heptarchy, exist in remote corners, currently with the latest ribald song from the London halls; superstitions linger, as may be proved by he who pursues his inquiries judiciously, and thought moves slowly still in the bucolic mind.

The Norman Conquest left few traces upon the population, and the peasant is still the Saxon he ever has been; his occupations, too, tend to slowness of speech and mind. The Sussex man is by the very rarest chance engaged in any manufacturing industries. He is by choice and by force of circumstances ploughman, woodman, shepherd, market-gardener, or carter, and is become heavy as his soil, and curiously old-world in habit. All which traits are delightful to the preternaturally sharp Londoner, whose nerves occupy the most important place in his being. These country folk are new and interesting creatures for study to him who is weary of that acute product of civilisation—the London arab.

Sussex ways are, many of them, still curiously patriarchal. But a few years ago, and ploughing was commonly performed in these fields by oxen.

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CLAYTON CHURCH AND THE SOUTH DOWNS.

Their cottages that, until a few years ago, were the same as ever, have recently been very largely rebuilt, much to the sorrow of those who love the picturesque. They were thatched, for the most part, or tiled, or roofed with stone slabs. A living-room with yawning fireplace and capacious settle was the chief feature of them. The floor was covered with red bricks. When the settle was drawn up to the cheerful blaze the interior was cosy. But many of the most picturesque cottages were damp and insanitary, and although they pleased the artist to look at, it by no means followed that they would have contented him to live in.

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Outside, in the garden, grew homely flowers and useful vegetables, and perhaps by the gnarled apple-tree there stood in the sun a row of bee-hives. Sussex superstition declared that they might, indeed, be purchased, but not for silver:

If you wish your bees to thrive,
Gold must be paid for ev'ry hive;
For when they're bought with other money,
There will be neither swarm nor honey.

The year was one long round of superstitious customs and observances, and it is not without them, even now. But superstition is shy and not visible on the surface.

In January began the round, for from Christmas Eve to Twelfth Day was the proper time for "worsling," that is "wassailing" the orchards, but more particularly the apple-trees. The country-folk would gather round the trees and chant in chorus, rapping the trunks the while with sticks:

Stand fast root, bear well top;
Pray, good God, send us a howling crop
Ev'ry twig, apples big;
Ev'ry bough, apples enow';
Hats full, caps full,
Full quarters, sacks full.

These wassailing folk were generally known as "howlers"; "doubtless rightly," says a Sussex archæologist, "for real old Sussex music is in a minor key, and can hardly be distinguished from howling." This knowledge enlightens our reading of the pages of the Rev. Giles Moore, of Horsted Keynes, when he records: "1670, 26th Dec., I gave the howling boys 6d.;" a statement which, if not illumined by acquaintance with these old customs, would be altogether incomprehensible.

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Then, if mud were brought into the house in the month of January, the cleanly housewife, at other times jealous of her spotless floors, would have nothing of reproof to say, for was this not "January butter." and the harbinger of luck to all beneath the roof-tree?

Saints' days, too, had their observances; the habits of bird and beast were the almanacs and weather warnings of the villagers, all innocent of any other meteorological department, and they have been handed down in doggerel rhyme, like this of the Cuckoo, to the present day:

In April he shows his bill,
In May he sings o' night and day,
In June he'll change his tune,
By July prepare to fly,
By August away he must.
If he stay till September,
'Tis as much as the oldest man
Can ever remember.

If he stayed till September, he might possibly see a sight which no mere human eye ever

beheld: he might observe a practice to which old Sussex folk know the Evil One to be addicted. For on Old Michaelmas Day, October 10th, the Devil goes round the country, and—dirty devil—spits on the blackberries. Should any persons eat one on October 11th, they, or some one of their kin, will surely die or fall into great trouble before the close of the year.

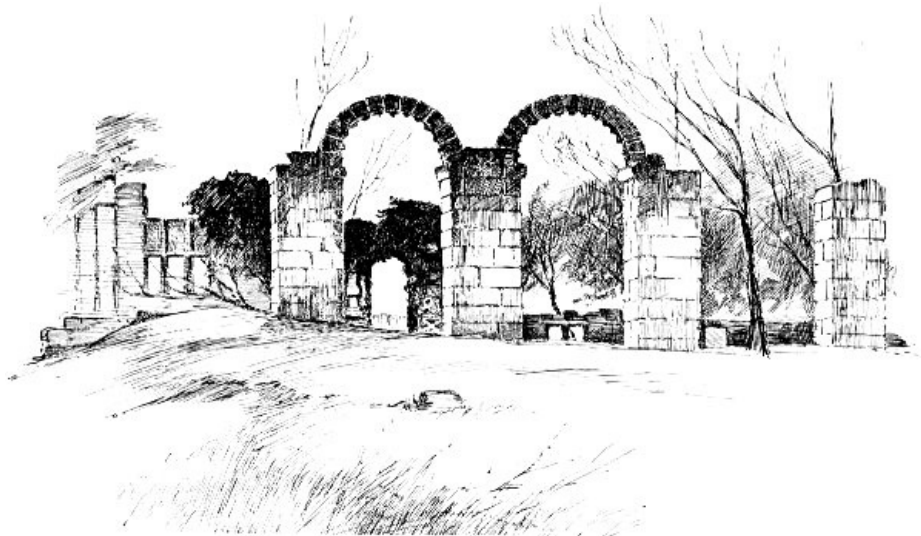
Sussex has neither the imaginative Celtic race of Cornwall nor that county's fantastic scenery to inspire legends; but is it at all wonderful that old beliefs die hard in a county so inaccessible as this has hitherto been? We have read travellers' tales of woful happenings on the road; hear now Defoe, who is writing in the year 1724, of another proof of heavy going on the highways: "I saw," says he, "an ancient lady, and a lady of very good quality, I assure you, drawn to church in her coach by six oxen; nor was it done in frolic or humour, but from sheer necessity, the way being so stiff and deep that no horses could go in it." All which says much for the piety of this ancient lady. Only a few years later, in 1729, died Dame Judith, widow of Sir Henry Hatsell, who in her will, dated January 10th, 1728, directed that her body should be buried at Preston, should she happen to die at such a time of year when the roads were passable; otherwise, at any place her executors might think suitable. It so happened that she died in the month of June, so compliance with her wishes was possible.

