The Project Gutenberg eBook of From Gretna Green to Land's End: A Literary Journey in England, by Katharine Lee Bates

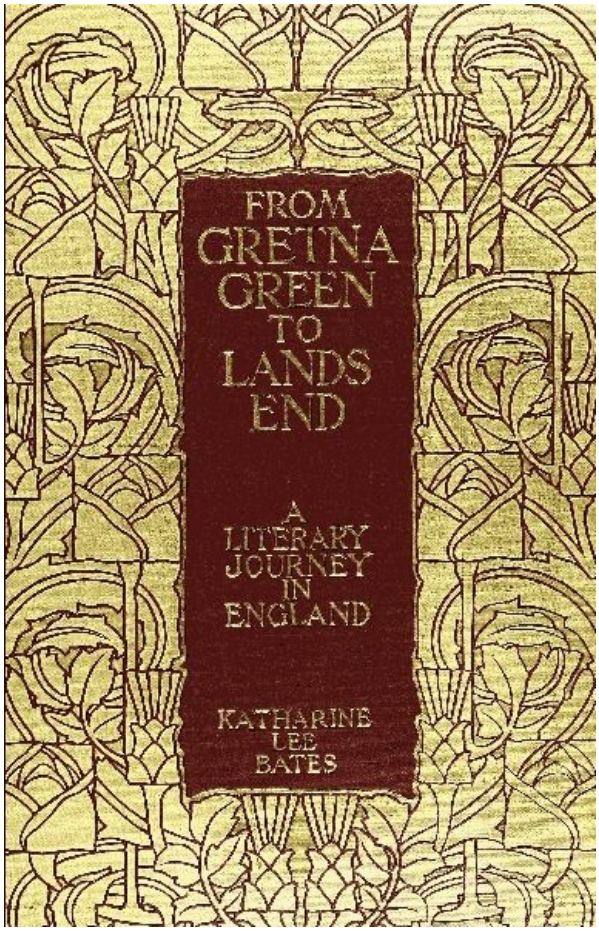
Title: From Gretna Green to Land's End: A Literary Journey in England

Author: Katharine Lee Bates

Release date: September 25, 2012 [EBook #40857]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by sp1nd, JoAnn Greenwood, and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive)



From Gretna Green to Land's End

A LITERARY JOURNEY IN ENGLAND

By

KATHARINE LEE BATES

Professor of English Literature in Wellesley College

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
BY KATHARINE COMAN

NEW YORK
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.
PUBLISHERS

From Gretna Green to Land's End

A LITERARY JOURNEY IN ENGLAND

By

KATHARINE LEE BATES

Professor of English Literature in Wellesley College

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
BY KATHARINE COMAN

NEW YORK
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.
PUBLISHERS

Published, October, 1907

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.

TO

MY FARING-MATES

KATHARINE COMAN
AND
ANNIE BEECHER SCOVILLE

Daffodil and furze and wheat,
Shining paths for truant feet;
From that golden blossoming
Wilted sprays are all I bring.
You who know their fault the best,
To their fault be tenderest,
For a breath of fragrant days
Whispers you from wilted sprays.

"*Some Shires, Joseph-like, have a better coloured coat than others; and some, with Benjamin, have a more bountiful mess of meat belonging to them. Yet every County hath a child's proportion.*"

THOMAS FULLER.

These summer wanderings through the west of England were undertaken at the request of *The Chautauquan*, from whose pages the bulk of this material is reprinted. But the chronicle of this recent journey has been supplemented, as the text indicates, by earlier memories.

K. L. B.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS

From Gretna Green to Land's End

[1]

THE BORDER

The dominant interest of the northwestern counties is, of course, the Lake District, with its far-famed poetic associations; yet for the student of English history and the lover of Border minstrelsy the upper strip of Cumberland has a strong attraction of its own.

An afternoon run on the Midland brought us from Liverpool to Carlisle. Such are the eccentricities of the English railway system that the "through carriage" into which guard and porter dumped us at Liverpool, a third-class carriage already crowded with one sleeping and one eating family, turned out not to be a through carriage at all; and a new guard, at Hellifield, tore us and our belongings forth and thrust us into an empty first-class, lingering in the doorway until we had produced the inevitable shilling. But the freedom of an empty carriage would have been well worth the honest price of first-class tickets, for as the train sped on from the Ribble into the [2] Eden Valley, with the blue heights of the Pennine range and the long reaches of the Yorkshire moors on our right, and on our left the cloud-caressed summits of Lakeland, we needed all the space there was for our exultant *ohs* and *ahs*, not to mention our continual rushing from window to window for the swiftly vanishing views of grey castle and ruined abbey, peel tower and stone

sheep-fold, grange and hamlet, and the exquisite, ever-changing panorama of the mist.

Carlisle, "the Border City," a clean, self-respecting, serious town, without beggars, with no superfluous street courtesies, but with effectual aid in need, is the heart of one of the most storied regions of England. The River Drift man and the Cave man seem to have fought the mammoth and the elk and gone their shadowy way untraced in this locality, but the museum in Tullie House contains hammers and axes, found in Cumberland soil, of the Stone Age, and spear-heads and arrow-heads, urns for human ashes, incense cups, food vessels and drinking vessels of the Bronze Age,—mute memorials of life that once was lived so eagerly beneath these same soft, [3] brooding skies.

As for the Romans, they seem here like a race of yesterday. A penny tram took us, in the clear, quiet light of what at home would be the middle of the evening, out to Stanwix, originally, it is believed, an important station in the series of fortresses that guarded the northern boundary of Roman Britain. These frontier lines consisted of a great stone wall, eight feet thick and eighteen feet high, ditched and set with forts and towers, running straight from the Solway to the Tyne, a distance of some seventy-three miles, and a little to the south of this, what is known as the *vallum*, a fosse with mounds of soil and rock on either side. The local antiquaries, urged on by a committee of Oxford men, have recently discovered a third wall, built of sods, between the two, and excavation and discussion have received a fresh impetus. Was the *vallum* built by Agricola,—earthworks thrown up by that adventurous general of the first Christian century to secure his conquest? Was the turf wall the erection of the great emperor Hadrian, who visited Britain in the year 120, and was the huge stone rampart constructed, early in the third century, by the [4] Emperor Severus? Or does the stone wall date from Hadrian? Or did he build all three?

While the scholars literally dig for truth, we may sit on the site of this mighty, well-nigh perished bulwark at Stanwix, with what is perhaps the wrinkle left on the landscape by the wall's deep moat dropping, under a screen of hawthorns and wind-silvered poplars, sheer at our feet, and thence we may look out across the Eden, with its dipping gulls and sailing swans, its hurrying swifts and little dancing eddy, to the heights of Carlisle. For the city is built on a natural eminence almost encircled by the Eden and its tributaries, the Petteril and the Caldew. It is a fine view even now, with the level light centred on the red sandstone walls of the grim castle, though factory chimneys push into the upper air, overtopping both the castle and its grave neighbour, the cathedral; but for mass and dignity, for significance, these two are unapproachable: these are Carlisle.

We must not see them yet. We must see a lonely bluff set over with the round clay huts of the Britons, and then, as the Roman legions sweep these like so many mole-hills from their path, we [5] must see in gradual growth a Roman town,—not luxurious, with the tessellated marble pavements and elaborate baths that have left their splendid fragments farther south, but a busy trading-point serving the needs of that frontier line of garrisons which numbered no less than fifteen thousand men. Some few inscribed and sculptured stones, remnants of altars, tombs, and the like, may be seen in the museum, with lamps, dishes, and other specimens of such coarse and simple pottery as was in daily use by common Roman folk when the days and the nights were theirs.

The name Carlisle—and it is said to be the only city of England which bears a purely British name—was originally Caer Lywelydd, British enough in very sooth. This the Romans altered to Lugubalia, and when, in 409, the garrisons of the Wall were recalled for the protection of Rome herself, the Britons of the neighbourhood made it their centre, and it passed into Arthurian tradition as Cardueil. Even the ballads vaguely sing of a time when

> "King Arthur lived in Merry Carlisle
> And seemly was to see."

[6]

But although the Britons sometimes united, under one hero or a succession of heroes, to save the land, now abandoned by the Romans, from the Saxons, they were often at war among themselves, and the headship of their northern confederacy was wrested from Carlisle and transferred to Dumbarton on the Clyde. The kingdom of the Cumbrian Britons, thenceforth known as Strathclyde, fell before the assault of the English kingdom of Northumbria, in which the Christian faith had taken deep root. For though the Britons, in the fourth century of Roman rule, had accepted Christianity, the Angles had come in with their own gods, and a new conversion of the north, effected by missionaries from Iona, took place about the sixth century. Sculptured crosses of this period still remain in Cumberland and Westmoreland, and the Carlisle museum preserves, in Runic letters, a Christian epitaph of "Cimokom, Alh's queen."

> "Holy into ruin she went,"

is the eloquent record, and from her grave-mound she utters the new hope: [7]

> "My body the all-loving Christ
> Young again shall renew after death,
> But indeed sorrowing tear-flow
> Never shall afflict me more."

For a moment the mists that have gathered about the shelving rock to which we are looking not merely across the Eden, but across the river of time, divide and reveal the figure of Cuthbert, the

great monk of Northumbria, to whom King Egfrith had committed the charge of his newly founded monastery at Caerluel. The Venerable Bede tells how, while the king had gone up into Scotland on a daring expedition against the Picts, in 685, Cuthbert visited the city, whose officials, for his better entertainment, took him to view a Roman fountain of choice workmanship. But he stood beside its carven rim with absent look, leaning on his staff, and murmured: "Perchance even now the conflict is decided." And so it was, to the downfall of Egfrith's power and the confusion of the north. After the ravaging Scots and Picts came the piratical Danes, and, about 875, what was left of Carlisle went up in flame. A rusted sword or two in the museum tells the fierce story of the Danish sack. At the end of the tenth century Cumberland was ceded to [8]
Scotland, but was recovered by William Rufus, son of William the Conqueror. Carlisle, the only city added to England since the Norman conquest, was then a heap of ruins; but in 1092, says the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," the king "went northward with a great army, and set up the wall of Carluel, and reared the castle."

No longer

> "The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,"

but there is still the castle, which even the most precipitate tourist does not fail to visit. We went in one of those wild blusters of wind and rain which are rightly characteristic of this city of tempestuous history, and had to cling to the battlements to keep our footing on the rampart walk. We peeped out through the long slits of the loop-holes, but saw no more formidable enemies than storm-clouds rising from the north. The situation was unfavourable to historic reminiscence, nor did the blatant guide below, who hammered our ears with items of dubious information, help us to a realisation of the castle's robust career. Yet for those who have eyes to read, the stones of [9]
these stern towers are a chronicle of ancient reigns and furious wars, dare-devil adventures and piteous tragedy.

The Norman fortress seems to have been reared upon the site of a Roman stronghold, whose walls and conduits are still traceable. After William Rufus came other royal builders, notably Edward I and Richard III. It was in the reign of the first Edward that Carlisle won royal favour by a spirited defence against her Scottish neighbours, the men of Annandale, who, forty thousand strong, marched red-handed across the Border. A Scottish spy within the city set it on fire, but while the men of Carlisle fought the flames, the women scrambled to the walls and, rolling down stones on the assailants and showering them with boiling water, kept them off until an ingenious burgher, venturing out on the platform above the gate, fished up, with a stout hook, the leader of the besiegers and held him high in the air while lances and arrows pierced him through and through. This irregular mode of warfare was too much for the men of Annandale, who marched home in disgust.

During Edward's wars against Wallace he made Carlisle his headquarters. Twice he held [10]
Parliaments there, and it was from Carlisle he set forth, a dying king, on his last expedition against the Scots. In four days he had ridden but six miles, and then breath left the exhausted body. His death was kept secret until his son could reach Carlisle, which witnessed, in that eventful July of 1307, a solemn gathering of the barons of England to mourn above the bier of their great war-lord and pay their homage to the ill-starred Edward II. A quarter century later, Lord Dacre, then captain of Carlisle Castle, opened its gates to a royal fugitive from Scotland, Balliol; and Edward III, taking up the cause of the rejected sovereign, made war, from Carlisle as his headquarters, on the Scots. After the Wars of the Roses, Edward IV committed the north of England to the charge of his brother Gloucester, who bore the titles of Lord Warden of the Marches and Captain of Carlisle Castle. Monster though tradition has made him, Richard III seems to have had a sense of beauty, for Richard's Tower still shows mouldings and other ornamental touches unusual in the northern architecture of the period. [11]

But the royal memory which most of all casts a glamour over Carlisle Castle is that of Mary, Queen of Scots. Fleeing from her own subjects, she came to England, in 1568, a self-invited guest. She landed from a fishing-boat at Workington, on the Cumberland coast,—a decisive moment which Wordsworth has crystallised in a sonnet:

> "Dear to the Loves, and to the Graces vowed,
> The Queen drew back the wimple that she wore;
> And to the throng, that on the Cumbrian shore
> Her landing hailed, how touchingly she bowed!
> And like a star (that, from a heavy cloud
> Of pine-tree foliage poised in air, forth darts,
> When a soft summer gale at evening parts
> The gloom that did its loveliness enshroud)
> She smiled; but Time, the old Saturnian seer,
> Sighed on the wing as her foot pressed the strand
> With step prelusive to a long array
> Of woes and degradations hand in hand—
> Weeping captivity, and shuddering fear
> Stilled by the ensanguined block of Fotheringay!"

Mary was escorted with all courtesy to Cockermouth Castle and thence to Carlisle, where hospitality soon became imprisonment. Her first request of Elizabeth was for clothing, and it was in one of the deep-walled rooms of Queen Mary's Tower, of which only the gateway now remains,

that she impatiently looked on while her ladies opened Elizabeth's packet to find—"two torn shifts, two pieces of black velvet, and two pairs of shoes." The parsimony of Queen Bess has a curious echo in the words of Sir Francis Knollys, who, set to keep this disquieting guest under close surveillance, was much concerned when she took to sending to Edinburgh for "coffers of apparell," especially as she did not pay the messengers, so that Elizabeth, after all, was "like to bear the charges" of Mary's vanity. The captive queen was allowed a semblance of freedom in Carlisle. She walked the terrace of the outer ward of the castle, went to service in the cathedral, and sometimes, with her ladies, strolled in the meadows beside the Eden, or watched her gentlemen play a game of football, or even hunted the hare, although her warders were in a fever of anxiety whenever she was on horseback lest she should take it into her wilful, beautiful head to gallop back to Scotland. [12]

But these frowning towers have more terrible records of captivity. Under the old Norman keep are hideous black vaults, with the narrowest of slits for the admission of air and with the walls still showing the rivet-holes of the chains by which the hapless prisoners were so heavily fettered. [13]

"Full fifteen stane o' Spanish iron
They hae laid a'right sair on me;
Wi' locks and keys I am fast bound
Into this dungeon dark and dreerie."

Rude devices, supposed to be the pastime of captives, are carved upon the walls of a mural chamber,—a chamber which has special significance for the reader of "Waverley," as here, it is said, Major Macdonald, the original of Fergus MacIvor, was confined. For Carlisle Castle was never more cruel than to the Jacobites of 1745. On November 18 Bonny Prince Charlie, preceded by one hundred Highland pipers, had made triumphal entrance into the surrendered city, through which he passed again, on the 21st of December, in retreat. Carlisle was speedily retaken by the English troops, and its garrison, including Jemmy Dawson of Jacobite song, sent in ignominy to London. Even so the cells of the castle were crammed with prisoners, mainly Scots, who were borne to death in batches. Pinioned in the castle courtyard, seated on black hurdles drawn by white horses, with the executioner, axe in hand, crouching behind, they were drawn, to make a Carlisle holiday, under the gloomy arch of the castle gate, through the thronged and staring street, and along the London road to Harraby Hill, where they suffered, one after another, the barbarous penalty for high treason. The ghastly heads were set up on pikes over the castle gates (yetts), as Scotch balladry well remembers. [14]

"White was the rose in his gay bonnet,
As he folded me in his broached plaidie;
His hand, which clasped mine i' the truth o' luve,
O it was aye in battle ready.
His lang, lang hair in yellow hanks
Waved o'er his cheeks sae sweet and ruddy,
But now they wave o'er Carlisle yetts
In dripping ringlets clotting bloodie.
My father's blood's in that flower tap,
My brother's in that hare-bell's blossom;
This white rose was steeped in my luve's blude,
And I'll aye wear it in my bosom.

"When I cam' first by merrie Carlisle,
Was ne'er a town sae sweetly seeming;
The white rose flaunted o'er the wall,
The thistled banners far were streaming!
When I cam' next by merrie Carlisle,
O sad, sad seemed the town, and eerie!
The auld, auld men came out and wept—
O, maiden, come ye to seek ye'r dearie?"

[15]

But not all the ballads of Carlisle Castle are tragic. Blithe enough is the one that tells how the Lochmaben harper outwitted the warden, who, when the minstrel, mounted on a grey mare, rode up to the castle gate, invited him in to ply his craft.

"Then aye he harped, and aye he carped,
Till a' the lordlings footed the floor;
But an the music was sae sweet,
The groom had nae mind o' the stable door.

"And aye he harped, and aye he carped,
Till a' the nobles were fast asleep;
Then quickly he took off his shoon,
And softly down the stair did creep."

So he stole into the stable and slipped a halter over the nose of a fine brown stallion belonging to the warden and tied it to the grey mare's tail. Then he turned them loose, and she who had a foal at home would not once let the brown horse bait,

"But kept him a-galloping home to her foal."

When the loss of the two horses was discovered in the morning, the harper made such ado that the warden paid him three times over for the grey mare. [16]

"And verra gude business," commented our Scotch landlady.

The most famous of the Carlisle Castle ballads relates the rescue of Kinmont Willie, a high-handed cattle-thief of the Border. For between the recognised English and Scottish boundaries lay a strip of so-called Debatable Land, whose settlers, known as the Batables, owed allegiance to neither country, but

"Sought the beeves, that made their broth,
In Scotland and in England both."

This Border was a natural shelter for outlaws, refugees, and "broken men" in general,—reckless fellows who loved the wildness and peril of the life, men of the type depicted in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel."

"A stark moss-trooping Scot was he,
As e'er couched Border lance by knee:
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best bloodhounds;
In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time, or tide,
December's snow or July's pride:
Alike to him was tide, or time, [17]
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's king and Scotland's queen."

Although these picturesque plunderers cost the neighbourhood dear, they never failed of sympathy in the hour of doom. The Graemes, for instance, were a large clan who lived by rapine. In 1600, when Elizabeth's government compelled them to give a bond of surety for one another's good behaviour, they numbered more than four hundred fighting men. There was Muckle Willie, and Mickle Willie, and Nimble Willie, and many a Willie more. But the execution of Hughie the Graeme was none the less grievous.

"Gude Lord Scroope's to the hunting gane,
He has ridden o'er moss and muir;
And he has grippit Hughie the Graeme,
For stealing o' the Bishop's mare.

"Then they have grippit Hughie the Graeme,
And brought him up through Carlisle toun;
The lasses and lads stood on the walls,
Crying, 'Hughie the Graeme, thou 'se ne'er gae doun.'" [18]

They tried him by a jury of men,

"The best that were in Carlisle toun,"

and although his guilt was open, "gude Lord Hume" offered the judge "twenty white owsen" to let him off, and "gude lady Hume" "a peck of white pennies," but it was of no avail, and Hughie went gallantly to his death.

For these Batables had their own code of right and wrong, and were, in their peculiar way, men of honour. There was Hobbie Noble, an English outlaw, who was betrayed by a comrade for English gold, and who, hanged at Carlisle, expressed on the gallows his execration of such conduct.

"I wad hae betray'd nae lad alive,
For a' the gowd o' Christentie."

The seizure of Kinmont Willie was hotly resented, even though his clan, the Armstrongs, who had built themselves strong towers on the Debatable Land, "robbed, spoiled, burned and murdered," as the Warden of the West Marches complained, all along upper Cumberland. The Armstrongs could, at one time, muster out over three thousand horsemen, and Dacres and Howards strove in [19] vain to bring them under control. Yet there was "Border law," too, one of its provisions being that on the appointed days of truce, when the "Lord Wardens of England and Scotland, and Scotland and England" met, each attended by a numerous retinue, at a midway cairn, to hear complaints from either side and administer a rude sort of justice in accordance with "the laws of the

Marches," no man present, not even the most notorious freebooter, could be arrested. But William Armstrong of Kinmont was too great a temptation; he had harried Cumberland too long; and a troop of some two hundred English stole after him, as he rode off carelessly along the Liddel bank, when the assemblage broke up, overpowered him, and brought him in bonds to Carlisle.

"O have ye na heard o' the fause Sakelde?
O have ye na heard o' the keen Lord Scroope?
How they hae ta'en bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Haribee to hang him up?

"They led him through the Liddel rack
And also through the Carlisle sands;
They brought him to Carlisle castle,
To be at my Lord Scroope's commands."

[20]

But this was more than the Scottish warden, Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, could bear.

"And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of the Border tide,
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Is Keeper on the Scottish side?

"And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear,
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Can back a steed or shake a spear?

"O! were there war between the lands,
As well I wot that there is nane,
I would slight Carlisle castle high
Though it were builded of marble stane.

"I would set that castle in a low[1]
And sloken it with English blood;
There's never a man in Cumberland
Should ken where Carlisle Castle stood.

"But since nae war's between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be,
I'll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be."

So Buccleuch rode out, one dark night, with a small party of Borderers, and succeeded, aided by one of the gusty storms of the region, in making his way to Carlisle undetected. [21]

"And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw;
But 'twas wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
When we came beneath the castle wa'."

The sudden uproar raised by the little band bewildered the garrison, and to Kinmont Willie, heavily ironed in the inner dungeon and expecting death in the morning, came the voices of friends.

"Wi' coulters, and wi' forehammers,
We garr'd[2] the bars bang merrilie,
Until we cam' to the inner prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie.

"And when we cam' to the lower prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie:
'O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou's to die?'

"'O I sleep saft, and I wake aft;
It's lang since sleeping was fley'd frae me!
Gie my service back to my wife and bairns,
And a' gude fellows that spier[3] for me.'"

But his spirits rose to the occasion, and when Red Rowan,

"The starkest man in Teviotdale,"

hoisted Kinmont Willie, whose fetters there was no time to knock off, on his back and carried him up to the breach they had made in the wall, from which they went down by a ladder they had [22]

brought with them, the man so narrowly delivered from the noose had his jest ready:

"Then shoulder-high with shout and cry
  We bore him down the ladder lang;
At every stride Red Rowan made
  I wot the Kinmont's airns[4] play'd clang.

"'O mony a time,' quo' Kinmont Willie,
  'I have ridden horse baith wild and wood.[5]
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
  I ween my legs have ne'er bestrode.

"'And mony a time,' quo' Kinmont Willie,
  'I've pricked a horse out owre the furse,
But since the day I back'd a steed,
  I never wore sic cumbrous spurs.'"

It is high time that we, too, escaped from Carlisle Castle into the open-air delights of the surrounding country. Five miles to the east lies the pleasant village of Wetheral on the Eden. Corby Castle, seat of a branch of the great Howard family, crowns the wooded hill across the [23] river, but we lingered in Wetheral Church for the sake of one who may have been an ancestor of "the fause Sakelde." This stately sleeper is described as Sir Richard Salkeld, "Captain and Keeper of Carlisle," who, at about the time of Henry VII, "in this land was mickle of might." His effigy is sadly battered; both arms are gone, a part of a leg, and the whole body is marred and dinted, with latter-day initials profanely scrawled upon it. But he, lying on the outside, has taken the brunt of abuse and, like a chivalrous lord, protected Dame Jane, his lady, whose alabaster gown still falls in even folds.

We drove eastward ten miles farther, under sun and shower, now by broad meadows where sleek kine, secure at last from cattle-lifters, were tranquilly grazing, now by solemn ranks of Scotch firs and far-reaching parks of smooth-barked, muscular beeches, now through stone-paved hamlets above whose shop-doors we would read the familiar ballad names, Scott, Graham (Graeme), Armstrong, Musgrave, Johnston, Kerr, and wonder how the wild blood of the Border had been tamed to the selling of picture postal cards. [24]

Our goal was Naworth, one of the most romantic of English castles. Its two great towers, as we approached, called imagination back to the days

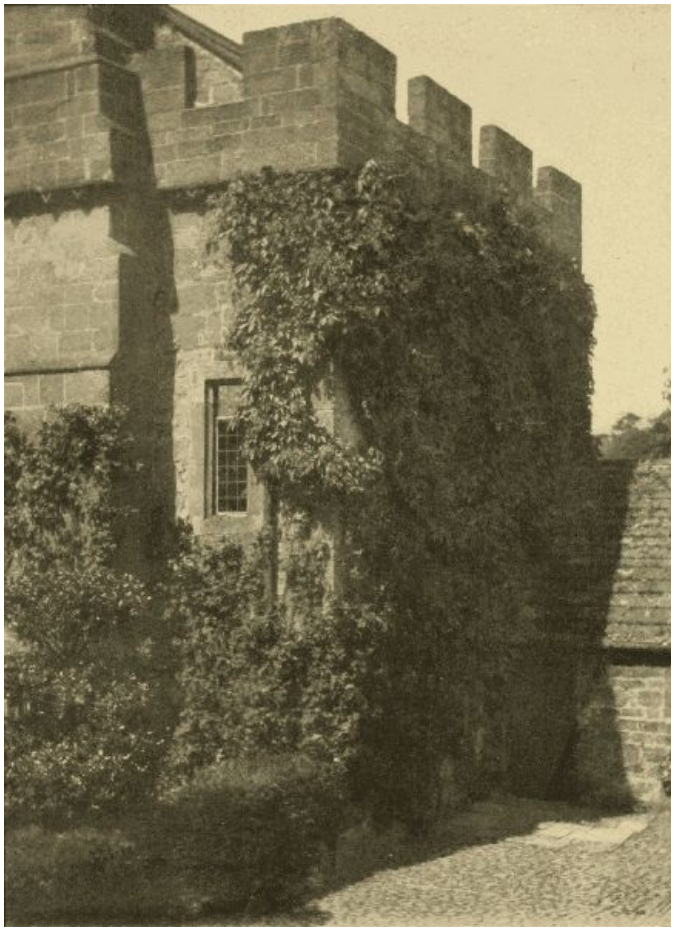
"When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry,

And minstrels, as they marched in order,
Played, 'Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border.'"

Naworth is the heart of a luxuriant valley. The position owes its defensive strength to the gorges cut by the Irthing and two tributaries. These three streams, when supplemented by the old moat, made Naworth an island fortress. The seat of the Earls of Carlisle, it was built by Ranulph Dacre in the fourteenth century. Even the present Lady Carlisle, a pronounced Liberal and a vigorous worker in the causes of Temperance and Woman Suffrage, though claiming to be a more thoroughgoing Republican than any of us in the United States, points out with something akin to pride "the stone man" on the Dacre Tower who has upheld the family escutcheon there for a little matter of five hundred years. In the sixteenth century the Dacre lands passed by marriage to the Howards, and "Belted Will," as Sir Walter Scott dubbed Lord William Howard, proved, under [25] Elizabeth and James, an efficient agent of law and order. Two suits of his plate armour still bear witness to the warrior, whom the people called "Bauld Willie," with the same homely directness that named his wife, in recognition of the ample dower she brought him, "Bessie with the braid apron," but his tastes were scholarly and his disposition devout. Lord William's Tower, with its rugged stone walls, its loopholes and battlements, its steep and narrow winding-stair guarded by a massive iron door, its secret passage to the dungeons, is feudal enough in suggestion, yet here may be seen his library with the oak-panelled roof and the great case of tempting old folios, and here his oratory, with its fine wood-carvings, its Flemish altar-piece, and its deep-windowed recess outlooking on a fair expanse of green earth and silver sky.

This castle, with its magnificent baronial hall, its treasures of art and spirit of frank hospitality, was harder to escape from than Carlisle. There was no time to follow the Irthing eastward to the point where, as the Popping Stones tell, Walter Scott offered his warm heart and honest hand to [26] the dark-eyed daughter of a French *emigre*. But we could not miss Lanercost, the beautiful ruined abbey lying about a mile to the north of Naworth. An Augustine foundation of the twelfth century, it has its memories of Edward I, who visited it with Queen Eleanor in 1180 and came again in broken health, six years later, to spend quietly in King Edward's Tower the last winter of his life. The nave now makes a noble parish church in which windows by William Morris and Burne-Jones glow like jewels. The choir is roofless, but gracious in its ruin, its pavement greened by moss, feathery grasses waving from its lofty arcades, and its walls weathered to all pensive, tender tints. The ancient tombs, most of them bearing the scallop-shells of the Dacres, are rich in sculpture. Into the transept walls are built some square grey stones of the Roman Wall, and a

Roman altar forms a part of the clerestory roof. The crypt, too, contains several Roman altars, dedicated to different gods whose figures, after the lapse of two thousand years, are startling in their spirited grace, their energy of life.



KING EDWARD'S TOWER, LANERCOST ABBEY

But Lanercost reminds us that we have all but ignored Carlisle Cathedral, and back we drive, by [27]
way of the village of Brampton with its curious old market-hall, to the Border City. After all, we have only followed the custom of the place in slighting the cathedral. Carlisle was ever too busy fighting to pay much heed to formal worship.

> "For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
> Save to patter an *Ave Mary*
> When I ride on a Border foray."

The cathedral dates from the time of William Rufus, and still retains two bays of its Norman nave, which suffered from fire in the early part of the thirteenth century. A still more disastrous fire, toward the close of that century, all but destroyed the new choir, which it took the preoccupied citizens one hundred years to rebuild, so that we see to-day Early English arches in combination with Decorated pillars and Late Decorated capitals. These capitals of fresh and piquant designs are an especial feature of the choir, whose prime glory, however, is the great east window with its perfect tracery, although only the upper glass is old. The cathedral has suffered not alone [28]
from a series of fires, but from military desecration. Part of its nave was pulled down by the irreverent Roundheads to repair the fortifications, and it was used after Carlisle was retaken from Prince Charlie as a prison for the garrison. Even to-day canny Cumberland shows a grain too much of frugality in pasturing sheep in the cathedral graveyard. Carlisle Cathedral has numbered among its archdeacons Paley of the "Evidences," and among its archdeans Percy of the "Reliques." Among its bridegrooms was Walter Scott, who wedded here his raven-haired lady of the Popping Stones.

One drive more before we seek the Lake Country,—ten miles to the north, this time, across the adventurous Esk, where a fierce wind seemed to carry in it the shout of old slogans and the clash and clang of arms, and across the boundary stream, the Sark, to Gretna Green, where breathless couples used to be married by blacksmith or innkeeper or the first man they met, the furious parents posting after all in vain. Then around by Longtown we drove and back to Carlisle, across the Solway Moss,—reaches of blowing grass in the foreground; dark, broken bogs, where men [29]
and women were gathering in the peat, in the middle distance; and beyond, the blue folds of hills on hills. It was already evening, but such was the witchery of the scene, still with something eerie and lawless about it despite an occasional farmhouse with stuffed barns and plump ricks and meadows of unmolested kine, that we would gladly, like the old Borderers whose armorial bearings so frequently included stars and crescents, have spent the night in that Debatable Land, with the moon for our accomplice in moss-trooping.

There are as many "best ways" of making the tour of this enchanted land as there are Lake Country guidebooks, volumes which, at prices varying from ten shillings to "tuppence," are everywhere in evidence. One may journey by rail to Keswick or to Windermere; one may come up from Furness Abbey to Lakeside, passing gradually from the softer scenery to the wilder; or one may enter by way of Penrith and Pooley Bridge, ushered at once into the presence of some of the noblest mountains and perhaps the loveliest lake.

This last was our route, and very satisfactory we found it. Our stay at Penrith had been abbreviated by a municipal councillors' convention which left not a bed for the stranger. We had been forewarned of the religious convention which throngs Keswick the last full week in July, and, indeed, an evangelist bound thither had presented us with tracts as we took our train at [31] Carlisle. But we had not reckoned on finding Penrith in such plethoric condition, and, after an uphill look at the broken red walls of Penrith Castle, which, with Carlisle, Naworth, and Cockermouth, stood for the defence of western England against the Scots, we mounted a motor-bus, of all atrocities, and were banged and clanged along a few miles of fairly level road which transferred us, as we crossed the Eamont, from Cumberland to Westmoreland. The hamlet of Pooley Bridge lies at the lower end of Ullswater, up whose mountain-hemmed reaches of ever-heightening beauty we were borne by *The Raven*, a leisurely little steamer with a ruddy captain serenely assured that his lake is the queen of all. The evening was cold and gusty,—rougher weather than any we had encountered in our midsummer voyage across the Atlantic,—but, wrapped in our rugs and shedding hairpins down the wind, we could have sailed on forever, so glorious was that sunset vision of great hills almost bending over the riverlike lake that runs on joyously, as from friend to friend, between the guardian ranks.

We lingered for a few days at the head of Ullswater, in Patterdale, and would gladly have [32] lingered longer, if only to watch the play of light and shadow over St. Sunday Crag, Place Fell, Stybarrow Crag, Fairfield, and all that shouldering brotherhood of giants, but we must needs take advantage of the first clear day for the coach-drive to Ambleside, over the Kirkstone Pass,

> "Aspiring Road! that lov'st to hide
> Thy daring in a vapoury bourn."

A week at Ambleside, under Wansfell's "visionary majesties of light," went all too swiftly in the eager exploration of Grasmere and Coniston, Hawkshead, Bowness, Windermere, and those "lofty brethren," the Langdale Pikes, with their famous rock-walled cascade, Dungeon Ghyll. The coach-drive from Ambleside to Keswick carried us, at Dunmailraise, across again from Westmoreland to Cumberland. Helvellyn and Thirlmere dominated the way, but Skiddaw and Derwent Water claimed our allegiance on arrival. What is counted the finest coach-drive in the kingdom, however, the twenty-four-mile circuit from Keswick known as the Buttermere Round, remained to bring us under a final subjection to the silver solitude of Buttermere and Crummock Water and [33] the rugged menace of Honister Crag. The train that hurried us from Keswick to Cockermouth passed along the western shore of pleasant Bassenthwaite Water, but from Workington to Furness Abbey meres and tarns, for all their romantic charm, were forgotten, while, the salt wind on our faces, we looked out, over sand and shingle, on the dim grey vast of ocean.

The Lake Country, it is often said, has no history. The tourist need not go from point to point enquiring

> "If here a warrior left a spell,
> Panting for glory as he fell;
> Or here a saint expired."

That irregular circle of the Cumberland Hills, varying from some forty to fifty miles in diameter, a compact mass whose mountain lines shut in narrow valleys, each with its own lake, and radiate out from Helvellyn in something like a starfish formation, bears, for all its wildness, the humanised look of land on which many generations of men have lived and died; but the records of that life are scant. [34]

There are several stone-circles, taken to be the remains of British temples, the "mystic Round of Druid frame," notably Long Meg and her Daughters, near Penrith, and the Druid's Circle, just out of Keswick. About the Keswick circle such uncanny influences still linger that no two persons can number the stones alike, nor will your own second count confirm your first. Storm and flood rage against that mysterious shrine, but the wizard blocks cannot be swept away. The Romans, who had stations near Kendal, Penrith, and Ambleside, have left some striking remembrances, notably "that lone Camp on Hardknott's height," and their proud road, still well defined for at least fifteen miles, along the top of High Street ridge. A storied heap of stones awaits the climber at the top of

> "The long ascent of Dunmailraise."

Here, in 945, the last king of the Cumbrian Britons, Dunmail, was defeated by Edmund of England in the pass between Grasmere and Keswick. Seat Sandal and Steel Fell looked down from either side upon his fall. Edmund raised a cairn above what his Saxon wits supposed was a slain king, but Dunmail is only biding his time. His golden crown was hurled into Grisedale Tarn, [35] high up in the range, where the shoulders of Helvellyn, Seat Sandal, and Fairfield touch, and on

the last night of every year these dark warders see a troop of Dunmail's men rise from the tarn, where it is their duty to guard the crown, bearing one more stone to throw down upon the cairn. When the pile is high enough to content the king, who counts each year in his deep grave the crash of another falling stone, he will rise and rule again over Cumberland.

Here history and folk-lore blend. Of pure folk-lore the stranger hears but little. Eden Hall, near Penrith, has a goblet filched from the fairies:

> "If e'er this glass should break or fall.
> Farewell the luck of Eden Hall."

The enchanted rock in the Vale of St. John is celebrated in Scott's "Bridal of Triermain." St. Bees has a triumphant tradition of St. Bega, who, determined to be a nun, ran away from the Irish king, her father, for no better reason than because he meant to marry her to a Norwegian prince, and set sail in a fishing-boat for the Cumberland coast. Her little craft was driven in by the storm [36] to Whitehaven, where she so won upon the sympathies of the Countess of Egremont that this lady besought her lord to give the fugitive land for a convent. It was midsummer, and the graceless husband made answer that he would give as much as the snow should lie upon next morning, but when he awoke and looked out from the castle casement, his demesne for three miles around was white with snow.