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XXXI

And now to trace the Hickstead and Bolney route from Hand Cross, that parting of the ways overlooking the most rural parts of Sussex. Hand Cross, it has already been said, is in the parish of Slaugham, which lies deep down in a very sequestered wood, where the head-springs issuing from the hillsides are never dry and the air is always heavy with moisture. "Slougham-cum-Crolé" is the title of the place in ancient records, "Crolé" being Crawley. It was from its ancient bogs and morasses that it obtained its name, pronounced by the natives "Slaffam," and it was certainly due to them that the magnificent manor-house—almost a palace—of the Coverts, the old lords of the manor—was deserted and began to fall to pieces so soon as built.

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THE RUINS OF SLAUGHAM PLACE.

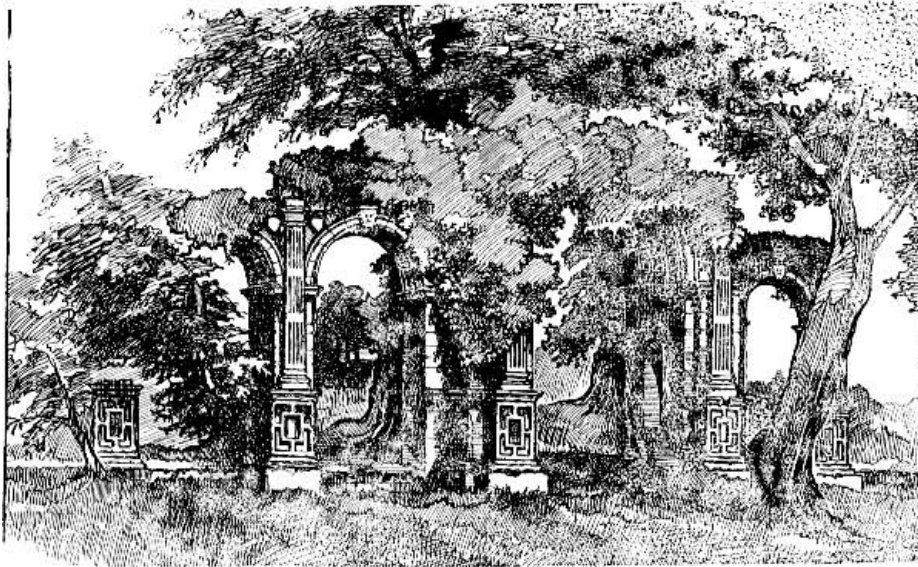
The Coverts, now and long since utterly extinct, were once among the most powerful, as they were also among the noblest, in the county. They were of Norman descent, and, to use a well-worn phrase, "came over with the Conqueror"; but they are not found settled here until towards the close of the fifteenth century, being preceded, as lords of the manor, by the Poynings of Poynings, and by the Berkeleys and Stanleys. Sir Walter Covert, to whose ancestors the manor fell by marriage, was the builder of that Slaugham Place whose ruins yet remain to show his idea of what was due to a landed proprietor of his standing. They cover, within their enclosing walls of red brick, which rise from the yet partly filled moat, over three acres of what is now orchard and meadowland. In spring the apple trees bloom pink and white amid the grey and lichen-stained ashlar of the ruined walls and arches of Palladian architecture, and the lush grass grows tall around the cold hearths of the roofless rooms. The noble gateway leads now, not from courtyard to hall, but doorless, with its massive stones wrenched apart by clinging ivy, stands merely as some sort of key to the enigma of ground plan presented by walls ruined in greater part to the level of the watery turf.

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The singular facts of high wall and moat surrounding a mansion of Jacobean build seem to point to an earlier building, contrived with these defences when men thought first of security and afterwards of comfort. Some few mullioned windows of much earlier date than the greater part of the mansion remain to confirm the thought.

That a building of the magnificence attested by these crumbling walls should have been allowed to fall into decay so shortly after its completion is a singular fact. Though the male line of the Coverts failed, and their estates passed, by the marriage of their womankind, into other hands, yet their alienation would not necessarily imply the destruction of their roof-tree. The explanation is to be sought in the situation and defects of the ground upon which Slaugham Place stood: a marshy tract of land, which no builder of to-day would think of selecting as a site for so important a dwelling. Home as it was of swamps and damps, and quashy as it is even now, it must have been in the past the breeding-ground of agues and chills innumerable.

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THE ENTRANCE: RUINS OF SLAUGHAM PLACE.

A true exemplar this of that Sussex of which in 1690 a barrister on circuit, whose profession led him by evil chance into this county, writes to his wife: "The Sussex ways are bad and ruinous beyond imagination. I vow 'tis melancholy consideration that mankind will inhabit such a heap of dirt for a poor livelihood. The county is in a sink of about fourteen miles broad, which receives all the water that falls from the long ranges of hills on both sides of it, and not being furnished with convenient draining, is kept moist and soft by the water till the middle of a dry summer, which is only able to make it tolerable to ride for a short time."

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Such soft and shaky earth as this could not bear the weight of so ponderous a structure as was Slaugham Place: the swamps pulled its masonry apart and rotted its fittings. Despairing of victory over the reeking moisture, its owners left it for healthier sites. Then the rapacity of all those neighbouring folk who had need of building material completed the havoc wrought by natural forces, and finally Slaugham Place became what it is to-day. Its clock-tower was pulled down and removed to Cuckfield Park, where it now spans the entrance drive of that romantic spot, and its handsomely carved Jacobean stairway is to-day the pride and glory of the "Star" Hotel at Lewes.

The Coverts are gone; their heraldic shields, in company of an architectural frieze of greyhounds' and leopards' heads and skulls of oxen wreathed in drapery, still decorate what remains of the north front of their mansion, and their achievements are repeated upon their tombs within the little church of Slaugham on the hillside. You may, if heraldically versed, learn from their quarterings into what families they married; but the deeds they wrought, and their virtues and their vices, are, for the most part, clean forgotten, even as their name is gone out of the land, who once, as tradition has it, travelled southward from London to the sea on their own manors.

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BOLNEY.

The squat, shingled spirelet of Slaugham Church and its decorated architecture mark the spot where many of this knightly race lie buried. In the Covert Chapel is the handsome brass of John Covert, who died in 1503; and in the north wall of the chancel is the canopied altar-tomb of Richard Covert, the much-married, who died in 1547, and is represented, in company of three of his four wives, by little brass effigies, together with a curious brass representing the Saviour rising from the tomb, guarded by armed knights of weirdly-humorous aspect, the more diverting because executed all innocent of joke or irreverence.

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Here is a rubbing, nothing exaggerated, of one of these guardian knights, to bear me up.



FROM A BRASS AT SLAUGHAM.

Another Richard, but twice married, who died in 1579, is commemorated in a large and elaborate monument in the Covert Chapel, whereon are sculptured, in an attitude of prayer, Richard himself, his two wives, six sons, and eight daughters.

Last of the Coverts whose name is perpetuated here is Jane, who deceased in 1586.

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HICKSTEAD PLACE.

Beside these things, Slaugham claims some interest as containing the mansion of Ashfold, where once resided Mrs. Matcham, a sister of Nelson. Indeed, it was while staying here that the Admiral received the summons which sped him on his last and most glorious and fatal voyage. Slaugham, too, with St. Leonard's Forest, contributes a title to the peerage, Lord St. Leonards' creation being of "Slaugham, in the county of Sussex."

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XXXII

This route to Brighton is singularly rural and lovely, and particularly beautiful in the way of copses and wooded hollows, whence streamlets trickle away to join the river Adur. Villages lie shyly just off its course, and must be sought, only an occasional inn or smithy, or the lodge-gates of modern estates called into existence since the making of the road in 1813, breaking the solitude. The existence of Bolney itself is only hinted at by the pinnacles of its church tower peering over the topmost branches of distant trees. "Bowney," as the countryfolk pronounce the name, is worth a little detour, for it is a compact, picturesque spot that might almost have been designed by an artist with a single thought for pictorial composition, so well do its trees, the houses, old and new, the church, and the "Eight Bells" inn, group for effect.

Down the road, rather over a mile distant from Bolney, and looking so remarkably picturesque from the highway that even the least preoccupied with antiquities must needs stop and admire, is Hickstead Place, a small but beautiful residence, the seat of Miss Davidson, dating from the time of Henry the Seventh, with a curious detached building in two floors, of the same or even somewhat earlier period, on the lawn; remarkable for the large vitrified bricks in its gables, worked into rough crosses and supposed to indicate a former use as a chapel. History, however, is silent that point; but, as the inquirer may discover for himself, it now fulfils the twin offices of a studio and a lumber room. The parish church of Twineham, little more than a mile away, is of the same period, and built of similar materials. Hickstead Place has been in the same family for close upon four hundred years, and as an old house without much in the way of a history, and with its ancient features largely retained and adapted to modern domestic needs, is a striking example both of the continuity and the placidity of English life. The staircase walls are frescoed in a blue monochrome with sixteenth-century representations of field-sports and hunting scenes, very curious and interesting. The roof is covered with slabs of Horsham stone, and the oak entrance is original. Ancient yews, among them one clipped to resemble a bear sitting on his rump, give an air of distinction to the lawn, completed by a pair of eighteenth-century wrought-iron gates between red brick pillars.

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NEWTIMBER PLACE.

Sayers Common is a modern hamlet, of a few scattered houses. Albourne lies away to the right. From here the Vale of Newtimber opens out and the South Downs rise grandly ahead. Noble trees, singly and in groups, grow plentiful; and where they are at their thickest, in the sheltered hollow of the hills, stands Newtimber Place, belonging to Viscount Buxton, a noble mansion with Queen Anne front of red brick and flint, and an Elizabethan back, surrounded by a broad moat of clear water, formed by embanking the beginnings of a little stream that comes willing out of the chalky bosom of the hills. It is a rarely complete and beautiful scene.

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Beyond it, above the woods where in spring the fluting blackbird sings of love and the delights of a mossy nest in the sheltered vale, rises Dale Hill, with its old toll-house. It was in the neighbouring Dale Vale that Tom Sayers, afterwards the unconquered champion of England, fought his first fight.

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PYECOMBE: JUNCTION OF THE ROADS.

He was not, as often stated, an Irishman, but the son of a man descended from a thoroughly Sussexian stock. The name of Sayers is well known throughout Sussex, and in particular at Hand Cross, Burgess Hill, and Hurstpierpoint. There is even, as we have already seen, a Sayers Common on the road. Tom Sayers, however, was born at Brighton. He worked as a bricklayer at building the Preston Viaduct of the Brighton and Lewes Railway: that great viaduct which spans the Brighton Road as you enter the town. He retired in 1860, after his fight with Heenan, and when he died, in 1865, the reputation of prize-fighting died with him.

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At the summit of Dale Hill stands Pyecombe, above the junction of roads, on the rounded shoulder of the downs. The little rubbly and flinty churches of Pyecombe, Patcham, Preston, and Clayton are very similar in appearance exteriorly and all are provided with identical towers finished off with a shingled spirelet of insignificant proportions. This little Norman church, consisting of a tiny nave and chancel only, is chiefly interesting as possessing a triple chancel arch and an ancient font.

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PATCHAM.

Over the chancel arch hangs a painting of the Royal Arms, painted in the time of George the Third, faded and tawdry, with dandified unicorn and a gamboge lion, all teeth and mane, regarding the congregation on Sundays, and empty benches at other times, with the most amiable of grins. It is quite typical of Pyecombe that those old Royal Arms should still remain; for the place is what it was then, and then it doubtless was what it had been in the days of good Queen Anne, or even of Elizabeth, to go no further back. The grey tower tops the hill as it has done since the Middle Ages, the few cottages cluster about it as of yore, and only those who lived in those humble homes, or reared that church, are gone. Making the circuit of the church, I look upon the stone quoins and the bedded flints of those walls; and as I think how they remain, scarce grizzled by the weathering of countless storms, and how those builders are not merely gone, but are as forgotten as though they had never existed, I could have it in my heart to hate the insensate handiwork of man, to which he has given an existence: the unfeeling walls of stone and flint and mortar that can outlast him and the memory of him by, it may well be, a thousand years.