Wordsworth's "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle," "The Horn of Egremont Castle," and "The Somnambulist" relate three legends of the region, of varying degrees of authenticity, and Lord's Island in Derwent Water brings to mind the right noble name of James Radcliffe, third and last Earl of Derwentwater, who declared for his friend and kinsman, the Pretender of 1715. On October sixth the young earl bade his brave girl-wife farewell and rode away to join the rebels, though his favourite dog howled in the courtyard and his dapple-grey started back from the gate. On October fourteenth the cause was lost, and the Earl of Derwentwater was among the seventeen hundred who surrendered at Preston. In the Tower and again on the scaffold his life [37] was offered him if he would acknowledge George I as rightful king and would conform to the Protestant religion, but he said it "would be too dear a purchase." On the evening after his beheading the Northern Lights flamed red over Keswick, so that they are still known in the countryside as Lord Derwentwater's Lights.

The dalesfolk could doubtless tell us more. There may still be dwellers by Windermere who have heard on stormy nights the ghastly shrieks of the Crier of Claife, calling across the lake for a ferry-boat, although it was long ago that a valiant monk from Lady Holm "laid" that troubled spirit, binding it, with book and bell, to refrain from troubling "while ivy is green"; and in the depths of Borrowdale, on a wild dawn, old people may cower deeper in their feather beds to shut out the baying of the phantom hounds that hunt the "barfoot stag" through Watendlath tarn and over the fells down into Borrowdale. There is said to be a local brownie, Hob-Thross by name, sometimes seen, a "body aw ower rough," lying by the fire at midnight. For all his shaggy look, he has so sensitive a spirit that, indefatigable though he is in stealthy household services, the least [38] suggestion of recompense sends him weeping away. He will not even accept his daily dole of milk save on the condition that it be set out for him in a chipped bowl.

But, in the main, the Lake Country keeps its secrets. The names are the telltales, and these speak of Briton and Saxon and the adventurous Viking. *Dale*, *fell*, *force* (waterfall), *ghyll* (mountain ravine), *holm* (island), *how* (mound), *scar* (cliff-face), are Icelandic words. Mountain names that seem undignified, as Coniston Old Man or Dolly Wagon Pike, are probably mispronunciations of what in the original Celtic or Scandinavian was of grave import. There appears to be a present tendency to substitute for the unintelligible old names plain English terms usually suggested by some peculiarity in the mountain shape, but it is a pity to give up the Celtic Blencathara, Peak of Demons, for Saddleback.

The jubilant throngs who flock to Lakeland every summer concern themselves little with its early history. The English pour into that blessed circuit of hills as into a great playground, coaching, [39] walking, cycling, climbing, boating, keenly alive to the beauty of the scenery and eagerly drinking in the exhilaration of the air. They love to tread the loftiest crests, many of which are crowned with cairns raised by these holiday climbers, each adding his own stone. But it is the shepherd who is in the confidence of the mountains, he who has

> "been alone
> Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
> That came to him, and left him, on the heights."

Wordsworth first learned to love humanity in the person of the shepherd

> "descried in distant sky,
> A solitary object and sublime."

Sheep, too, are often seen against the sky-line, and even the cow—that homelike beast who favours you in her innocent rudeness, from the gap of a hawthorn hedge, with that same prolonged, rustic, curious stare that has taxed your modesty in Vermont or Ohio—will forsake the shade of "the honied sycamore" in the valley for summits

> "sharp and bare,
> Where oft the venturous heifer drinks the noontide breeze."

[40]

There have been fatal accidents upon the more precipitous peaks. Scott and Wordsworth have sung the fate of that "young lover of Nature," Charles Gough, who, one hundred years ago, fell from the Striding Edge of Helvellyn and was watched over in death for no less than three months by his little yellow-haired terrier, there on the lonely banks of Red Tarn, where her persistent barking at last brought shepherds to the body. In the Patterdale churchyard, whose famous great yew is now no more, we noticed a stone commemorating a more recent victim of Helvellyn, a Manchester botanist, who had come summer by summer to climb the mountain, and who, a few years since, on his last essay, a man of seventy-three, had died from exhaustion during the ascent. The brow of Helvellyn, now soft and silvery as a melting dream, now a dark mass banded by broad rainbows, overlooks his grave.

I remember that Nathan's story of the rich man who "had no pity," but took for a guest's dinner the "one little ewe lamb" of his poor neighbour, was read in the Patterdale church that evensong, and it was strange to see how intently those sturdy mountain-lads, their alert-eyed sheep dogs [41]
waiting about the door, listened to the parable. Not only does the Scripture imagery—"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want"—but the phrasing of the prayerbook—"We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep"—come with enhanced significance in a pastoral region.

Lakeland in the tourist season is not at its best in point of flowers. The daffodils that in Gowbarrow Park—recently acquired and opened as a national preserve—rejoiced the poet as they danced beside the dancing waves of Ullswater, fade before July, and the patches of ling and heather upon the mountain-sides lack the abundance that purples the Scottish hills, but the delicate harebell nods blithely to the wayfarer from up among the rocks, and the foxglove grows so tall, especially in the higher passes, as to overtop those massive boundaries into which the "wallers" pack away all the loose stone they can.

Birds, too, are not, in midsummer, numerous or varied. Where are Wordsworth's cuckoo and skylark and green linnet? The eagles have been dislodged from their eyries on Eagle Crag. A heavily flapping raven, a congregation of rooks, a few swallows and redbreasts, with perhaps a [42]
shy wagtail, may be the only winged wanderers you will salute in an hour's stroll, unless this, as is most likely, has brought you where

> "plots of sparkling water tremble bright
> With thousand thousand twinkling points of light."

There you will be all but sure to see your Atlantic friends, the seagulls, circling slowly within the mountain barriers like prisoners of the air and adding their floating shadows to the reflections in the lake below. For, as Wordsworth notes,—what did Wordsworth fail to note?—the water of these mountain meres is crystal clear and renders back with singular exactitude the "many-coloured images imprest" upon it.

But the life of the Cumbrian hills is the life of grazing flocks, of leaping waterfalls and hidden streams with their "voice of unpretending harmony,"—the life of sun and shadow. Sometimes the sky is of a faint, sweet blue with white clouds wandering in it,—the old Greek myth of Apollo's flocks in violet meadows; sometimes the keenest radiance silvers the upper crest of *cumuli* that [43]
copy in form the massy summits below; sometimes the mellow sunset gold is poured into the valleys as into thirsty cups; but most often curling mists wreathe the mountain-tops and move in plumed procession along their naked sides.

The scenic effects and the joy of climbing are not lost by American tourists, yet these, as a rule, come to the Lake Country in a temper quite unlike that of the English holiday seekers. We come as pilgrims to a Holy Land of Song. We depend perhaps too little upon our own immediate sense of grandeur and beauty, and look perhaps too much to Wordsworth to interpret for us "Nature's old felicities." The Lake Country that has loomed so large in poetry may even disappoint us at the outset. The memory of the Rockies, of our chain of Great Lakes, of Niagara, may disconcert our first impressions of this clump of hills with only four, Scafell Pike, Scafell, Helvellyn, and Skiddaw, exceeding three thousand feet in height; of lakes that range from Windermere, ten miles long and a mile broad, to the reedy little pond of Rydal Water, more conventionally termed "a fairy mere"; of waterfalls that are often chiefly remarkable, even Southey's Lodore, for their [44]
lack of water. Scales Tarn, of which Scott wrote,

> "Never sunbeam could discern
> The surface of that sable tarn,
> In whose black mirror you may spy
> The stars, while noontide lights the sky,"

is seventeen feet deep.

ISLAND IN GRASMERE LAKE

It is all in proportion, all picturesque,—almost in too regular proportion, almost too conspicuously picturesque, as if it had been expressly gotten up for the "tripper." There is nothing of primeval wildness about it. Nature is here the lion tamed, an accredited human playmate. Indeed, one almost feels that here is Nature sitting for her portrait, a self-conscious Nature holding her court of tourists and poets. Yet this is but a fleeting and a shamefaced mood. It takes intimacy to discover the fact of reticence, and those are aliens indeed who think that a single coach-drive, even the boasted "circular tour," has acquainted them with the Lake Country,—yes, though they trudge over the passes (for it is coach etiquette to put the passengers down whenever the road gets steep) Wordsworth in hand. In truth, the great amount of literary association may be to the [45] conscientious "Laker" something of a burden. Skiddaw thrusts forth his notched contour with the insistent question: "What was it Wordsworth said about me?" Ennerdale church and the Pillar Rock tax one's memory of "The Brothers," and every stone sheep-fold calls for a recitation from "Michael." That "cradled nursling of the mountain," the river Duddon, expects one to know by heart the thirty-four sonnets recording how the pedestrian poet

> "accompanied with faithful pace
> Cærulean Duddon from its cloud-fed spring."

The footpath you follow, the rock you rest upon, the yew you turn to admire, Wishing-Gate and Stepping-Stones admonish you to be ready with your quotation. Even the tiny cascade of Rydal Water—so small as presumably to be put to bed at six o'clock, for it may not be visited after that hour—has been sung by the Grasmere laureate. While your care-free Englishman goes clambering over the golden-mossed rocks and far within the slippery recesses of Dungeon Ghyll, your serious American will sit him down amid the bracken and, tranquilly watched by Lingmoor [46] from across the vale, read "The Idle Shepherd-Boys," and the exquisite description of the scene in Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Fenwick's Career." If he can recall Coleridge's lines about the "sinful sextons' ghosts," so much the better, and if he is of a "thorough" habit of mind, he will have read through Wordsworth's "Excursion" in preparation for this expedition to the Langdales and be annotating the volume on his knee.

There may be something a little naïve in this studious attitude in the presence of natural beauty, but the devotion is sincere. Many a tourist, English and American, comes to the Lake Country to render grateful homage to those starry spirits who have clustered there. Fox Howe, the home of Dr. Arnold and dear to his poet son; The Knoll, home of Harriet Martineau; and the Dove's Nest, for a little while the abode of Mrs. Hemans, are duly pointed out at Ambleside, but not all who linger in that picture-book village and climb the hill to the Church of St. Anne, standing serene with its square, grey, pigeon-peopled tower, know that Faber was a curate there in the youthful [47] years before he "went over to Rome." He lived hard by in what is said to be the oldest house in Ambleside, once a manor-house of distinction,—that long, low stone building with small, deep-set windows and the cheery touches of colour given by the carefully tended flowers about the doors. "A good few" people thought he was not "just bright," our landlady told us, "because he would be walking with his head down, busy at his thoughts," yet Wordsworth said that Faber was the only man he knew who saw more things in Nature than he did in a country ramble. Bowness cherishes recollections of the gay, audacious doings of Professor Wilson (Christopher North), and Troutbeck plumes itself on being the birthplace of Hogarth's father. Keswick, where Shelley once made brief sojourn, holds the poet-dust of Southey and of Frederic Myers, and in Crosthwaite Vicarage may be found a living poet of the Lakes, Canon Rawnsley,—a name to conjure with throughout the district, whose best traditions he fosters and maintains.

Opposite Rydal Mount, at Nab Cottage, dwelt, for the closing years of his clouded life, the darling [48] of the dalesfolk, "Li'le Hartley," first-born son of Coleridge,—that boy "so exquisitely wild" to whom had descended something of his father's genius crossed by the father's frailty. Hartley's

demon was not the craving for opium, but for alcohol. After a sore struggle that crippled but did not destroy, he rests in Grasmere churchyard, his stone bearing the inscription, "By Thy Cross and Passion." It was from Nab Cottage that another soul of high endowment, menaced by the opium lust, De Quincey, took a bride, Margaret, a farmer's daughter, who made him the strong and patient wife his peril needed. They dwelt in Dove Cottage at Townend, Grasmere, the hallowed garden-nest where Wordsworth and his wife and his sister Dorothy—that ardent spirit the thought of whom is still "like a flash of light"—had dwelt before. Wordsworth's later homes at Allan Bank, the Grasmere Rectory, and even at Rydal Mount are less precious to memory than this, where he and Coleridge and Dorothy dreamed the great dreams of youth together. Thither came guests who held high converse over frugal fare,—among them Sir Walter Scott, Charles Lamb, "the frolic and the gentle," and that silent poet, the beloved brother John. It was a plain [49] and thrifty life that Dove Cottage knew, with its rustic little rooms and round of household tasks, but thrift took on magic powers in the Lake Country a century ago. Amazing tales are told of the "Wonderful Walker," schoolmaster of Buttermere and curate of Seathwaite, the Pastor of the "Excursion," but his feats of economy might be challenged by the old-time curate of Patterdale, who, on an income of from sixty to ninety dollars a year, lived comfortably, educated his four children, and left them a tidy little fortune. Such queer turns of fate were his that he published his own banns and married his father.

Most of those for whose sake the Lake Country is holy ground lived a contemplative, sequestered life akin to that of the mediæval monks, the scholars and visionaries of a fighting world; but Coniston, on the edge of Lancashire, is the shrine of a warrior saint, Ruskin, whose last earthly home, Brantwood, looks out over Coniston Water, and whose grave in the quiet churchyard, for which Westminster Abbey was refused, is beautifully marked by a symbolically carven cross [50] quarried from the fine greenstone of Coniston Fells. In the Ruskin Museum may be seen many heart-moving memorials of that hero life, all the way from the abstracts of sermons written out for his mother in a laborious childish hand to the purple pall, worked for him by the local Linen Industry he so eagerly founded, and embroidered with his own words: "Unto This Last."

Not in any roll-call of the men of letters who have trodden the Cumbrian Hills should the poet Gray be forgotten. The first known tourist in the Lake Country, he was delighted with Grasmere and Keswick, but Borrowdale, plunged deep amid what the earliest guide-book, that of West in 1774, was to describe as "the most horrid romantic mountains," turned him back in terror.

Yet Wordsworth, for all his illustrious compeers, is still the presiding genius of these opalescent hills and silver meres. It is to him, that plain-faced man who used to go "booing" his verses along these very roads, that multitudes of visitants have owed

> "Feelings and emanations—things which were
> Light to the sun and music to the wind."

[51]

It is good for the soul to follow that sane, pure life from its "fair seedtime" on the garden terrace at Cockermouth, where the murmuring Derwent gave

> "Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind,
> A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
> That Nature breathes among the hills and groves,"

through the boyhood at Hawkshead—that all-angled little huddle of houses near Esthwaite Water —a boyhood whose inner growth is so marvellously portrayed in "The Prelude," on through the long and fruitful manhood of a poet vowed,

> "Days of sweet leisure, taxed with patient thought
> Abstruse, nor wanting punctual service high,
> Matins and vespers of harmonious verse,"

to the churchyard beside the Rotha, where Wordsworth and his kin of flesh and spirit keep their "incommunicable sleep."

> "Blessing be with them, and eternal praise!"

THREE RUSH-BEARINGS [52]

> *Where is the stranger? Rushes, ladies, rushes,*
> *Rushes as green as summer for this stranger.*
>
> FLETCHER'S "Valentinian."

I

We heard about it first in Ambleside. We were in lodgings half-way up the hill that leads to the serene, forsaken Church of St. Anne. It was there that Faber, fresh from Oxford, had been curate, silently thinking the thoughts that were to send him into the Roman communion, and his young ghost, with the bowed head and the troubled eyes, was one of the friends we had made in the few

rainy days of our sojourn. Another was Jock, a magnificent old collie, who accepted homage as his royal due, and would press his great head against the knee of the alien with confident expectation of a caress, lifting in recognition a long, comprehending look of amber eyes. Another friend—though our relations were sometimes strained—was Toby, a piebald pony of piquant [53] disposition. He allowed us to sit in his pony-cart at picturesque spots and read the Lake Poets to him, and to tug him up the hills by his bridle, which he had expert ways of rubbing off, to the joy of passing coach-loads, when our attention was diverted to the landscape. Another was our kindly landlady. She came in with hot tea that Saturday afternoon to cheer up the adventurous member of the party, who had just returned half drowned from a long drive on coachtop for the sake of scenery absolutely blotted out by the downpour. There the "trippers" had sat for hours, huddled under trickling umbrellas, while the conscientious coachman put them off every now and then to clamber down wet banks and gaze at waterfalls, or halted for the due five minutes at a point where nothing was perceptible but the grey slant of the rain to assure them—and the spattered red guidebook confirmed his statement—that this was "the finest view in Westmoreland." So when our landlady began to tell us of the ancient ceremony which the village was to observe that afternoon, the bedrenched one, hugging the bright dot of a fire, grimly implied that the customs [54] and traditions of this sieve-skied island—in five weeks we had had only two rainless days—were nothing to her; but the tea, that moral beverage which enables the English to bear with their climate, wrought its usual reformation.

At half-past five we were standing under our overworked umbrellas on a muddy street corner, waiting for the procession to come by. And presently it came, looking very much as if it had been through a pond to gather the rushes. In front went a brass band, splashing along the puddles to merry music, and then a long train of draggled children, with a few young men and maidens to help on the toddlers, two or three of whom had to be taken up and carried, flowers and all. But soberly and sturdily, in the main, that line of three hundred bonny bairns trotted along through the heavy clay, under the soft rain—little lads in rubber coats and gaiters, some holding their tall bunches of rushes, or elaborate floral designs, upright before them like bayonets, some shouldering them like guns; tired little lassies clasping their "bearings" in their arms like dolls, or [55] dragging them along like kittens. All down the line the small coats and cloaks were not only damp, but greened and mossed and petal-strewn from the resting and rubbing of one another's burdens. These were of divers sorts. Most effective were the slender bundles of rushes,—long, straight rushes gathered that morning from the meres by men who went out in boats for the purpose. These rush-fagots towered up from a distance like green candles, making the line resemble a procession of Catholic fairies. The village, however, took chief pride in the moss-covered standards of various device entwined with rushes and flowers. There were harps of reeds and waterlilies, crosses of ferns and harebells, shepherds' crooks wound with heather, sceptres, shields, anchors, crowns, swords, stars, triangles, hearts, with all manner of nosegays and garlands. Ling and bracken from the hillsides, marigolds from the marsh, spikes of oat and spears of wheat from the harvest-fields, and countless bright-hued blossoms from meadow and dooryard and garden were woven together, with no little taste and skill, in a pretty diversity of patterns.

The bells rang out blithe welcome as the procession neared the steepled Church of St. Mary, [56] where a committee of ladies and gentlemen received the offerings and disposed them, according to their merit, in chancel or aisles. The little bearers were all seated in the front pews, the pews of honour, before we thronging adults, stacking our dripping umbrellas in the porch, might enter. The air was rich with mingled fragrances. Along the chancel rail, in the window-seats, on the pillars, everywhere, were rushes and flowers, the choicest garden-roses whispering with foxglove and daisy and the feathered timothy grass. But sweeter than the blossoms were the faces of the children, glad in their rustic act of worship, well content with their own weariness, no prouder than the smiling angels would have had them be. Only here and there a rosy visage was clouded with disappointment, or twisted ruefully awry in the effort to hold back the tears, for it must needs be that a few devices, on which the childish artists had spent such joyful labour, were assigned by the expert committee to inconspicuous corners. The mere weans behaved surprisingly well, though evensong, a brief and sympathetic service, was punctuated by little [57] sobs, gleeful baby murmurs, and crows of excitement. The vicar told the children, in a few simple words, how, in earlier times, when the church was unpaved, the earth-floor was strewn with sweet-smelling rushes, renewed every summer, and that the rushes and flowers of to-day were brought in memory of the past, and in gratitude for the beauty of their home among the hills and lakes. Then the fresh child voices rang out singing praises to Him who made it all:

"The purple-headed mountain,
  The river running by,
The sunset, and the morning
  That brightens up the sky."

They sang, too, their special hymn written for the Ambleside rush-bearers seventy years ago, by the well-beloved vicar of Brathay, the Rev. Owen Lloyd:

"Our fathers to the house of God,
  As yet a building rude,
Bore offerings from the flowery sod,
  And fragrant rushes strew'd.

"These, of the great Redeemer's grace

Bright emblems, here are seen;
He makes to smile the desert place
With flowers and rushes green."

[58]

One highly important ceremony, to the minds of the children, was yet to come,—the presentation of the gingerbread. As they filed out of the church, twopenny slabs of a peculiarly black and solid substance were given into their eager little hands. The rain had ceased, and we grown-ups all waited in the churchyard, looking down on the issuing file of red tam-o'-shanters, ribboned straw hats, worn grey caps, and, wavering along very low in the line, soft, fair-tinted baby hoods, often cuddled up against some guardian knee. Under the varied headgear ecstatic feasting had begun even in the church porch, though some of the children were too entranced with excitement to find their mouths. One chubby urchin waved his piece of gingerbread in the air, and another laid his on a gravestone and inadvertently sat down on it. A bewildered wee damsel in robin's-egg blue had lost hers in the basket of wild flowers that was slung about her neck. One spud of a boy, roaring as he came, was wiping his eyes with his. In general, however, the rush-bearers were munching with such relish that they did not trouble themselves to remove the tissue paper adhering to the bottom of each cake, but swallowed that as contentedly as the rest. Meanwhile [59] their respective adults were swooping down upon them, dabbing the smear of gingerbread off cheeks and chins, buttoning up little sacques and jackets, and whisking off the most obtrusive patches of half-dried mud. Among these parental regulators was a beaming old woman with a big market-basket on her arm, who brushed and tidied as impartially as if she were grandmother to the whole parish.

Then, again, rang out those gleeful harmonies of which our Puritan bells know nothing. The circle of mountains, faintly flushed with an atoning sunset, looked benignly down on a spectacle familiar to them for hundreds of Christian summer-tides; and if they remembered it still longer ago, as a pagan rite in honour of nature gods, they discreetly kept their knowledge to themselves.

The rushes and flowers brightened the church through the Sunday services, which were well attended by both dalesfolk and visitors. On Monday twelve prizes were awarded, and the bearings were taken away by their respective owners. Then followed "the treat," an afternoon of frolic, with rain only now and then, on a meadow behind St. Mary's. The ice-cream cart, the [60] climbing-pole, swings and games, seemed to hold the full attention of the children, to each of whom was tied a cup; but when the simple supper was brought on to higher ground close by the church, who sat like a gentle mother in the very midst of the merry-make, a jubilant, universal shout, "It's coom! It's coom!" sent all the small feet scampering toward the goodies. To crown it all, the weather obligingly gave opportunity, on the edge of the evening, for fireworks, which even the poor little Wesleyans outside the railing could enjoy.

THE RUSH-BEARING AT GRASMERE

II

The Ambleside rush-bearing takes place on the Saturday before the last Sunday in July. The more

famous Grasmere rush-bearing comes on the Saturday next after St. Oswald's Day, August fifth. This year (1906) these two festivals fell just one week apart. The London papers were announcing that it was "brilliant weather in the Lakes," which, in a sense, it was, for the gleams of sunshine between the showers were like opening doors of Paradise; yet we arrived at Grasmere so wet [61] that we paid our sixpences to enter Dove Cottage, a shrine to which we had already made due pilgrimage, and had a cosey half-hour with Mrs. Dixon, well known to the tourist world, before the fireplace whose quiet glow often gladdened the poets and dreamers of its great days gone by.

Our canny old hostess, in the bonnet and shawl which seem to be her official wear, was not disposed this afternoon to talk of the Wordsworths, whom she had served in her girlhood. Her mind was on the rush-bearing for which she had baked the gingerbread forty-three years. There were five hundred squares this time, since, in addition to what would be given to the children, provision must be made for the Sunday afternoon teas throughout Grasmere. The rolling out of the dough had not grown easier with the passing of nearly half a century, and she showed us the swollen muscles of her wrist. Her little granddaughters, their flower erections borne proudly in their arms, were dressed all spick and span for the procession, and stood with her, for their pictures, at the entrance to Dove Cottage.

It was still early, and we strolled over to the tranquil church beside the Rotha. Under the [62] benediction of that grey, embattled tower, in the green churchyard with

> "Ridge rising gently by the side of ridge,
> A heaving surface,"

sleep Wordsworth, his sister Dorothy, and their kindred, while the names of Hartley Coleridge and Arthur Hugh Clough may be read on stones close by. We brought the poets white heather and heart's ease for our humble share in the rush-bearing.

Grasmere church, with its strange row of rounded arches down the middle of the nave and its curiously raftered roof, still wears the features portrayed in *The Excursion*:

> "Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
> But large and massy; for duration built;
> With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
> By naked rafters intricately crossed,
> Like leafless underboughs, in some thick wood,
> All withered by the depths of shade above.
> Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,
> Each in its ornamental scroll enclosed,
> Each also crowned with wingèd heads—a pair
> Of rudely painted Cherubim. The floor
> Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,
> Was occupied by oaken benches ranged
> In seemly rows; the chancel only showed
> Some vain distinctions, marks of earthly state,
> By immemorial privilege allowed."

[63]

There were a number of people in the church, but the reverent hush was almost unbroken. Strangers in the green churchyard were moving softly about, reading the inscriptions on stones and brasses, or waiting in the pews, some in the attitude of devotion. In the south aisle leaned against the wall the banner of St. Oswald, a crimson-bordered standard, with the figure of the saint in white and crimson, worked on a golden ground. A short, stout personage, with grey chin-whiskers and a pompous air, presumably the sexton, came in a little after three with a great armful of fresh rushes, and commenced to strew the floor. Soon afterwards the children, with their bearings, had taken their positions, ranged in a long row on the broad churchyard wall, fronting the street, which by this time was crowded with spectators, for the Grasmere rush-bearing is the most noted among the few survivals of what was once, in the northern counties of England, a very general observance. There is an excellent account of it, by an eyewitness, as early as 1789. James Clarke, in his *Survey of the Lakes*, wrote: [64]

> "I happened once to be at Grasmere, at what they call a Rushbearing.... About the latter end of September a number of young women and girls (generally the whole parish) go together to the tops of the hills to gather rushes. These they carry to the church, headed by one of the smartest girls in the company. She who leads the procession is styled the Queen, and carries in her hand a huge garland, and the rest usually have nosegays. The Queen then goes and places her garland upon the pulpit, where it remains till after the next Sunday. The rest then strew their rushes upon the bottom of the pews, and at the church door they are met by a fiddler, who plays before them to the public house, where the evening is spent in all kinds of rustic merriment."

Still more interesting is the record, in Hone's *Year Book*, by "A Pedestrian." On July 21, 1827, the walking tour of this witness brought him to Grasmere.

> "The church door was open, and I discovered that the villagers were strewing the floors with fresh rushes.... During the whole of this day I observed the children busily employed in preparing garlands of such wild flowers as the beautiful valley produces, for the evening procession, which commenced at nine, in the following order: The

children, chiefly girls, holding their garlands, paraded through the village, preceded by the Union band. They then entered the church, when the three largest garlands were placed on the altar, and the remaining ones in various parts of the place. In the [65]
procession I observed the 'Opium Eater,' Mr. Barber, an opulent gentleman residing in the neighbourhood, Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth, Miss Wordsworth and Miss Dora Wordsworth. Wordsworth is the chief supporter of these rustic ceremonies. The procession over, the party adjourned to the ballroom, a hayloft at my worthy friend Mr. Bell's (now the Red Lion), where the country lads and lasses tripped it merrily and heavily. They called the amusement dancing. I called it thumping; for he who made the most noise seemed to be esteemed the best dancer; and on the present occasion I think Mr. Pooley, the schoolmaster, bore away the palm. Billy Dawson, the fiddler, boasted to me of having been the officiating minstrel at this ceremony for the last six and forty years.... The dance was kept up to a quarter of twelve, when a livery servant entered and delivered the following verbal message to Billy: 'Master's respects, and will thank you to lend him the fiddle-stick.' Billy took the hint, the Sabbath was at hand, and the pastor of the parish (Sir Richard le Fleming) had adopted this gentle mode of apprising the assembled revellers that they ought to cease their revelry. The servant departed with the fiddle-stick, the chandelier was removed, and when the village clock struck twelve not an individual was to be seen out of doors in the village."

Since then many notices of the Grasmere rush-bearings have been printed, the most illuminating being that of the Rev. Canon Rawnsley, 1890, now included in one of his several collections of [66]
Lake Country sketches. He calls attention to the presence, among the bearings, of designs that suggest a Miracle Play connection, as Moses in the bulrushes, the serpent on a pole, and the harps of David and Miriam,—emblems which were all in glowing evidence this past summer. A merry and sympathetic account is given in a ballad of 1864, ascribed to Mr. Edward Button, formerly the Grasmere schoolmaster:

"In Grasmere's hill-girt valley,
'Tis pleasant to recall
The children of the dalesmen hold
A pretty festival.

"The children of the valley
To this day faithful keep
The custom of their hardy sires
Who in the churchyard sleep.

"For when hot summer's waning,
They to the lake repair
To pull the reeds and lilies white
That grow in plenty there.

"With these, and ferns and mosses,
And flowers of varied dye,
They hasten home, and all day long
Their busy fingers ply.

[67]

"Then in the quiet evening,
Ere dew begins to fall,
They range their floral trophies on
The churchyard's low-topped wall.

"There crosses without number,
Of every shape and size,
And wreaths, triangles, crowns, and shields
Appear in flowery guise.

"And verses, too, and mottoes,
Words ta'en from Holy Writ,
And some designs which mock the pen,
We'll call them nondescript.

"But all are glad and happy
Who in the pageant share,
And the urchins with the nondescripts
Are proud as any there.

"And proudly struts each youngster,
When, devices gay in hand,
They round about the village march
To the music of the band.

"Like to a string of rainbows
Appears that cortege bright,

Winding 'mong the crooked lanes
In the golden evening light!

"And coming to the church again
They bear their garlands in,
They fix them round the time-stained fane
While the bells make merry din.

[68]

"But hark! before departing
From that house of prayer,
The incense of a grateful hymn
Floats on the quiet air."

The older hymn of St. Oswald—

"They won us peace, Thy saints, O Lord,
Even though, like royal David, they
Smiting and smitten with the sword
Toiled through their mortal day"—

is now followed by a hymn from the pen of Canon Rawnsley, whose genial notice, as he passed this August along the churchyard wall of bearings, brought a happy flush to one child-face after another:

"The Rotha streams, the roses blow,
Though generations pass away,
And still our old traditions flow
From pagan past and Roman day.

"Beside the church our poets sleep,
Their spirits mingle with our throng;
They smile to see the children keep
Our ancient feast with prayer and song.

"We too have foes in war to face,
Not yet our land from sin is free.
Lord, give us of St. Oswald's grace
To make us kings and saints to Thee."

[69]

The Grasmere rush-bearing, so far as we saw it, was lacking in none of the traditional features, not even the rain. Yet the gently falling showers seemed all unheeded by the line of bright-eyed children, steadfastly propping up on the wall their various tributes. Banners and crosses and crowns were there, and all the customary emblems. Among the several harps was one daintily wrought of marguerites; two little images of Moses reposed in arks woven of flags and grasses; on a moss-covered lattice was traced in lilies: "Consider the lilies of the field." The serpent was made of tough green stems, knotted and twisted together in a long coil about a pole. Geranium, maiden-hair fern, Sweet William, pansies, daisies, dahlias, asters, fuchsias mingled their hues in delicate and intricate devices. Among the decorated perambulators was one all wreathed in heather, with a screen of rushes rising high behind. Its flower-faced baby was all but hidden under a strewing of roses more beautiful than any silken robe, and a wand twined with lilies of the valley swayed unsteadily from his pink fist. Six little maidens in white and green, holding tall stalks of rushes, upheld the rush-bearing sheet—linen spun at Grasmere and woven at Keswick— [70] crossed by blossoming sprays.

The rush-cart, bearing the ribbon-tied bunches of rushes, crowned with leafy oak-boughs and hung with garlands, belonged especially to Lancashire, where it has not yet entirely disappeared; indeed a rush-cart has been seen in recent years taking its way through one of the most squalid quarters of grimy Manchester; but the rush-sheet, on which the precious articles of the parish, silver tankards, teapots, cups, spoons, snuff-boxes, all lent to grace this festival, were arranged, had really gone out until, in this simplified form, it was revived a few years ago at Grasmere by lovers of the past. That the sheet now holds only flowers is due to that same inexorable logic of events which has brought it about that no longer the whole parish with cart-loads of rushes, no longer, even, the strong lads and lasses swinging aloft bunches of rushes and glistening holly boughs, but only little children ranged in cherubic row along the churchyard wall, and crowing babies in their go-carts, bring to St. Oswald the tribute of the summer. [71]

It was from coach-top we caught our farewell glimpse of the charming scene. The village band, playing the Grasmere rush-bearing march—an original tune believed to be at least one hundred and fifty years old—led the way, followed by the gold and crimson banner of the warrior saint. The rush-sheet, borne by the little queen and her maids of honour, came after, and then the throng of one hundred or more children, transforming the street into a garden with the beauty and sweetness of their bearings. As the procession neared the church, the bells pealed out "with all their voices," and we drove off under a sudden pelt of rain, remembering Wordsworth's reference to

"This day, when forth by rustic music led,

The village children, while the sky is red
With evening lights, advance in long array
Through the still churchyard, each with garland gay,
That, carried sceptre-like, o'ertops the head
Of the proud bearer."

Our third rush-bearing we found in Cheshire, on Sunday, August 12. A morning train from Manchester brought us to Macclesfield—keeping the Sabbath with its silk-mills closed, and its steep streets nearly empty—in time for luncheon and a leisurely drive, through occasional gusts [72] of rain, four miles to the east, up and up, into the old Macclesfield Forest. This once wild woodland, infested by savage boars, a lurking-place for outlaws, is now open pasture, grazed over by cows whose milk has helped to make the fame of Cheshire cheese. But Forest Chapel still maintains a rite which flourished when the long since perished trees were sprouts and saplings.

It is a tiny brown church, nested in a hollow of the hills, twelve hundred feet above the sea. In the moss-crowned porch, whose arch was wreathed with flowers and grasses, stood the vicar, as we came up, welcoming the guests of the rush-bearing. For people were panting up the hill in a continuous stream, mill hands from Macclesfield and farmer-folk from all the hamlets round. Perhaps seven or eight hundred were gathered there, hardly one-fourth of whom could find room within the church.

We passed up the walk, thickly strewn with rushes, under that brightly garlanded porch, into a little sanctuary that was a very arbour of greenery and blossom. As we were led up the aisle, our [73] feet sank in a velvety depth of rushes. The air was delicious with fresh, woodsy scents. A cross of lilies rose from the rush-tapestried font. The window-seats were filled with bracken, fern, and goldenrod. The pulpit and reading-desk were curtained with long sprays of bloom held in green bands of woven rushes. The chancel walls were hidden by wind-swayed greens from which shone out, here and there, clustering harebells, cottage roses, and the golden glint of the sunflower. The hanging lamps were gay with asters, larkspur, and gorse. The whole effect was indescribably joyous and rural, frankly suggestive of festivity.

It was early evensong, a three o'clock service. There was to be another at five. After the ritual came the full-voiced singing of a familiar hymn:

"Before the hills in order stood,
  Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
  To endless years the same.

"Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
  Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
  Dies at the opening day."

[74]

So singing, the little congregation filed out into the churchyard, where the greater congregation, unable to gain access, was singing too. It was one of the rare hours of sunshine, all the more blissful for their rarity. The preacher of the day took his stand on a flat tombstone. Little girls were lifted up to seats upon the churchyard wall, and coats were folded and laid across low monuments for the comfort of the old people. A few little boys, on their first emergence into the sunshine, could not resist the temptation to turn an unobtrusive somersault or so over the more distant mounds, but they were promptly beckoned back by their elders and squatted submissively on the turf. The most of the audience stood in decorous quiet. Two generations back, gingerbread stalls and all manner of booths would have been erected about the church, and the rustics, clumping up the steep path in the new boots which every farmer was expected to give his men for the rush-bearing, would have diversified the services by drinking and wrestling.

But altogether still and sacred was the scene on which we looked back as the compulsion of the railway time-table drew us away; the low church tower keeping watch and ward over that green [75] enclosure of God's acre, with the grey memorial crosses and the throng of living worshippers,—a throng that seemed so shadowy, so evanescent, against the long memories of Forest Chapel and the longer memories of those sunlit hills that rejoiced on every side. A yellow rick rose just behind the wall, the straws blowing in the wind as if they wanted to pull away and go to church with the rushes. On the further side of the little temple there towered a giant chestnut, a dome of shining green that seemed to overspread and shelter its Christian neighbour, as if in recognition of some ancient kinship, some divine primeval bond, attested, perhaps, by this very rite of rush-bearing. The enfolding blue of the sky, tender with soft sunshine, hallowed them both.

A GROUP OF INDUSTRIAL COUNTIES

[76]

I. Lancashire

We all know Liverpool,—but how do we know it? The Landing Stage, hotels whose surprisingly

stable floors, broad beds, and fresh foods are grateful to the sea-worn, the inevitable bank, perhaps the shops. Most of us arrive at Liverpool only to hurry out of it,—to Chester, to London, to the Lakes. Seldom do the beguilements of the Head Boots prevail upon the impatient American to visit the birthplaces of its two queerly assorted lions, "Mr. Gladstone and Mrs. 'Emans," of whom the second would surely roar us "as gently as any sucking dove." Yet we might give a passing thought to these as well as to the high-hearted James Martineau and to Hawthorne, our supreme artist in romance, four of whose precious years the country wasted in that "dusky and stifled chamber" of Brunswick Street. And hours must be precious indeed to the visitor who [77] cannot spare even one for the Walker Fine Art Gallery, where hangs Rossetti's great painting of "Dante's Dream,"—the Florentine, his young face yearning with awe and grief, led by compassionate Love to the couch of Beatrice, who lies death-pale amid the flush of poppies.