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XXXIII

From Pyecombe we come through a cleft in the great chalk ridge of the South Downs into the country of the "deans." North and South of the Downs are two different countries—so different that if they were inhabited by two peoples and governed by two rulers and a frontier ran along the ridge, it would seem no strange thing. But both are England, and not merely England, but the same county of Sussex. It is a wooded, Wealden district of deep clay we have left, and a hungry, barren land of chalk we enter. But it is a sunny land, where the grassy shoulders of the mighty downs, looking southward, catch and retain the heat, and almost make you believe Brighton to be named from its bright and lively skies, and not from that very shadowy Anglo-Saxon saint, Bricthelm.

THE
DEANS

The country of the deans is, in general, a barren country. Every one knows Brighton and its neighbourhood to be places where trees are rare enough to be curiosities, but in this generally treeless land there are hollows and shallow valleys amid the dry chalky hillsides where little boscaiges form places for the eye, tired of much bright dazzling sunlight, to rest. These are the deans. Very often they have been made the sites of villages; and all along this southern aspect of these hills of the Sussex seaboard you will find deans of various qualifications, from East Dean and West Dean, by Eastbourne, to Denton (which is, of course "Dean-ton") near Newhaven, Rottingdean, Ovingdean, Balsdean, Standean, Roedean, and the two that are strung along these last miles into Brighton—Pangdean and Withdean. Most of these show the same characteristics of clustered woodlands in a sheltered fold of the hills, where a grey little flinty church with stunted spirelet presides over a few large farms and a group of little cottages. Time and circumstance have changed those that do not happen to conform to this general rule; and, as ill luck will have it, our first "dean" is one of these nonconformists.

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Pangdean is a hamlet situated in that very forbidding spot where the downs are at their baldest, and where the chalk-heaps turned up in the making of the Brighton Railway call aloud for the agricultural equivalent of Tatcho and its rivals. It is little more than an unkempt farm and a roadside pond of dirty water where acrobatic ducks perform astonishing feats of agility, standing on their heads and exhibiting their posteriors in the manner of their kind. But within sight, down the stretch of road, is Patcham, and beyond it

the hamlet of Withdean, more conformable.

Why Patcham is not nominally, as it is actually in form and every other circumstance, a "dean" is not clear. There it lies in the vale, just as a dean should and does do; with sheltering ridges about it, and in the hollow the church, the cottages, and the woodlands. Very noble woodlands, too: tall elms with clanging rookeries, and, nestling below them, an old toll-house.

Not so *very* old a toll-house, for it was the successor of Preston turnpike-gate which, erected on the outskirts of Brighton town about 1807, was removed north of Withdean in 1854, as the result of an agitation set afoot in 1853, when the Highway Trustees were applying to Parliament for another term of years. It and its legend "NO TRUST," painted large for all the world to see, and hateful in a world that has ever preferred credit, were a nuisance and a gratuitous satire upon human nature. No one regretted them when their time came, December 31st, 1878; least of all the early cyclists, who had the luxury of paying at Patcham Gate, and yielded their "tuppences" with what grace they might.

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On the less hallowed north side of the churchyard of Patcham may still with difficulty be spelled the inscription:

Sacred to the memory of DANIEL SCALES,
who was unfortunately shot on Thursday evening,
November 7th, 1796.

Alas! swift flew the fatal lead,
Which piercèd through the young man's head.
He instant fell, resigned his breath,
And closed his languid eyes in death.
All you who do this stone draw near,
Oh! pray let fall the pitying tear.
From this sad instance may we all,
Prepare to meet Jehovah's call.

It is a relic of those lawless old days of smuggling that are so dear to youthful minds. Youth, like the Irish peasant, is always anarchist and "agin the Government"; and certainly the deeds of derring-do that were wrought by smuggler and Revenue officer alike sometimes stir even middle-aged blood.

Smuggling was rife here. Where, indeed, was it not in those times? and Daniel Scales was the most desperate of a daring gang. The night when he was "unfortunately shot," he, with many others of the gang, was coming from Brighton laden heavily with smuggled goods, and on the way they fell in with a number of soldiers and excise officers, near this place. The smugglers fled, leaving their casks of liquor to take care of themselves, careful only to make good their own escape, saving only Daniel Scales, who, met by a "riding officer," was called upon to surrender himself and his booty, which he refused to do. The officer, who himself had been in early days engaged in many smuggling transactions, but was now a brand plucked from the burning, and zealous for King and Customs, knew that Daniel was "too good a man for him, for they had tried it out before," so he shot him through the head; and as the bullet, like those in the nursery rhyme, was made of "lead, lead, lead," Daniel was killed. Alas! poor Daniel.



OLD DOVECOT, PATCHAM.

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An ancient manorial pigeon-house or dovecot still remains at Patcham, sturdily built of Sussex flints, banded with brick, and wonderfully buttressed.

PRESTON

Preston is now almost wholly urban, but its Early English church, although patched and altered, still keeps its fresco representing the murder of Thomas à Becket, and that of an angel disputing with the Devil for the possession of a departed soul. The angel, like some celestial grocer, is weighing the shivering soul in the balance, while the Devil, sitting in one scale, makes the unfortunate soul in the other "kick the beam."

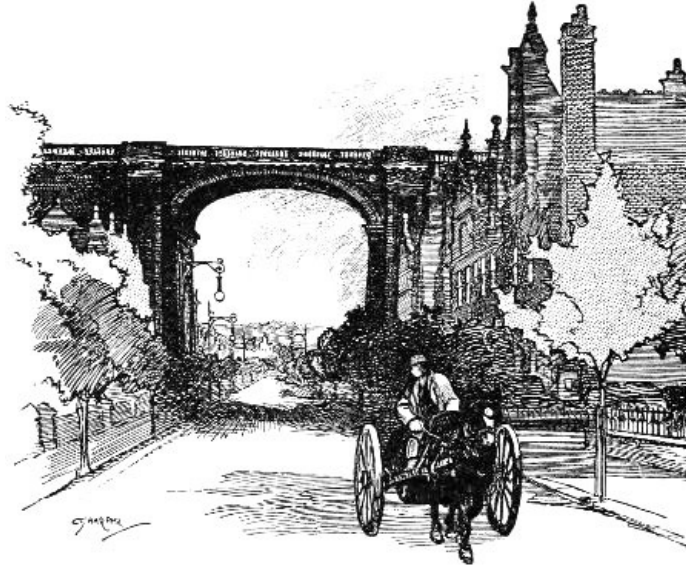
XXXIV

It has very justly been remarked that Brighton is treeless, but that complaint by no means holds good respecting the approach to it through Withdean and Preston Park, which is exceptionally well wooded, the tall elms forming an archway infinitely more lovable than the gigantic brick arch of the railway viaduct that poses as a triumphal entry into the town.