But the individuality of Liverpool is in its docks,—over six miles of serried basins hollowed out of the bank of the broad Mersey, one of the hardest-worked rivers in the world,—wet docks and dry docks, walled and gated and quayed. From the busiest point of all, the Landing Stage, the mighty ocean liners draw out with their throngs of wearied holiday-makers and their wistful hordes of emigrant home-seekers. And all along the wharves stand merchantmen of infinite variety, laden with iron and salt, with soap and sugar, with earthenware and clay, with timber and tobacco, with coal and grain, with silks and woollens, and, above all, with cotton,—the raw cotton sent in not only from our own southern plantations, but from India and Egypt as well, and the returning cargoes of cloth spun and woven in "the cotton towns" of Lancashire. The life of Liverpool is [78] commerce; it is a city of warehouses and shops. The wide sea-range and the ever-plying ferryboats enable the merchant princes to reside well out of the town. So luxurious is the lot of these merchants deemed to be that Lancashire has set in opposition the terms "a Liverpool gentleman" and "a Manchester man," while one of the ruder cotton towns, Bolton, adds its contribution of "a Bolton chap." This congestion of life in the great port means an extreme of poverty as well as of riches. The poor quarters of Liverpool have been called "the worst slums in Christendom," yet a recent investigation has shown that within a limited area, selected because of its squalor and misery, over five thousand pounds a year goes in drink. The families that herd together by threes and fours in a single dirty cellar, sleeping on straw and shavings, nevertheless have money to spend at "the pub,"—precisely the same flaring, gilded ginshop to-day as when Hawthorne saw and pitied its "sad revellers" half a century ago.

THE QUADRANT, LIVERPOOL

While Liverpool has a sorry pre-eminence for high death-rate and for records of vice and crime, [79] Manchester, "the cinder-heap," may fairly claim to excel in sheer dismalness. The river Irwell, on which it stands, is so black that the Manchester clerks, as the saying goes, run down to it every morning and fill their ink-pots. Not only Manchester, but all the region for ten miles around, is one monster cotton factory. The towns within this sooty ring—tall-chimneyed Bolton; Bury, that has been making cloth since the days of Henry VIII; Middleton on the sable Irk; Rochdale, whose beautiful river is forced to toil not for cotton only, but for flannels and fustians and friezes; bustling Oldham; Ashton-under-Lyme, with its whirr of more than three million spindles; Staley Bridge on the Tame; Stockport in Cheshire; Salford, which practically makes one town with Manchester; and Manchester itself—all stand on a deep coal-field. The miners may be seen, of a Sunday afternoon, lounging at the street corners, or engaged in their favourite sport of flying carrier pigeons, as if the element of air had a peculiar attraction for these human gnomes. If the doves that they fly are white, it is by some special grace, for smut lies thick on wall and ledge, on the monotonous ranks of "workingmen's homes," on the costly public buildings, on the elaborate [80] groups of statuary. One's heart aches for the sculptor whose dream is hardly made pure in marble before it becomes dingy and debased.

Beyond the borders of this magic coal-field, above which some dark enchantment binds all humanity in an intertwisted coil of spinning, weaving, bleaching, printing, buying, selling cotton, are various outlying collieries upon which other manufacturing towns are built,—Warrington, which at the time of our Revolution supplied the Royal Navy with half its sail-cloth; Wigan, whose tradition goes back to King Arthur, but whose renown is derived from its seam of cannel coal;

calico Chorley; Preston, of warlike history and still the centre of determined strikes; and plenty more.

The citizens of the cotton towns are proud of their grimy bit of the globe, and with good reason. "Rightly understood," said Disraeli, "Manchester is as great a human exploit as Athens." The swift industrial growth, the vast business expansion of all this region, are to be counted among the modern miracles of progress, barren of beauty and joy as their present stage may seem to be. [81] The heroes held in memory here are plain workingmen whose mechanical inventions resulted in the English spinning-mill,—John Kay of Bury, James Hargreaves of Blackburn, Samuel Crompton of Bolton, and Sir Richard Arkwright, a native of Preston, who began his career as a barber's apprentice and won his accolade by an energy of genius which virtually created the cotton manufacture in Lancashire. The battle legends are of angry mobs and smashed machinery, of garrisoned mills and secret experiments and inventors in peril of their lives. The St. George of Lancashire is George Stephenson, the sturdy Scotchman, who in 1830 constructed that pioneer railway between Liverpool and Manchester,—a road which had to perform no mean exploit in crossing the quaking bog of Chat Moss. Fanny Kemble, when a girl of twenty-one, had the ecstasy of a trial trip with Stephenson himself. She tells with fairy-tale glamour how "his tame dragon flew panting along his iron pathway" at "its utmost speed, thirty-four miles an hour, swifter than a bird flies." Wonder of wonders, this "brave little she-dragon" could "run with equal facility [82] backwards or forwards." This trip took place at the end of August, preliminary to the final opening on September fifteenth, an occasion whose triumph was marred by a fatal mischance, in that a stray dragon ran over a director who was innocently standing on the track. For a patron saint of to-day, Manchester need go no further than to the founder of the Ancoats Brotherhood, Charles Rowley, that cheery philanthropist reminding one of Hawthorne's friend who brightened the dreary visages he met "as if he had carried a sunbeam in his hand"; for the disciples of the Beautiful, the followers of the Golden Rule, are full of courage even here among what the poet Blake would designate as "dark Satanic mills." From out the dirt and din, shrieking engines, roaring furnaces, clattering machinery, chimneys belching smoke by day and flame by night, blithely rises the song of their Holy War:

"I will not cease from mental fight,
  Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
  In England's green and pleasant land."

But this, though the modern reality of South Lancashire, is not what the tourist goes out to see. [83] From Liverpool to Furness Abbey is his natural and joyful route. He steams at full speed up this richest, most prosperous, and well-nigh most unattractive part of England; he has left the Mersey, the county's southern boundary, far behind; he crosses the Ribble, which flows through the centre of Lancashire, and the Lune, which enters it from Westmoreland on the north and soon empties into Morecambe Bay. He has come from a district close-set with factory towns, scarred with mine shafts and slag heaps, into the sweet quietude of an agricultural and pastoral region. But still above and beyond him is Furness, that northernmost section of Lancashire lying between Cumberland and Westmoreland and shut off from the rest of the county by Morecambe Bay and the treacherous Lancaster sands. High Furness is a part of the Lake Country, claiming for Lancashire not only Coniston Lake but even one side of Windermere, which lies on the Westmoreland border. Its Cumberland boundary is the sonneted Duddon. Low Furness, the peninsula at the south of this isolated strip, has a wealth of mineral deposits, especially iron. The town Barrow-in-Furness, which in 1846 consisted of a single hut, with one fishing-boat in the [84] harbour, has been converted, by the development of the mines, into a place of much commercial consequence. Yet the lover of poetry will visit it, not for its steel works, figuring so tragically in Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Helbeck of Bannisdale," nor for its shipbuilding yards and boasted floating docks, nor for the paper works which take in a tree at one end and put it out as boxes of dainty stationery at the other, but in order to reach, by a boat from Peele Pier, Wordsworth's Peele Castle, "standing here sublime,"—that old island fortress which the poet's dream has glorified with

"The light that never was on sea or land."

But it is to Furness Abbey that the throngs of sightseers come, and well they may. Its melancholy grace is one of the treasures of memory. It was thither that Wordsworth as a schoolboy—for Hawkshead is within the limits of Furness—would sometimes ride with his fellows. The "Prelude" holds the picture, as he saw it over a century ago, of [85]

"the antique walls
Of that large abbey, where within the Vale
Of Nightshade, to St. Mary's honour built,
Stands yet a mouldering pile with fractured arch,
Belfry, and images, and living trees;
A holy scene! Along the smooth green turf
Our horses grazed. To more than inland peace
Left by the west wind sweeping overhead
From a tumultuous ocean, trees and towers
In that sequestered valley may be seen,
Both silent and both motionless alike;
Such the deep shelter that is there, and such

The safeguard for repose and quietness."

We lingered there for days, held by the brooding spell of that most lovely ruin. Hour upon hour we would wander about among the noble fragments which Nature was so tenderly comforting for the outrages of His Rapacity Henry VIII. Harebells shone blue from the top of the broken arch of the tall east window, whose glass was long since shattered and whose mullions were wrenched away. Grasses and all manner of little green weeds had climbed up to triforium and clerestory, where they ran lightly along the crumbling edges. Ivy tapestries were clinging to the ragged stone surfaces. Thickets of nightshade mantled the sunken tombs and altar steps. Ferns nodded over the fretted canopies of the richly wrought choir stalls and muffled the mouths of fierce old [86] gargoyles, still grinning defiance at Time. In the blue overhead, which no roof shut from view, a seagull would occasionally flash by with the same strong flight that the eyes of the Vikings, whose barrows once dotted the low islands of this western coast, used to follow with sympathetic gaze. Wrens have built their nests in plundered niche and idle capital. The rooks, arraying themselves in sombre semicircle along some hollow chancel arch, cawed reminiscent vespers. And little boys and girls from Barrow, joyous mites of humanity not yet smelted into the industrial mass, tried leaping-matches from the stumps of mossy pillars and ran races through nave and cloister. The wooden clogs of these lively youngsters have left their marks on prostrate slab and effigy, even on "the stone abbot" and "the cross-legged knight," much to the displeasure of the custodian,—a man who so truly cares for his abbey, the legal property of the Duke of Devonshire, that he has purchased two of the chief antiquarian works upon Furness in order that he may thoroughly acquaint himself with its history. It was he who told us that many of the empty stone [87] coffins had been carried away by the farmers of the neighbourhood to serve as horse-troughs, and that in their barn walls might be seen here and there sculptured blocks of red sandstone quite above the appreciation of calves and heifers. He told how he had shown "Professor Ruskin" about the ruins, and how, at Ruskin's request, Mrs. Severn had sent him from Brantwood seeds of the Italian toad-flax to be planted here. He lent us his well-thumbed folios, West's "Antiquities of Furness" and "Beck's Annales Furnessienses," so that, sitting under the holly-shade in the Abbey Hotel garden, with a "starry multitude of daisies" at our feet, we could pore at our ease over that strange story, a tale of greatness that is told, and now, save for those lofty ribs and arches so red against the verdure, nothing but a tale. Our readings would be pleasurably interrupted toward the close of the afternoon by the advent of tea, brought to us in the garden, and the simultaneous arrival of a self-invited robin.

"Not like a beggar is he come,
But enters as a looked-for guest,
Confiding in his ruddy breast."

[88]

We tossed crumbs to him all the more gaily for the fancy that his ancestors were among the pensioners of the abbey in the day of its supremacy. For the monks of Furness maintained an honourable reputation for hospitality from that mid-thirteenth-century beginning, when the Grey Brothers from Normandy first erected the grave, strong, simple walls of their Benedictine foundation in this deep and narrow vale, to the bitter end in 1537. Meanwhile they had early discarded the grey habit of the Benedictines for the white of the Cistercians, and their abbot had become "lord of the liberties of Furness," exercising an almost regal sway in his peninsula, with power of life and death, with armed forces at command, and with one of the richest incomes of the kingdom under his control. With wealth had come luxury. The buildings, which filled the whole breadth of the vale, had forgotten their Cistercian austerity in a profusion of ornament. Within "the strait enclosure," encompassing church and cloisters, the little syndicate of white-vested monks not only chanted and prayed, transcribed and illuminated manuscripts, taught the children of their tenants and entertained the stranger, but planned financial operations on a [89] large scale. For outside this, the holy wall, was another, shutting in over threescore acres of fertile land which the lay brothers, far exceeding the clerical monks in number, kept well tilled. Here were mill, granary, bakehouse, malt-kiln, brewery, fish-pond; and beyond stretched all Furness, where the abbey raised its cattle, sheep and horses, made salt, smelted its iron, and gathered its rents.

Few of the monastic establishments had so much to lose, but Furness was surrendered to the commissioners of Henry VIII with seemingly no resistance. The Earl of Sussex reported to his greedy master that he found the Lord Abbot "of a very facile and ready mynde," while the prior, who had been a monk in that house for fifty years, was "decrepted and aged." Yet it may be noted that of the thirty-three monks whom Sussex found in possession, only thirty signed the deed of surrender. On the fate of the three history is silent, save for a brief entry to the effect that two were imprisoned in Lancaster Castle. There is no record of their liberation. The monks who made their submission were granted small pensions. The abbot received the rectory of Dalton, so near [90] the desecrated abbey that he might have heard, to his torment, the crash of its falling towers. But there is room to hope that in those cruel dungeons of Lancaster two men died because they would not cringe. We do not know, and it was in vain we hunted through the moonlight for the ghost of that mysterious thirty-third, who, too, might have a gallant tale to tell.

The region abounds in points of interest. Romney, the painter, is buried in the churchyard of Dalton, his native place. Beautiful for situation is Conishead Priory, "the Paradise of Furness," once a house of the Black Canons and now a much-vaunted Hydropathic, for, in the stately language of the eighteenth-century antiquary, Thomas West, "Æsculapius is seldom invited to Furness, but Hygeia is more necessary than formerly."

THE TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL

Near the banks of the Duddon stands Broughton Tower, with its legend of how the manor, in possession of the family from time immemorial, was lost by Sir Thomas Broughton—and this was the way of it. In 1487 Lambert Simnel, claiming to be the son of the murdered Clarence, sailed over from Ireland, where he had been crowned by the sister of Richard III, to dispute the new [91] throne of Henry VII. Among his supporters were the Earl of Lincoln, Lord Lovel of Oxfordshire, and Lord Geraldine with an Irish force; but it was the general of his two thousand Burgundian mercenaries, "bold Martin Swart," who is credited with having given name to Swarthmoor, where the invaders encamped. Sir Thomas joined them with a small body of retainers and, in the crushing defeat that followed, was probably left dead upon the field. But legend says that two of the English leaders escaped,—Lord Lovel to his own house in Oxfordshire, where he hid in a secret chamber and perished there of hunger, and Sir Thomas to his faithful tenantry, who for years concealed him in their huts and sheep-folds, and when he died, white-haired, wrapped him in his own conquered banner, and gave him a burial worthy of his race.

But our associations with Swarthmoor were of peace and not of war. Our pilgrimage thither was made for the sake of Mistress Fell of Swarthmoor Hall and of George Fox, her second husband, who established hard by what is said to be the first meeting-house of Friends in England. Quitting [92] the train at Lindal, a few miles above the abbey, we found ourselves in the rich iron country, "the Peru of Furness." It must be the reddest land this side of sunset. Even the turnips and potatoes, we were told, come red out of the ground. I know that we tramped amazedly on, over a red road, past red trees and buildings, with a red stream running below, and the uncanniest red men, red from cap to shoe, rising like Satan's own from out the earth to tramp along beside us. The road was deeply hedged, airless and viewless, and we were glad when we had left three miles of it behind, though the village of Swarthmoor, at which we had then arrived, proved to be one of those incredibly squalid English villages that make the heart sick. Between wide expanses of sweet green pasture, all carefully walled in, with strict warnings against trespass, ran two or three long, parallel stone streets, swarming with children and filthy beyond excuse. The lambs had space and cleanliness about them, soft turf to lie upon, pure air to breathe, but the human babies crawled and tumbled on that shamefully dirty pavement, along which a reeking beer wagon was noisily jolting from "public" to "public." Farther down our chosen street, which soon [93] slipped into a lane, there were tidier homes and more sanitary conditions. Yet even Swarthmoor Hall, the fine old Tudor mansion which rose across the fields beyond, had a somewhat uninviting aspect. There were broken panes in the windows, and the cows had made the dooryards too much their own. The present proprietors, who, we were assured, value the old place highly, and had refused repeated offers for it from the Society of Friends, rent it to a farmer. The housekeeper, not without a little grumbling, admitted us, and showed us about the spacious rooms with their dark oak panelling, their richly carven mantels, their windows that look seaward over Morecambe Bay and inland to the Coniston mountains. The hall which Judge Fell—that wise and liberal man, tolerant beyond his time—allowed the Friends to use for their weekly meetings, is a room of goodly proportions, with flagged floor and timbered roof. In the dining-room window stands a simple deal desk once belonging to George Fox, but that upper door through which he used to preach to the throng in orchard and meadow is now walled up. As we, departing, looked [94] back at the house, large, plain, three-storied, covered with grey stucco, we noted how right up on the chimney, in the alien fellowship of the chimney-pots, flourished a goodly green yew, sown by passing wind or bird. The housekeeper, who had waxed so gracious that she accompanied us for a few steps on our way, said she had lived in Swarthmoor thirty-four years and had always seen the yew looking much as it did now, but that an old man of the neighbourhood remembered it in his boyhood as only finger-long. It had never, so far as she could tell, been provided by mortal hand with earth or water, but grew by some inner grace, a housetop sign and signal.

Many hallowed memories cluster about that old Elizabethan mansion. It was in 1632 that Judge Fell brought thither his bride, Margaret Askew, sixteen years his junior. She was a descendant of Anne Askew, who, a beautiful woman of twenty-four, thoughtful and truthful, had been burned as a heretic,—one of the closing achievements of the reign of Henry VIII. "I saw her," reports a bystander, "and must needs confess of Mistress Askew, now departed to the Lord, that the day [95] before her execution, and the same day also, she had on an angel's countenance, and a smiling face; though when the hour of darkness came, she was so racked that she could not stand, but was holden up between two serjeants."

It was then that the Lord Chancellor—who previously, when even the callous jailer had refused to rack the delicate body further, had thrown off his gown and worked the torture-engine with his own hands—offered her the king's pardon if she would recant, receiving in reply only the quiet words, "I came not hither to deny my Lord and Master."

It is not easy for us who read to echo the prayer of her who suffered:

"Lord, I Thee desyre,
  For that they do to me,
Let them not taste the hyre
  Of their inyquyte."

No wonder that Margaret Fell, with such a history in her heart, should have lent a ready ear to the doctrines of the "Children of Light," as the people dubbed them, the "Friends of Truth," as they called themselves, the "Quakers," whose prime contention was for liberty of conscience. [96]

She had been married twenty years when George Fox first appeared at Swarthmoor Hall, where all manner of "lecturing ministers" were hospitably entertained. Three weeks later, Judge Fell, a grave man not far from sixty, was met, as he was riding home from circuit, by successive parties of gentlemen, "a deal of the captains and great ones of the country," who had come out to tell him that his family were "all bewitched." Home he came in wrath, but his wife soothed him as good wives know how,—had the nicest of dinners made ready, and sat by him, chatting of this and that, while he ate.

"At night," says her own account, "George Fox arrived; and after supper, when my husband was sitting in the parlour, I asked if he might come in. My husband said yes. So George walked into the room without any compliment. The family all came in, and presently he began to speak. He spoke very excellently, as ever I heard him; and opened Christ's and the Apostles' practices.... If all England had been there, I thought they could not have denied the truth of these things. And so [97] my husband came to see clearly the truth of what he spake."

The next First-day the meeting of the Friends was held at Swarthmoor Hall on Judge Fell's own invitation, though he himself went, as usual, to "the Steeplehouse." The spirit of persecution was soon abroad, and one day, when the Judge was absent on circuit, Fox, while speaking in the church, was set upon, knocked down, trampled, beaten, and finally whipped out of town. On Judge Fell's return, he dealt with the Friend's assailants as common rioters. The Judge held, however, his mother's faith to the end, never becoming a member of the Society. He died in the year of Cromwell's death, 1658, and was buried by torchlight under the family pew in Ulverston church. "He was a merciful man to God's people," wrote his widow, adding that, though not a Friend, he "sought after God in the best way that was made known to him."

Meanwhile Margaret Fell had become a leader among the Children of Light. Twice she wrote to Cromwell in behalf of their cause, and again and again to Charles II, with whom she pleaded face [98] to face. Now that her husband's protection was withdrawn, persecution no longer spared her, and she, like Fox and many another of the Society, came to know well the damp and chilly dungeons of Lancaster Castle,—that stern prison of North Lancashire which may be viewed afar off from the ominous height of Weeping Hill.

"Thousands, as toward yon old Lancastrian Towers,
A prison's crown, along this way they passed,
For lingering durance or quick death with shame,
From this bare eminence thereon have cast
Their first look—blinded as tears fell in showers
Shed on their chains."

Refusing, as a Quaker must needs refuse, to take the oath of supremacy, Mistress Fell stood her trial in 1663, her four daughters beside her. Her arguments irritated the judge into exclaiming that she had "an everlasting tongue," and he condemned her to imprisonment for life, with confiscation of all her property to the Crown. But after some five years of Lancaster's grim hospitality she was released, and forthwith set out on a series of visits to those English jails in which Quakers were immured. It was not until eleven years after Judge Fell's death that she [99] married George Fox. The courtship is summarised in Fox's "Journal": "I had seen from the Lord a considerable time before that I should take Margaret Fell to be my wife; and when I first mentioned it to her she felt the answer from God thereto." Yet after the marriage, as before, they pursued, in the main, their separate paths of preaching, journeying, and imprisonment. It was seven years before illness brought Fox to Swarthmoor, which had been restored to the family, for a brief rest. About a quarter of a mile from the mansion, stood a dwelling-house in its three or four acres of land. This modest estate Fox purchased and gave it "to the Lord, for the service of

his sons and daughters and servants called Quakers.... And also my ebony bedstead, with painted curtains, and the great elbow-chair that Robert Widder sent me, and my great sea case with the bottles in it I do give to stand in the house as heirlooms, when the house shall be made use of as a meeting-place, that Friends may have a bed to lie on, a chair to sit on, and a bottle to hold a little water for drink." He adds: "Slate it and pave the way to it and about it, that Friends may go dry to their meeting. You may let any poor, honest Friend live in the house, and so let it be for the [100] Lord's service, to the end of the world."

A deep hawthorn lane, winding to the left, led us to that apostolic meeting-house, well-nigh hidden from the road by its high, grey, ivy-topped wall. We passed through a grassy outer court into an inner enclosure thick-set with larches, hollies, and wild cherry. The paths are paved. Luxuriant ivy curtains porch and wall, and clambers up over the low tower. Above the door is inscribed:

Ex dono G. F., 1682.

The meeting-room within is of Quaker plainness, with drab-tinted walls. The settees are hard and narrow, though a few "at the top" are allowed the creature comforts of cushions. Only the posts are left of the ebony bedstead, but two elbow-chairs of carven oak, a curiously capacious and substantial travelling-chest, and a Bible still are shown as Fox's personal belongings. The Bible is a black-letter folio of 1541, the Treacle Bible, open at the third chapter of Jeremiah, where, in the last verse, comes the query: "Is not there any tryacle in Gylyad?" [101]

But Lancashire has other saints no less holy than those dear to Protestant and Quaker memory. Surely martyrs, irrespective of the special phase of the divine idea for which they gladly give up their bodies to torture and to death, are the truest heroes of history.

> "For a tear is an intellectual thing,
> And a sigh is the sword of an Angel King,
> And the bitter groan of the Martyr's woe
> Is an arrow from the Almighty's bow."

This remote county, especially the north with its perilous bogs and rugged fells, clung to the mother faith. Many of its old families are still Catholic; many a Tudor mansion can show its "priest-hole" from which, perhaps, some hidden Jesuit has been dragged to the dungeon or the scaffold. We journeyed up from Manchester on a sunny afternoon, for love of one of these, to the beautiful valley of the Ribble, rich in manifold traditions. Our time was short, but we climbed to the keep of Clitheroe Castle, ruined for its loyalty to Charles I, and viewed that wide prospect whose most impressive feature is the witch-storied stretch of Pendle Hill. On that long level range the famous witches of Lancashire used to hold their unseemly orgies, hooting and yowling [102] about Malkin Tower, their capital stronghold, whose evil stones were long since cast down and scattered. Peevish neighbours they were, at the best, ready on the least provocation to curse the cow from giving milk and the butter from coming in the churn, but on Pendle Hill the broomstick battalion was believed to dance in uncouth circle about caldrons seething with hideous ingredients and to mould little wax images of their enemies who would peak and pine as these effigies wasted before the flames, or shudder with fierce shoots of agony as red-hot needles were run into the wax. What were honest folk to do? It was bad enough to have the bride-cake snatched away from the wedding-feast and to find your staid Dobbin all in a lather and dead lame at sunrise from his wild gallop, under one of these "secret, black and midnight hags," to Malkin Tower, but when you were saddled and bridled and ridden yourself, when the hare that you had chased and wounded turned suddenly into your own wife panting and covered with blood, when your baby was stolen from the cradle to be served up in the Devil's Sacrament of the Witches' [103] Sabbath, it was time to send for one of King James's "witch-finders." So the poor old crones, doubled up and corded thumb to toe, were flung into the Calder to see whether they would sink or swim, or sent to where the fagot-piles awaited them in the courtyard of Lancaster Gaol, or even—so the whisper goes—flung into their own lurid bonfires on Pendle Hill. But still strange shadows, as of furious old arms that scatter curses, are to be seen on those heather-purpled slopes, and from the summit black thunderstorms crash down with supernatural suddenness and passion.

Our driver was a subdued old man, with an air of chronic discouragement. He met the simplest questions, about trains, about trees, about climate, with a helpless shake of the head and the humble iteration: "I can't say. I'm no scholard. I never went to school. I can't read." He eyed Pendle Hill, standing blue in a flood of sunshine, with obvious uneasiness, and asked if we thought there really were "such folk as witches." As we drove up the long avenues of Stonyhurst, our goal, that imposing seat of learning seemed to deepen his meek despondency. He murmured [104] on his lofty perch: "I never went to school."

Stonyhurst, the chief Catholic college of England, was originally located at St. Omer's in France. Over sea to St. Omer's the Catholic gentry of Elizabethan times used to send their sons. There the exiled lads vainly chanted litanies for England's conversion, their church door bearing in golden letters the fervent prayer: "*Jesu, Jesu, converte Angliam, fiat, fiat.*" The Elizabethan sonneteer, William Habington, who describes "a holy man" as one who erects religion on the Catholic foundation, "knowing it a ruinous madness to build in the air of a private spirit, or on the sands of any new schism," was a St. Omer's boy. Nineteen of those quaintly uniformed lads, blue-coated, red-vested, leather-trousered, afterwards died on the scaffold or in prison, usually as Jesuit priests who had slipped into England against Elizabethan law.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century, when the strong feeling against the Jesuits led to their banishment from France and finally to the temporary suppression of the order, the school began its wanderings,—from St. Omer's to Bruges, thence to Liège, and at last, in 1794, from [105] Liège to England, where one of the alumni presented the homeless seminary with the fine estate of Stonyhurst. In this secluded, healthful situation there now stands a prosperous college, with dormitories for two hundred students, with well-equipped academic buildings, a preparatory school, and a great farm which of itself maintains the institution.

Stonyhurst has many treasures,—illuminated missals, Caxton editions, a St. John's Gospel in Gaelic script said to have been found in the tomb of St. Cuthbert, relics of "Blessed Thomas More," original portraits of the Stuarts,—including the winsome picture of Bonny Prince Charlie as a child,—but the object of our quest was a little manuscript volume of Robert Southwell's poems. Of course the porter knew nothing about it, though he strove to impart the impression that this was the only matter in the universe on which he was uninformed, and "the teaching fathers" were still absent for their summer holiday; but a gentle old lay brother finally hunted out for us the precious book, choicely bound in vellum and delicately written in an unknown hand, [106] with corrections and insertions in the young priest's own autograph. This Stonyhurst manuscript gives the best and only complete text for the strange, touching, deeply devotional poems of Father Southwell,—the text on which Grosart's edition rests. It is supposed that they were written out for him by a friend while he lay a prisoner in the Tower, and that in the intervals between the brutalities of torture to which that most sensitive organism was again and again subjected, he put to his book these finishing touches,—only a few months and weeks before he was executed at Tyburn by a blunderer who adjusted the noose so badly that the martyr "several times made the sign of the Cross while he was hanging."

Our eyes filled as we deciphered the faded Elizabethan script:

"God's spice I was, and pounding was my due;
  In fading breath my incense savored best;
Death was the meane, my kyrnell to renewe;
  By loppynge shott I upp to heavenly rest.

"Rue not my death, rejoice at my repose;
  It was no death to me, but to my woe;
The budd was opened to lett out the rose,
  The cheynes unloos'd to let the captive goe."

[107]

As we were driving on to Whalley, to pay our tribute of honour to yet one shining memory more, the summit of Pendle Hill suddenly wrapped itself in sable cloud, and its haunting vixens let loose upon us the most vehement pelt of rain, diversified with lightning-jags and thunder-crashes, that it was ever my fortune to be drenched withal. One of the Lancashire witches is buried in Whalley churchyard under a massive slab which is said to heave occasionally. I think I saw it shaking with malicious glee as we came spattering up the flooded path, looking as if we had ourselves been "swum" in the Calder.

Whalley church, one of the most curious and venerable parish churches of England, shelters the ashes of John Paslew, last Abbot of Whalley. Upon the simple stone are cut a floriated cross and chalice, with the words "*Jesu fili dei miserere mei*." Only the fewest traces, chief of which is a beautiful gateway with groined roof, remain of this great abbey, one of the richest in the north of England, charitable, hospitable, with an especially warm welcome for wandering minstrels. Its walls have been literally levelled to the ground, like those of the rival Cistercian foundation at [108] Sawley, a few miles above. But the "White Church under the Leigh," believed to have been originally established by the missionary Paulinus in the seventh century, preserves the abbey choir stalls, whose crocketed pinnacles tower to the top of the chancel. Their *misereres* are full of humour and spirit. An old woman beating her husband with a ladle is one of the domestic scenes that tickled the merry monks of Whalley. We could have lingered long in this ancient church for its wealth of fine oak carving, its pew fashioned like a cage, its heraldic glass, and, in the churchyard, the three old, old crosses with their interlacing Runic scrolls, one of which, when a witch read it backward, would do her the often very convenient service of making her invisible. But we had time only for the thought of Abbot Paslew, who, refusing to bow to the storm like the Abbot of Furness, had raised a large body of men and gone to arms for the defence of the English monasteries against the royal robber. He was a leader in the revolt of 1537, known as the Pilgrimage of Grace. The Abbot of Sawley, William Trafford, old jealousies forgotten, took the field with him. But monks were no match for Henry VIII's generals, the rebellion was promptly [109] crushed, the Abbot of Sawley was hanged at Lancaster, and Abbot Paslew was taken, with a refinement of vengeance, back to Whalley and gibbeted there, in view of the beautiful abbey over which he had borne sway for thirty years. The country folk had depended upon it for alms, for medical aid, for practical counsel, for spiritual direction, and we may well believe that, as they looked on at the execution, their hearts were hot against the murderers of him who, when he grasped the sword, had assumed the title of Earl of Poverty. The mound where he suffered is well remembered to this day.

The flying hours had been crowded with impressions, tragic, uncanny, pitiful, and we had yet, in going to the station, to run the gantlet of a tipsy town, for it was a holiday. We had found Clitheroe drinking, earlier in the afternoon, and now we found Whalley drunk. One unsteady individual, wagging his head from side to side and stretching out a pair of wavering arms, tried to

bar my progress.

"Wh-where be g-goin'?" he asked. [110]

"To the train," I answered curtly, dodging by.

He sat down on the wall and wept aloud.

"T-to the tr-train! Oh, the L-Lord bl-bless you! The g-good L-Lord bl-bless you all the w-way!"

And the last we saw and heard of him, he was still feebly shaking his hands after us and sobbing maudlin benedictions.

II. Cheshire

Drayton the poet once took it upon him to assure Cheshire that what was true of Lancashire was true also of her:

> "Thy natural sister shee—and linkt unto thee so
> That Lancashire along with Cheshire still doth goe."

From that great backbone of England, the Pennine Range, both these counties fall away to the west, but Cheshire quickly opens into the Shropshire plain. At the northeast it has its share in the treasures of the deep coal-field rent across by the Pennines, and here, too, are valuable beds of copper. In this section of the county cluster the silk towns, among them Macclesfield, the chief seat in England of this manufacture, and Congleton, whose character we will trust has grown [111] more spiritual with time. For in 1617 one of the village wags tugged a bear into the pulpit at the hour of service, and it was a full twelvemonth before the church was reconsecrated and worship resumed. Indeed, the Congleton folk had such a liking for bear-baiting or bear-dancing, or whatever sport it was their town bear afforded them, that when a few years later this poor beast died, it is told that

> "living far from Godly fear
> They sold the Church Bible to buy a bear."

The old Cheshire, everywhere in evidence with its timber-and-plaster houses, distracts the mind from this new industrial Cheshire. We visited Macclesfield, but I forgot its factories, its ribbons and sarcenets, silks and satins and velvets, because of the valiant Leghs. Two of them sleep in the old Church of St. Michael, under a brass that states in a stanza ending as abruptly as human life itself:

> "Here lyeth the body of Perkin a Legh
> That for King Richard the death did die,
> Betray'd for righteousness;
> And the bones of Sir Peers his sone, [112]
> That with King Henrie the fift did wonne
> In Paris."

I have read that Sir Perkin was knighted at Crecy and Sir Peers at Agincourt, and that they were kinsmen of Sir Uryan Legh of Adlington, the Spanish Lady's Love.

> "Will ye hear a Spanish Lady,
> How she wooed an Englishman?
> Garments gay and rich as may be,
> Decked with jewels, she had on."

This Sir Uryan was knighted by Essex at the siege of Calais, and it was then, apparently, that the poor Spanish lady, beautiful and of high degree, lost her heart. The Elizabethan ballad, whose wood-cut shows a voluminously skirted dame entreating an offish personage in a severely starched ruff, tells us that she had fallen, by some chance of war, into his custody.

> "As his prisoner there he kept her;
> In his hands her life did lie;
> Cupid's bands did tie them faster
> By the liking of an eye.

> "But at last there came commandment
> For to set all ladies free,
> With their jewels still adorned,
> None to do them injury."

[113]

But freedom was no boon to her.

> "Gallant Captain, take some pity
> On a woman in distress;
> Leave me not within this city
> For to die in heaviness."

In vain he urges that he is the enemy of her country.

"Blessed be the time and season
  That you came on Spanish ground;
If you may our foes be termed,
  Gentle foes we have you found."

He suggests that she would have no difficulty in getting a Spanish husband, but she replies that Spaniards are "fraught with jealousy."

"Still to serve thee day and night
  My mind is prest;
The wife of every Englishman
  Is counted blest."

He objects that it is not the custom of English soldiers to be attended by women.

"I will quickly change myself,
  If it be so,
And like a page will follow thee
  Where e'er thou go."

But still he makes excuse: [114]

"I have neither gold nor silver
  To maintain thee in this case,
And to travel is great charges,
  As you know, in every place."

She puts her fortune at his disposal, but he has hit upon a new deterrent:

"On the seas are many dangers,
  Many storms do there arise,
Which will be to ladies dreadful
  And force tears from watry eyes."

She implies that she would gladly die, even of seasickness, for his sake, and at that the truth breaks forth:

"Courteous lady, leave this folly;
  Here comes all that breeds this strife:—
I in England have already
  A sweet woman to my wife.

"I will not falsify my vow
  For gold nor gain,
Nor yet for all the fairest dames
  That live in Spain."

Her reply, with its high Spanish breeding, puts his blunt English manners to shame:

"Oh how happy is that woman
  That enjoys so true a friend.
Many happy days God lend her!
  Of my suit I'll make an end.

---

[115]

"Commend me to that gallant lady;
  Bear to her this chain of gold;
With these bracelets for a token;
  Grieving that I was so bold.

"I will spend my days in prayer,
  Love and all her laws defy;
In a nunnery I will shroud me,
  Far from any company.

"But e'er my prayer have an end,
  Be sure of this,—
To pray for thee and for thy Love
  I will not miss.

"Joy and true prosperity
  Remain with thee!"
"The like fall unto thy share,
  Most fair lady!"

This ballad, which Shakespeare might have bought for a penny "at the Looking-glass on London bridge" and sung to the tune of "Flying Fame," is still a favourite throughout Cheshire.

But we are driving from Macclesfield up into the Cheshire highlands,—velvety hills, green to the top, all smoothed off as trim as sofa-cushions and adorned with ruffles of foliage. Nature is a neat housekeeper even here in the wildest corner of Cheshire. What was once savage forest is now [116] tranquil grazing-ground, and the walls that cross the slopes and summits, dividing the sward into separate cattle-ranges, run in tidy parallels. But most of the county is flat,—so flat that it all can be viewed from Alderly Edge, a cliff six hundred and fifty feet high, a little to the west of Macclesfield. Along the Mersey, the Lancastrian boundary, rise the clustered chimneys of Cheshire's cotton towns. Yet cotton is not the only industry of this northern strip. The neighbourhood of Manchester makes market-gardening profitable; potatoes and onions flourish amain; and Altrincham, a pleasant little place where many of the Manchester mill-owners reside, proudly contributes to their felicity its famous specialty of the "green-top carrot."

I suppose these cotton-lords only smile disdainfully at the tales of the old wizard who keeps nine hundred and ninety-nine armed steeds in the deep caverns of Alderly Edge, waiting for war. What is his wizardry to theirs! But I wonder if any of them are earning a sweeter epitaph than the one which may be read in Alderly Church to a rector, Edward Shipton, M.A.,—it might grieve his [117] gentle ghost, should we omit those letters,—who died in 1630:

> "Here lies below an aged sheep-heard clad in heavy clay,
> Those stubborne weedes which come not of unto the judgment day.
> Whilom hee led and fed with welcome paine his careful sheepe,
> He did not feare the mountaines' highest tops, nor vallies deep,
> That he might save from hurte his fearful flocks, which were his care.
> To make them strong he lost his strengthe, and fasted for their fare.
> How they might feed, and grow, and prosper, he did daily tell,
> Then having shew'd them how to feed, he bade them all farewell."

Good men have come out of Cheshire. In the Rectory House of Alderly was born Dean Stanley. Bishop Heber is a Cheshire worthy, as are the old chroniclers, Higden and Holinshead. Even the phraseology of Cheshire wills I have fancied peculiarly devout, as, for instance, Matthew Legh's, in 1512:

> "*Imprimis*, I bequeath my sole to almightie god and to his blessed moder seynt Mary, and to all the selestiall company in heaven, and my bodi to be buried in the Chappell of Seynt Anne within the parish Church of Handley or there where it shall please almightie god to call for me at his pleasure."

The men of Cheshire have on occasion, and conspicuously during the Civil War, approved [118] themselves for valour. When the royalist garrison of Beeston Castle, the "other hill" of this pancake county, was at last forced to accept terms from the Roundhead troops, there was "neither meat nor drink found in the Castle, but only a piece of a turkey pie, two biscuits, and a live pea-cock and pea-hen."

Yet Cheshire is famed rather for the virtues of peace,—for thrift, civility, and neighbourly kindness. An early-seventeenth-century "Treatise on Cheshire" says: "The people of the country are of a nature very gentle and courteous, ready to help and further one another; and that is to be seen chiefly in the harvest time, how careful are they of one another." A few years later, in 1616, a native of the county wrote of it not only as producing "the best cheese of all Europe," but as blessed with women "very friendly and loving, painful in labour, and in all other kind of housewifery expert."

The accepted chronicler of Cheshire womanhood, however, is Mrs. Gaskell. As we lingered along the pleasant streets of Knutsford—her Cranford—and went in and out of the quiet shops, we [119] blessed her memory for having so delectably distilled the lavender essences of that sweet, old-fashioned village life. She had known it and loved it all the way from her motherless babyhood, and she wrote of it with a tender humour that has endeared it to thousands. Our first Knutsford pilgrimage was to her grave beside the old Unitarian chapel, for both her father and her husband were clergymen of that faith. We had seen in Manchester—her Drumble—the chapel where Mr. Gaskell ministered, and had read her "Mary Barton," that sympathetic presentation of the life of Lancashire mill-hands which awoke the anger and perhaps the consciences of the manufacturers. She served the poor of Manchester not with her pen alone, but when our war brought in its train the cotton famine of 1862-63, she came effectively to their relief by organizing sewing-rooms and other means of employment for women. Husband and wife, fulfilled of good works, now rest together in that sloping little churchyard which we trod with reverent feet.

It must be confessed that Knutsford is becoming villaized. It has even suffered the erection, in [120] memory of Mrs. Gaskell, of an ornate Italian tower, which Deborah certainly would not have approved. It was not May-day, so we could not witness the Knutsford revival of the May-queen court, and we looked in vain for the Knutsford wedding sand. On those very rare occasions when a bridegroom can be found, the kith and kin of the happy pair make a welcoming path for Hymen by trickling coloured sands through a funnel so as to form a pavement decoration of hearts, doves, true-love knots, and the like, each artist in front of his own house. But no minor disappointments could break the Cranford spell, which still held us as we drove out into the surrounding country. How sunny and serene! With what awe we passed the timbered mansions of

the county families! What green hedgerows! What golden harvest-fields! What pink roses clambering to the cottage-thatch! What gardens, and what pastures on pastures, grazed over by sleek kine that called to mind Miss Matty's whimsical old lover and his "six and twenty cows, named after the different letters of the alphabet." [121]

Here in central Cheshire we ought not to have been intent on scenery, but on salt, for of this, as of silk, our smiling county has almost a monopoly. And only too soon the blue day was darkened by the smoke of Northwich, the principal seat of the salt trade and quite the dirtiest town in the county. The valley of the Weaver, the river that crosses Cheshire about midway between its northern boundary, the Mersey, and its southern, the Dee, has the richest salt-mines and brine-springs of England. The salt towns, whose chimneys belch blackness at intervals along the course of the stream, are seen at their best, or worst, in Northwich, though Nantwich, an ancient centre of this industry, has charming traditions of the village hymn that used to be sung about the flower-crowned pits, especially the "Old Brine," on Ascension Day, in thanksgiving for the salt. We tried to take due note of railways and canals, docks and foundries, and the queer unevenness of the soil caused by the mining and the pumping up of brine,—such an uncertain site that the houses, though bolted, screwed, and buttressed, continually sag and sink. The mines themselves are on the outskirts of the town, and we looked at the ugly sheds and scaffoldings above ground, [122] and did our best to imagine the strange white galleries and gleaming pillars below. There was no time to go down because it had taken our leisurely Knutsford coachman till ten o'clock to get his "bit of breakfast." Dear Miss Matty would have been gentle with him, and so we strove not to glower at his unbending back, but to gather in what we could, as he drove us to the train, of the beauties by the way.

We left the salt to the care of the Weaver, which was duly bearing it on, white blocks, ruddy lumps, rock-salt and table-salt, to Runcorn and to Liverpool. We put the brine-pits out of mind, and enjoyed the lovely fresh-water meres, social resorts of the most amiable of ducks and the most dignified of geese, which dot the Cheshire landscape. We had visited Rostherne Mere on our way out, and caught a glint from the fallen church-bell which a Mermaid rings over those dim waters every Easter dawn. We paused at Lower Peover for a glimpse of its black-and-white timbered church, deeply impressive and almost unique as an architectural survival. Among its curiosities we saw a chest hollowed out of solid oak with an inscription to the effect that any girl [123] who can raise the lid with one arm is strong enough to be a Cheshire farmer's wife. Sturdy arms they needs must have, these Cheshire women, for the valley of the Weaver, like the more southerly Vale of Dee, is largely given up to dairy farms and to the production of cheeses. A popular song betrays the county pride:

"A Cheshire man went o'er to Spain
  To trade in merchandise,
And when arrived across the main
  A Spaniard there he spies.

"'Thou Cheshire man,' quoth he, 'look here,—
  These fruits and spices fine.
Our country yields these twice a year;
  Thou hast not such in thine.'

"The Cheshire man soon sought the hold,
  Then brought a Cheshire cheese.
'You Spanish dog, look here!' said he.
  'You have not such as these.'

"'Your land produces twice a year
  Spices and fruits, you say,
But such as in my hand I bear.
  Our land yields twice a day.'"

But the best songs of Cheshire go to the music of the river Dee. We have all had our moments of envying its heart-free Miller. [124]

"There was a jolly Miller once
  Lived on the river Dee;
He worked and sang from morn till night,
  No lark more blithe than he;
And this the burden of his song
  Forever used to be:
I care for nobody, no, not I,
  And nobody cares for me."

Kingsley's tragic lyric of

"Mary, go and call the cattle home
  Across the sands of Dee,"

reports too truly the perils of that wide estuary where Lycidas was lost. On the corresponding estuary of the Mersey stands Birkenhead, the bustling modern port of Cheshire; but it was at Chester that Milton's college mate had embarked for another haven than the one he reached.

Chester itself is to many an American tourist the old-world city first seen and best remembered. Liverpool and Birkenhead are of to-day, but Chester, walled, turreted, with its arched gateways, its timber-and-plaster houses, its gables and lattices, its quaint Rows, its cathedral, is the mediæval made actual. The city abounds in memories of Romans, Britons, Saxons, of King Alfred who drove out the Danes, of King Edgar who, "toucht with imperious affection of glory," [125] compelled six subject kings to row him up the Dee to St. John's Church, of King Charles who stood with the Mayor on the leads of the wall-tower now called by his name and beheld the defeat of the royal army on Rowton Moor. As we walked around the walls,—where, as everywhere in the county, the camera sought in vain for a Cheshire cat,—we talked of the brave old city's "strange, eventful history," but if it had been in the power of a wish to recall any one hour of all its past, I would have chosen mine out of some long-faded Whitsuntide, that I might see a Miracle pageant in its mediæval sincerity,—the tanners playing the tragedy of Lucifer's fall, perhaps, or the water-carriers the comedy of Noah's flood.

III. Staffordshire

This is the Black Country *par excellence*,—a county whose heraldic blazon should be the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. It belongs to the central plain of England, save on the northeast, where the lower end of the Pennine chain breaks into picturesque highlands. Its gently [126] undulating reaches are still largely given over to agriculture, but the bulk of its population, the most of its energy and wealth, are concentrated in the manufacturing towns that so thickly stud the surface over its two coal-fields. The northern is the last of that long line of coal-measures running down from Lancashire; the southern is much larger, though not so workable, and extends across all South Staffordshire. Both north and south, iron in rich quantities is found with the coal, so that for many years Staffordshire controlled the iron trade of the world. Of late, South Wales and other regions are successfully disputing its supremacy.

We had, in previous visits to England, crossed Staffordshire several times by train, and memory retained an unattractive impression of netted railways, forests of factory chimneys, and grimy miners sweethearting with rough pitgirls under smoke and cinders. If we must enter it now, the occasion seemed propitious for a trial of the automobile,—a mode of conveyance which we had deemed too sacrilegious for the Border and the Lake Country. [127]

Toward ten o'clock on an August morning—for the chauffeur, like our Cheshire coachman, could not be hurried over his "bit of breakfast"—we tucked ourselves and a confiding Shrewsbury lady into a snug motor-car, and away we sped through northeastern Shropshire across the county line. In a gasp or two the name Eccleshall glimmered through the dust that flew against our goggles. This little town has one of the finest churches in the county, but the frenzy of speed was on us, and we tore by. Suddenly we came upon the Trent, winding along, at what struck us as a contemptibly sluggish pace, down Staffordshire on its circuitous route to the Humber. We tooted our horn and honked up its western side to the Potteries. Here the machine suffered an attack of cramps, and while it was groaning and running around in a circle and pawing the air, we had our first opportunity to look about us.

The region known as the Potteries, the chief seat of the earthenware manufactures of England, consists of a strip of densely populated land in this upper basin of the Trent, a strip some ten miles long by two miles broad, whose serried towns and villages give the aspect of one [128] continuous street. Within this narrow district are over three hundred potteries, whose employees number nearly forty thousand, apart from the accessory industries of clay-grinding, bone-grinding, flint-grinding, and the like. It draws on its own beds of coal and iron, but the china-clay comes from Cornwall by way of Runcorn and the Grand Trunk Canal, while for flints it depends on the south coast of England and on France. Genius here is named Josiah Wedgwood. This inventor of fine porcelains, whose "Queen's ware" gained him the title of "Queen's Potter," was born in 1759 at Burslem, which had been making brown butter-pots as far back as the days of Charles I. When Burslem grew too small for his enterprise, Wedgwood established the pottery village of Etruria, to which the automobile passionately refused to take us. It dashed us into Newcastle-under-Lyme, where we did not particularly want to go, and rushed barking by Stoke-under-Trent, the capital of the Potteries and also—though we had not breath to mention it—the birthplace of Dinah Mulock Craik. In the last town of the line, Longtown, our machine fairly balked, and the chauffeur with dignity retired under it. A crowd of keen-faced men and children [129] gathered about us, while we ungoggled to observe the endless ranks of house-doors opening into baby-peopled passages,—and, looming through the murky air, the bulging ovens of the china factories. At last our monster snorted on again, wiggling up the hill sideways with a grace peculiar to itself and exciting vain hopes of a wreck in the hearts of our attendant urchins. It must have been the Potteries that disagreed with it, for no sooner were their files of chimneys left behind than it set off at a mad pace for Uttoxeter, on whose outskirts we "alighted," like Royalty, for a wayside luncheon of sandwiches, ale, and dust.

IN THE POTTERIES—A CHILD-MOTHER

Uttoxeter is no longer the idle little town that Hawthorne found it, when he made pilgrimage thither in honour of Dr. Johnson's penance, for the good Doctor, heart-troubled for fifty years because in boyhood he once refused to serve in his father's stead at the market bookstall, had doomed himself to stand, the whole day long, in the staring market-place, wind and rain beating against his bared grey head, "a central image of Memory and Remorse." Lichfield, Dr. Johnson's [130] native city, commemorates this characteristic act by a bas-relief on the pedestal of the statue standing opposite the three-pillared house where the greatest of her sons was born.

While our chauffeur, resting from his labours under the hedge, genially entertained the abuse of a drunken tramp who was accusing us all of luxury, laziness, and a longing to run down our fellowmen, my thoughts turned wistfully to Lichfield, lying due south, to whose "Queen of English Minsters" we were ashamed to present our modern hippogriff. I remembered waking there one autumnal morning, years ago, at the famous old inn of the Swan, and peering from my window to see that wooden bird, directly beneath it, flapping in a rainy gale. The cathedral rose before the mental vision,—the grace of its three spires; its wonderful west front with tiers of saints and prophets and archangels, "a very Te Deum in stone"; the delicate harmonies of colour and line within; the glowing windows of the Lady Chapel; the "heaven-loved innocence" of the two little sisters sculptured by Chantrey, and his kneeling effigy of a bishop so benignant even in marble [131] that a passing child slipped from her mother's hand and knelt beside him to say her baby prayers. What books had been shown me there in that quiet library above the chapter-house! I could still recall the richly illuminated manuscript of the "Canterbury Tales," a volume of Dr. South's sermons with Dr. Johnson's rough, vigorous pencil-marks all up and down the margins, and, treasure of treasures, an eighth-century manuscript of St. Chad's Gospels. For this is St. Chad's cathedral, still his, though the successive churches erected on this site have passed like human generations, each building itself into the next.

St. Chad, hermit and bishop, came from Ireland as an apostle to Mercia in the seventh century. Among his first converts were the king's two sons, martyred for their faith. Even in these far distant days his tradition is revered, and on Holy Thursday the choristers of the cathedral yet go in procession to St. Chad's Well, bearing green boughs and chanting. A century or so ago, the well was adorned with bright garlands for this festival. The boy Addison, whose father was Dean of Lichfield, may have gathered daffodils and primroses to give to good St. Chad. [132]

The ancient city has other memories. Farquhar set the scene of his "Beaux' Stratagem" there. Major André knew those shaded walks. In the south transept of the cathedral is the sepulchre of Garrick, whose death, the inscription tells us, "eclipsed the gaiety of nations and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure." It may be recalled that Hawthorne found it "really pleasant" to meet Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's tomb in the minster, and that Scott asserts there used to be, in "moated Lichfield's lofty pile," a monument to Marmion, whose castle stood a few miles to the southeast, at Tamworth.

But the motor-car, full-fed with gasoline, would brook no further pause. As self-important as John Hobs, the famous Tanner of Tamworth whom "not to know was to know nobody," it stormed through Uttoxeter and on, outsmelling the breweries of Burton-on-Trent. Ducks, hens, cats, dogs, babies, the aged and infirm, the halt and the blind, scuttled to left and right. Policemen glared out at it from their "motor-traps" in the hedges. A group of small boys sent a rattle of stones [133] against it. Rocester! Only three miles away were the ruins of the Cistercian Abbey of Croxden. We would have liked to see them, if only to investigate the story that the heart of King John is buried there, for we had never before heard that he had a heart; but while we were voicing our desire we had already crossed the Dove and whizzed into Derbyshire.

Dovedale was our goal. This beautiful border district of Derby and Staffordshire abounds in literary associations. Near Ilam Hall, whose grounds are said to have suggested to Dr. Johnson the "happy valley" in "Rasselas," and in whose grotto Congreve wrote his "Old Bachelor," stands the famous Isaak Walton Inn. The patron saint of the region is the Gentle Angler, who in these "flowery meads" and by these "crystal streams" loved to

> "see a black-bird feed her young,
> Or a laverock build her nest."

Here he would raise his

> "low-pitched thoughts above
> Earth, or what poor mortals love."

On a stone at the source of the Dove, and again on the Fishing-House which has stood since 1674 [134]
"Piscatoribus sacrum," his initials are interlaced with those of his friend and fellow-fisherman Charles Cotton, the patron sinner of the locality. In Beresford Dale may be found the little cave where this gay and thriftless gentleman, author of the second part of "The Complete Angler," used to hide from his creditors. At Wootton Hall Jean Jacques Rousseau once resided for over a year, writing on his "Confessions" and amusing himself scattering through Dovedale the seeds of many of the mountain plants of France. In a cottage at Church Mayfield, Moore wrote his "Lalla Rookh," and near Colwich Abbey once stood the house in which Handel composed much of the "Messiah."

We did not see any of these spots. The automobile would none of them. It whisked about giddily half an hour, ramping into the wrong shrines and out again, disconcerting a herd of deer and a pack of young fox-hounds, and then impetuously bolted back to Uttoxeter. There were antiquities all along the way,—British barrows, Roman camps, mediæval churches, Elizabethan mansions,—
but the dusty and odoriferous trail of our car was flung impartially over them all. [135]

We shot through Uttoxeter and went whirring on. A glimpse of the hillside ruins of Chartley Castle brought a fleeting sorrow for Mary Queen of Scots. It was one of those many prisons that she knew in the bitter years between Cockermouth and Fotheringay,—the years that whitened her bright hair and twisted her with cruel rheumatism. She was harried from Carlisle in Cumberland to Bolton Castle in Yorkshire, and thence sent to Tutbury, on the Derby side of the Dove, in custody of the unlucky Earl of Shrewsbury and his keen-eyed, shrewish-tongued dame, Bess of Hardwick. But still the poor queen was shifted from one stronghold to another. Yorkshire meted out to her Elizabeth's harsh hospitality at Sheffield, Warwickshire at Coventry, Leicestershire at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Derbyshire at Wingfield Manor and Chatsworth and Hardwick Hall, even at Buxton, where she was occasionally allowed to go for the baths, and Staffordshire at Tixall and here at Chartley. It was while she was at Chartley, with Sir Amyas Paulet for her jailer, that the famous Babington conspiracy was hatched, and anything but an
automobile would have stopped and searched for that stone wall in which a brewer's boy [136]
deposited the incriminating letters, read and copied every one by Walsingham before they reached the captive.

At Weston we jumped the Trent again and pounded on to Stafford, the shoemakers' town, where we came near knocking two bicyclists into a ditch. They were plain-spoken young men, and, addressing themselves to the chauffeur, they expressed an unfavourable opinion of his character. Stafford lies half-way between the two coal-fields of the county. Directly south some fifteen miles is Wolverhampton, the capital of the iron-manufacturing district. We remembered that Stafford was the birthplace of Isaak Walton, but it was too late to gain access to the old Church of St. Mary's, which has his bust in marble and, to boot, the strangest font in England. We climbed the toilsome heights of Stafford Castle for the view it was too dark to see, and then once more delivered ourselves over to the champing monster, which spun us back to Shrewsbury through a weird, infernal world flaring with tongues of fire.

THE HEART OF ENGLAND—WARWICKSHIRE [137]

A few miles to the northwest of Coventry lies the village of Meriden, which is called the centre of England. There on a tableland is a little pool from which the water flows both west and east, on the one side reaching the Severn and the British Channel, on the other the Trent and the North Sea. "Leafy Warwickshire" is watered, as all the world knows, by the Avon. The county, though its borders show here and there a hilly fringe, and though the spurs of the Cotswolds invade it on the south, is in the main a fertile river-basin, given over to agriculture and to pasturage. The forest of Arden, that once covered the Midlands, is still suggested by rich-timbered parks and giant trees of ancient memory. On the north, Warwickshire tapers up into the Staffordshire coal-fields and puts on a manufacturing character. The great town of this district is Birmingham,
capital of the hardware industries. [138]

It was from Birmingham that we started out on our Warwickshire trip. We had but a hasty impression of a well-built, prosperous, purposeful town, but if we had known at the time what masterpieces of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood were to be seen in the Art Gallery we would have taken a later train than we did for Nuneaton. Here we bade farewell to railways, having

decided to "post" through the county. Our automobile scamper across Staffordshire had left us with a conviction that this mode of travel was neither democratic nor becoming,—least of all adapted to a literary pilgrimage. We preferred to drive ourselves, but the English hostlers, shaking their stolid heads, preferred that we should be driven. It was only by a lucky chance that we had found, in the Lake Country, a broad-minded butcher who would trust us on short expeditions with "Toby" and a pony-cart. After all, it is easier to adapt yourself to foreign ways than to adapt them to you, and the old, traditional, respectable method of travel in England is by post. The regular rate for a victoria—which carries light luggage—and a single horse is a shilling a mile, with no charge for return, but with a considerable tip to the driver. In out-of-the-way [139] places the rate was sometimes only ninepence a mile, but in the regions most affected by tourists it might run up to eighteenpence. So at Nuneaton we took a carriage for Coventry, a distance, with the digressions we proposed, of about twelve miles, and set out, on a fair August afternoon, to explore the George Eliot country.

Our driver looked blank at the mention of George Eliot, but brightened at the name of Mary Anne Evans. He could not locate for us, however, the school which she had attended in Nuneaton, but assured us that "Mr. Jones 'ud know." To consult this oracle we drove through a prosaic little town, dodging the flocks of sheep that were coming in for the fair, to a stationer's shop. Mr. Jones, the photographer of the neighbourhood, proved to be as well versed in George Eliot literature and George Eliot localities as he was generous in imparting his knowledge. He mapped out our course with all the concern and kindliness of a host, and practically conferred upon us the freedom of the city.

Nuneaton was as placidly engaged in making hats and ribbons as if the foot of genius had never [140] hallowed its soil, and went its ways, regardless while we peered out at inns and residences mirrored in George Eliot's writings. The school to which Robert Evans' "little lass" used to ride in on donkeyback every morning, as the farmers' daughters ride still, is The Elms on Vicarage Street,—a plain bit of a place, with its bare walls and hard forms, to have been the scene of the awakening of that keen intelligence. We were duly shown the cloak-closet, to reach whose hooks a girl of eight or nine must have had to stand on tiptoe, the small classrooms, and the backyard that served as a playground. The educational equipment was of the simplest,—but what of that? Hamlet could have been "bounded in a nutshell," and here there was space enough for thought. A Nuneaton lady, lodging with the caretaker during the vacation, told us with a touch of quiet pride that her husband had known "Marian Evans" well in their young days, and had often walked home with her of an evening from the rectory.

As we drove away toward that rectory in Chilvers Coton, the parish adjoining Nuneaton on the [141] south, we could almost see the little schoolgirl riding homeward on her donkey. It is Maggie Tulliver, of "The Mill on the Floss," who reveals the nature of that tragic child, "a creature full of eager and passionate longing for all that was beautiful and glad; thirsty for all knowledge; with an ear straining after dreamy music that died away, and would not come near to her; with a blind, unconscious yearning for something that would link together the wonderful impressions of this mysterious life, and give her soul a sense of home in it."

Chilvers Coton, like Nuneaton, has no memories of its famous woman of letters. The only time we saw her name that afternoon was as we drove, two hours later, through a grimy colliery town where a row of posters flaunted the legend:

ASK FOR GEORGE ELIOT SAUCE.

But in the Chilvers Coton church, familiar to readers of "Scenes from Clerical Life," is a window given by Mr. Isaac Evans in memory of his wife, not of his sister, with an inscription so like Tom Tulliver's way of admonishing Maggie over the shoulder that we came near resenting it: [142]

"She layeth her hands to the spindle."

But we would not flout the domestic virtues, and still less would we begrudge Tom's wife—not without her share of shadow, for no people are so hard to live with as those who are always right—her tribute of love and honour. So with closed lips we followed the sexton out into the churchyard, past the much visited grave of "Milly Barton," past the large recumbent monument that covers the honest ashes of Robert Evans of Griff, and past so many fresh mounds that we exclaimed in dismay. Our guide, however, viewed them with a certain decorous satisfaction, and intimated that for this branch of his craft times were good in Chilvers Coton, for an epidemic was rioting among the children. "I've had twelve graves this month already," he said, "and there"—pointing to where a spade stood upright in a heap of earth—"I've got another to-day." We demurred about detaining him, with such pressure of business on his hands, but he had already led us, over briars and sunken slabs, to a stone inscribed with the name of Isaac Pearson Evans of [143] Griff and with the text:

"The memory of the just is blessed."

As we stood there, with our attendant ghoul telling us, in rambling, gossipy fashion, what a respectable man Mr. Isaac Evans was, and how he never would have anything to do with "his sister for years, but after she married Mr. Cross he took her up again and went to her funeral,"—how could we force out of mind a passage that furnishes such strange commentary on that graven line?

"Tom, indeed, was of opinion that Maggie was a silly little thing. All girls were silly....

> Still he was very fond of his sister, and meant always to take care of her, make her his housekeeper, and punish her when she did wrong.... Tom, you perceive, was rather a Rhadamanthine personage, having more than the usual share of boy's justice in him—the justice that desires to hurt culprits as much as they deserve to be hurt, and is troubled with no doubts concerning the exact amount of their deserts."

It is in this parish of Chilvers Coton that George Eliot was born, in a quiet brown house set among laden apple-trees, as we saw it, with a bright, old-fashioned garden of dahlias, sweet peas, [144] and hollyhocks. The place is known as South Farm or Arbury Farm, for it is on the grounds of Arbury Priory, one of the smaller monasteries that fell prey to Henry VIII, now held by the Newdigate family. We drove to it through a park of noble timber, where graceful deer were nibbling the aristocratic turf or making inquisitive researches among the rabbit warrens. Robert Evans, of Welsh origin, was a Staffordshire man. A house-builder's son, he had himself begun life as a carpenter. Adam Bede was made in his likeness. Rising to the position of forester and then to that of land agent, he was living, at the time of his daughter's birth, at Arbury Farm, in charge of the Newdigate estate. Three or four months later he removed to Griff, an old brick farmhouse standing at a little distance from the park, on the highroad. Griff House passed, in due course of time, from the occupancy of Robert Evans to that of his son, and on the latter's death, a few years ago, was converted into a Dairy School "for gentleman-farmers' daughters." Pleasant and benignant was its look that August afternoon, as it stood well back among its beautiful growth of [145] trees,—cut-leaf birch and yellowing chestnut, Cedar of Lebanon, pine, locust, holly, oak, and yew, with a pear-tree pleached against the front wall on one side, while the other was thickly overgrown with ivy. Geraniums glowed about the door, and the mellow English sunshine lay softly over all. This was a sweet and tender setting for the figure of that ardent wonder-child,—a figure imagination could not disassociate from that of the sturdy elder brother, whose presence—if he were in affable and condescending mood—made her paradise.

> "They trotted along and sat down together, with no thought that life would ever change much for them. They would only get bigger and not go to school, and it would always be like the holidays; they would always live together and be fond of each other.... Life did change for Tom and Maggie; and yet they were not wrong in believing that the thoughts and loves of those first years would always make part of their lives. We could never have loved this earth so well if we had had no childhood in it."

We forgave, as we lingered in that gracious scene, "the memory of the just." For all Tom's virtues, he had given Maggie, though she was her father's darling and had no lack of indulgent love about [146] her, the best happiness of her childhood. Across the years of misunderstanding and separation she could write:

> "But were another childhood's world my share,
> I would be born a little sister there."

We had even a disloyal impulse of sympathy for these kinsfolk of genius, who must needs pay the price by having their inner natures laid bare before the world, but we checked it. Our worlds, little or large, are bound to say and believe something concerning us: let us be content in proportion as it approximates the truth.

Our road to Coventry ran through a mining district. Every now and then we met groups of black-faced colliers. Robert Evans must often have driven his daughter along this way, for in her early teens she was at school in the City of the Three Spires, and later on, when her widowed father resigned to his son his duties as land agent, and Griff House with them, she removed there with him to make him a new home. The house is still to be seen in Foleshill road, on the approach from the north; but here the star of George Eliot pales before a greater glory, the all-eclipsing [147] splendour, for at Coventry we are on the borders of the Shakespeare country.

Stratford-on-Avon lies only twenty miles to the south, and what were twenty miles to the creator of Ariel and Puck? Surely his young curiosity must have brought him early to this

> "Quaint old town of toil and trouble,
> Quaint old town of art and song."

The noble symmetries of St. Michael's, its companion spires of Holy Trinity and Grey Friars, the narrow streets and over-jutting housetops, the timber-framed buildings, the frescoed walls and carven window-heads, all that we see to-day of the mediæval fashion he must have seen in fresher beauty, and far more; yet even then the glory of Coventry had departed. From the eleventh century, when Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and his Countess of beloved memory, the Lady Godiva, built their magnificent abbey, of which hardly a trace remains, the city had been noted for its religious edifices. Its triple-spired cathedral of St. Mary,—existing to-day in but a few foundation fragments,—its monasteries and nunneries and churches of the various orders formed [148] an architectural group unmatched in England. Coventry was conspicuous, too, for civic virtues. As its merchants increased in riches, they lavished them freely on their queenly town. The Earl in his now crumbled castle and the Lord Abbot had hitherto divided the rule, but in 1345 came the first Mayor. It was while the Rose-red Richard sat so gaily on his rocking throne that Coventry celebrated the completion of its massive walls, three miles in circuit, with twelve gates and thirty-two towers. In the middle of the fifteenth century it received a special charter, and Henry VI declared it "the best governed city in all his realm." It was then that the famous guilds of

Coventry were at their height, for its merchants had waxed wealthy in the wool trade, and its artisans were cunning at cloth-making.

As we stood in St. Mary's Hall, erected toward the end of the fourteenth century by the united fraternities known as the Holy Trinity Guild, we realised something of the devotional spirit and artistic joy of those old craftsmen. The oak roof of the Great Hall is exquisitely figured with a choir of angels playing on their divers instruments. In the kitchen—*such* a kitchen, with stone [149] arches and fine old timber-work!—another angel peeps down to see that the service of spit and gridiron is decorously done. The building throughout abounds in carved panels, groined roofs, state chairs of elaborate design, heraldic insignia, portraits, grotesques, and displays a marvellous tapestry, peopled with a softly fading company of saints and bishops, kings and queens.

Among the Coventry artists, that gladsome throng of architects, painters, weavers, goldsmiths, and silversmiths who wrought so well for the adornment of their city, John Thornton is best remembered. It was he who made—so they say at Coventry—the east window of York minster, and here in St. Mary's Hall he placed superb stained glass of harmoniously blended browns. We could fancy a Stratford boy with hazel eyes intent upon it, conning the faces of those English kings to whom he was to give new life and longer reigns. Henry VI holds the centre, thus revealing the date of the window, and near him are Henry IV and Henry V, Lancastrian usurpers to whose side the partial dramatist has lured us all. It was to join their forces at Shrewsbury that [150] he sent Falstaff marching through Coventry with his ragged regiment, whose every soldier looked like "Lazarus in the painted cloth." Richard II is conspicuous by his absence, but in writing his tragedy the young Shakespeare remembered that Coventry was the scene of the attempted trial at arms between Bolingbroke and the Duke of Norfolk. The secret cause of the combat involved the honour of Richard, and he, not daring to trust the issue, threw "his warder down," forbade the duel, and sentenced both champions to

> "tread the stranger paths of banishment."

But Shakespeare's Coventry, like Shakespeare's London, was largely a city of ruins. Broken towers and desolate courts told of the ruthless sweep of the Reformation. The cloth trade, too, was falling off, and even that blue thread whose steadfast dye gave rise to the proverb "True as Coventry blue" was less in demand under Elizabeth than under Henry VIII. Yet though so much of its noble ecclesiastical architecture was defaced or overthrown, though its tide of fortune had [151] turned, the city was lovely still, among its most charming buildings being various charitable institutions founded and endowed by wealthy citizens. That exquisite timber-and-plaster almshouse for aged women, Ford's Hospital, then almost new, may have gained in mellow tints with time, but its rich wood-work, one fretted story projecting over another like the frilled heads of antiquated dames, row above row, peering out to see what might be passing in the street beneath, must have delighted the vision then as it delights it still. I dare say Will Shakespeare, saucy lad that he was, doffed his cap and flashed a smile as reviving as a beam of sunshine at some wistful old body behind the diamond panes of her long and narrow window. For there she would have been sitting, as her successor is sitting yet, trying to be thankful for her four shillings a week, her fuel, her washing, and her doctoring, but ever, in her snug corner, dusting and rearranging the bits of things,—cups and spoons, a cushion or two, Scripture texts,—her scanty salvage from the wreck of home. That the pathos of the old faces enhances the picturesqueness of it all, those eyes so keen to read the book of human life would not have failed to note. [152]

Coventry would have had for the seeking heart of a poet other attractions than those of architectural beauty. It was a storied city, with its treasured legend of Lady Godiva's ride—a legend not then vulgarised by the Restoration addition of Peeping Tom—and with its claim to be the birthplace of England's patron saint, the redoubtable dragon slayer. A fourteenth-century poet even asserts of St. George and his bride that they

> "many years of joy did see;
> They lived and died in Coventree."

It had a dim memory of some old-time slaughter—perhaps of Danes—commemorated in its play of Hock Tuesday. Coventry was, indeed, a "veray revelour" in plays and pageants, and if nothing else could have brought a long-limbed, wide-awake youth to try what his Rosalind and Celia and Orlando found so easy, a holiday escapade in the Forest of Arden, we may be all but sure the Corpus Christi Mysteries would have given the fiend the best of the argument with conscience. It [153] is not likely, however, that it had to be a runaway adventure. That worshipful alderman, John Shakespeare, was himself of a restless disposition and passing fond of plays. He would have made little, in the years of his prosperity, of a summer-day canter to Coventry, with his small son of glowing countenance mounted on the same stout nag. Later on, when debts and lawsuits were weighing down his spirits, the father may have turned peevish and withheld both his company and his horse, but by that time young Will, grown tall and sturdy, could have trudged it, putting his enchanting tongue to use, when his legs, like Touchstone's, were weary, in winning a lift from some farmer's wain for a mile or so along the road. But by hook or by crook he would be there, laughing in his doublet-sleeve at the blunders of the "rude mechanicals"—of the tailors who were playing the Nativity and of the weavers on whose pageant platform was set forth the Presentation in the Temple. Robin Starveling the Tailor, and his donkeyship Nick Bottom the Weaver, were they not natives of Coventry? And when the truant—if truant he was—came footsore back to [154] Stratford and acted over again in the Henley Street garden, sweet with June, the "swaggering" of

the "hempen home-spuns," did not his gentle mother hide her smiles by stooping to tend her roses, while the father's lungs, despite himself, began to "crow like Chanticleer"?

Foolish city, to have kept no record of those visits of the yeoman's son, that dusty youngster with the dancing eyes! When royal personages came riding through your gates, you welcomed them with stately ceremonies and splendid gifts, with gay street pageants and gold cups full of coin. Your quills ran verse as lavishly as your pipes ran wine. You had ever a loyal welcome for poor Henry VI; and for his fiery queen, Margaret of Anjou, you must needs present, in 1456, St. Margaret slaying the dragon. Four years later, though with secret rage, you were tendering an ovation to her arch enemy and conqueror, Edward IV. Here this merry monarch kept his Christmas in 1465, and nine years later came again to help you celebrate the feast of St. George. For Prince Edward, three years old, your Mayor and Council, all robed in blue and green, turned out in 1474, while players strutted before the child's wondering eyes, while the music of harp and [155]
viol filled his ears, and the "Children of Issarell" flung flowers before his little feet. His murderer, Richard III, you received with no less elaborate festivities nine years later, when he came to see your Corpus Christi plays. But it was to you that his supplanter, Henry VII, repaired straight from the victory of Bosworth Field, and you, never Yorkist at heart, flew your banners with enthusiastic joy. His heir, Arthur, a winsome and delicate prince, you greeted with unconscious irony, four years before his death, by the blessings of the Queen of Fortune. You summoned the "Nine Orders of Angels," with a throng of "divers beautiful damsels," to welcome Henry VIII and the ill-omened Catherine of Aragon in 1510. They were sumptuously entertained at your glorious Priory, for whose destruction that graceless guest, the King, was presently to seal command. But before its day of doom it sheltered one more royal visitor of yours, the Princess Mary, who came in 1525 to see the Mercers' Pageant. In 1565, the year after Shakespeare's birth, you fêted with all splendour Queen Elizabeth, the last of the Tudors, and in 1616, the year of Shakespeare's [156]
death, you spread the feast for King James, the first of the Stuarts. But you have forgotten your chief guest of all, the roguish youngster munching his bread and cheese in the front rank of the rabble, the heaven-crowned poet who was to be more truly king-maker than the great Warwick himself.

Our first seeing of the name of Warwick in Warwickshire was over a green-grocer's shop in Coventry. The green-grocer was all very well, but the sewing-machine factories and, worse yet, the flourishing business in bicycles and motor-cars jarred on our sixteenth-century dream. I am ashamed to confess how speedily we accomplished our Coventry sightseeing, and how early, on the day following our arrival, we took the road again. We set out in our sedate victoria with high expectations, for we had been told over and over that the route from Coventry to Warwick was "the most beautiful drive in England." For most of the distance we found it a long, straight, level avenue, bordered by large trees. There were few outlooks; clouds of dust hung in the air, and gasoline odours trailed along the way. We counted it, as a drive, almost the dullest of our forty [157]
odd, but it was good roading, and the opinion of the horse may have been more favourable.