It is Brighton's ever-open front door. No occasion to knock or ring; enter and welcome to that cheery town: a brighter, cleaner London.

Brighton has renewed its youth. It has had ill fortune as well as good, and went through a middle period when, deserted by Royalty, and not yet fully won to a broader popularity, its older houses looked shabby and its newer mean. But that period has passed. What remains of the age of George the Fourth has with the lapse of time and the inevitable changes in taste, become almost archæologically interesting, and the newer Brighton approaches a Parisian magnificence and display. The Pavilion of George the Fourth was the last word in gorgeousness of his time, but it wears an old-maidish appearance of dowdiness in midst of the Brighton of the twentieth century.

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PRESTON VIADUCT: ENTRANCE TO BRIGHTON.

The Pavilion is of course the very hub of Brighton. The pilgrim from London comes to it past the great church of St. Peter, built in 1824, in a curious Gothic, and thence past the Level to the Old Steyne. The names of the terraces and rows of houses on either side proclaim their period, even if those characteristic semicircular bayed fronts did not: they are York Place, Hanover Terrace, Gloucester Place, Adelaide this, Caroline that, and Brunswick t'other: all names associated with the late Georgian period.

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The Old Steyne was in Florizel's time the rendezvous of fashion. The "front" and the lawns of Hove have long since usurped that distinction, but the gardens and the old trees of the Old Steyne are more beautiful than ever. They are the only few the town itself can boast.

BRIGHTON

Treeless Brighton has been the derision alike of Doctor Johnson and Tom Hood, to name no others. Johnson, who first visited Brighton in 1770 in the company of the Thrales and Fanny Burney, declared the neighbourhood to be so desolate that "if one had a mind to hang one's self for desperation at being obliged to live there, it would be difficult to find a tree on which to fasten a rope." At any rate it would have needed a particularly stout tree to serve Johnson's turn, had he a mind to it. Johnson was an ingrate, and not worthy of the good that Doctor Brighton wrought upon him.

Hood, on the other hand, is jocular in an airier and lighter-hearted fashion. His punning humour (a kind of witticism which Johnson hated with the hatred of a man who delved deep after Greek and Latin roots) is to Johnson's as the footfall of a cat to the earth-shaking tread of the elephant. His, too, is a manner of gibe that is susceptible of being construed into praise by the townsfolk. "Of all the trees," says he, "I ever saw, none could be mentioned in the same breath with the magnificent beach at Brighton."

But though these trees of the Pavilion give a grateful shelter from the glare of the sun and the roughness of the wind, they hide little of the tawdriness of that architectural enormity. The gilding has faded, the tinsel become tarnished, and the whole pile of cupolas and minarets is reduced to one even tint, that is not white nor grey, nor any distinctive shade of any colour. How the preposterous building could ever have been admired (as it undoubtedly was at one time) surpasses belief. Its cost, one shrewdly suspects—it is supposed to have cost over £1,000,000—was what appealed to the imagination.

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That reptile Croker, the creature of that Lord Hertford whom one recognises as the "Marquis of Steyne" in "Vanity Fair," admired it, as assuredly did not rough and ready Cobbett, who opines, "A good idea of the building may be formed by placing the pointed half of a large turnip upon the middle of a board, with four smaller ones at the corners."

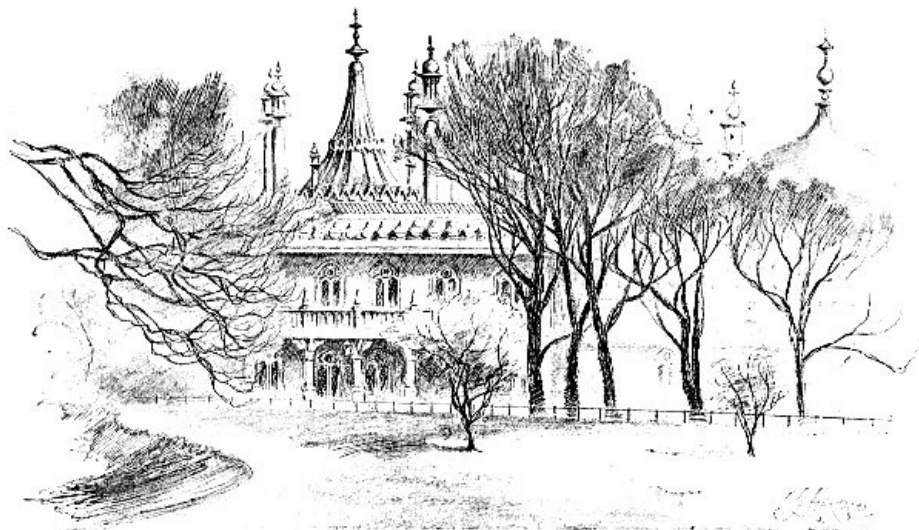
That is no bad description of this monument of extravagance and bad taste. Begun so early

as 1784, it was, after many alterations, pullings-down and rebuildings, completed in 1818, with the exception of the north gate, the work of William the Fourth in 1832.

The Pavilion was, in fact, the product of an ill-informed enthusiasm for Chinese architecture, mingled with that of India and Constantinople, and was built as a Marine Palace, to combine the glories of the Summer Palace at Pekin with those of the Alhambra. It suffers nowadays, much more than it need do, from the utter absence of exterior colouring. A judicious scheme of brilliant colour and gilding, in accordance with its style, would not only relieve the dull drab monotone, but would go some way to justify the Prince's taste.