Five miles brought us to Kenilworth, about whose stately ruins were wandering the usual summer groups of trippers and tourists. Its ivies were at their greenest and its hollies glistened with an emerald sheen, but when I had last seen the castle, in a far-away October, those hollies were yet more beautiful with gold-edged leaves and with ruby berries. Then, as now, the lofty red walls seemed to me to wear an aspect, if not of austerity, at least of courtly reserve, as if, whoever might pry and gossip, their secrets were still their own. In point of fact, the bewitchments of Sir Walter Scott have made it well-nigh impossible for any of us to bear in mind that in the ancient fortress of Kenilworth King John was wont to lurk, spinning out his spider-webs, that Simon de Montfort once exercised gay lordship here, and here, in sterner times, held Henry III and Prince Edward prisoners; that these towers witnessed the humiliation of the woful Edward II, and that in these proud halls the mirth-loving Queen Bess had been entertained by the Earl of Leicester on three several occasions prior to the famous visit of 1575. On her first coming [158]
our poet was a prattler of two—if only Mistress Shakespeare had kept a "Baby Record"!—and I am willing to admit that the event may not have interested him. When her second royal progress excited Warwickshire, he was a four-year-old, teasing his mother for fairy stories, and peeping into the acorn-cups for hidden elves, but hardly likely to have been chosen to play the part of Cupid while

> "the imperial votaress passèd on,
> In maiden meditation, fancy-free."

As a boy of eight, however, a "gallant child, one that makes old hearts fresh," he may have stood by the roadside, or been perched on some friendly shoulder to add his shrill note to the loyal shout when the Queen rode by amid her retinue; and three years later, I warrant his quick wits found a way to see something of those glittering shows, those "princely pleasures of Kenilworth Castle," which lasted nineteen days and were the talk of the county. How eagerly his winged imagination would have responded to the Lady of the Lake, to Silvanus, Pomona and Ceres, to the [159]
"savage man" and the satyrs, to the "triton riding on a mermaid 18 foot long; as also Arion on a dolphin, with rare music"![6] If we did not think so much about Amy Robsart at Kenilworth as, according to Scott, we should have done, it is because we were unfortunate enough to know that she perished fifteen years before these high festivities,—three years, indeed, before the Castle was granted to Robert Dudley.

Stoneleigh Abbey, with its tempting portraits, lay three miles to the left, and we would not swerve from our straight road, which, however, grew more exciting as we neared Warwick, for it

took us past Blacklow Hill, to whose summit, six hundred years ago, the fierce barons of Edward II dragged his French favourite, Piers Gaveston, and struck off that jaunty head, which went bounding down the hill to be picked up at the bottom by a friar, who piously bore it in his hood to Oxford.

We halted again at Guy's Cliff, constrained by its ancient tradition of Guy, Earl of Warwick, he who [160]

"did quell that wondrous cow"

of Dunsmore Heath. My own private respect for horned beasts kept me from flippantly undervaluing this exploit. After other doughty deeds, giants, monsters, and Saracens falling like ninepins before him, Guy returned in the odour of sanctity from the Holy Land, but instead of going home to Warwick, where his fair countess was pining, he sought out this cliff rising from the Avon and, in a convenient cavity, established himself as a hermit. Every day he begged bread at the gate of his own castle, and his wife, not recognising her dread lord in this meek anchorite, supplied his needs. Just before his end he sent her a ring, and she, thus discovering the identity of the beggar, sped to the cave, arriving just in time to see him die. Other hermits succeeded to his den, and in the reign of Henry VI, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, founded a chantry there. Henry VIII made short work of that, and the romantic rocks passed from one owner to another, the present mansion having been built above them in the eighteenth century. Guy's Cliff [161] was termed by Leland "a place delightful to the muses," and we were pleased to find it still enjoyed their favour. One of those supernaturally dignified old servitors who hang about to catch the pennies struck an attitude on the bridge and, informing us that he was a poet and had had verses in print, recited with touching earnestness the following effusion:

"'Ere yer can sit and rest a while,
And watch the wild ducks dive in play,
  Listen to the cooin' dove
And the noisy jay,
Watch the moorhen as she builds her rushy nest
Swayin' hupon the himmortal Havon's 'eavin' breast."

FEEDING THE PEACOCKS AT WARWICK CASTLE

Warwick, a wide-streeted, stately old town, with two of its mediæval gates still standing, was familiar to us both. I had spent a week here, some years ago, and taken occasion, after inspecting the lions, to view the horses, for the autumn races chanced to be on. I remember sitting, surprised at myself, on the grand stand, in an atmosphere of tobacco smoke and betting. The bookmakers stood below, conspicuous in green velveteen coats; some had their names on the open money-bags hanging from their necks; all were shouting themselves hoarse. A red-nosed [162] lady in dashing apparel sat on my right, enlightening my ignorance with a flood of jockey English, while on my left a plain-faced, anxious little body would turn from helping her husband decide his bets to urge upon me the superior morality of this to all other forms of English sport. The green below was filled with a bustling crowd of men, women, and children, pressing about the booths, the Punch-and-Judys and the show-carts, adventuring upon the swings and merry-go-rounds, tossing balls at gay whirligigs and winning cocoanuts in the fascinating game of "Aunt Sally," or ransacking the "silken treasury,"

"Lawns as white as driven snow,
Cyprus black as e'er was crow,"

of many a modern Autolycus. The throng was bright with fluttering pennons, red soldier coats,

and the vivid finery of housemaids on a holiday. I saw five out of the seven races sweep by and waxed enthusiastic over "Porridge" and "Odd Mixture," but "good old Maggie Cooper," on which my red-nosed neighbour lost heavily, while the husband of my moral little friend won, put me to [163] such embarrassment between them that I bethought myself of my principles and slipped away.

Eschewing such profane reminiscences, I recalled the Church of St. Mary, with its haughty Beauchamp Chapel where ancient Earls of Warwick keep their marble state, together with the Earl of Leicester and his "noble impe." I recalled the delectable home for old soldiers, Leycester's Hospital, so inimitably described by Hawthorne. Across the years I still could see the antique quadrangle with its emblazoned scutcheons and ornately lettered texts; the vaulted hall with its great carven beams; the delightful kitchen with its crested fireplace of huge dimensions, its oaken settles and copper flagons, its Saxon chair that has rested weary mortality for a thousand years, and its silken fragment of Amy Robsart's needlework. Most clearly of all rose from memory the figures of the old pensioners, the "brethren" garbed in long blue gowns with silver badge on shoulder, stamped, as the whole building is stamped over and over, with the cognisance of The Bear and the Ragged Staff. I had done homage at Warwick to the memory of Landor, who was [164] born there in a house dear to his childhood for its mulberries and cedars, its chestnut wood, and its fig tree at the window. Partly for his sake I had visited Rugby, on the eastern border of Warwickshire,—that great public school which became, under Dr. Arnold's mastership, such a power in English life. Rugby disapproved of my special interest, for it has had better boys than Landor, so wild-tempered a lad that his father was requested to remove him when, only fifteen, he was within five of being head of the school. But the neighbouring village of Bilton entirely endorsed my motives when I went the rounds of Bilton Hall as an act of respectful sympathy for the eminent Mr. Addison, who wedded the Dowager Countess of Warwick and here resided with her for the three years that his life endured under that magnificent yoke.

With so much sightseeing to our credit, we decided to limit our Warwick experiences on this occasion to luncheon and the castle, for although we both had "done" the splendid home of the Earls of Warwick more than once, even viewing it by moonlight and by dawnlight from the bridge [165] across the Avon, it did not seem decorous to pass by without leaving cards—not our visiting cards, but those for which one pays two shillings apiece in the shop over against the gate.

Warwick Castle, built of the very centuries, cannot be expected to alter with Time's "brief hours and weeks"—at least, with so few of them as fall to one poor mortal's lot. From visit to visit I find it as unchanged as the multiplication table. By that same chill avenue, cut through the solid rock and densely shaded, we passed into the same grassy court lorded over by the same arrogant peacocks—who have, however, developed an intemperate appetite for sweet chocolate—and girt about by the same proud walls and grey, embattled towers. A princely seat of splendid memories, one is half ashamed to join the inquisitive procession that trails after a supercilious guide through the series of state apartments—Great Hall, Red Drawing Room, Cedar Room, Gilt Drawing Room, Boudoir, Armory Passage, and so on to the end. We looked at the same relics,—old Guy's dubious porridge pot, Marie Antoinette's mosaic table, Queen Anne's red velvet bed, the mace of the King-maker, Cromwell's helmet; the same treasures of rare workmanship and [166] fabulous cost,—a Venetian table inlaid with precious stones, shimmering tapestries, enamelled cabinets and clocks; the same notable succession of portraits in which the varying art of Van Dyke, Holbein, Rembrandt, Rubens, Lely, Kneller has perpetuated some of the most significant faces of history. How strangely they turn their eyes on one another!—Anne Boleyn; her Bluebeard, Henry VIII, pictured here not only in his rank manhood, but as a sweet-lipped child; Loyola in priestly vestments of gold and crimson; the Earl of Strafford with his doomful look; Charles I; Henrietta Maria; Rupert of the Rhine; the heroic Marquis of Montrose; the literary Duke of Newcastle; the romantic Gondomar, Spanish ambassador to Elizabeth; and with them—confuting my rash statement that the castle knows no change—Sargent's portrait of the present Countess of Warwick, a democrat of the democrats, enfolding her little son. There remained the walk through the gardens to the conservatory, whose Warwick Vase, said to have been found in Hadrian's Villa, is, for all its grandeur, less dear to memory than the level green branches of the [167] great cedars of Lebanon. But when it came to peacocks and pussycats cut in yew, we deemed it time to resume our journey.

WILMCOTE, THE BIRTHPLACE OF SHAKESPEARE'S MOTHER

Leamington was close at hand, with its Royal Pump Rooms, swimming-baths and gardens, its villas and crescents and bath-chairs and parades, its roll of illustrious invalids who have drunk of its mineral waters; but we would not turn aside for Leamington. Dr. Parr's church at Hatton could not detain us, nor other churches and mansions of renown, nor the footsteps of the worthies of the Gunpowder Plot, nor Edge Hill where Charles I met the Parliamentarians in the first battle of the Civil War, nor the park of Redway Grange in which Fielding wrote—and laughed as he wrote—a portion of "Tom Jones," nor the Red Horse cut in turf, nor any other of the many attractions of a neighbourhood so crowded with memorials of stirring life. Our thoughts were all of Shakespeare now; our goal was Stratford-on-Avon.

Should we drive by the right bank of the river, or the left? The choice lay between Snitterfield and Charlecote Park. In Snitterfield, a village four miles to the north of Stratford, the poet's [168] paternal grandsire, Richard Shakespeare, wore out a quiet yeoman life, tilling the farm that he rented from Robert Arden of Wilmcote, father of the poet's mother. There must have been a strain of something better than audacity in the tenant's son to win him the hand of Mary Arden. Henry Shakespeare, the poet's uncle, died at Snitterfield in 1596, when the quick scion of that slow blood was in the first fever of his London successes. But we chose the left-hand road and Charlecote Park. For a while the sunny Avon, silver-flecked with such swans as Shakespeare and Ben Jonson may have smiled upon together, bore us blithe company; then we passed under the shadow of oaks with "antique root" out-peeping, and of more

> "moss'd trees
> That have outliv'd the eagle."

Before the Forest of Arden was cut away for the use of the Droitwich salt-boilers and other Vandals, the land was so thickly wooded that tradition says a squirrel might have skipped from bough to bough across the county, without once touching the ground. Now it is rich glebe and [169] tillage. We skirted the broad acres of Charlecote Park and viewed its "native burghers," the deer, but were loth to believe that Shakespeare, even in his heyday of youthful riot, would have "let the law go whistle" for the sake of "a hot venison-pasty to dinner." Yet it is like enough that there was no love lost between the Shakespeares and the Lucys, a family who have held the manor since the twelfth century and, in their Elizabethan representative, laid themselves open to the suspicion of pompous bearing and deficient sense of humour. The *luces*, or pikes, in their coat of arms, the pun-loving tongue of a "most acute juvenal" could hardly have resisted. "The dozen white louses do become an old coat well." Sir Thomas Lucy entertained Queen Elizabeth in 1572, and if the boys from Stratford Grammar School were not in evidence at the Park Gates on her arrival, it must have been because Holofernes was drilling them for a show of the Nine Worthies later on.

In the fields about the town the pea-pickers, an autumn feature of this neighbourhood, were already at work. They held our eyes for a little and, when we looked forward again, there by the [170] river rose the spire of Holy Trinity, keeping its faithful watch and ward. We clattered over the old stone bridge of fourteen arches and there we were, between the staring rows of tourist shops, all dealing in Shakespeare commercialised. His likeness, his name, his plays are pressed into every huckster's service. The windows fairly bristle with busts of Shakespeare of all sizes and half a dozen colours; with models of the Henley Street house, ranging in price, with varying magnitude and material, from pennies to pounds; with editions of his works, from miniature copies to colossal; with photographs, postal-cards, etchings, sketches; with rubbings of his tombstone inscription; with birthday books and wall texts, and with all sorts of articles, paper-cutters, match-boxes, pencil-trays, I dare say bootjacks, stamped with verse or phrase of his. This poet-barter is only a fraction of Shakespeare's endowment of his native town. Innkeepers, porters,

drivers, guides, custodians are maintained by him. Sir Thomas Lucy never dreamed of such a retinue. Hardly did Warwick the King-maker support so great a household. He is not only Stratford's pride, but its prosperity, and the welfare of the descendants of Shakespeare's [171] neighbours is not a matter for the stranger to deplore. Nevertheless, we hunted up lodgings, drank bad tea at one of the Shakespeare Tea Rooms, and were out of those greedy streets as quickly as possible on a stroll across the old ridged fields to Shottery.

CHARLECOTE PARK ENTRANCE

On the way we met a sophisticated donkey, who, waggling his ears, asked in Bottom's name for a gratuity of "good sweet hay"; and a bevy of children scampered up, as we neared Anne Hathaway's cottage, to thrust upon us their wilted sprigs of lavender and rosemary. They were merry little merchants, however, and giggled understandingly when we put them off with "No, thank you, William," "No, thank you, Anne." We arrived a minute after six, and the cottage was closed for the night, though a medley of indignant pilgrims pounded at the garden gate and took unavailing camera shots through the twilight. But we were content with our dusky glimpse of the timber-and-plaster, vinegrown walls and low thatched roof. In former years we had trodden that box-bordered path up to an open door and had duly inspected fireplace and settle, Bible and [172] bacon-cupboard, and the ancient bedstead. What we cared for most this time was the walk thither, coming by that worn footway toward the setting sun, as Shakespeare would have come on his eager lover's visits, and the return under a gossamer crescent which yet served to suggest the "blessed moon" that tipped

> "with silver all these fruit-tree tops"

for a rash young Romeo who would better have been minding his book at home.

The next morning we spent happily in revisiting the Stratford shrines. Even the catch-shilling shops bore witness, in their garish way, to the supremacy of that genius which brings the ends of the earth to this Midland market-town.

The supposed birthplace is now converted, after a chequered career, into a Shakespeare Museum, where are treasured more or less authentic relics and those first editions which are worth their weight in radium. Built of the tough Arden oak and of honest plaster, it was a respectable residence for the times, not unworthy of that versatile and vigorous citizen who traded in corn and timber and wool and cattle, rose from the offices of ale-taster and constable to [173] be successively Chamberlain, Alderman, and High Bailiff, and loomed before the eyes of his little son as the greatest man in the world. The house, whose clay floors it may have been the children's task to keep freshly strewn with rushes, would have been furnished with oaken chests and settles, stools, trestle-boards, truckle-beds, and perhaps a great bedstead with carved posts. Robert Arden, a man of property and position, had left, among other domestic luxuries, eleven "painted cloths"—naïve representations of religious or classical subjects, with explanatory texts beneath. His daughter may have had some of these works of art to adorn the walls of her Stratford home, and, like enough, she brought her husband a silver salt-cellar and a "fair garnish of pewter." Her eldest son, whose plays "teach courtesy to kings," was doubtless carefully bred,—sent off early to school "with shining morning face," and expected to wait on his parents at their eleven o'clock breakfast before taking his own, though we need feel no concern about his going hungry. Trust him for knowing, as he passed the trenchers and filled the flagons, how to get [174] many a staying nibble behind his father's back.

We wandered on to the Grammar School, still located in the picturesque, half-timbered building originally erected, toward the end of the thirteenth century, by the Guild of the Holy Cross. Here once was hospital as well as school, and in the long hall on the ground floor, even yet faintly frescoed with the Crucifixion, the Guild held its meetings and kept its feasts. Henry VIII made but

half a bite of all this, but the boy-king, Edward VI, eleven years before Shakespeare's birth, gave the ancient edifice back to Stratford. Then the long hall was used for the deliberations of the Town Council, and sometimes, especially when John Shakespeare was in office, for the performances of strolling players,—three men and a boy, perhaps, travelling in their costumes, which, by a little shifting and furbishing, might serve for an old-fashioned morality or a new-fangled chronicle, or, should the schoolmaster's choice prevail, for something newly Englished from the classics. "Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light." The school, thenceforth known as Edward VI Grammar School, was permanently established in the top story, where it is [175] still in active operation. Here we saw the Latin room in which another William than Mistress Page's hopeful was taught "to hick and to hack," and the Mathematics room where he learned enough arithmetic to "buy spices for our sheep-shearing." He was only fourteen or fifteen, it is believed, when his father's business troubles broke off his schooling, but not his education. Everywhere was "matter for a hot brain." And he, who, since the days when he "plucked geese, played truant, and whipped top, ... knew not what 'twas to be beaten," would have borne up blithely against this seeming set-back. Nature had given him "wit to flout at Fortune," and these, too, were the red-blooded years of youth, when he was ever ready to "dance after a tabor and pipe" and pay his laughing court to many a "queen of curds and cream."

"But, O, the thorns we stand upon!"

The mature charms of Anne Hathaway turned jest into earnest and sent prudence down the wind. There was a hasty wedding, nobody knows where, and John Shakespeare's burdens were [176] presently increased by the advent of three grandchildren. It was obviously high time for this ne'er-do-well young John-a-Dreams—"yet he's gentle; never schooled, and yet learned; full of noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved"—to strike out into the world and seek his fortune.

Next to the Guild Hall stands the Guild Chapel, whose former frescoes of the Day of Judgment must have made deep impression on the "eye of childhood that fears a painted devil"; and over the way from the Guild Chapel is New Place. On this site in the time of Henry VII rose the Great House, built by a Stratford magnate and benefactor, Sir Hugh Clopton,—he who gave the town that "fair Bridge of Stone over Avon." In 1597 Shakespeare, who could hardly have been in London a dozen years, had prospered so well, albeit in the disreputable crafts of actor and playwright, that he bought the estate, repaired the mansion then in "great ruyne and decay," and renamed it New Place. Yet although it was his hour of triumph, his heart was sorrowful, for his only son, his eleven-year-old Hamnet, "jewel of children," had died the year before. At least [177] another decade passed before Shakespeare finally withdrew from London and settled down at New Place with the wife eight years his senior, a plain country woman of Puritan proclivities. In his twenty years of intense creative life,

"The inward service of the mind and soul"

must have widened beyond any possible comprehension of hers, nor can his two daughters, unlettered and out of his world as they were, have had much inkling of the career and achievements of "so rare a wonder'd father." His parents were dead. Their ashes may now mingle with little Hamnet's in some forgotten plot of the elm-shadowed churchyard. Of his two daughters, Susanna, the elder, had married a Stratford physician, and there was a grandchild, little Elizabeth Hall, to brighten the gardens of New Place. As I lingered there,—for the gardens remain, though the house is gone,—my eyes rested on a three-year-old lass in a fluttering white frock,—no wraith, though she might have been,—dancing among the flowers with such uncertain steps and tossing such tiny hands in air that the birds did not trouble themselves to take to their [178] wings, but hopped on before her like playfellows.

The deepest of the Shakespeare mysteries is, to my mind, the silence of those closing years. Were nerves and brain temporarily exhausted from the strain of that long period of continuous production? Or had he come home from London sore at heart, "toss'd from wrong to injury," smarting from "the whips and scorns of time" and abjuring the "rough magic" of his art? Or was he, in "the sessions of sweet silent thought," dreaming on some high, consummate poem in comparison with which the poor stage-smirched plays seemed to him not worth the gathering up? Or might he, taking a leaf out of Ben Jonson's book, have been in fact arranging and rewriting his works, purging his gold from the dross of various collaborators? Or was some new, inmost revelation of life dawning upon him, holding him dumb with awe? We can only ask, not answer; but certainly they err who claim that the divinest genius of English letters had wrought merely for house and land, and found his chief reward in writing "Gentleman" after his name. [179]

"Sure, he that made us with such large discourse
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To rust in us unus'd."

Shakespeare had been gentle before he was a gentleman, and had held ever—let his own words bear witness!—

"Virtue and cunning were endowments greater
Than nobleness and riches."

The gods had given him but fifty-two years on earth—had they granted more, he might have probed and uttered too many of their secrets—when for the last time he was "with holy bell ...

knoll'd to church." It was an April day when the neighbours bore a hand-bier—as I saw a hand-bier borne a few years since across the fields from Shottery—the little way from New Place down Chapel Lane and along the Waterside—or perhaps by Church Street—and up the avenue, beneath its blossoming limes, to Holy Trinity.

Here, where the thousands and the millions come up to do reverence to this

> "Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,"

I passed a peaceful hour, ruffled only—if the truth must out—by the unjustifiable wrath which [180]
ever rises in me on reading Mrs. Susanna Hall's epitaph. I can forgive the "tombemaker" who wrought the bust, I can endure the stained-glass windows, I can overlook the alabaster effigy of John Combe in Shakespeare's chancel, but I resent the Puritan self-righteousness of the lines,—

> "Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,
> Wise to salvation was good Mistris Hall,
> Something of Shakespeare was in that but this
> Wholly of him with whom she's now in blisse."

Yes, I know that Shakespeare made her his heiress, that she was clever and charitable, that in July of 1643 she entertained Queen Henrietta Maria at New Place, but I do not care at all for the confusion of her bones when "a person named Watts" intruded into her grave fifty-eight years after she had taken possession, and I believe she used her father's manuscripts for wrapping up her saffron pies.

We spent the earlier half of the afternoon in a drive among some of the outlying villages of Stratford,—first to Wilmcote, the birthplace of Shakespeare's mother. We dismissed a fleeting thought of "Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot," and sought only for "Mary Arden's [181]
Cottage." Gabled and dormer-windowed, of stout oak timbers and a light brown plaster, it stands pleasantly within its rustic greenery. Old stone barns and leaning sheds help to give it an aspect of homely kindliness. Robert Arden's will, dated 1556, is the will of a good Catholic, bequeathing his soul to God "and to our blessed Lady, Saint Mary, and to all the holy company of heaven." He directed that his body should be buried in the churchyard of St. John the Baptist in Aston-Cantlow. So we drove on, a little further to the northwest, and found an Early English church with a pinnacled west tower. The air was sweet with the roses and clematis that clambered up the walls. It is here, in all likelihood, that John Shakespeare and Mary Arden were married.

We still pressed on, splashing through a ford and traversing a surviving bit of the Forest of Arden, to one village more, Wootton-Wawen, with a wonderful old church whose every stone could tell a story. Somervile the poet, who loved Warwickshire so well, is buried in the chantry chapel, and the white-haired rector told us proudly that Shakespeare had often come to service [182]
there. Indeed, Wootton-Wawen may have meant more to the great dramatist and done more to shape his destinies than we shall ever know, though Shakespeare scholarship is beginning to turn its searchlight on John Somervile of Edstone Hall, whose wife was nearly related to Mary Arden. Papist, as the whole Arden connection seems to have been, John Somervile's brain may have given way under the political and religious troubles of those changeful Tudor times. At all events, he suddenly set out for London, declaring freely along the road that he was going to kill the Queen. Arrest, imprisonment, trial for high treason, conviction, and a mysterious death in his Newgate cell followed in terrible sequence. Nor did the tragedy stop with him, but his wife, sister, and priest were arrested on charge of complicity, and not these only, but that quiet and honourable gentleman, Edward Arden of Park Hall in Wilmcote, with his wife and brother. Francis Arden and the ladies were in course of time released, but Edward Arden, who had previously incurred the enmity of Leicester by refusing to wear his livery,—a flattery to which many of the Warwickshire gentlemen eagerly stooped,—suffered, on December 20, 1583, the [183]
brutal penalty of the law,—hanged and drawn and quartered, put to death with torture, for no other crime than that of having an excitable son-in-law and a sturdy English sense of self-respect. A sad and bitter Yule it must have been for his kinsfolk in Wilmcote and in Stratford. There was danger in the air, too; a hot word might give Sir Thomas Lucy or some zealous Protestant his chance; and there may well have been graver reasons than a poaching frolic why young Will Shakespeare should have disappeared from the county.

THE COTSWOLDS [184]

Late in the afternoon we started out from Stratford for a peep at the Cotswolds, swelling downs that belong in the main to Oxfordshire, although, as our drive soon revealed to us, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, and even Worcestershire all come in for a share of these pastoral uplands. It is in the Cotswolds, not far from the estuary of the Severn, that the Thames rises and flows modestly through Oxfordshire, which lies wholly within its upper valley, to become the commerce-laden river that takes majestic course through the heart of London.

We were still in the Shakespeare country, for his restless feet must often have roved these breezy wilds, famous since ancient days for hunts and races. "I am glad to see you, good Master Slender," says genial Master Page. And young Master Slender, with his customary tact, replies: "How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say he was outrun on Cotsol." Whereupon Master [185]

Page retorts a little stiffly: "It could not be judged, sir," and Slender chuckles: "You'll not confess; you'll not confess." Why could it not be judged? For one of the delights of the Cotswold hunt—so hunters say—is the clear view on this open tableland of the straining pack. Shakespeare knew well the "gallant chiding" of the hounds,—how, when they "spend their mouths,"

> "Echo replies
> As if another chase were in the skies."

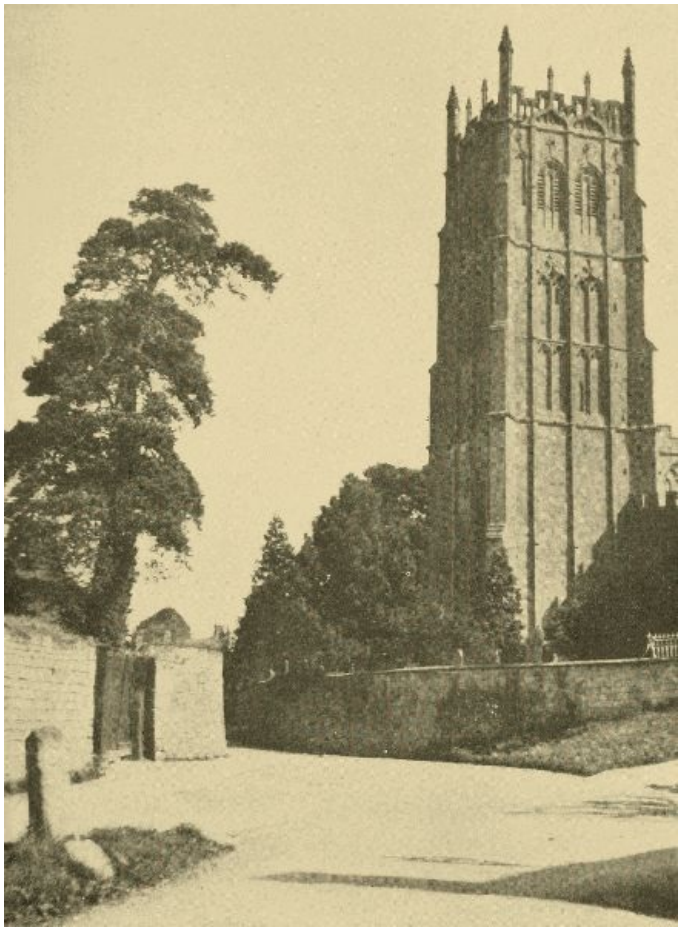
Here he may have seen his death-pressed hare, "poor Wat," try to baffle his pursuers and confuse the scent by running among the sheep and deer and along the banks "where earth-delving conies keep."

Still about our route clung, like a silver mist, Shakespeare traditions. In the now perished church of Luddington, two miles south of Stratford, the poet, it is said, married Anne Hathaway; but the same bridal is claimed for the venerable church of Temple Grafton, about a mile distant, and again for the neighbouring church of Billesley. Long Marston, "Dancing Marston," believes its [186] sporting-ground was in the mind of the prentice playwright, a little homesick yet in London, when he wrote:

> "The Nine-Men's Morris is filled up with mud;
> And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
> For lack of tread, are undistinguishable."

At Lower Quinton stands an old manor-house of whose library—such is the whisper that haunts its folios—Will Shakespeare was made free. A happy picture that—of an eager lad swinging across the fields and leaping stiles to enter into his paradise of books.

We were well into Gloucestershire before this, that tongue of Gloucestershire which runs up almost to Stratford-on-Avon, and were driving on in the soft twilight, now past the old-time Common Fields with their furlongs divided by long balks; now over rolling reaches, crossed by low stone walls, of sheep-walk and water-meadow and wheat-land, with here and there a fir plantation or a hazel covert; now through a strange grey hamlet built of the native limestone. Our road was gradually rising, and just before nightfall we came into Chipping Campden, most [187] beautiful of the old Cotswold towns. We had not dreamed that England held its like,—one long, wide, stately street, bordered by silent fronts of great stone houses, with here and there the green of mantling ivy, but mainly with only the rich and changeful colouring of the stone itself, grey in shadow, golden in the sun. Campden was for centuries a famous centre of the wool trade; the Cotswolds served it as a broad grazing-ground whose flocks furnished wool for the skilful Flemish weavers; its fourteenth century Woolstaplers' Hall still stands; its open market-house, built in 1624 midway of the mile-long street, is one of its finest features; its best-remembered name is that of William Grevel, described on his monumental brass (1401) as "Flower of the Wool-merchants of all England." He bequeathed a hundred marks toward the building of the magnificent church, which stood complete, as we see it now, in the early fifteenth century. Its glorious tower, tall and light, yet not too slender, battlemented, turreted, noble in all its proportions, is a Cotswold landmark. As we were feasting our eyes, after an evening stroll, upon the symmetries of that grand church, wonderfully impressive as it rose in the faint moonlight [188] above a group of strange, pagoda-roofed buildings, its chimes rang out a series of sweet old tunes, all the more poignantly appealing in that the voices of those ancient bells were thin and tremulous, and now and then a note was missed.



TOWER OF CHIPPING CAMPDEN CHURCH

The fascinations of Campden held us the summer day long. We must needs explore the church interior, which has suffered at the hands of the restorer; yet its chancel brasses, wrought with figures of plump woolstaplers, their decorous and comely dames, and their kneeling children, reward a close survey. I especially rejoiced in one complacent burgher, attended by three wimpled wives, and a long row of sons and daughters all of the same size. There is a curious chapel, too, where we came upon the second Viscount Campden, in marble shroud and coronet, ceremoniously handing, with a most cynical and unholy expression, his lady from the sepulchre. There was a ruined guildhall to see, and some antique almshouses of distinguished beauty. As we looked, an old man came feebly forth and bowed his white head on the low enclosing wall in an attitude of grief or prayer. We learned later that one of the inmates had died that very hour. We [189] went over the works of the new Guild of Handicraft, an attempt to realise, here in the freshness of the wolds, the ideals of Ruskin and Morris. We cast wistful eyes up at Dover's Hill, on whose level summit used to be held at Whitsuntide the merry Cotswold Games. "Heigh for Cotswold!" But it was the hottest day of the summer, and we contented ourselves with the phrase.

Other famous Cotswold towns are "Stow-on-the-Wold, where the wind blows cold"; Northleach in the middle of the downs, desolate now, but once full of the activities of those wool-merchants commemorated by quaint brasses in the splendid church,—brasses which show them snugly at rest in their furred gowns, with feet comfortably planted on stuffed woolpack or the fleecy back of a sheep, or, more precariously, on a pair of shears; Burford, whose High Street and church are as noteworthy as Campden's own; Winchcombe, once a residence of the Mercian kings and a famous shrine of pilgrimage; Cirencester, the "Capital of the Cotswolds," built above a ruined Roman city and possessing a church of surpassing richness. How we longed for months of free- [190] footed wandering over these exhilarating uplands with their grey settlements like chronicles writ in stone! But Father Time was shaking his hour-glass just behind us, in his marplot fashion, and since it had to be a choice, we took the evening train to Chipping Norton.

I regret to say that Chipping Norton, the highest town in Oxfordshire, showed little appreciation of the compliment. It was not easy to find lodging and wellnigh impossible to get carriage conveyance back to Campden the next day. It is a thriving town, ranking third in the county, and turns out a goodly supply of leather gloves and the "Chipping Norton tweeds." The factory folk were, many of them, having their holiday just then; their friends were coming for the week-end and had one and all, it would seem, set their hearts on being entertained by a Saturday drive; the only victoria for hire in the place was going to Oxford to bring an invalid lady home; altogether the hostlers washed their hands—merely in metaphor—of the two gad-abouts who thought Chipping Norton not good enough to spend Sunday in. Before we slept, however, we had [191] succeeded in engaging, at different points, a high wagonette, a gaunt horse, and a bashful boy, and the combination stood ready for us at nine o'clock in the morning.

Meanwhile we had seen the chief sights of this venerable town, whose name is equivalent to Market Norton. Its one wide street, a handsome, tree-shadowed thoroughfare with the Town Hall set like an island in its midst, runs up the side and along the brow of a steep plateau. A narrow

way plunges down from this central avenue and passes a seven-gabled row of delectable almshouses, dated 1640. Indeed, no buildings in these Midland counties have more architectural charm than their quaint shelters for indigent old age. The abrupt lane leads to a large grey church, square-towered and perpendicular, like the church of Chipping Campden, but with a few Early English traces. Its peculiar feature is the glass clerestory,—great square windows divided from one another by the pillars of the nave. The sexton opened the doors for us so early that we had leisure to linger a little before the old altar-stone with its five crosses, before St. Mary's banner bordered with her own blue, before the warrior pillowed on his helmet and praying his [192] last prayer beside his lady, whose clasped hands, even in the time-worn alabaster, have a dimpled, chubby, coaxing look; and before those characteristic merchant brasses, the men in tunics with close sleeves and girdles, one of them standing with each foot on a woolpack, the women in amazing head-dresses, "horned" and "pedimented," and all the work so carefully and elaborately wrought that the Cotswold brasses are authorities for the costume of the period.

THE ROLLRIGHT STONES

One of the main objects of this expedition, however, was the drive back over the hills with their far views of down and wold to whose vegetation the limestone imparts a peculiar tint of blue. We deviated from the Campden road to see the Rollright Stones, a hoary army with their leader well in advance. He, the King Stone, is across the Warwickshire line, but, curiously enough, a little below the summit which looks out over the Warwickshire plain. This monolith, eight or nine feet high, fantastically suggests a huge body drawn back as if to brace itself against the fling of some tremendous curse. The tale tells how, in those good old times before names and dates had to be [193] remembered, a petty chief, who longed to extend his sway over all Britain, had come thus far on his northward march. But here, when he was almost at the crest of the hill, when seven strides more would have brought him where he could see the Warwickshire village of Long Compton on the other side, out popped an old witch, as wicked as a thorn-bush, with the cry:

> "If Long Compton thou canst see,
> King of England thou shalt be."

On bounded the chief—what were seven steps to reach a throne!—but the wooded summit, still shutting off his view, rose faster than he, and again the eldritch screech was heard:

> "Rise up, stick! stand still, stone!
> King of England thou shalt be none."

And there he stands to this day, even as the spell froze him, while the sorceress, disguised as an elder tree, keeps watch over her victim. The fairies steal out from a hole in the bank on moonlight nights and weave their dances round him. No matter how securely the children of the [194] neighbourhood fit a flat stone over the hole at bedtime, every morning finds it thrust aside. We would not for the world have taken liberties with that elfin portal, but if we had been sure which of the several elder trees was the witch, we might have cut at her with our penknives and seen,—it is averred by many,—as her sap began to flow and her strength to fail, the contorted stone strain and struggle to free itself from the charm. And had we seen that, I am afraid we should forthwith have desisted from our hacking and taken to our heels. As it was, the place had an uncanny feel, and we went back into Oxfordshire some eighty yards to review the main body of the army,

> "a dismal cirque
> Of Druid stones upon a forlorn moor."

These mysterious monuments, which in the day of the Venerable Bede were no less remarkable

than Stonehenge, have been ravaged by time, but some sixty of them—their magic baffles an exact count—remain. Grey Druid semblances, heathen to the core, owl-faced, monkey-faced, they stand in a great, ragged circle, enclosing a clump of firs. Deeply sunken in the ground, they are [195] of uneven height; some barely peep above the surface; the tallest rises more than seven feet; some lie prone; some bend sideways; all have an aspect of extreme antiquity, a perforated, worm-eaten look the reverse of prepossessing. But our visit was ill-timed. If we had had the hardihood to climb up to that wind-swept waste at midnight, we should have seen those crouching goblins spring erect, join hands and gambol around in an ungainly ring, trampling down the thistles and shocking every church spire in sight. At midnight of All Saints they make a mad rush down the hillside for their annual drink of water at a spring below.

The antiquaries who hold that these strange stones were erected not as a Druid temple, nor as memorials of victory, nor for the election and inauguration of primitive kings, but for sepulchral purposes, rest their case largely on the Whispering Knights. This third group is made up of five stones which apparently once formed a cromlech and may have been originally covered with a mound. They are some quarter of a mile behind the circle,—a bad quarter of a mile I found it as I struggled across the rugged moor knee-deep in rank clover and other withering weeds. Just [196] before me would fly up partridges with a startled whirr, hovering so near in their bewilderment that I could almost have knocked a few of them down with my parasol, if that had appealed to me as a pleasant and friendly thing to do. For this was a "cover," destined to give a few of Blake's and Shelley's countrymen some autumn hours of brutalising sport.

> "Each outcry of the hunted hare
> A fibre from the brain doth tear.
> A skylark wounded in the wing;
> A cherubim doth cease to sing."

The Five Knights lean close together, yet without touching, enchanted to stone in the very act of whispering treason against their ambitious chief. They whisper still under the elder tree, and often will a lass labouring in the barley fields slip away from her companions at dusk to beg the Five Knights to whisper her an answer to the question of her heart. I walked back, having hit on a path, in company with a rustic harvester, whose conversation was confined to telling me five times over, in the stubborn, half-scared tone of superstition, that while the other elders are laden [197] with white berries, this elder always bears red; and the collie wagged his tail, and the donkey wagged his ears, in solemn confirmation.

The wagonette gathered us in again, and soon we passed, not far from the fine Elizabethan mansion known as Chastleton House, the Four-Shire Stone, a column marking the meeting-point of Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire. Our route lay for a while in Gloucestershire. As our shy young driver refreshed our skeleton steed, which had proved a good roadster, with gruel, that favourite beverage of English horses, at Moreton-in-the-Marsh, another little grey stone town with open market-hall, we noted a building marked P. S. A. and learned it was a workingman's club, or something of that nature, and that the cabalistic initials stood for Pleasant Sunday Afternoon. We changed horses at Campden, did our duty by the inevitable cold joints, and drove up to Fish Inn, with its far outlook, and thence down into the fertile Vale of Evesham. We had not been ready to say with Richard II, [198]

> "I am a stranger here in Glostershire;
> These high wild hills and rough uneven ways
> Draw out our miles, and make them wearisome,"

but we found a new pleasure in the smiling welcome of gardened Worcestershire. The charming village of Broadway, beloved of artists, detained us for a little, and at Evesham, even more attractive with its beautiful bell-tower, its Norman gateway and cloister arch—pathetic relics of its ruined abbey—and with its obelisk-marked battlefield where fell Simon de Montfort, "the most peerless man of his time for valour, personage, and wisdom," we brought our driving-tour in the Midlands to a close.

OXFORD [199]

Shakespeare's frequent horseback journeys from London to Stratford, and from Stratford to London, must have made him familiar with the county of Oxfordshire. He would have seen its northern uplands sprinkled over with white-fleeced sheep of the pure old breed, sheep so large that their mutton is too fat for modern palates: a smaller sheep, yielding inferior wool, is fast supplanting the original Cotswold. He would not have met upon the downs those once so frequent passengers, the Flemish merchants with their trains of sumpter mules and pack-horses, bound for Chipping Campden or some other market where wool might be "cheapened" in the way of bargaining, for by Shakespeare's day the cloth-making industry in the valley of the Stroud Water, Gloucestershire, had attained to such a flourishing condition that the export of raw material was forbidden. [200]

It is not likely that his usual route would have given him the chance to refresh himself with Banbury cakes at Banbury and, profane player that he was, bring down upon himself a Puritan

preachment from Ben Jonson's Zeal-of-the-land-Busy; but Shakespeare's way would almost certainly have lain through Woodstock. This ancient town has royal traditions reaching back to King Alfred and Etheldred the Redeless, but these are obscured for the modern tourist by the heavy magnificence of Blenheim Palace, the Duke of Marlborough's reward for his "famous victory." The legend of Fair Rosamund—how Henry II hid her here embowered in a labyrinth, and how the murderous Queen Eleanor tracked her through the maze by the clue of a silken thread—Shakespeare, like Drayton, could have enjoyed without molestation from the critical historian, who now insists that it was Eleanor whom the king shut up to keep her from interfering with his loves. Poor Rosamund! Her romance is not suffered to rest in peace here any more than was her fair body in the church of Godstow nunnery. There she had been buried in the centre of the choir, and the nuns honoured her grave with such profusion of broidered hangings and burning tapers [201] as to scandalise St. Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, who, on visiting the nunnery in 1191, gave orders that she be disinterred and buried "out of the church with other common people to the end that religion be not vilified." But after some years the tender nuns slipped those rejected bones into a "perfumed leather bag" and brought them back within the holy pale. The dramatist, who seems to have done wellnigh his earliest chronicle-play writing in an episode of the anonymous "Edward III," may have remembered, as he rode into the old town, that the Black Prince was born at Woodstock. But whether or no he gave a thought to Edward III's war-wasted heir, he could hardly have failed to muse upon that monarch's poet, "most sacred happie spirit," Geoffrey Chaucer, whose son Thomas—if this Thomas Chaucer were indeed the poet's son—resided at Woodstock in the early part of the fifteenth century. And still fresh would have been the memory of Elizabeth's imprisonment in the gate-house during a part of her sister Mary's reign. It was here, according to Holinshed, on whom the burden of pronouns rested lightly, that the captive princess "hearing [202] upon a time out of hir garden at Woodstock a certaine milkemaid singing pleasantlie wished herselfe to be a milkemaid as she was, saieing that hir case was better, and life more merier than was hirs in that state as she was."

Charles I and the Roundheads had not then set their battle-marks all over Oxfordshire, and Henley, now famed for its July regatta as far as water flows, was still content with the very moderate speed of its malt-barges; but Oxford—I would give half my library to know with what feelings Shakespeare used to behold its sublime group of spires and towers against the sunset sky. This "upstart crow," often made to wince under the scorn of those who, like Robert Greene, —the red-headed reprobate!—could write themselves "Master of Arts of both Universities," what manner of look did he turn upon that august town

> "gorgeous with high-built colleges,
> And scholars seemly in their grave attire,
> Learnèd in searching principles of art?"

Here in the midst of the valley of the Thames, Oxford had already kept for centuries a queenly state, chief city of the shire, with a university that ranked as one of the "two eyes of England." [203] The university, then as now, was made up of a number of colleges which owned, by bequest and by purchase, a considerable portion of the county, though they by no means limited their estates to Oxfordshire. Almost all those "sacred nurseries of blooming youth" which delight us to-day were known to the dust-stained traveller who put up, perhaps twice a year, perhaps oftener, at the Crown Inn, kept by John Davenant, vintner. Apart from the painfully modern Keble, a memorial to the author of "The Christian Year," and the still more recent roof-trees for dissent, Congregational Mansfield and Unitarian Manchester, what college of modern Oxford would be utterly strange to Shakespeare? Even in Worcester, an eighteenth-century erection on the site of the ruined Benedictine foundation of Gloucester College, search soon reveals vestiges of the old monastic dwellings. Not a few of the very edifices that Shakespeare saw still stand in their Gothic beauty, but in case of others, as University, which disputes with Merton the claim of seniority, boasting no less a founder than Alfred the Great, new buildings have overgrown the old. Some [204] have changed their names, as Broadgates, to which was given, eight years after Shakespeare's death, a name that even in death he would hardly have forgotten,—Pembroke, in honour of William, Earl of Pembroke, then Chancellor of the University. Already venerable, as the poet looked upon them, were the thirteenth-century foundations of Merton, with its stately tower, its library of chained folios, its memories of Duns Scotus; and Balliol, another claimant for the dignities of the first-born, tracing its origin to Sir John de Balliol, father of the Scottish king, remembering among its early Fellows and Masters John Wyclif the Reformer; and Hart Hall, where Tyndale was a student, the Hertford College of to-day; and St. Edmund Hall, which has been entirely rebuilt. Another thirteenth-century foundation, St. Alban Hall, has been incorporated with Merton.

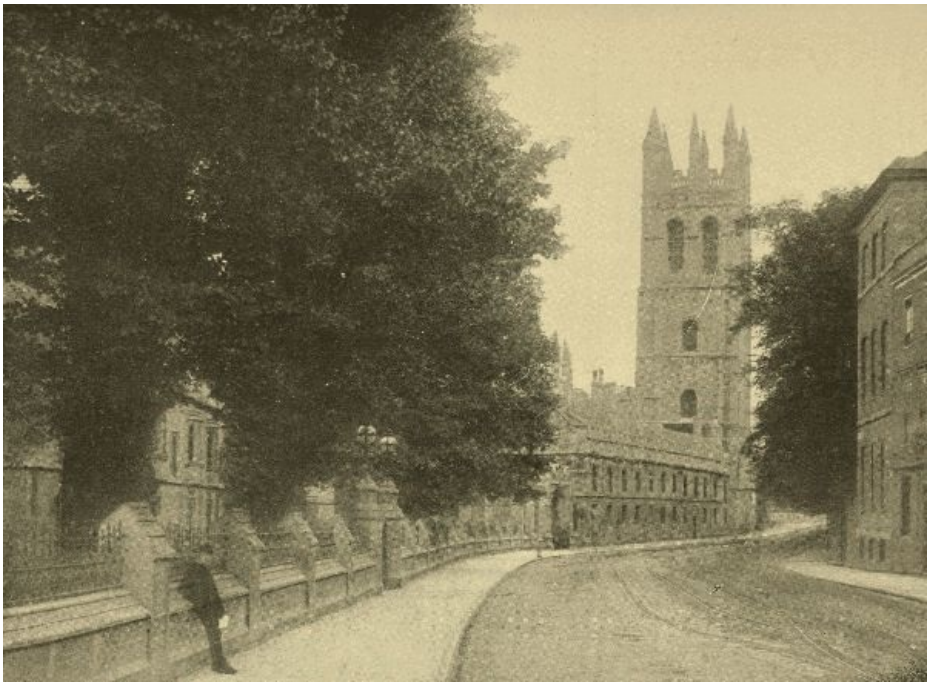
The fourteenth-century colleges, too, would have worn a weathered look by 1600,—Exeter and Oriel and Queen's and New. The buildings of Exeter have been restored over and over, but the mediæval still haunts them, as it haunted Exeter's latest poet, William Morris, who loved [205] Oxfordshire so well that he finally made his home at Kelmscott on the Upper Thames. Oriel, which, as Shakespeare would have known, was Sir Walter Raleigh's college, underwent an extensive rebuilding in the reign of Charles I. To Oriel once belonged St. Mary Hall, where Sir Thomas More studied,—a wag of a student he must have been!—and now, after an independence of five hundred years, it is part of Oriel again. Queen's, named in honour of Philippa, the consort of Edward III, has so completely changed its outer fashion that George II's Queen Caroline is perched upon its cupola, but by some secret of individuality it is still the same old college of the Black Prince and of Henry V,—the college where every evening a trumpet summons the men to dine in hall, and every Christmas the Boar's Head, garnished with the traditionary greenery, is

borne in to the singing of an old-time carol, and every New Year's Day the bursar distributes thread and needles among its unappreciative masculine community with the succinct advice: "Take this and be thrifty."

New College, unlike these three, has hardly altered its original fabric. If Shakespeare smiled over [206]
the name borne by a structure already mossed and lichened by two centuries, we have more than twice his reason for smiling; indeed, we have one excuse that he had not, for we can think of Sydney Smith as a New College man. Old it is and old it looks. The very lanes that lead to it, grey and twisted passages of stone, conduct us back to the mediæval world. The Virgin Mary, the Archangel Gabriel, and, no whit abashed in such high company, Bishop Wykeham, the Founder, watch us from their storm-worn niches as we pass under the gateway into the majestic quadrangle. Here time-blackened walls hold the gaze enthralled with their ancientry of battlements and buttresses, deep-mullioned windows and pinnacle-set towers. Beyond lie the gardens, still bounded on two sides by the massive masonry, embrasured, bastioned, parapeted, of the old City Wall,—gardens where it should always be October, drifty, yellow, dreamy, quiet, with wan poplars and aspens and chestnuts whispering and sighing together, till some grotesque face sculptured on the wall peers out derisively through ivy mat or crimson creeper, and the red- [207]
berried hollies, old and gay with many Christmases, rustle in reassuring laughter. Meanwhile the rooks flap heavily among the mighty beeches, whose tremendous trunks are all misshapen with the gnarls and knobs of age.

Of the fifteenth-century foundations, All Souls, "The College of All Souls of the Faithful Departed," and especially of those who fell in the French wars, retains much of its original architecture; in the kitchen of Lincoln, if not in the chapel, Shakespeare would still find himself at home; and for him, as for all the generations since, the lofty tower of Magdalen rose as Oxford's crown of beauty. Magdalen College is ancient. The very speaking of the name (Maudlin) tells us that, all the more unmistakably because Magdalen Bridge and Magdalen Street carry the modern pronunciation. But Magdalen College, with its springing, soaring grace, its surprises of delight, its haunting, soul-possessing loveliness, has all the winning charm of youth. Its hundred acres of lawn and garden, wood and park, where deer browse peacefully beneath the shade of giant elms and where Addison's beloved Water Walks beside the Cherwell are golden with the primroses [208]
and daffodils of March and blue with the violets and periwinkles of later spring, are even more tempting to the book-fagged wanderer than Christ Church Meadow and "Mesopotamia." It is hard to tell when Magdalen is most beautiful. It has made the circle of the year its own. On May Day dawn, all Oxford, drowsy but determined, gathers in the broad street below to see—it depends upon the wind whether or no one may hear—the choir chant their immemorial hymn from the summit of the tower. When the ending of the rite is made known to the multitude by the flinging over of the caps,—black mortar-boards that sail slowly down the one hundred and fifty feet like a flock of pensive rooks,—then away it streams over Magdalen Bridge toward Iffley to gather Arnold's white and purple fritillaries, and, after a long and loving look at Iffley's Norman Church, troops home along the towing-path beside the Isis. Shakespeare may himself have heard, if he chanced to be passing through on St. John Baptist's Day, the University sermon preached from the curiously canopied stone pulpit well up on the wall in a corner of one of the quadrangles, while the turf was sweet with strewn rushes and all the buildings glistening with [209]
fresh green boughs. But even in midwinter Magdalen is beautiful, when along Addison's Walk the fog is frosted like most delicate enamel on every leaf and twig, and this white world of rime takes on strange flushes from the red sun peering through the haze.

Of the six Tudor foundations, Trinity occupies the site of Durham College, a thirteenth-century Benedictine institution suppressed by Henry VIII; St. John's, closely allied to the memory of Archbishop Laud, is the survival of St. Bernard College, which itself grew out of a Cistercian monastery; Brasenose, associated for earlier memory with Foxe of the "Book of Martyrs" and for later with Walter Pater, supplanted two mediæval halls; and Jesus College, the first to be founded after the Reformation, endowed by a Welshman for the increase of Welsh learning, received from Elizabeth a site once held by academic buildings of the elder faith. Only Corpus Christi, where Cardinal Pole and Bishop Hooker studied to such different ends, although it is, as its name indicates, of Catholic origin, rose on fresh soil and broke with the past, with the mediæval [210]
educational tradition, by making regular provision for the systematic study of Latin and Greek.



THE TOWER, MAGDALEN COLLEGE

The great Tudor foundation was Christ Church, built on the sacred ground where, in the eighth century, St. Frideswide, a princess with a pronounced vocation for the religious life, had erected a nunnery of which she was first abbess. The nunnery became, after her death, a house of canons, known as St. Frideswide's Priory. Cardinal Wolsey brought about the surrender of this priory to the king, and its prompt transfer to himself, some fifteen years before the general Dissolution. His ambition, not all unrealised, was to found as his memorial a splendid seat of the New Learning at Oxford to be called Cardinal's College. He had gone so far as to erect a magnificent hall, with fan-vaulted entrance and carved oak ceiling of surpassing beauty, a kitchen ample enough to feed the Titans, "The Faire Gate" and, in outline, the Great Quadrangle, for whose enlargement he pulled down three bays of the Priory church, when his fall cut short his princely projects. His graceless master attempted to take over to himself the credit of Wolsey's labours, substituting the name of King Henry VIII's College, but on creating, a few years later, [211] the bishopric of Oxford, he blended the cathedral and college foundations as the Church and House of Christ. The cathedral fabric is still in the main that of the old Priory church. Of the several quadrangles, Canterbury Quad keeps a memory of Canterbury College, which, with the other Benedictine colleges, Gloucester and Durham, went down in the storm. Christ's Church —"The House," as its members call it—is the aristocratic college of Oxford. Noblemen and even princes may be among those white-surpliced figures that flit about the dim quads after Sunday evensong. Ruskin's father, a wealthy wine-merchant of refined tastes and broad intelligence, hesitated to enter his son as a gentleman commoner at Christ's lest the act should savour of presumption. Yet no name has conferred more lustre on "The House" than that of him who became the Slade Professor of Fine Arts, waking all Oxford to nobler life and resigning, at last, because he could not bear that the university should sanction vivisection.

Wadham College, though the lovely garden with its hoary walls starred by jasmine and its [212] patriarchal cedars casting majestic shadows—a garden that rivals for charm even those of St. John's and Worcester and Exeter—has such a venerable air, is the youngest of all these. Its first stone was laid, on a site formerly occupied by a priory of Augustinian Friars, only six years before Shakespeare's death. In his later journeys he would not have failed to note the progress of its erection.

But if Shakespeare saw, as he rode through Oxford, almost all the colleges that may now be seen, he also saw much that has crumbled away into an irretrievable past. Not only were the various colleges, halls, priories, and friaries of the monastic orders still in visible ruin, but the great abbeys of Osney and of Rewley, the former one of the largest and richest in all England, still made the appeal of a beautiful desolation. No wonder that Shakespeare compared the naked branches of autumn, that wintry end of the season

> "When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
> Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,"

to

> "bare, ruined choirs."

[213]

If, as seems probable, the Arden sympathies lingered long with the Mother Church, if Shakespeare did not forget, even in those closing years when his homeward trips brought him to a Puritan household and an ever more Puritan town, the bitter fate of his kinsmen of Wilmcote and Wootton-Wawen, he must have been keenly alive to these ravages of the Reformation. Yet he had been some twenty years at the vortex of Elizabethan life, in the very seethe of London; he had witnessed many a wrong and many a tragedy; he was versed to weariness of heart in the

"hostile strokes" that befall humanity, in all the varied

> "throes
> That nature's fragile vessel doth sustain
> In life's uncertain voyage";

and he knew, no man better, that Right is not of one party, nor Truth of a single creed. He must have mused, as he took the air in Oxford streets after Mistress Davenant had served his supper, on the three great Protestant Martyrs of whose suffering some of the elder folk with whom he chatted had been eyewitnesses. The commemorative cross that may now be seen in front of Balliol, near the church of St. Mary Magdalen whose tower was a familiar sight to Shakespeare's [214] eyes, displays in richly fretted niches the statues of "Thomas Cranmer, Nicolas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, Prelates of the Church of England, who near this spot yielded their bodies to be burned." Most of all, his thought would have dwelt on Cranmer, that pathetic figure whose life was such a mingled yarn of good and evil. He had won the favour of Henry VIII by approving the divorce of Queen Catherine. He had beheld—and in some cases furthered—the downfalls of Sir Thomas More, of Anne Boleyn, of Wolsey, of Cromwell, of Catherine Howard, of Seymour, and of Somerset. He had stood godfather to Elizabeth and to Edward. He had watched over the death-bed of the tyrant; he had crowned that tyrant's frail young son as Edward VI. When by his adherence to the cause of Lady Jane Grey he had incurred sentence of treason, he was pardoned by Queen Mary. Yet this pardon only amounted to a transfer from the Tower of London to the Bocardo in Oxford, that prison-house over the North Gate from whose stone cells used to come down the hoarse cry of cold and hunger: "Pity the Bocardo birds." There were those still living in [215] Oxford who could have told the dramatist, as he gazed up through the moonlight (for who does not?) to the pinnacled spire of St. Mary-the-Virgin, all the detail of those April days, only ten years before his birth, when Cranmer, with Ridley and Latimer, was brought into the church and bidden, before a hostile assemblage of divines, to justify the heresies of the new prayer-book. On the Tuesday Cranmer pleaded from eight till two; Ridley was heard on the Wednesday, and on the Thursday the aged Latimer, a quaint champion as he stood there "with a kerchief and two or three caps on his head, his spectacles hanging by a string at his breast, and a staff in his hand." On the Friday all three were condemned. After a year and a half of continued confinement, Archbishop Cranmer, whose irresolution was such that, from first to last, he wrote seven recantations, was made to look out from his prison window upon the tormented death of his friends. Then it was that the stanch old Latimer, bowed with the weight of fourscore years, but viewing the fagots undismayed, spake the never-forgotten words: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be [216] put out." Cranmer's own end came six months later, on March 21, 1556. He was first brought to St. Mary's that he might publicly abjure his heresies. But at that desperate pass, no longer tempted by the hope of life,—for hope there was none,—his manhood returned to him with atoning dignity and force. Prison-wasted, in ragged gown, a man of sixty-seven years, he clearly avowed his Protestant faith, declaring that he had penned his successive recantations in fear of the pains of death, and adding: "Forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand therefore shall be first punished; for if I may come to the fire, it shall be the first burnt." And having so "flung down the burden of his shame," he put aside those who would still have argued with him and fairly ran to the stake,

> "Outstretching flameward his upbraided hand."

The university church, this beautiful St. Mary's, has other memories. From its pulpit Wyclif proclaimed such daring doctrines that Lincoln College was founded to refute them,—Lincoln, [217] which came to number among its Fellows John Wesley and to shelter those first Methodist meetings, the sessions of his "Holy Club." In St. Mary's choir rests the poor bruised body of Amy Robsart. The spiral-columned porch was erected by Laud's chaplain, and its statue of the Virgin and Child so scandalised the Puritans that they pressed it into service for one of their articles of impeachment directed against the doomed archbishop.

What could the thronging student life of Oxford have meant to the author of "Hamlet"? Of his careless young teachers in stage-craft—so soon his out-distanced rivals—Lyly and Peele and Lodge would have been at home beside the Isis and the Cherwell, as Greene and Nash and Marlowe by the Cam; but Shakespeare—did those fluttering gowns, those gaudy-hooded processions, stir in him more than a stranger's curiosity? The stern day of that all-learned Master of Balliol, Dr. Jowett, who stiffened examinations to a point that would have dismayed Shakespeare's contemporaries, save, perhaps, the redoubtable Gabriel Harvey, was still in the far future; the magnificent New Schools, with their dreaded *viva voces*, had not yet come; the [218] Rhodes Scholarships were beyond the dream-reach of even a Raleigh or a Spenser; but academic tests and academic pomps there were. The Old Schools Quadrangle, not quite complete, had been building in a leisurely way since 1439 and was in regular use, though the Divinity School, whose arched, groined, boss-studded roof is one of the beauties of Oxford, had nearly suffered wreck, in the brief reign of Edward VI, at the hands of that class of theological reformers who have a peculiar aversion to stained glass. The exercises of the *Encaenia* Shakespeare would have heard, if he ever chanced to hear them, in St. Mary's, but half a century after his death they were transferred to the new Sheldonian Theatre. In St. Mary's, which was not only "Learning's receptacle" but also "Religion's parke," these exercises, the *Acts*, naturally took the form of disputations concerning "wingy mysteries in divinity." When they passed out from the church to an unconsecrated edifice, political and social themes, still treated in scholastic Latin, were added, but even so the entertainment was of the dullest. Professional fun-makers, successors of the [219]

mediæval minstrels, had to be called in to enliven the occasion with a peppering of jests, but these became so scurrilous that the use of hired buffoons was forbidden by Convocation. Then the resourceful undergraduates magnanimously came forward, volunteering to take this delicate duty upon themselves, and manfully have they discharged it to this day. These young Oxonians have developed the normal undergraduate gift for sauce into an art that even knows the laws of proportion and restraint. The limits allowed them are of the broadest, but only twice in living memory has their mischief gone so far as to break up the assemblage.

The threefold business of the annual *Encaenia* is to confer honorary degrees, to listen to the prize compositions, and to hear an address delivered by the Public Orator in commemoration of Founders and Benefactors, with comment on current events. On the one occasion when I was privileged to be present, the hour preceding the entrance of the academic procession was the liveliest of all. The lower galleries were reserved for guests, but the upper, the Undergraduates' Gallery, was packed with students in cap and gown, who promptly began to badger individuals [220] chosen at whim from the throng of men standing on the floor.

"I don't like your bouquet, sir. It's too big for your buttonhole. If the lady wouldn't mind—"

The offending roses disappeared in a general acclaim of "Thank you, sir," and the cherubs aloft pounced on another victim. The unfortunates so thrust into universal notice usually complied with the request, whatever it might be, as quickly as possible, eager to escape into obscurity, but a certain square-jawed Saxon wearing a red tie put up a stubborn resistance until all the topmost gallery was shouting at him, and laughing faces were turned upon him from every quarter of the house.

"Take off that red tie, sir."

"Indeed, sir, you don't look pretty in it."

"It doesn't go well with your blushes."

"*Will* you take off that tie, sir?"

"It's not to our cultured taste, sir."

"It's the only one he's got."

"Dear sir, *please* take it off."

"It gives me the eye-ache, sir." [221]

"Have you paid for it yet?"

"Was there anybody in the shop when you bought it?"

"Are you wearing it for an advertisement?"

"Hush-h! *She* gave it to him."

"Oh, SHE put it on for him."

"You're quite right, sir. Don't take it off."

"We can sympathize with young romance, sir."

"Be careful of it, sir."

"Wear it till your dying day."

"It's the colour of her hair."

But by this time the poor fellow's face was flaming, and he jerked off the tie and flung it to the floor amid thunders of derisive applause.

Then the Undergraduate Gallery turned its attention to the organist, who in all the hubbub was brilliantly going through the numbers of his program.

"Will you kindly tell us what you're playing, Mr. Lloyd?"

"We don't care for classical music ourselves."

"'Auld Lang Syne,' if you please."

The organ struck into "Auld Lang Syne," and the lads sprang up and sang it lustily with hands [222] clasped in the approved Scotch fashion.

"'Rule, Britannia,' Mr. Lloyd."

Again he obliged them and was rewarded by a rousing cheer, followed by cheers for the Varsity and the ladies, groans for the Proctors, who are the officers of discipline, and barks for their assistants, the so-called Bulldogs. In the midst of this yelping chorus the great doors were flung wide, and an awesome file of dignitaries, in all the blues and purples, pinks and scarlets, of their various degrees, paced slowly up the aisle, escorting their distinguished guests, savants of several nations, and headed by the Vice-Chancellor, whose array outwent Solomon in all his glory.

The top gallery was on its feet, but not in reverence. The organ-march was drowned in the roar of lusty voices greeting the Head of the University thus:

"Oh, whist, whist, whist!
  Here comes the bogie man.
Now go to bed, you Baby,
  You Tommy, Nell, and Dan.
Oh, whist, whist, whist!
  He'll catch ye if he can;
And all the popsies, wopsies, wop,
  Run for the bogie man."

[223]

The uproar was no whit diminished when presently the Vice-Chancellor was seen to be making an address.

"Who wrote it for you, sir?"

"Oh, that's shocking bad Latin."

"*Jam!* What kind of jam?"

"It's just what you said to those other blokes last year."

"It's always the same thing."

"It's all blarney."

"The guests wish you were done, sir."

"You may sit down, sir."

But the Vice-Chancellor, unperturbed, kept on with his inaudible oratory to its natural end.

A professor of illustrious name was next to rise, throwing up a laughing look at the boys, whose tumult bore him down after the first few sentences. What matter? It was idle to pretend that that great audience could follow Latin speeches. They were all to go into print, and he who would and could might read them at his ease. The phrase that undid this genial personage was *clarior luce*.

"Oh, *oh*, sir! Lucy who?"

"Clare or Lucy? Try for both, sir."

"We'll surely tell your wife, sir." [224]

"A sad example to our youth, sir."

"You shock our guest from Paris, sir."

The prize English essayist was hardly allowed to recite the first paragraph of his production.

"Very nice."

"But a great bore."

"It's not as good as mine."

"That'll do, sir."

"The Vice-Chancellor is gaping, sir."

"Three cheers for the lady who jilted the Senior Proctor!"

Under the storm of enthusiasm evoked by this happy suggestion, the English essayist gave place to the Greek poet, a rosy-cheeked stripling who stood his ground barely two minutes.

"Aren't you very young, my dear?"

"Will some kind lady kiss him for his mother?"

The English prize poem, the Newdigate, founded by Sir Roger Newdigate of the George Eliot country, was heard through with a traditional attention and respect, though the poet's delivery came in for occasional criticism.

"You're too singsong, sir." [225]

"Please give him the key, Mr. Lloyd."

Even those few world-famed scholars and statesmen on whom the University was conferring the high distinction of her D. C. L. were showered with merry impudence, as one by one they advanced to receive the honour, though there were no such lucky shots of wit as have signalised, on different occasions, at Oxford or at Cambridge, the greeting of certain popular poets. Holmes was asked from the gallery if he had come in the one-hoss shay, and Longfellow, wearing the gorgeous vestments of his new dignity, was hailed by a cry: "Behold the Red Man of the West." Even the Laureate, whose prophet locks were flung back from his inspired brow somewhat more wildly than their wont, was assailed by a stentorian inquiry:

"*Did* your mother call you early, call you early, Alfred dear?"

The conferring of degrees upon Oxford students takes place—at irregular intervals, but not infrequently—in the Convocation House. Into a long, narrow room, dignitaries grouped at the top and candidates at the bottom, with guests seated in rows on either side, sweeps the Vice-Chancellor in his gorgeous red and white. He is preceded by the mace-bearer and followed by [226] two Proctors. Taking the place of honour, he reads a page or two of Latin, lifting his cap—the Proctors raising theirs in solemn unison—whenever the word *Dominus* occurs. The lists of candidates for the various degrees are then read, and the Proctors, at the end of each list, rise simultaneously, march a few steps down the hall, wheel with military precision, and, like the King of France, march back again. These apparently wayward promenades are supposed to give opportunity for tradesmen with unpaid bills to imperil a candidate's degree by plucking the Proctor's gown. The Oxford tradesmen have not availed themselves of this privilege for a century or so, but the term *plucked* is only too familiar. With many bows and much Latin, even with kneeling that the Vice-Chancellor may tap the learned pates with a Testament, the higher degrees are conferred. Each brand-new doctor withdraws into the robing-room, where his waiting friends eagerly divest him of his old plumage and trick him out in gayer hood and more voluminous gown. So arrayed, he returns for a low bow to the Vice-Chancellor, who touches his [227] own mortar-board in response. The larger company of candidates for the first degree come forward in groups, each head of a college presenting his own men, and these are speedily made into bachelors.

Out of that student multitude have come—not all, be it confessed, with degrees—many of England's greatest. Glorious phantoms haunt by moonlight the Gothic shadows of High Street. The gallant Lovelace, the resolute Pym, Admiral Blake, Sir Philip Sidney, Francis Beaumont, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Sir Thomas Browne, Dr. Johnson, Dean Swift, Wellington, Peel, Gladstone, Adam Smith, Hamilton, Locke, Hobbes, Blackstone, Newman, Manning, Stanley, Maurice, Faber, Heber, Clough, Jeremy Taylor, Whitfield, the Wesleys, the Arnolds,—and this is but the beginning of a tale that can never be told. Yet Oxford, "Adorable Dreamer" though she be,

> "Still nursing the unconquerable hope,"

has not done as well by her poets as by the rest of her brood. With all her theology, she did not make a churchman out of Swinburne, nor a saint of Herrick, and as for Landor and Shelley, her [228] eyes were holden and she cast them forth.

Of Shakespeare, an alien figure crossing the path of her gowned and hooded doctors, or watching her "young barbarians all at play"—for Oxford lads knew how to play before ever "Eights Week" was thought of—she seems to have remembered nothing save that he stood godfather to his landlady's baby-boy, little William Davenant, in the old Saxon church of St. Michael's. Oxford let him pay his reckoning at the Crown and go his way unnoted. He was none of hers. Even now, when his name is blazoned on rows upon rows of volumes in window after window of Broad Street, I doubt if the Oxford dons would deem Shakespeare capable of editing his own works.

> "Where were you bred?
> And how achieved you these endowments, which
> You make more rich to owe?"

One would like to fancy that Duke Humphrey's library, beautiful as a library of Paradise, made the poet welcome; but the King's Commissioners had despoiled it in 1550, and more than half a century went by before, toward the close of Shakespeare's life, Sir Thomas Bodley had refounded [229] and refitted it as The Bodleian.

Yet the grey university city, "spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age,"—how could she have failed deeply to impress the sensitive spirit of that disregarded wayfarer? Although she had suffered so grievously under the flail of the Reformation, although she was destined to become the battered stronghold of Charles I, the voice within her gates was, and is, not the battle-cry, but the murmurous voice of meditation and dream and prayer. As we enter into the sanctuary of her grave beauty, personal chagrins and the despair of our own brief mortality fall away. The unending life of human thought is here, enduring, achieving, advancing, with its constant miracle of resurrection out of the old form into the new.

COUNTIES OF THE SEVERN VALLEY [230]

Of the counties occupying the Severn basin, three form, in continuation with Cheshire, the Welsh border,—Shropshire, Hereford, and Monmouth. Shropshire, together with the West Midland counties of Worcester and Gloucester, is traversed by the mother stream, but Hereford and Monmouth lie in their respective vales of the tributary Wye and Usk, and Warwickshire, already noted, in the broad basin of the Avon.

In previous summers we had explored, to some extent, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire and the picturesque Wye valley, but we were, except for glimpses from the railway, strangers to Shropshire, and so dropped off the train at Shrewsbury, in a Saturday twilight, with but moderate

expectation. Had not the judicious Baedeker instructed us that "not more than half a day need be devoted to Shrewsbury"? What happened was that we lost our hearts to the beautiful old town [231] and lingered there nearly a week without finding time, even so, to do a third of the tourist duty laid down in what a guileless Florentine has called "the red prayer-book of the foreigners." But we would gladly have stayed months longer and listened for the moonlight talk between that lofty Norman castle, "builte in such a brave plot that it could have espyed a byrd flying in every strete," and those fine old houses of the Salop black-and-white whose "curious sculptures and carvings and quirks of architecture" gave such pleasure to Hawthorne. Surely here, in this city of many memories, "a stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."

Shrewsbury is but a little city,—one of the local proverbs runs: "We don't go by size, or a cow would catch a hare,"—but its architectural grace and a certain joyousness of open-air life more French than English endow it with rare charm. It won a fitting praise from its own Tudor poet, Thomas Churchyard:

"Now Shrewsbury shall be honoured (as it ought);
The seate deserves a righte greate honour heere;
That wallèd town is sure so finely wrought,
It glads itself, and beautifies the sheere."

[232]

Fortunate in situation, Shrewsbury is enthroned upon twin hills almost surrounded by the Severn. As one of the warders of the Welsh border, it was stoutly fortified, and enough of the old wall remains to make a pleasant promenade. On the only land approach, an isthmus barely three hundred yards broad, stands the square red keep of the castle. The slender spire of St. Mary's is a landmark far and wide. St. Alkmund's, with a sister spire, has a tradition that reaches back to Æthelfreda, daughter of Alfred the Great. Old St. Chad's, a noble church in the days of Henry III, has swayed and sunk into a fragment that serves as chapel for the cemetery where some of the first Salopian families take their select repose. The towered Abbey Church is of venerable dignity, with battered monuments of cross-legged knight and chaliced priest, and a meek, bruised, broken effigy supposed to represent that fiery founder of the abbey, first Earl of Shrewsbury and builder of the castle, Roger de Montgomery, second in command at Hastings to William the Conqueror.

THE SEVERN BELOW THE QUARRY, SHREWSBURY

The first known name of Shrewsbury was The Delight, and by that name it may well be [233] remembered of those who have wandered through Wyle Cop and Butchers' Row, past the Raven tavern where Farquhar wrote "The Recruiting Officer" and the old half-timbered house where Richmond, soon to be Henry VII, lodged on his way to Bosworth Field. There are steep streets that, as the proverb has it, go "uphill and against the heart," but carven gables and armorial bearings and mediæval barge-boards tempt one on. There are wild and fierce associations, as that of the Butter Market, where at the High Cross poor Prince David of Wales—who must have had nine lives—after being dragged through the town at a horse's tail, was "hanged, burned and quartered," but in the main it is a city of gracious memories. Its Grammar School, an Edward VI foundation, which in the seventeenth century boasted four masters, six hundred scholars, and a "hansome library," counts on its roll of alumni Charles Darwin, the most famous native of Shrewsbury, the poet Faber, Philip Sidney and his *fidus Achates*, Fulke Greville, whose tomb in St. Mary's Church at Warwick bears the inscription that he was "Servant to Queen Elizabeth, [234] Counsellour to King James, and Friend to Sir Philip Sidney." It was in 1564, that starry year in English literary annals, that the two lads entered the school. Sidney's father was then Lord President of Wales—one of the best she ever had—and resident at Ludlow Castle, from whose splendid halls Sir Henry and Lady Mary wrote most wise and tender letters to their "little Philip."