But, be it what it may, the Pavilion set the seal of a certain permanence upon the princely and royal favours extended to the town, whose population, numbered at 2,000 in 1761 and 3,600 in 1786, had grown to 5,669 by 1794 and 12,012 in 1811. In the succeeding ten years it had more than doubled itself, being returned in 1821 at 24,429. How Georgian Brighton is wholly swallowed up and engulfed in the modern towns of Brighton, Hove, and Preston is seen in the present population of 161,000—the equivalent of nearly six other Brightons of the size of that in the last year of the reign of George the Fourth.

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THE PAVILION.

One of the best stories connected with the Pavilion is that told so well in the "Four Georges":

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"And now I have one more story of the bacchanalian sort, in which Clarence and York and the very highest personage in the realm, the great Prince Regent, all play parts.

"The feast was described to me by a gentleman who was present at the scene. In Gilray's caricatures, and amongst Fox's jolly associates, there figures a great nobleman, the Duke of Norfolk, called Jockey of Norfolk in his time, and celebrated for his table exploits. He had quarrelled with the Prince, like the rest of the Whigs; but a sort of reconciliation had taken place, and now, being a very old man, the Prince invited him to dine and sleep at the Pavilion, and the old Duke drove over from his Castle of Arundel with his famous equipage of grey horses, still remembered in Sussex.

"The Prince of Wales had concocted with his royal brothers a notable scheme for making the old man drunk. Every person at table was enjoined to drink wine with the Duke—a challenge which the old toper did not refuse. He soon began to see that there was a conspiracy against him; he drank glass for glass; he overthrew many of the brave. At last the first gentleman of Europe proposed bumpers of brandy. One of the royal brothers filled a great glass for the Duke. He stood up and tossed off the drink. 'Now,' says he, 'I will have my carriage and go home.'

"The Prince urged upon him his previous promise to sleep under the roof where he had been so generously entertained. 'No,' he said; 'he had had enough of such hospitality. A trap had been set for him; he would leave the place at once, and never enter its doors more.'

"The carriage was called, and came; but, in the half-hour's interval, the liquor had proved too potent for the old man; his host's generous purpose was answered, and the Duke's old grey head lay stupefied on the table. Nevertheless, when his post-chaise was announced, he staggered to it as well as he could, and, stumbling in, bade the postilions drive to Arundel.

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"They drove him for half an hour round and round the Pavilion lawn; the poor old man fancied he was going home.

"When he awoke that morning, he was in a bed at the Prince's hideous house at Brighton. You may see the place now for sixpence; they have fiddlers there every day, and sometimes

buffoons and mountebanks hire the Riding-House and do their tricks and tumbling there. The trees are still there, and the gravel walks round which the poor old sinner was trotted."

CHARLES,
DUKE OF
NORFOLK

Very telling indignation, no doubt, but the gross defect of Thackeray's "Four Georges" is its want of sincerity. Sympathy is wasted on that Duke, who was one of the filthiest voluptuaries of his age, or of any other since that of Heliogabalus. Charles Howard, eleventh Duke of Norfolk, was not merely a bestial drunkard, like his father before him, capable of drinking all his contemporaries under the table; but was a swinish creature in every way. Gorging himself to repletion with food and drink, he would make himself purposely sick, in order to begin again. A contemporary account of him as a member of the Beefsteak Club described him as a man of huge unwieldy fatness, who, having gorged until he had eaten himself into incapacity for speaking or moving, would motion for a bell to be rung, when servants, entering with a litter, would carry him off to bed. It was well written of him:

On Norfolk's tomb inscribe this placard:
He lived a beast and died a blackguard.

This "very old," "poor old man" of Thackeray's misplaced sympathy did not, as a matter of fact, live to a very great age. He died in 1815, aged sixty-nine.

Practical joking was elevated to the status of a fine art at Brighton by the Prince and his merry men. A characteristic story of him is that told of a drive to Brighton races, when he was accompanied in his great yellow barouche by Townsend, the Bow Street runner, who was present to protect the Prince from insult or robbery at the hands of the multitude. "It was a position," says my authority, "which gave His Royal Highness an opportunity to practise upon his guardian a somewhat unpleasant joke. Turning suddenly to Townsend, just at the termination of a race, he exclaimed, 'By Jove, Townsend, I've been robbed; I had with me some damson tarts, but they are now gone.' 'Gone!' said Townsend, rising; 'impossible!' 'Yes,' rejoined the Prince, 'and you are the purloiner,' at the same time taking from the seat whereon the officer had been sitting the crushed crust of the asserted missing tarts, and adding, 'This is a sad blot upon your reputation as a vigilant officer.' 'Rather say, your Royal Highness, a sad stain upon my escutcheon,' added Townsend, raising the gilt-buttoned tails of his blue coat and exhibiting the fruit-stained seat of his nankeen inexpressibles."

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XXXV

But it was not this practical-joking Prince who first discovered Brighton. It would never have attained its great vogue without him, but it would have been the health resort of a certain circle of fashion—an inferior Bath, in fact. To Dr. Richard Russell—the name sometimes spelt with one "l"—who visited the little village of Brighthelmstone in 1750, belongs the credit of discovering the place to an ailing fashionable world. He died in 1759, long ere the sun of royal splendour first rose upon the fishing-village; but even before the Prince of Wales first visited Brighthelmstone in 1782, it had attained a certain popularity, as the "Brighthelmstone Guide" of July, 1777, attests, in these halting verses:

This town or village of renown,
Like London Bridge, half broken down,
Few years ago was worse than Wapping,
Not fit for a human soul to stop in;
But now, like to a worn-out shoe,
By patching well, the place will do.
You'd wonder much, I'm sure, to see
How it's becramm'd with quality.

[Pg 263]

And so on.

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THE CLIFFS, BRIGHTHELMSTONE, 1789.
From an aquatint after Rowlandson.

[Pg 265]



DR. RICHARD RUSSELL.
From the portrait by Zoffany.

GUIDES
 TO
 BRIGHTON

Brighthelmstone, indeed, has had more Guides written upon it than even Bath has had, and very curious some of them are become in these days. They range from lively to severe, from grave to gay, from the serious screeds of Russell and Dr. Relhan, his successor, to the light and airy, and not too admirable puffs of to-day. But, however these guides may vary, they all agree in harking back to that shadowy Brighthelm who is supposed to have given his peculiar name to the ancient fisher-village here established time out of mind. In the days when "County Histories" were first let loose, in folio volumes, upon an unoffending land, historians, archæologists, and other interested parties seemed at a loss for the derivation of the place-name, and, rather than confess themselves ignorant of its meaning, they conspired together to invent a Saxon archbishop, who, dying in the odour of sanctity and the ninth century, bequeathed his appellation to what is now known, in a contracted form, as Brighton.

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But the man is not known who has unassailable proofs to show of this Brighthelm's having so honoured the fisher-folk's hovels with his name.

Thackeray, greatly daring, considering that the Fourth George is the real patron—saint, we can hardly say; let us make it king—of the town, elected to deliver his lectures upon the "Four Georges" at Brighton, among other places, and to that end made, with monumental assurance, a personal application at the Town Hall for the hire of the banqueting-room in the Royal Pavilion.

But one of the Aldermen, who chanced to be present, suggested, with extra-aldermanic wit, that the Town Hall would be equally suitable, intimating at the same time that it was not considered as strictly etiquette to "abuse a man in his own house." The witty Alderman's suggestion, we are told, was acted upon, and the Town Hall engaged forthwith.

It argued considerable courage on the lecturer's part to declaim against George the Fourth anywhere in that town which His Majesty had, by his example, conjured up from almost nothingness. It does not seem that Thackeray was, after all, ill received at Brighton; whence thoughts arise as to the ingratitude and fleeting memories of them that were either in the

first or second generation, advantaged by the royal preference for this bleak stretch of shore beneath the bare South Downs, open to every wind that blows. Surely gratitude is well described as a "lively sense of favours to come," and they, no doubt, considered that the statue they had erected in the Steyne gardens to him was a full discharge of all obligations. Nor is the history of that effigy altogether creditable. It was erected in 1828, as the result of a movement among Brighton tradesfolk in 1820, to honour the memory of one who had incidentally made the fortunes of so many among them; but although the subscription list remained open for eight years and a half, it did not provide the £3,000 agreed upon to be paid to Chantrey, the sculptor of it.

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The bronze statue presides to-day over a cab-rank, and the sea-salt breezes have strongly oxidised the face to an arsenical green; insulting, because greenness was not a distinguishing trait in the character of George the Fourth.

LAST OF
THE
REGENCY.

The surrounding space is saturated with memories of the Regency; but the roysterers are all gone and the recollection of them is dim. Prince and King, the Barrymores—Hellgate, Newgate, and Cripplegate—brothers three; Mrs. Fitzherbert, "the only woman whom George the Fourth ever really loved," and whom he married; Sir John Lade, the reckless, the frolicsome, historic in so far that he was the first who publicly wore trousers: these, with others innumerable, are long since silent. No more are they heard who with unseemly revelry affronted the midnight moon, or upset the decrepit watchman in his box. Those days and nights are done, nor are they likely to be revived while the Brighton policemen remain so big and muscular.

With the death of George the Fourth the play was played out. William the Fourth occasionally patronised Brighton, but decorum then obtained, and Queen Victoria and Prince Albert not only disliked the memory of the last of the Georges, but could not find at the Pavilion the privacy they desired. The Queen therefore sold it to the then Commissioners of Brighton in 1850, for the sum of £53,000, and never afterwards visited the town.

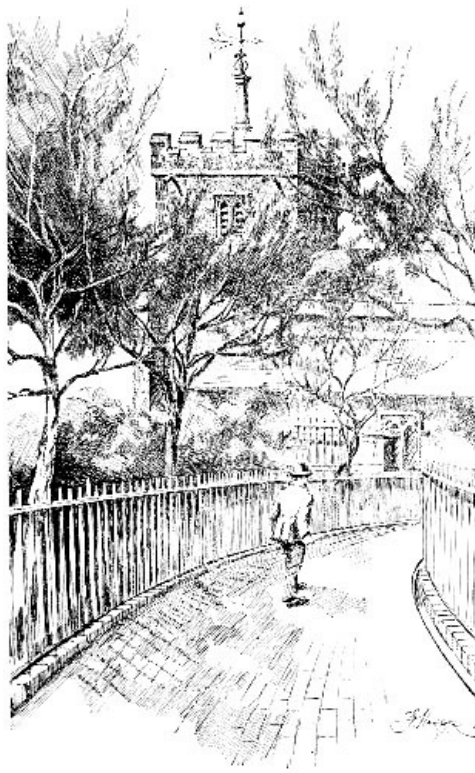
[Pg 268]

XXXVI

The Pavilion and the adjoining Castle Square, where one of the old coach booking-offices still survives as a railway receiving-office, are to most people the ultimate expressions of antiquity at Brighton; but there remains one landmark of what was "Brighthelmstone" in the ancient parish church of St. Nicholas, standing upon the topmost eyrie of the town, and overlooking from its crowded and now disused graveyard more than a square mile of crowded roofs below. It is probably the place referred to by a vivacious Frenchman who, a hundred and twenty years ago, summed up "Brigtemstone" as "a miserable village, commanded by a cemetery and surrounded by barren mountains."

From here you can, with some trouble, catch just a glimpse of the Watery horizon through the grey haze that rises from countless chimney-pots, and never a breeze but blows laden with the scent of soot and smoke. Yet, for all the changed fortune that changeable Time has brought this hoary and grimy place, it has not been deprived of interesting mementoes. You may, with patience, discover the tombstone of Phoebe Hassall, a centenarian of pith and valour, who, in her youthful days, in male attire, joined the army of His Majesty King George the Second and warred with her regiment in many lands; and all around are the resting-places of many celebrities, who, denied a wider fame, have yet their place in local annals; but prominent, in place and in fame, is the tomb of that Captain Tattersell who (it must be owned, for a consideration) sailed away one October morn of 1651 across the Channel, carrying with him the hope of the clouded Royalists aboard his grimy craft.

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ST. NICHOLAS, THE OLD PARISH CHURCH OF BRIGHTHELMSTONE.