He must have profited by these, for in after years Fulke Greville extolled him as the paragon of schoolboys:

> "Of his youth I will report no other wonder than this, though I lived with him and knew him from a child, yet I never knew him other than a man, with such staidness of mind, lovely and familiar gravity, as carried grace and reverence above great years; his talk ever of knowledge and his very play tending to enrich his mind so that even his teachers found something in him to observe and learn above that which they had usually read or taught."

The school, still flourishing, is now housed in new buildings across the Severn, opposite the Quarry, a spacious park with

> "Broad ambrosial aisles of lofty limes."

[235]

Here we used to sit on shaded benches and watch the bright-eyed urchins fishing in the river, for Shropshire, as the saying goes, is "full of trouts and tories." Here we would repeat Milton's invocation to the Goddess of the Severn:

> "Sabrina fair,
> Listen where thou art sitting
> Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
> In twisted braids of lilies knitting
> The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair,"

and when her "sliding chariot" declined to stay for us

> "By the rushy-fringèd bank,"

we would ignobly console ourselves with "a Shrewsbury cake of Palin's own make,"—such a delicious, melting-on-the-tongue concoction as Queen Bess was regaled withal and as suggested to Congreve, in his "Way of the World," the retort: "Why, brother Wilful of Salop, you may be as short as a Shrewsbury cake, if you please." The Simnel cake of which Herrick sings,—

> "I'll to thee a Simnel bring,
> 'Gainst thou goest a mothering,"

[236]

is made only in the days approaching Christmas and Easter. It consists of minced fruit in a saffron-coloured crust, said to be exceeding tough, and on Mothering Sunday, in Mid-Lent, is taken as a gift to their mothers by children out at service, who, on this local festival, come home to be welcomed at the cost of the fatted calf, veal and rice-pudding being the regulation dinner. The ancient refrain: "A soule-cake, a soule-cake! Have mercy on all Christen soules for a soule-cake!" refers to yet another specialty of Shropshire ovens. On All Souls' Eve it used to be the custom to set out on the table a tower of these round flat cakes, every visitor reducing the pile by one. The residue, if residue there were, fell to the share of the poor ghosts.

The Quarry, in the bad old times, was often the scene of bull-baitings and bear-baitings and cock-fights. It is better to remember that the Whitsun Plays were performed here, for these were comely and edifying spectacles. In 1568, when Sir Henry Sidney favoured the Grammar School with a visit, there was "a noble stage playe played at Shrewsbury, the which was praysed greately, and the chyffe actor thereof was one Master Aston," being no less a personage than the [237] head master.

A Quarry holiday that, by the grace of Sabrina, fell within the brief limits of our sojourn, was the Shrewsbury Floral Fête, vaunted on the pink program as "The Grandest Fête in the United Kingdom." Our landlady earnestly vouched for the truth of this description. "There is them who would have it as York Gala be the greatest, but York Gala, grand however, ben't so grand as this."

On Wednesday, August twenty-second, we took aristocratic tickets at two and six, for Wednesday is the day of the county families. Thursday is the shilling day, when, by train, by coach, by barge, by wagonette, by farmer's gig and carrier's cart, all the countryside comes streaming in. The weather had been watched with keen anxiety. "Rain spells ruin," the saying went; but it was clear and hot. Men, women, and children lay on the grass around their luncheon baskets—we had hardly expected this of the county families—all through the wide enclosure, making the most of every disk of shade. From the central bandstand and from the encircling tents—refreshment [238] tents, flower tents, fruit tents, vegetable tents, bee-and-honey tents—drooped rows of languid pennons. The fountain in The Dingle sent up a silvery tree of spray, while the white and yellow water-lilies in its little pool blinked like sleepy children. Within the tents the heat was stifling, but a continuous flow of flushed humanity, as whist as in the County Store where even the awed shop girls are instructed to speak with bated breath, passed in admiring review the sumptuous masses of heavily fragrant flowers, the great black grapes almost bursting with wine, the luscious plums and cherries, the amazing platoons of plethoric onions, exaggerated potatoes, and preposterously elongated turnips and carrots, the model beehives and the jars of amber honey. The gold-medal exhibitors, perspiring but beaming, stood by their red-ticketed products, while the silver-medal folk viewed their blue tickets with a pleasant sense of superiority to the subdued white-ticket battalion and the invisible yellow-ticketers who were only "commended."

All the while successive bands—the Shropshire Imperial Yeomanry, His Majesty's Coldstream

Guards, and His Majesty's Scots Guards—were merrily playing away, and presently the [239]
clamorous ringing of what might have been a sturdy dinner-bell called us to the Acrobatic Stand, about which the crowd soon became so dense, while the somersault artists converted their bodies into giddy playthings, that one rustic philosopher was heard to remark: "Well, we ain't seeing owt, but we're in t' show." Then came the horse-leaping, which was such a favourite feature that not even the miraculous performances of the King of the High Wire, and the ether-dancing feats of the Cee Mee Troupe availed to divide the multitude. When Rufus, to the deep but decorous delight of the Cheshire visitors, had outleaped all the rest, we swarmed across the Quarry and sat down on the grass to wait for the ascent of the monster balloons, those gigantic golden-brown puffs of gas that had been softly tugging at their bonds all the morning. The Shrewsbury had already made a number of captive ascents and finally achieved its "right away" in good order, rising majestically into the upper air until it hung like an orange on our furthest reach of vision, but the wayward Wulfruna broke her ropes on a captive trip and feloniously made off with [240]
several astonished passengers, among whose vanishing heads peered out the scared, ecstatic face of a small boy.

As dusk grew on, our ever-greatening host still comported itself with well-bred English quietude. We never forgot what was due to the presence of the county families. Even the lads in Eton jackets tripped one another up softly and engagingly. Bath chairs and baby wagons traversed the thick of the press. The King of the High Wire, who seemed to be made of air and india-rubber, appeared again and performed such impossible antics on his dizzy line that the setting sun rested its chin on the horizon to stare at him, and from a slit in the gaudy trapeze tent half-chalked visages peered out and paid him the professional tribute of envy. The tumblers tumbled more incredibly than before. The Handcuff King shuffled off one mortal coil after another. The Lady Cyclists cycled in an extremely unladylike manner,—a performance punctuated by the impatient yelping of little dogs beneath the stage, eager to show off their own accomplishments. On they came at last, bounding, barking, wagging, tumultuous, all striving to take part in every trick. [241]
They quite refused to stop when their respective turns were over, but went on all together excitedly jumping rope and hitting ball long after ropes and balls had disappeared, until they were unceremoniously picked up and bundled down a trap-door, an exit of wagging tail-tips.

As darkness fell, the Severn was all astir with pleasure-boats, while happy ragamuffins, getting their fireworks for nothing, thronged the further bank. Rockets went skittering over our heads, fire-wheels spluttered and whizzed, and as the first of the fire-balloons flashed up, a baby voice behind us piped:

"O mummy, mummy! See! There's a somebody died and going up to heaven."

Altogether the Floral Fête was as sweet-natured and pleasurable a festival as ever we chanced upon and completed our subjugation to this old town that the Severn so lovingly embraces. To quote from a black-letter ballad treasured in the Bodleian:

"The merry Town of Shrowsbury
  God bless it still,
For it stands most gallantly
  Upon a high hill.

[242]

It standeth most bravely
  For all men to see.
Then every man to his mind,
  Shrowsbury for me!"

The county of Shropshire smooths away on the east into a level pasture-land belonging to the central plain of England, but its western portion is roughened by the spurs of the Welsh mountains. Its own mountain is the Wrekin, a solitary height a few miles to the east of Shrewsbury. The summit commands so wide a view that the toast of Salopians everywhere is "All round the Wrekin." South of the Severn run several ranges of hills down toward the hop-gardens and apple-orchards of Hereford and Worcester. Of these, "Clee Hills," the highest of the ranges, "be holy in Shropshire."[7] North Salop has a coal-field, with its accompanying prosperity and disfigurement,—busy factories, belching furnaces, houses that tip and tumble from the hollowing out of the ground beneath. We rioted in our memorable motor car through several of these grimy towns, Wellington among them, and Newport, where the runaway Shrewsbury balloon came safely down. Wellington cherishes a legend relating to a bad old giant of Wales, who, having a [243]
spite against the Mayor of Shrewsbury, purposed to choke up the Severn and drown out the town. So he started off with a heavy sack of earth over his shoulder, but lost his way, like the stupid giant he was, and met, near Wellington, a cobbler carrying home a bag of boots and shoes to mend. The giant asked him how far it was to Shrewsbury, and the cobbler, emptying his sack of ragged footwear, declared he had worn out all those boots and shoes on the road. This so discouraged the giant that he flung down his burden of earth, forming the Wrekin, and trudged meekly home again.

Far more delightful than automobiling were the leisurely drives we took in the neighbourhood of Shrewsbury. One fair afternoon we drove five miles southeast to Wroxeter to view the tragic ruins of the Roman city of Uriconium. Here, at the junction of Watling Street with the western Roman road, guarding these communications and the passes of the Severn, stood "The White Town in the Woodland." After the Roman armies were withdrawn, it was stormed and burned by [244]
the Saxons. The lapse of fourteen hundred years has not obliterated the traces of that anguish.

Only a little below the surface lies earth still black from the heats of the tremendous conflagration; charred bones crackle beneath the tread; in an under-chamber of one of the baths has been found the skeleton of an old man crouched between the pillars, as if seeking refuge from the rage of fire and sword. The skeletons of two women were beside him and, close to his bony hand, his little hoard of coins. There still stands a rugged mass of wall some seventy feet in length, its Roman string-courses of flat red bricks showing bright against the prevailing grey of that jagged, gaping structure. Now birds nest in it, and from the lower heaps and ranges of broken masonry all about springs the wild rose as well as the thistle. Uriconium was larger than Pompeii, and its ruins, said to be the most extensive of their kind in England, smite one with heartache. We roamed about its grassy hollows and thicketed mounds, its bone-strewn forum, and its baths with their patches of mosaic flooring, their groups of little brick columns, and other [245] fragments of a perished luxury. We wondered that the sky above this city left so desolate, a sky of softest azure flecked with cloudlets dazzling white, did not wear perpetual shadow for its sake. But those heavens were as serene as if the dying wail of Uriconium had never pierced them, and the cleft summit of Milton's "blue-topped Wrekin"—a deep, intense, gleaming blue it was that afternoon—kept no memory of the day when the Severn ran red with blood and its own head was veiled with smoke and ashes.

The noble Norman church of Wroxeter, near by, has set at its churchyard gate two Roman pillars with finely sculptured capitals that have been recovered from the river-bed. Its font is hollowed out of another Roman capital and looks only half converted. The church is remarkable for its Easter sepulchre, an arched niche in the north wall of the chancel, and for its altar-tombs. This Easter sepulchre, where the crucifix would have been placed on Good Friday to be raised again with rejoicing on Easter morning, is of creamy stone with ball-flower ornament. Within the niche are reddish traces of a Resurrection fresco. The effigies on the altar-tombs have been singularly [246] preserved from mutilation. Even the rings upon those comely hands that clasp their prayer-books in the centuried trance of their devotions remain intact. Here sleeps a Jacobean baronet splendid in scarlet alabaster robes and broad gilt chain. A peacock is at his head and a lion's claw at his feet. His lady, from gold head-dress to dainty shoon, is no less immaculate. May their rest on their stone pillows be forever unprofaned! In that hushed and almost forgotten sanctuary slumber also Elizabethan knights and ladies whose tombs, wrought about with quaint figures, are peculiarly individual and tempted us to closer study than the waning light allowed.

There were many pilgrimages we longed to make in Shropshire—to the birthplace and burial-place of Lord Clive, her Indian hero, and to the home of Lord Herbert of Chirbury, brother of the Saintly George Herbert, himself a Jacobean courtier only less eminent in letters than in life. Even bluff Ben Jonson hailed him as "All-virtuous Herbert." Other Shropshire worthies, who would hardly so have designated each other, are Richard Baxter and William Wycherley. Two others [247] that I would like, in the interests of a broader charity, to pair together in the procession of great Salopian ghosts, are Bishop Percy of the "Reliques," and Dick Tarlton, lord of mirth, the best-beloved clown of the Elizabethan stage. The queen herself had a good friend in Dick Tarlton, for he told her, says Fuller, "more of her faults than most of her chaplains and cured her melancholy better than all her physicians."

The inexorable almanac urged us on, but one excursion that we could not forego was that to Battlefield Church. Thither we drove through such a tender afternoon, the soft sky brooding close above the earth as if she loved it, that it was hard to realise associations of wrath and war. The sun made golden windows in the clouds. The brown Severn was slyly breaking down its banks as it ran. We took our way through Shropshire lanes whose hawthorn hedges on either side were fringed with yellow wisps of rye scraped off from the harvest loads. Beyond we came upon the harvest fields with their shining stacks. And in Battlefield Church itself we found, almost rough-hewn from the tree-trunk, a mediæval image of Our Lady of Pity. [248]

Here was fought on another summer day, July 21, 1403, the decisive battle between Henry IV and the Percies. Henry had sat but four years upon his troubled throne when these proud nobles of the north, by whose aid he had ousted Richard II, rose against him. Although Richard had been murdered, Edmund Mortimer, the next of blood, was a thorn in Henry's pillow. Mortimer had been taken prisoner by the revolting Welsh leader, Owen Glendower, and Henry, if we may take Shakespeare for our historian, listened coldly and incredulously to Harry Percy's assurances of Mortimer's resistance. In vain did this eloquent Hotspur, Mortimer's brother-in-law, pour forth his impetuous tale—how

> "on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
> In single opposition, hand to hand,
> He did confound the best part of an hour
> In changing hardiment with great Glendower;
> Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,
> Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
> Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
> Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
> And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank
> Blood-stained with those valiant combatants."

[249]

When the king refused to ransom Mortimer, Hotspur's anger bubbled over:

> "He said he would not ransom Mortimer,
> Forbade my tongue to speak of Mortimer,

But I will find him when he lies asleep,
And in his ear I'll holla 'Mortimer!'
Nay,
I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak
Nothing but 'Mortimer' and give it him."

Thus Hotspur, and his father, the Earl of Northumberland, his uncle, the Earl of Worcester, "the irregular and wild Glendower," and the valiant Douglas of Scotland raised their united banners against the usurper. Many Cheshire gentlemen, to their sorrow, joined Hotspur as he marched through their county. He came in sight of Shrewsbury on the evening of July nineteenth. But Henry was there before him; the royal standard floated over the castle; and it was three or four miles to the north of the town that the shock of battle came. Five thousand of the rebels and three thousand of the loyal forces fell. The Earl of Worcester was slain on the field, and "that spirit Percy" himself, "the theme of honour's tongue," he who had ever been "sweet fortune's minion and her pride," perished there in the toils of his "ill-weav'd ambition." The traditional spot [250] where he fell is pointed out, as also the antique oak from whose leafy top Owen Glendower is fabled to have watched, at a safe distance, the fortunes of the fight.

Battlefield Church was built in gratitude for this victory, and a perpetual chantry of eight canons was endowed to serve it with daily masses "for the king's salvation during his life, and after his death for his soul, and for the souls of his progenitors and of those who were slain in the battle and were there buried, and for the souls of all the faithful departed." The meadow behind the church, which, with its mounds, ridges, and depressions, still bears the battle-scars, is supposed to be the grave of thousands of the soldiers. The masses were duly said for nearly one hundred and fifty years, until the chantry was surrendered to Henry VIII. The church, abandoned after the Dissolution and suffered to fall into decay, has been restored. Its curious image of Our Lady of Pity was an ancient treasure of Albright Hussey, a neighbouring hamlet where we paused on our homeward way to see a veritable moated grange, and was brought to Battlefield early in the [251] fifteenth century, when the church was consecrated. In the vestry are two small windows that keep such bits of the original glass as could be gathered up from the pile of shreds and splinters stored away in a farm-building close by. One of the recovered designs is a figure of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, vivid, ascetic, with loaf in hand. But more vital yet is the portrait of Henry IV—a royal form robed in such glowing, living crimson as only the old craftsmen knew how to pour into their glass. The face, "wan with care," is earnest and sorrowful.

Many are the battle-tales of these counties on the Welsh marches. William the Conqueror gave leave to certain of his followers to take and hold what land they could in that wild region, and a line of strong castles was erected; but the fierce British, making sudden raids from their mountain fastnesses, were a constant threat and trouble, until Edward I, despite the tuneful curses of all the Welsh bards, reduced them to subjection, putting the last native Prince of Wales to a cruel death at Shrewsbury and transferring the title to his own firstborn son. As the [252] jurisdiction of the Marches became of importance, special courts were held by the Prince of Wales either in person or through a deputy known as the Lord President of Wales,—an office not abolished until 1688. The seat of these courts was Ludlow, a place that even to our partial eyes rivalled Shrewsbury in beauty and is counted by many the banner town of England. It stands in the very south of Shropshire on a commanding height just where the river Teme, which forms the Hereford boundary, is joined by the Corve. The lofty-towered Church of St. Lawrence, only second in praise to St. Mary Redcliffe of Bristol, and the impressive remains of what was once both Castle and Princely Palace crown this precipitous mass of rock, from which broad streets, retaining a goodly number of stately timbered houses dating from the times when the Courts of the Marches gathered illustrious companies at Ludlow, descend to plain and river. No description of this once royal residence, with its pure, bracing atmosphere, can better the honest lines of old Tom Churchyard: [253]

"The towne doth stand most part upon a hill,
  Built well and fayre, with streates both longe and wide;
The houses such, where straungers lodge at will,
  As long as there the Counsell lists abide.
"Both fine and cleane the streates are all throughout,
  With condits cleere and wholesome water springs;
And who that lists to walk the towne about
  Shall find therein some rare and pleasant things;
But chiefly there the ayre so sweete you have
  As in no place ye can no better crave."

The magnificent old castle has seen strange sights. While undergoing siege by Stephen, in his war against Maud, Prince Henry of Scotland, who accompanied him, was caught up by a long iron hook and all but pulled within the walls. Stephen himself galloped up just in time to cut the cords with his sword and rescue the dangling prince. The redoubtable Sir Hugh de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore, once lay captive in what is still known as Mortimer's Tower. It cost him three thousand marks of silver, besides all his plate, horses, and hawks, to go free again. Ludlow Castle was, at a later period, added by marriage to the already formidable holdings of the Mortimers. Roger de Mortimer took an active part in the deposition of Edward II and was created Earl of March. In imitation of King Arthur, whose great tradition arches over all that countryside, the [254] ambitious young noble held a Round Table, and conducted Queen Isabella, with whom his relations were not above suspicion, and his boy sovereign, Edward III, to his castles of Wigmore

and Ludlow, where he entertained them with "great costs in tilts and other pastimes." There was not room in England for him and for a king, and his arrogant career was ended on the Smithfield gibbet. Marlowe gives him a proud exit from the tragic stage:

> "Weep not for Mortimer
> That scorns the world and, as a traveler,
> Goes to discover countries yet unknown."

It was his great-grandson, Edmund de Mortimer, who, by marriage with the daughter of Prince Lionel, third son of Edward III, gave that other Edmund Mortimer, his descendant, a better title to the throne than that of Henry IV. This last of the Mortimers was until his death the apparently listless centre of continual conspiracies. When he gave up his ineffectual ghost, his estates passed to his nephew, the vigorous Duke of York, who fixed his chief residence at Ludlow Castle. As the York rebellion gathered force and the Wars of the Roses set in, this neighbourhood [255] became a centre of hostilities. The Lancastrians, in their hour of triumph, wreaked furious vengeance on Ludlow, but Edward IV, on his accession, consoled the town with a liberal charter and selected it as the residence of his sons, the Little Princes of the Tower. It is pleasant to think that before their swift fate came upon them they had a few years of happy childhood playing on the greensward of those spacious courts, perched up with their lesson books in the stone window-seats, and praying their innocent prayers within the arcaded walls of that circular Norman chapel, built on the model of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and praised by Churchyard as

> "So bravely wrought, so fayre and finely fram'd,
> That to world's end the beauty may endure."

Another princely association, hardly less pathetic, haunts these arched portals and embattled towers. The heir of Henry VII, Prince Arthur, in whom the greatness of Britain's legendary hero was to live again, passed his delicate childhood here, and here, shortly after his marriage to Catherine of Arragon, died suddenly on a spring day of 1502, a lad of sixteen summers. An [256] unknown contemporary tells how letters were hastily despatched from Ludlow to His Majesty's Council, and they, seeking the gentlest bearer of such grievous news, "sent for the King's ghostly father.... He in the morning of the Tuesday following, somewhat before the time accustomed, knocked at the King's chamber door; and when the King understood it was his Confessor, he commanded to let him in. The Confessor then commanded all those there present to avoid, and after due salutation began to say, *Si bona de manu Dei suscepimus, mala autem quare non sustineamus?* and so showed his Grace that his dearest son was departed to God. When his Grace understood that sorrowful heavy tidings, he sent for the Queen, saying that he and his Queen would take the painful sorrows together. After that she was come, and saw the King her lord and that natural and painful sorrow, as I have heard say, she with full great and constant comfortable words besought his Grace that he would, first after God, remember the weal of his own noble person, the comfort of his realm and of her ... over that how that God had left him yet a fair [257] prince, two fair princesses; and that God is where he was.... Then the King thanked her of her good comfort. After that she was departed and come to her own chamber, natural and motherly remembrance of that great loss smote her so sorrowful to the heart, that those that were about her were fain to send for the King to comfort her."

We saw on a Sunday, in the beautiful Church of St. Lawrence, a dole of bread for the poor, a row of twelve goodly loaves set out on a Tudor monument which is believed to commemorate Prince Arthur, and possibly to cover the ashes of his boyish heart, although the body was buried in Worcester Cathedral, where his chantry stands at the right of the High Altar.

Among the tombs in the rich-windowed choir is one whose inscription reads:

> "Heare lyethe the bodye of Ambrozia Sydney, iiii doughter of the Right Honourable Syr Henry Sydney, Knight of the moste noble order of the Garter, Lord President of the Counsell of Wales, etc. And of Lady Mary his wyef, doughter of the famous Duke of Northumberland, who dyed in Ludlow Castell, ye 22nd of Februarie, 1574."

We paused there a moment in reverence to Sir Philip Sidney's mother, "a full fair lady" who lost [258] her beauty by nursing Queen Elizabeth, from whom she took the contagion, through an attack of smallpox, and afterwards "chose rather to hide herself from the curious eyes of a delicate time than come upon the stage of the world with any manner of disparagement."

The last Lord Marcher before the Restoration was the Earl of Bridgwater, whose appointment was most gloriously celebrated by the creation of Milton's "Comus," presented on Michaelmas Night, 1634, in the Great Hall of the castle. The first to hold the office—thenceforth only nominal—after the Restoration was the Earl of Carberry, whose seneschal was one Samuel Butler, a steward who may or may not have kept good accounts, but who used his pen to effective purpose in writing, in a chamber over the gate, the first portion of "Hudibras."

Ludlow is the centre for fascinating excursions. The delicious air and most lovely scenery tempt one forth on roads that run between bird-haunted banks fringed with luxuriant bracken and lined with all manner of trees to whose very tops climbs the aspiring honeysuckle. The glint of red [259] berries from the mountain ash, the drooping sprays of the larches, the silvery glimpses of far vistas framed in leafy green, the spicy forest fragrances, the freshness and buoyancy of the air, all unite to make the spirit glad. From every rise in the road are views that range over a fair

outspread of plain and valley, rimmed by gentle hills. All over Worcestershire we looked, and into Wales, and up through Salop to where the Wrekin smiled a gracious recognition. Points of special interest abound,—Haye Wood, where Lady Alice, daughter of the Earl of Bridgwater, and her brothers lost their way and by their little adventure gave young Milton the suggestion for his Masque; St. Mary's Knoll, once crowned by a venerated image of the Virgin; Oakley Park, with its Druid trees; the little church of Pipe Aston, with its curious semi-cirque of Norman carving over the door; Leinthall church, overtopped at either end by lofty yews; British fort; Tudor mansion; storied battlefield.

Our first goal was Richard's Castle in Hereford, dating from the reign of Edward the Confessor,— [260] a Norman keep before the Norman Conquest. Nothing of that brave erection is left save a mound of earth and a bit of broken wall. Near by stands an old church with some remnants of fine glass and with the rare feature, in England, of a detached bell-tower. We lingered in the church yard, looking out from a massive recumbent slab that was cleft from end to end, as if the impatient sleeper could not wait for the Archangel's trump, eastward to the Malvern Hills, whose earthly blue melted as softly into the blue of the sky as life melts into death. But a line of rooks flapping roostward awoke us to the flight of time, and the pensive appeal of that quiet spot, with its lichened crosses and grave-mantling growths of grass and ivy, was dispelled by a donkey who thrust his head through a green casement in the hedge and waggled his long ears at us with a quizzical expression.

An excursion that could not be foregone, however our consciences pricked us for delay, was that to Wigmore, the once impregnable hold of the Mortimers. As we left Ludlow, we looked back on the looming grey mass of its own still stupendous castle and were hardly prepared to find the [261] rival fortress in such utter desolation of decay. Standing on its sentry height, girdled with its massive walls, it was once a menace to the English throne. Now such towers as yet remain are rent and ragged. Only a curtain of ivy guards the inner gate. Trees have sprung from the dirt-choked embrasures, and purple thistles grow rank in the empty courts. Yet for all the rich cloaking of vine and wall-flower, all the carpeting of moss and blossom, Time has not made peace with this grim ruin. Something sullen and defiant still breathes from those gigantic fragments. Dark openings in the ground give glimpses of stone passages and yawning dungeons that must render the place a paradise for boys. Thence we drove to Wigmore Abbey where the Mortimers lodged the priestly intercessors who had no light task to pray away the sins of that proud and ruthless race. We found a farm resounding with the baaing of sheep and mooing of cows instead of with Latin chants. Wrought into the texture of the grange itself, a weather-stained house of stone, with, as we saw it, a row of decorative pigeons perched on the roof-tree, are remnants of the old carvings and window traceries. At the rear, a long, low building of the Shropshire black- [262] and-white, with a great bundle of straw bulging from an upper window, retains a fine arched gateway. Pleached fruit trees, climbing roses, and purple clematis do their best to console the scene for its lost pieties. On the homeward route, by way of yellow wheat fields, waving woods, and running water, we had a wonderful view of the Welsh mountains bathed in the opalescent hues of sunset, a divine lustre through which rang sweetly the vespers of the thrush, and could hardly persuade ourselves that it was from those glorified heights the wave of war used to rush down to break in blood upon the Marches.

WIGMORE ABBEY—GATE HOUSE AND BARN

Yet even the little round county of Herefordshire, with its soft green levels, its apple orchards and cider-presses, its hop gardens, and those broad fields where graze its famous sheep and cattle, has tragic tales to tell. Wigmore Castle, indeed, is over the Hereford line. A few miles to the northwest are the ruins of Brampton-Bryan Castle, which testifies to the latest war-anguish of these western shires, the struggle to the death between Charles I and Parliament. Here Lady Harley was besieged for over a month by her royalist neighbour, Colonel Lingen, who—ill-done [263]

for a cavalier—came up against her, in the absence of her husband and son, with a force of six hundred men. Cheery, gallant, resourceful while the need lasted, Lady Harley gave way when the baffled enemy had withdrawn, and wrote her son that if the castle must undergo another siege, she was sure that God would spare her the seeing it. And having so written, she died the following day. In the spring the royalists returned with cannon and battered down the walls, burning and plundering. At the end of the long strife, Parliament awarded Sir Robert Harley, as some partial recompense for his sorrows and losses, the Lingen lands, but Edward Harley, the son of that brave, tender-hearted mother, called at once on Lady Lingen and presented her with the title-deeds. It may be doubted if all the Herefordshire annals record a nobler victory.

The Wars of the Roses were waged with peculiar ferocity in this section of England. The great battle of Mortimer's Cross, which gave Edward IV his crown, was fought a little to the west of Leominster. Here old Owen Tudor, who had wedded Henry V's French Kate, daughter and widow [264]
of kings,—he whose grandson, Henry VII, brought in the Tudor line of English sovereigns, was taken prisoner. He was executed, with all the other prisoners of rank, in Hereford market-place, and his head was "set upon the highest grice of the market cross and a mad woman kemped his hair and washed away the blood from his face, and she got candles and set about him burning, more than one hundred. This Owen Tudor was father unto the Earl of Pembroke, and had wedded Queen Katherine, King Henry VI's mother, weening and trusting always that he should not be beheaded till he saw the axe and block, and when he was in his doublet he trusted on pardon and grace till the collar of his red velvet doublet was ripped off. Then he said, 'That head shall lie on the stock that was wont to lie on Queen Katherine's lap,' and put his heart and mind wholly unto God, and full meekly took his death."[8]

Earlier civil conflicts, that between Edward II and his barons, and that holier war of liberty, won [265]
though lost, by Simon de Montfort against his king and prince, have left graphic memories in Herefordshire. But even these strifes seem recent beside the battle-marks of Offa the Saxon, who built an earthen dyke, still in fairly good preservation, from the Severn to the Wye, to keep the Welshmen back; and beside those thick-set British camps and Roman camps that testify to the stubborn stand of Caractacus and his Silures against the all-conquering legions.

We were on a peaceful pilgrimage and could well dispense with visiting Coxwall Knoll, close above Brampton-Bryan, where Caractacus met his crushing defeat, and Sutton Walla, some five miles to the north of Hereford, where Offa, King of the Mercians, betrayed to assassination his guest, King Ethelbert of the East Angles; but we ought to have sought out Holm Lacy, for the sake of the Sir Scudamour of Spenser's "Faery Queene," and to have visited Hope End, near Ledbury, in loving homage to Elizabeth Barrett Browning. And so we might, had it not been for the innate depravity of man as exemplified in the dourest driver that ever handled reins. His one aim throughout that trip was not to go anywhere we wished. He would sometimes seem to [266]
hesitate at a parting of the ways, but it was only to find out which road was our desire, when as deaf and dumb to all our protests as if he knew only the Silurian tongue, as impervious to parasol pokes as if he were cased in Roman mail, he would take the other. The only comfort that came to our exasperated souls was the reflection that at sundown we could dismiss Sir Stiffback with his ill-earned shillings and never see his iron phiz again, whereas the unfortunate women of his household, the possible wife, sister, daughter, would have to put up with the unflinching obduracy of that cross-grained disposition until he went the way of Roger de Mortimer. But not even this cromlech of a coachman, though with the worst intentions, could prevent our enjoying the pastoral charm of the quiet land through which we drove, for this county, as Fuller wrote, "doth share as deep as any in the alphabet of our English commodities, though exceeding in the W for wood, wheat, wool, and water." As for wood, we saw in Harewood Park, by which our Clod of Wayward Marl inadvertently drove us, chestnuts and beeches whose height and girth would do [267]
credit to California; in point of wheat the county is said to be so fertile that, for all the wealth of cattle, the people have not time to make their own butter and cheese; the wool was reckoned in Fuller's time the finest of all England; and the salmon-loved Wye, which rises, like the Severn, on the huge Plinlymmon mountain, flows with many picturesque turns and "crankling winds" across the county, receiving the Lug, on which Leominster is situate, and further down, the Monnow, which forms the Monmouth boundary.

But if we failed to find the white-rose bower of Mrs. Browning's childhood, and her classic

> "garden-ground,
> With the laurel on the mound,
> And the pear-tree oversweeping
> A side-shadow of green air."

—does the turf remember her Hector with "brazen helm of daffodilies" and "a sword of flashing lilies?"—we were on poetic territory in the streets of Hereford. It was here, as Mr. Dobell's happy discovery has shown, that a lyrist, Thomas Traherne, worthy of the fellowship of Herbert and of Vaughan passed his early years, a shoemaker's son, like Marlowe in another cathedral city, [268]
Canterbury. If we could have seen Hereford as this humble little lad saw it, it would have been a celestial vision, for truly he said: "Certainly Adam in Paradise had not more sweet and curious apprehensions of the world than I when I was a child." His own description of this radiant star we so blindly inhabit as it first dazzled his innocent senses is too exquisite to be passed over:

> "The corn was orient and immortal wheat which never should be reaped nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the

> street were as precious as gold; the gates were at first the end of the world. The green trees when I saw them first through one of the gates transported and ravished me; their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstacy, they were such strange and wonderful things. The Men! O what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem! Immortal Cherubim! And young men, glittering and sparkling angels; and maids, strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty! Boys and girls tumbling in the street were moving jewels: I knew not that they were born or should die. But all things abided eternally as they were in their proper places. Eternity was manifest in the Light of the Day, and something infinite behind everything appeared, which talked with my expectation and moved my desire. The City seemed to [269] stand in Eden or to be built in Heaven."

If this were the Hereford of the first half of the seventeenth century, the city has dimmed a little since, yet we found it a pleasant town enough, with the Wye murmuring beside it, and its ancient cathedral of heroic history reposing in its midst. Garrick was born in Hereford, and poor Nell Gwynne, and in the north transept of the cathedral is a brass to John Philips, who endeared himself to all the county by his poem on "Cyder." We went to see the Preaching Cross that marks the site of a monastery of the Black Friars, neighboured now by the Red Cross Hospital for old soldiers and servants. One of these beneficiaries, in the prescribed "fustian suit of ginger colour," eagerly showed us about and was sorely grieved that we could not wait to hear his rambling chronicle to the end. The rest of our time in Hereford outside our hostelry—the Green Dragon, most amiable of monsters—we spent in the cathedral, an old acquaintance, but so passing rich in beauties and in curiosities that at the end of our swift survey we were hardly more satisfied than [270] at the beginning. We will come back to it some time—to the grave old church that has grown with the centuries and, unabashed, mingles the styles of various periods, the church in which Stephen was crowned and Ethelbert buried; to the croziered bishops in their niches, the two great, thirteenth-century bishops among them, D'Aquablanca, the worst of saints with the loveliest of tombs, and Cantilupe, so godly that he never allowed his sister to kiss him, of such healing virtues that even sick falcons were cured at his shrine; to the Knights Templars, mail-clad, treading down fell beasts; to the wimpled dames with praying hands, shadowed by angel-wings; to the Chapter Library with its chained tomes; and to that mediæval *Mappa Mundi* (about 1313) showing the earth with its encircling ocean, Eden and Paradise above, and such unwonted geographical features sprinkled about as the Phoenix, Lot's Wife, and the Burial Place of Moses.

Our surly coachman deposited us at Ross, the little border town with houses sloping from the hilltop to the Wye, while behind and above the mall rises a tall grey spire. Here our faith in [271] human nature was promptly restored by that contemplation of the virtues of The Man of Ross which even the public-house signboards forced upon us. This John Kyrle so lauded by Pope, was a cheery old bachelor of modest income, the most of which he expended for the town in works of practical benevolence, planting elms, laying out walks, placing fountains, and caring for the poor.

> "Whose cause-way parts the vale with shady rows?
> Whose seats the weary traveler repose?
> Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise?
> 'The Man of Ross,' each lisping babe replies."

But the lisping babes are wrong as to this last particular, for Kyrle did not build the spire, although he gave the church its gallery and pulpit.

At Ross we ought to have taken to the water, for the scenery of the Lower Wye, with its abrupt cliffs, rich woods, and smiling meadows, is one of the prides of England, but we had run so far behind our dates, by the dear fault of Shropshire, that we went on by train. The rail, however, follows the river, and we had—or thought we had—swift glimpses of the romantic ruins of Wilton [272] Castle, one of the old Border keeps, and of Goodrich castle, where Wordsworth met the little maid of "We are Seven." This valley of the Wye, which was to the poet Gray the delight of his eyes and "the very seat of pleasure," yields striking effects in wooded crag and gorge at Symond's Yat, but we enjoyed hardly less the tranquil reaches of green pasture, where the afternoon sunshine still lay so warm that little groups of sheep were cuddled at the foot of every tree. The ancient town of Monmouth, in its nest of hills, reminded us not merely of its royal native, Henry V,

> —"Ay, he was born at Monmouth,
> Captain Gower"—

but of that twelfth-century romancer, Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose "History of the Britons," with its fluent account of the doings of hitherto unheard-of kings, especially Arthur the Giant Killer and his false queen Guanhumara, so scandalised his contemporaries that they did not scruple to call him a "shameless and impudent liar" and to report that legions of devils had been seen hovering over his manuscript. About seven miles to the southwest of Monmouth is Raglan Castle, [273] where Charles I took refuge after Naseby. Its gallant lord, the Marquis of Worcester, then in his eighty-fourth year, stood a siege of ten weeks, not capitulating until the loyal little garrison, fast diminishing, was reduced to such extremities that the horses ate their halters for want of forage. I had visited, some fifteen years before, those war-scarred towers, tapestried with marvellous masses of ivy, and from the windows of the Royal Apartments had looked out on that lovely western view in which the harassed Stuart took solace. Lord Herbert, son of the staunch old royalist, invented and constructed a machine, the terror of the peasantry, which has a good claim to be counted the first steam-engine. The so-called Yellow Tower was the scene of his wizard

craft. The Great Hall now lies open to wind and weather, and but one wall of the chapel stands, its two stone effigies peeping out from their ivy-curtained niches.