His altar-tomb stands without the southern doorway of the church, and reads curiously to modern ears. That not one of all the many who have had occasion to print it has transcribed the quaintness of that epitaph aright seems a strange thing, but so it is:

[Pg 270]

P.M.S.

Captain NICHOLAS TETTERSELL, through whose Prudence ualour an Loyalty Charles the second King of England & after he had escaped the sword of his merciless rebels and his fforses received a fatall ouerthrowe at Worcester Sept^r 3^d 1651, was ffaithfully preserued & conueyed into ffrance. Departed this life the 26th day of Iuly 1674.

—> —> —>

Within this monument doth lye,
 Approued Ffaith, hono^r and Loyalty.
 In this Cold Clay he hath now tane up his statioⁿ,
 At once preserued y^e Church, the Crowne and nation.
 When Charles y^e Greate was nothing but a breat^h
 This ualiant soule stept betweene him & death.
 Usurpers threats nor tyrant rebells frowne
 Could not affright his duty to the Crowne;
 Which glorious act of his Church & state,
 Eight princes in one day did Gratulate
 Professing all to him in debt to bee
 As all the world are to his memory
 Since Earth Could not Reward his worth have giveⁿ,
 Hee now receiues it from the King of heauen.

The escape of Charles the Second, after many perilous adventures, belongs to the larger sphere of English history. Driven, after the disastrous result of Worcester Fight, to wander, a fugitive, through the land, he sought the coast from the extreme west of Dorsetshire, and only when he reached Sussex did he find it possible to embark and sail across the Channel to France. Hunted by relentless Roundheads, and sheltered on his way only by a few faithful adherents, who in their loyalty risked everything for him, he at length, with his small party, reached the village of Brighthelmstone and lodged at the inn then called the "George."

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THE AQUARIUM, BEFORE DESTRUCTION OF THE CHAIN PIER.

That evening, after much negotiation, Colonel Gunter, the King's companion, arranged with Nicholas Tattersell, master of a small trading craft, to convey the King across to Fécamp, to sail in the early hours of the following morning, October 14th. How they sailed, and the account of their wanderings, are fully set forth in the "narrative" of Colonel Gunter.

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XXXVII

A new era for Brighton and the Brighton Road opened in November, 1896, with the coming of the motor-car. Already the old period of the coaching inns had waned, and that of gigantic and palatial hotels, much more luxurious than anything ever imagined by the builders of the Pavilion, had dawned; and then, as though to fitly emphasize the transition, the old Chain Pier made a dramatic end.

The Chain Pier just missed belonging to the Georgian era, for it was not begun until October, 1822, but, opened the following year, it had so long been a feature of Brighton—and so peculiar a feature—that it had come, with many, to typify the town, quite as much as the Pavilion itself. It was, moreover, additionally remarkable as being the first pleasure-pier built in England. It had long been failing and, condemned as dangerous, would soon have been demolished; but the storm of December 4th, 1896, spared that trouble. It was standing when day closed in, but when the next morning dawned, its place was vacant.

Since then, those who have long known Brighton have never visited it without a sense of loss; and the Palace Pier, opposite the Aquarium, does not fill the void. It is a vulgarity for one thing, and for another typifies the Hebraic week-end, when the sons and daughters of Judah descend upon the town. Moreover, it is absolutely uncharacteristic, and has its counterparts in many other places.

But Brighton itself is eternal. It suffers change, it grows continually; but while the sea remains and the air is clean and the sun shines, it, and the road to it, will be the most popular resorts in England.

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Footnotes:

[1] He was a baker; hence the nickname.

[2] Henry Barry, Earl of Barrymore, in the peerage of Ireland.

[3] *Hiatus* in the Journals, arranged by the editor for benefit of the Young Person!

[4] Kirkpatrick Macmillan, in 1839-40, invented a dwarf, rear-driving machine of the "safety" type, and was fined at Glasgow for "furiously riding." He made and sold several, but they attained nothing more than local and temporary success.

[5]

"There's nothing brings you round
Like the trumpet's martial sound."—W. S. GILBERT.
"The Pirates of Penzance."

[6] In 1829 there were three additional gates: one at Crawley, another at Hand Cross, before you came to the "Red Lion," and one more at Slough Green. Meanwhile the Horley gate on this route had disappeared. At a later period another gate was added, at Merstham, just past the "Feathers." On the other routes there were, of course, yet more gates—e.g., those of Sutton, Reigate, Wray Park, Woodhatch, Dale, and many more.

Salfords gate was the last on the main Brighton Road. It remained until midnight, October 31st. 1881, when the Reigate Turnpike Trust expired, after an existence of 126 years. Not until then did this most famous highway become free and open throughout its whole distance.

[7] Preface to "Præterita," dated May 10th, 1885.

[8] The name derives from a farm so called, marked on a map of 1716 "Stotes Ness."

[9] "Sir Edward Banks, Knight, of Sheerness, Isle of Sheppey, and Adelphi Terrace, Strand, Middlesex, whose remains are deposited in the family vault in this churchyard. Blessed by Divine Providence with an honest heart, a clear head, and an extraordinary degree of perseverance, he rose superior to all difficulties, and was the founder of his own fortune; and although of self-cultivated talent, he in early life became contractor for public works, and was actively and successfully engaged during forty years in the execution of some of the most useful, extensive, and splendid works of his time; amongst which may be mentioned the Waterloo, Southwark, London, and Staines Bridges over the Thames, the Naval Works at Sheerness Dockyard, and the new channels for the rivers Ouse, Nene, and Witham in Norfolk and Lincolnshire. He was eminently distinguished for the simplicity of his manners and the benevolence of his heart; respected for his inflexible integrity and his pure and unaffected piety; in all the relations of his life he was candid, diligent, and humane; just in purpose, firm in execution; his liberality and indulgence to his numerous coadjutors were alone equalled by his generosity and charity displayed in the disposal of his honourably-acquired wealth. He departed this life at Tilgate, Sussex ... on the 5th day of July, 1835, in the sixty-sixth year of his age."

[10] Matthew Buckle, Admiral of the Blue; born 1716, died 1784.

[11] He really drove the other way; from Carlton House to Brighton.

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