We quitted the train at Tintern, where our stay was all too short, notwithstanding the memory of tranquil weeks spent there in a previous summer. The ruins of Tintern Abbey are of a peculiarly austere and noble beauty. Its foundation dates back to 1131, only three years after the coming of [274] the Cistercians into England. It was the third of their English houses, which came to number nearly two hundred. It stood in its full grace, the Gothic style just leaning toward the Decorated, when the Dissolution struck its uses from it and left it to gradual decay. Roofed by the blue skies of a summer noon, with wooded hills looking in through the unglazed mullions of the windows, or in the glory of the moonlight, the silver lustre flooding empty nave and silent cloisters, and illuming with its searching rays rare bits of carven foliage, Tintern wears perhaps a purer loveliness in its desolation than ever before. Our farewell visit was paid in an early morning hour. In that freshness of the day, those slender pillars and arches delicately wrought presented an aspect more than ever grave and melancholy. There is nothing of the grotesque here, and comparatively little of ornamental detail to distract the mind from the impression of the whole. The rooks that peered over from their lofty perch above the great east window, whose remaining traceries were etched in shadow on the turf, and the bright-eyed little red-breasts that hopped [275] fearlessly about did not, it is true, observe the Cistercian rule of silence; but the shining wings of doves fluttering from one grey wall to another might well have been the embodied prayers of those White Monks who so often chanted matins at the long-since fallen altars.

We went from the Abbey to the train. Still the railroad followed the winding river. A fleeting sight of the towering Wyndcliff reminded me of a by-gone afternoon when, unexpectedly bringing up on a ramble at Moss Cottage, I undertook, quite too late for prudence, a solitary ascent of this inviting steep. From the summit I looked out over mellow-tinted autumnal woods to the looping ribbon of the Wye, the white cliffs known as the Twelve Apostles rising beyond, and still beyond the sail-bearing Severn, with villages and church-towers discernible in the far distance and, best of all, the rose of sunset glowing upon the face of the Black Mountains. It was a sublime vision, but when the western flush had faded out and I must needs descend by that ever-darkening path which took its zigzag course among thick yews and down slippery slabs of slate, I came to the conclusion it was not written that my neck should be broken on this side of the Atlantic. [276]

We had only an hour at Chepstow, but the picturesque river-town was not new to us, and the hour sufficed to revive our memories of its rock-based old castle overhanging the Wye, the castle where Jeremy Taylor was once imprisoned, and its Norman church with deeply recessed doorway. At Chepstow we took train for Newport, crossing the strip of garden-land that lies between the Wye, the Gloucestershire boundary, and its almost parallel stream, the Usk. West Monmouth is Black Country, forming a part of the South Wales coal-field, and we were not surprised to find Newport a busy harbour, grimy with its exports of coal and iron. We heard a strange tongue spoken all about us and realised that Monmouthshire, nominally English since the time of Henry VIII, is still largely Welsh in manners and in character. The old Newport is much obscured by the new. The castle, where Simon de Montfort took refuge, is in good part hidden behind a flourishing brewery, but the Church of St. Woollos, built high upon Stow Hill, still dominates the scene. This church has a history even older than its fine Norman architecture, for [277] it is told that Harold once plundered the town, desecrating the original sanctuary and breaking open the cheeses, which he found filled with blood. Then he was aghast and repented, but a month later, according to the monastic record, "for that wickedness and other crimes" he fell at Hastings.

Our goal was Caerleon, three miles up the Usk, a quiet little village that was once the capital of South Wales, once the Isca Silurum of the Romans, and once, in the misty realm of romance, that Caerleon-upon-Usk where Arthur was crowned and where the ninth of his twelve great battles was fought. Tennyson's Lancelot relates to spellbound listeners in the Castle of Astolat how

> "at Caerleon had he helped his lord,
> When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse
> Set every gilded parapet shuddering."

But the "Mabinogion," that treasury of fanciful old Welsh tales, gives, by way of contrast, a naïve and somewhat gaudy picture of the king enjoying his repose:

> "King Arthur was at Caerlleon upon Usk; and one day he sat in his chamber; and with him were Owain the son of Urien, and Kynon the son of Clydno, and Kai the son of [278] Kyner; and Gwenhwyar and her hand-maidens at needlework by the window.... In the center of the chamber, King Arthur sat upon a seat of green rushes, over which was spread a covering of flame-coloured satin; and a cushion of red satin was under his elbow.... And the King went to sleep."

If the ghosts of the Second Augustan Legion could return for an hour to this their frontier station, deep in the British wilds, they would find ranged and labelled in a neat museum shards of their pottery, broken votive tablets, fragments of sculptured figures, among them a Medusa whose stony stare might seem to have taken effect, urns whose ashes were long since scattered, bits of mosaic pavement, coins, lamps, needles, hairpins, waifs and strays of their "unconsidered trifles." But the fainter wraith of King Arthur would discover no more than a weedy mound and hollow in a ragged field, where autumnal dandelions keep the only glints of his golden memory. We met there an old labourer stooping beneath the heavy sack upon his shoulder. He told us that the

mound was Arthur's Round Table, but as for the hollow—apparently the site of a Roman open amphitheatre—he could only shake his grey head and confide: "They do say as was a grand palace there long ago and one day it all sunk under,—sunk way down into the ground." [279]

The Usk, which has reflected such lost splendours, empties into the broad estuary of the Severn a little lower down than the Wye which rejoins the greater river at Chepstow. The Severn, which has its rising not two miles from the Wye in the Welsh mountains, makes a wider sweep to the east, crossing Shropshire, Worcester, and Gloucester. Worcester, indeed, mainly consists of the Middle Severn valley, with ranges of low hills on either side. This fertile basin abounds, like the Hereford vale of the Wye, in apple-orchards and pear-orchards, hop-gardens and wheat-fields, but the enterprising little shire has developed, too, a number of manufacturing industries. On the north it runs up into the Black Country of Staffordshire; Dudley, Stourbridge, and Oldbury are murky with the smoke and smudge of factory chimneys. Glass is a specialty of Stourbridge, carpets of Kidderminster, salt of Droitwich, and needles and fishhooks of Redditch. Nail-making used to be the bread and beer of ten thousand cottages at the foot of the Clent and Lickey Hills. [280]

But intermingled with its thriving crafts and trades is another wealth of historic associations and natural beauties. In the dense woods which once covered the county, hostile bands have dodged or sought one another from time immemorial, notably during the Civil Wars of Simon de Montfort and of the Roses. Even so late as the Parliamentary War, there remained forest enough to do good service to a fugitive. It was in an oak of Boscobel Wood, on the Salop border, that after the disastrous battle of Worcester

> "the younger Charles abode
> Till all the paths were dim,
> And far below the Roundhead rode
> And hummed a surly hymn."

The points of specific literary interest are not many. Little St. Kenelm underwent his martyrdom by the Clent Hills; Richard Baxter ministered for twenty-two years to a rough flock in Kidderminster; Samuel Butler was born in Strensham-on-the-Avon; Samuel Johnson went to school in Stourbridge; and the Leasowes, near by, was the home of Shenstone, who made it one of the most attractive estates in England. But the Malvern Hills keep a great, dim memory, that of the fourteenth-century visionary associated with the West Midland allegory of "Piers Plowman." We are not sure of his name, though we speak of him as Langland; the rugged, vigorous old poem in its three versions may yet be proved to be of composite rather than single authorship; we ourselves, though of Long Will's discipleship, had not faith enough in the personal tradition to visit the reputed birthplace at Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire; but on those breezy slopes still seems to linger the wistful presence of a gaunt, "forwandred" clerk who [281]

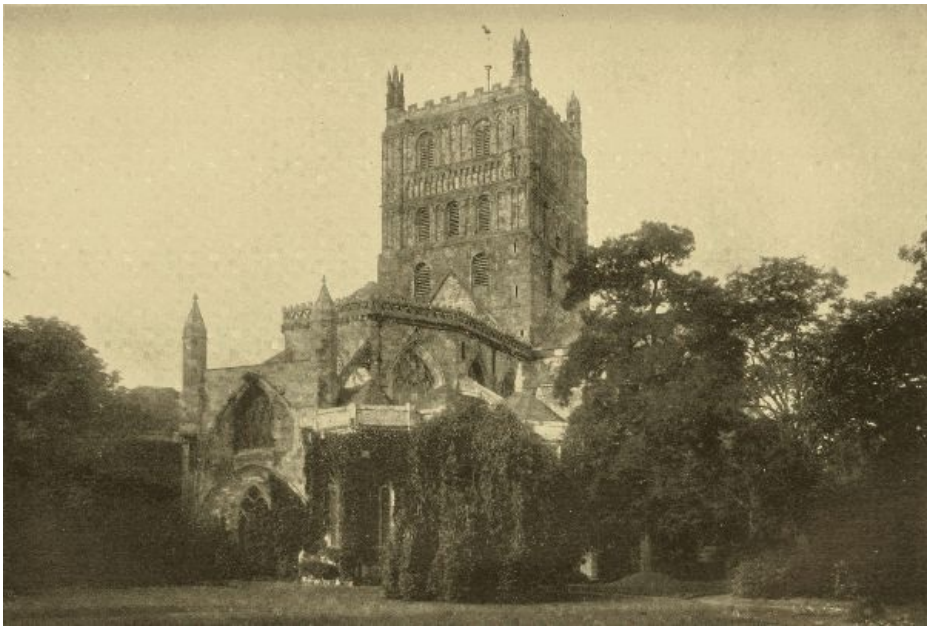
> "In a somer seson whan soft was the sonne,
> On a May mornynge on Malverne hulles"

dreamed the Easter dream, still unfulfilled on earth, of human brotherhood.

These gracious heights, standing

> "Close as brother leans to brother,
> When they press beneath the eyes
> Of some father praying blessings
> From the gifts of Paradise,"

gave hiding for four years to Sir John Oldcastle, the genial Lollard who made merry with Prince Hal, but would not renounce his faith, and was finally given up by the over-orthodox young king to the bishops. Henry V himself was present at the martyrdom, peculiarly revolting, but the worst of it all is that Shakespeare, consciously or unconsciously, endorsed the Roman Catholic caricature and wronged a true and generous spirit in his ineffaceable portrait of Sir John Falstaff, Prince Hal's "old lad of the castle." It must be that Raggedstone Hill, which casts a curse on whomsoever its shadow touches, gloomed with peculiar blackness over the hunted knight. Its ominous shade is said to have stolen on Cardinal Wolsey and on those royal fugitives of the Red Rose, Margaret of Anjou and the hapless young Prince Edward. [282]



TEWKESBURY ABBEY

From the summit of Worcester Beacon and from other of the higher Malvern crests the view ranges, on a clear day, over some fifteen counties and embraces the six momentous battlefields of Shrewsbury, Mortimer's Cross, Edge Hill, Worcester, Evesham and Tewkesbury, and the three cathedrals of Hereford, Worcester, and Gloucester, besides the remnants of six great religious houses of mediæval England,—Great and Little Malvern, Pershore, Evesham, Deerhurst and [283] Tewkesbury. Little Malvern Priory, established in the twelfth century by a band of Benedictine monks from Worcester who sought the wilds that they might emulate the life of hermits, survives only in fragments, but the church of Great Malvern Priory, an earlier outgrowth from Worcester, keeps its Norman interior, with rich treasures of stained glass and miserere carvings. We had passed through the Vale of Evesham toward the close of our long Midland drive and seen the scant relics of its mitred abbey, but we fail to follow the Avon on to Pershore, one of the richest and most powerful of the old monastic foundations. Not only were these monasteries planted in the fairest and most fruitful lands of the county, but a large portion of Worcestershire was owned by them and by the neighbouring abbeys of Gloucestershire. In all this horde of priests one has a special claim to literary remembrance,—Layamon, who dwelt in the hamlet of Ernley, near the junction of the Severn and the Stour. He constitutes an important link in the passing on of the Arthurian legend, which, first related in Latin prose by that entertaining prelate, Geoffrey of [284] Monmouth, had been already rendered into French verse by Wace, the professional chronicler of the Plantagenets. Layamon retold and amplified the story, using the French poem as his basis, but aided by two other works whose identity is doubtful.

> "Layamon these books beheld and the leaves he turned. He them with love beheld. Aid him God the Mighty! Quill he took with his fingers, and wrote on book-skin, and the true words set together, and the three books pressed into one."

We could pay only a flying visit to Malvern this summer, but in other summers have resorted thither again and again for the refreshment of the blithe air and pure water and of walking on those turfy hills where many a grateful sojourner has left path or seat to ease the climber's way.

Worcester, too, was familiar ground, and this time we gave but a few hours to the "Faithful City," which paid so dearly for its steadfast loyalty to Charles I. The unspeakable Parliamentarians proved nearly as destructive as the Danes, who, in the ninth century and again in the eleventh, had sacked it with fire and sword. The militant Presbyterians wreaked their piety most of all upon [285] the Cathedral, leaving it roofless, its splendid glass all shattered, its brasses wrenched away, its altars desecrated and torn down. We found the red-brick town upon the Severn brisk and cheerful, with its proud shop-window display of its own products, from the Royal Worcester China to Worcestershire Sauce, with the deeply laden barges that almost hid the river; its lively hop market; and its grunting sows, each with her litter of recalcitrant little pigs, driven in a meandering course through the main street by ruddy boys and girls. The cathedral, whose memories embrace St. Dunstan and St. Wulfstan and that stout-hearted old martyr of Oxford, Bishop Latimer—who had himself once presided at the burning of a friar—uplifted our hearts with its august vista of nave and choir. The crowned tenant of that choir, King John, ought to be troubled in his gilded rest by the proximity of a Prince Arthur, though not the Arthur to whom he did such grievous wrong. The best of the cathedral is, to my thinking, the solemn grace of the crypt, beneath whose light-pillared arches stand about various stone figures of rueful [286] countenance. After their centuries of sunlight, high-niched on the central tower, the Restorer has scornfully dislodged them and dungeoned them down here.

Just below Worcester the Severn is augmented by the Teme, which has valiantly cut its way through the line of western hills to join the court of Sabrina, and at Tewkesbury, on the Gloucester border, it receives its most famous affluent, Shakespeare's Avon. Tewkesbury was new to us, and we lingered there two days, wishing we might make them twenty. As it was we

had to forego the delightful trip on the Severn to Deerhurst, an old monastic town whose pre-Norman church is said to be of extremely curious architecture.

Tewkesbury Abbey, which outranks in size ten of the twenty-eight English cathedrals, is one of the most illustrious churches in the United Kingdom. Unlike most of the larger monastic establishments, it was under the control of a succession of great families whose deeds and misdeeds form no small part of the history of England. Fitz-Hamon, kin to the Conqueror, swept away what buildings of the old Saxon abbey he may have found there, and erected the magnificent Norman church which still awes the beholder. The ashes of Fitz-Hamon, who died in [287]
1107, rest near the High Altar. The next lord of Tewkesbury to be buried in the Abbey was Gilbert de Clare, one of the signers of Magna Charta. The name of his father, Richard de Clare, headed the list, and one of the seven copies of the Great Charter was deposited in the Abbey. Every lord of Tewkesbury after Gilbert de Clare was interred in this church, which, for the next two hundred and fifty years, until the lordship of Tewkesbury was absorbed into the Crown, grew ever more splendid with costly monuments. The widow of Gilbert de Clare married the brother of Henry III, Richard, Duke of Cornwall, but although she thus became a countess of many titles and one of the first ladies of the land, she asked, in dying, to be buried beside the husband of her youth in Tewkesbury. To this her second husband would not agree, but he was magnanimous enough to send her poor, homesick heart back to the Abbey in a silver vase, which was duly placed in Earl Gilbert's marble mausoleum.

The De Clares of Tewkesbury, Earls of Gloucester and Hereford, were a warrior race. The second [288]
Gilbert, called the Red Earl, fought both with Simon de Montfort, and against him, and the third Gilbert, his son, fell at Bannockburn. By his early death the lordship of Tewkesbury passed from the De Clares, who had held it for nearly a century, to the young earl's brother-in-law, Hugh le Despencer. This new Earl of Gloucester had succeeded Piers Gaveston in the perilous favour of Edward II. When Roger de Mortimer, by the unhallowed aid of Queen Isabel, triumphed over the king, the elder Despencer, a man of ninety, was hanged at Bristol, and his son, Hugh le Despencer, crowned with nettles, was swung from the gallows fifty feet high, in a hubbub of mockeries and rejoicings, at Hereford. His widow collected the scattered quarters of his body, exposed in various towns, and interred them in the Abbey under a richly carved and coloured monument. The Despencers, though no longer Earls of Gloucester, held the lordship of Tewkesbury for wellnigh another hundred years, cherishing and beautifying the fabric of the church and adding lavishly to its memorials of bronze and marble and to its treasure of chalices, copes, and jewels. [289]

Early in the fifteenth century the male line of the Despencers became extinct, and the Lady Isabel, sister of the last Lord Despencer, succeeded to the ecclesiastical honours of the family. Married in the Abbey at the age of eleven to Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Worcester, she was widowed ten years later and found her solace in building an exquisite chapel, known as the Warwick Chantry, in her husband's memory. Her second husband, cousin to the first, was Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, whom she commemorated in the still more elaborate Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick; but she herself chose to lie at Tewkesbury. Her daughter married Warwick the King-maker and became the mother of two fair girls of most pathetic story. The elder, Isabel, was wedded to George, Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward III,—"false, fleeting, perjur'd Clarence,"—who is supposed to have been murdered in the Tower through the agency of his brother Richard—drowned, the whisper went, in a butt of Malmsey wine. A fortnight earlier his wife and an infant child had died, probably of poison. A son and daughter survived, who, for the royal blood that flowed in their veins, were regarded with uneasiness by [290]
the Tudor kings and ultimately sent to the block. The daughter, Margaret Plantagenet, superintended the education of the Princess Mary, and was once described by Henry VIII himself as "the most saintly woman in England." But she was the mother of Cardinal Pole, who had angered the tyrant and was on the Continent out of his reach; so this reverend and gracious lady, at the age of sixty-eight, had her stately head clumsily hacked off by a prentice executioner on Tower Hill, where her innocent brother had perished forty-two years before. The second daughter of the Countess Isabel had an even more pitiful life than her sister's, for her first husband was Prince Edward, the last Lancastrian, and then, after he had been foully slain, she strangely accepted the hand of one of his murderers, Richard of Gloucester, the worst of the Yorkists, by whom she was soon, it would appear, coolly put out of the world. A favourite saying of the county, probably having reference to the extraordinary number and wealth of its religious houses, runs: "As sure as God is in Gloucestershire," but one can hardly read these tragedies of Tewkesbury without feeling that the Devil has been no infrequent sojourner there. [291]

The lamentable Wars of the Roses, which had drenched England with blood, threw up their last red spray against the Abbey. The resolute Queen Margaret and her son had attempted, with an army raised by the Duke of Somerset, to get possession of Gloucester, but they found it already held by the Yorkists and hastened on to Tewkesbury. Still weary from their forced march, they were attacked by Edward at break of a summer dawn (1471) while the monks were chanting matins in the Abbey, and sustained a signal defeat. The place of slaughter is still known as Bloody Meadow. The Duke of Somerset, with a few knights and squires, took refuge within the sacred walls, but Edward and his followers, hot for vengeance, rushed in to slay them even there. The abbot, who had just been celebrating mass, came from the altar and, holding the consecrated host high in his hands, stood between the furious Yorkists and their prey. The war-wrath was for the moment stayed, and Edward gave his word to respect the peace of the sanctuary. But after a service of thanksgiving, the blood-anointed king and his fierce nobles withdrew to a house hard [292]
by, where that unhappy younger Edward, the legitimate heir to the throne, was brought a

defenceless prisoner into their presence, insulted, assailed, and slain. The rumour went that the king himself had with his gauntleted hand struck the royal youth across the mouth, and in an instant the others, like wild beasts, were upon him, Richard of Gloucester in the front. It is believed that the mangled, boyish body was buried in the Abbey under the central tower.

But while the lords of Tewkesbury stormed through their brief careers, coming one after another to lie, battle-bruised, stabbed, headless, quartered, even with the halter-mark about the neck, within the holy hush of the great church, its Benedictine monks went on a quiet way, tilling the soil, writing glosses, copying service-books, chanting prayers, exercising a large hospitality and a larger charity. At the Dissolution, the townspeople, who had from time immemorial used the nave as their parochial church, bought the choir and chapels from Henry VIII, so that this noble structure, so significant in English story, escaped the fate of Furness, Tintern, and the many more. [293]

We had ourselves a little difficulty in getting beyond the nave. We had gone in an hour before service on a Sunday evening, hoping to be allowed to walk around the choir, but we incurred scathing rebuke from a red-haired verger, who had practised like eloquence on Sunday automobile parties until his flow of denunciation was Hebraic. We gave way at once, expressed due contrition, and meekly sat down to wait for evensong. Whereupon, after furtively scrutinising us from behind one pillar after another, he cautiously approached and with searching little blue eyes severely inquired if we really intended to stay for the service,—"all through the sermon, ye understand; not just for the music." Our reply so raised us in his opinion that he actually took us on the rounds, proving an intelligent and even jocose conductor, and we, for our part, heard the sermon to the very end, not daring to stir from our places until the last note of "Milton's organ" had died away.

Many visitors come to this attractive old town, with its timbered houses and pleasant river-walks, for the sake of "John Halifax, Gentleman." The scenes of Mrs. Craik's tender romance, Abel [294] Fletcher's dwelling, the mill on the Avon, the tannery, the remains of the famous hedge, the garden where the two lads talked, are pointed out as soberly and simply as that ancient house in Church Street whose floor is said still to keep the stain of princely blood, or the cross where the Duke of Somerset and his companions, dragged from the shelter of the Abbey in violation of the king's own promise, were beheaded.

But the Severn, with ever-broadening flow, a tidal river now that fills and shallows twice a day, bears onward to the sea. Her course lies for a while through orchards and wheat-fields. The Cotswolds, separating the Severn valley from the basin of the Thames and constituting the bulk of Gloucestershire, rise in billowy outlines on the east and, presently, Dean Forest, one of the few remaining patches of England's formerly abundant woods, uplifts its "broad and burly top" on the west. The earth beneath those oaks and beeches has hoards of mineral wealth, and furnaces are scattered through the forest glades. At Gloucester the Severn divides, that

"with the more delight
She might behold the towne of which she's wondrous proud."

[295]

And a fine old town it is, still keeping, in its four right-angled streets, the original Roman plan. Large vessels can make their way up the Severn as far as Gloucester, which Elizabeth, to Bristol's neighbourly disgust, chartered as a seaport, though the Berkeley Canal, opened in 1827, is now the regular channel. The cathedral stands upon ground hallowed since the seventh century. This building, for all the solemn grandeur of its Norman nave, is of most interest, from an architectural point of view, because of its gradual development of the Perpendicular style, gloriously manifest in choir and cloister. Its masons seem to have been particularly ingenious, for the building abounds in original and fanciful features of which the Whispering Gallery is only an example. Its martyr is John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester. One of Mary's earliest victims, he was sent from London back to Gloucester, where he was greatly beloved, to be burned before the eyes of his own flock. Many royal prayers have been murmured beneath these vaulted roofs, and many royal feasts of Severn salmon and lamprey-pie held in the grey city. The Saxon kings were much at Gloucester; William the Conqueror spent his Yule-tides here whenever [296] he could, and here, in the chapter house, he ordered the compilation of Domesday Book; Rufus, Henry I, Henry II, and John often visited the town, and Henry III, as a boy of ten, was crowned in the cathedral. Parliaments were held in Gloucester by Edward I, Richard II, Henry IV, and Henry V, and from Gloucester Richard III, with whom murder had grown to be a habit, is supposed to have sent secret orders to the Tower for the smothering of his little nephews. In a side-chapel is the tomb of Robert, Duke of Normandy, eldest son of the conqueror. The effigy, of Irish oak, is so instinct with force and vigour in its only half recumbent posture that the iron screen seems really necessary to hold the Norman down. But the royal burial that made the fortunes of the cathedral was that of the wretched Edward II, whose canopied tomb in the choir became a favourite shrine of pilgrimage.

Still the Severn, now with a burden of heavily freighted barges, a mighty flood that has left more than one hundred miles behind the tiny pool, three inches deep, in which it rose, sweeps on, past the stern walls of Berkeley Castle, where Edward II was cruelly done to death, toward the [297] Somerset boundary. Here it receives the waters of the lower Avon, on which the great port of Bristol stands, and so the proud Sabrina leads her retinue of streams into the Bristol Channel,

"Supposing then herself a sea-god by her traine."

SOMERSET AND DEVONSHIRE [298]

The three southwestern counties of England, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, reach out, like the hearts of their sons, into the wild Atlantic. Many a Westward Ho adventure was sped from Bristol, Bideford, Plymouth, Dartmouth, and even from Topsham, which long served as the port of Exeter. The far-sea Elizabethan sailors and their dauntless commanders, those "Admirals All" whose praises a living poet of these parts, Henry Newbolt, has sung, came largely from this corner of England. The father of Sir Francis Drake was a Tavistock tar. That dreamer of illimitable dreams, Sir Walter Raleigh, was born in the little Devon village of East Budleigh. Another Devon village, familiar to Raleigh's boyhood, Ottery St. Mary, is the native place of Coleridge, whose immortal sea-ballad came into being just over the Somerset border, in those radiant days when he and Wordsworth, two young poets in the fulness of their friendship and the [299] freshness of their inspiration, would go wandering together, from their homes in Nether Stowey, off on the Quantock Hills,—days commemorated by Wordsworth in "The Prelude."

> "Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved,
> Unchecked we loitered 'mid her sylvan courts;
> Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,
> Didst chant the vision of that Ancient Man,
> The bright-eyed Mariner."

My first view of the Quantocks was had, some years ago, from Exmoor. Coming through North Devon, we had been walking for hours, knee-deep in heather, over that high, rolling moorland where the red deer still run wild. The pollen rose in clouds about our heads. Black-faced sheep and white-tailed rabbits and startled, flurrying heath-cocks shared, but did not break, the rapture of that solitude. Bell-heather and rose-heather and white heather mingled their hues, at a little distance, in a rippling sea of purple. We lay down in it, and the fragrant sprays closed warm about us, while the soft sky seemed almost to touch our faces. We were supremely happy and we [300] hoped that we were lost. We had long been out of sight of human habitation, but our compass served us better than we wished, and when, with a covert sense of disappointment, though the sun was red on the horizon, we came at last upon a woman and child gathering whortleberries in a dimple of the moor, we learned that we were, as we should have been, in the heart of the Lorna Doone country.

All lovers of Blackmore's delectable romance remember that its modest hero, John Ridd, of the parish of Oare, was a Somerset man. "Zummerzett thou bee'st, Jan Ridd, and Zummerzett thou shalt be." But the Doone glen, which actually was, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, the hold of a marauding band of outlaws, lies on Badgeworthy Water, a part of the Devon boundary. We ate our handful of whortleberries in Devon, but soon, following directions, found ourselves on the brow of a steep incline, peering over upon a farmhouse, known as Lorna's Bower, in the valley below. Scrambling down the declivity as best we might, we crossed the Badgeworthy by means of a log and a hand-rail, climbed a fence inhospitably placed at the end of [301] this rude bridge, and thus made unceremonious entrance into Somerset. They were gruff of speech at Lorna's Bower, but kind of heart, and treated the belated wanderers well, feasting us on the inevitable ham and eggs, with a last taste of Devonshire cream, and giving us the warm corner of the settle by the great, peat-burning fireplace. A sheepskin waistcoat, with the wool yet on, lay across the rheumatic knees of our host, and hams and sides of bacon dangled from the rafters overhead.

According to the saying "It always rains on Exmoor," the next morning broke in storm, and we made slow progress under the rain and over the mud along the Badgeworthy. All our path was a Waterslide, yet we came at last to the Doone valley, where tumbled heaps of stone mark the site of the felons' houses. Foxglove and bracken and heather would have whispered us the gossip of the place, but a sudden spurt of especially violent rain drove us on to a shepherd's hut for refuge. Two sportsmen, booted and spurred, with their horses saddled in the shed, all ready to mount and ride if the Exmoor hunt should sweep that way, were there before us. One of them told us [302] that his own house had the dints of the Doones' terrible blows on one of its oak doors. As the weather had gone from bad to worse, we abandoned our walking trip, bestowed ourselves in a creakity cart, the only vehicle there obtainable, and drove past the little Oare church, where John and Lorna were so tragically wedded, over "Robbers' Bridge," and on to the top of Oare Hill. Here we paused for a memorable view of the rain-silvered landscape, with Dunkery Beacon glimmering above. On through blurred pictures of beautiful scenery we went, into the village of Porlock, sweet with roses, and plunging down Porlock Hill, we held on our gusty way to Minehead. The hostelries of this favourite watering-place being full, we pushed on by an evening train to Taunton, a fair town of heroic history. In the stormy times of Charles I, it was twice gallantly defended by Admiral Blake, himself a son of Somerset, against the cavalier forces. Forty years later, when the unpopular James II had succeeded to his brother's throne, Taunton frankly embraced the perilous cause of the Duke of Monmouth, welcoming him with joyous ceremonies. [303] In Taunton market-place he was proclaimed king, and from Taunton he issued his royal proclamations. The Duke was utterly defeated at Sedgemoor, three miles to the east of Bridgewater, in what Macaulay designates as "the last fight deserving the name of a battle that has been fought on English ground." The simple Somerset folk who had followed the banners of Monmouth were punished with pitiless severity. The brutal officers made a jest of the executions.

A range of gibbets, with their ghastly burdens, crossed the moor, but Taunton was the especial victim of the royal vengeance. A hundred prisoners were put to death there by Kirke and his "lambs," and wellnigh another hundred hanged by such process of law as was embodied in Jeffrey's "Bloody Assize."

But we would not linger in Taunton,—no, not even for the sake of its gentle Elizabethan poet, Samuel Daniel, nor would we stay our journey for trips to the places of varied interest on either side. A little to the southwest is Wellington, which gave The Iron Duke his title. Going north from there one would come soon to Milverton, the birthplace of Dr. Thomas Young, that ingenious [304] linguist who first began to read the riddle of the Sphinx; for he had deciphered some half dozen of the Egyptian hieroglyphics in advance of Champollion's great announcement. A few miles further to the north is Combe Flory, the pleasant parsonage which Sidney Smith made so gay, even binding his books, and theological books at that, in brightest colours. To get a tropical effect, and to hoax his guests, he hung oranges from his garden shrubs, and to gratify a lady who hinted that deer would ornament the little park, he fitted out his two donkeys—who doubtless had their opinion of him and of his doings—with branching antlers, and stationed them before the windows for a pastoral effect. Well away to the east of Taunton is Ilchester, the birthplace of that illustrious thirteenth-century friar, Roger Bacon, a necromancer to his own generation, and a pioneer in scientific method to ours; and near by Ilchester is Odcombe, where Tom Coryatt, stoutest-soled of travellers, was born. He claimed to have walked, between May and October of 1608, no less than nineteen hundred and seventy-five miles over the continent of Europe, and had [305] just achieved a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and a call on the Great Mogul when, under the eastern stars, he died. England profited by his travels in the entertaining volume commonly known as Coryatt's "Crudities," as well as in that foreign elegance of table-forks which he is said to have introduced.

A mightier spell than any of these was upon us, the spell of Glastonbury, but I do not know why we did not give a few hours to Athelney, which lay directly in our route. It was here, on an alder-forested island in a waste of fens and marshes, at the confluence of the Parrett and the Tone, that King Alfred took shelter when the Danes had overrun the land. Here he lost that "Alfred's Jewel" which is now the treasure of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford; here this otherwise impeccable monarch burned the cakes; and from here he made such successful sallies against the enemy that he delivered England and regained his throne.

The county of Somerset, a land of broad, green valleys enclosed by rugged ranges of hill and upland, has been compared in form to an arm slightly bent about the eastern and southern shores [306] of Bristol Channel. The river Parrett crosses it at the elbow, dividing it into a southern section,—moors, bogs, mountains, with the deep vale of the river Tone—and a northern part, larger and more populous, but hardly less broken. Above the Parrett, and almost parallel with it, runs the river Brue, draining that once vast peat swamp known as the Brent Marshes. Glastonbury now stands on the north bank of the Brue, but at some remote period was islanded in the midst of the river. The Britons—if the wise say true—called it The Appletree Isle, or Avalon,—a name caught up in the golden meshes of Arthurian romance. The wounded king but

> "passes to the Isle Avilion,
> He passes and is heal'd and cannot die."

The Britons in their heathen days had dreamed of a fairyland where death and sorrow entered not, the Celtic Tir-na-n'Og, an Island of Immortal Youth hid somewhere in the flushed, mysterious west, and the Christian faith, that came so early to Glastonbury, did not destroy but gathered to itself the wistful hope, so that the site of one of the earliest churches in England became the [307] centre of strangely blended legends. It was in the Isle of Avalon, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, that the sword Excalibur was forged, and after Arthur had passed from mortal ken, he was not dead, but still, through the waiting centuries,

> "Mythic Uther's deeply wounded son
> In some fair space of sloping greens
> Lay, dozing, in the vale of Avalon,
> And watched by weeping queens."

Yet the mediæval voices, that we would gladly believe more simply than we may, tell us that Arthur was buried at Glastonbury in a sarcophagus hollowed out of the trunk of an oak, that the penitent Guinevere was laid at his feet, that the skeletons were uncovered and removed to the church in the reign of Henry II, and were seen by so sane a witness as Leland so late as the middle of the sixteenth century. But in King Arthur, death is life, and not his reputed grave, nor the giant bones folk wondered at, nor the golden lock of Guinevere that crumbled at a monk's too eager clutch, could shake the faith in his second coming. Malory, writing in the fifteenth century, [308] illustrates even in his half denial the persistency of that expectation:

> "Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place, and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather, I will say,—here in this world he changed his life, but many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse: *Hic jacet Arthurus Rex quondam Rexque futurus*."

Arthurian legends are attached to other places in Somersetshire, notably to Cadbury, whose earlier name was Camelot, and to its adjacent village of Queen's Camel. Here on the river Camel

cluster Arthurian names,—King Arthur's Palace, a moated mound; King Arthur's Well, a spring of magic virtues; King Arthur's Hunting Causeway, an old track across the fields; and here the tradition of a great battle lingers. But Glastonbury is not only an Arthurian shrine; it was once, in purer days than ours, the keeper of the Holy Grail.

"To whom the monk: 'The Holy Grail! ...
... What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?'

[309]

"'Nay, monk, what phantom?' answer'd Percivale.
'The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
This, from the blessed land of Aromat—
After the day of darkness, when the dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah—the good saint,
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.
And there awhile it bode; and if a man
Could touch or see it, he was healed at once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to Heaven, and disappear'd.'

"To whom the monk: 'From our old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,
And there the heathen prince, Arviragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build;
And there he built with wattles from the marsh
A little lonely church.'"[9]

Dreamy hours were those we spent under the shadow of Glastonbury Tor, among the tranquil ruins of that once so glorious abbey, strolling about with a motley company of sheep, chickens, and tourists over what is perhaps the most ancient consecrated ground in England. Hither came St. Joseph of Arimathæa with his eleven companions and here the staff of the saint, as he thrust it into the ground, put forth leaf and blossom as a signal that the resting-place was reached. The [310] little wattled oratory that the Archangel Gabriel commanded and the pagan king permitted them to build on a waste island of the marsh was succeeded, in course of time, by a primitive form of monastery, where St. Patrick, his mission to Ireland accomplished, dwelt many years and died. Here in a later century great St. Dunstan held the post of abbot and waged at his forge stern warfare against the Devil. And it is sober history that here a Christian church and brotherhood lived on in unbroken peace from British times to English. "What Glastonbury has to itself, alone and without rival," says Freeman, "is its historical position as the tie, at once national and religious, which binds the history and memories of our race to those of the race which we supplanted."

The after-story of Glastonbury is as tragic as that of Whalley. A mitred abbey, enlarged and enriched from generation to generation, it became a court whither the sons of noblemen and gentlemen were sent for nurture in gracious manners; a school of learning whose library was one of the most precious in the realm; a seat of princely hospitalities and lavish charities. When the [311] storm burst, Abbot Whiting strove to hide from the spoilers some of the abbey plate. He was forthwith arrested at his manor of Sharpham—the very house where Fielding the novelist was afterwards born,—sentenced at Wells, dragged on a hurdle to the top of Glastonbury Tor, and there hanged and butchered, his head being spiked above the abbey gate. The magnificent church and extensive conventual buildings, stripped and abandoned, long served the neighbourhood as a quarry. Richly sculptured blocks were built into barns and garden-walls and even broken up for making a road over the marshes. Little is left for the gazer now save a few weed-crowned columns, an exquisite Early English chapel on the site of St. Joseph's wattled church, a gabled tithe-barn, an old pilgrim inn, and the Abbot's Kitchen, a witchcap structure whose four vast fireplaces must all have roared with jollity when Abbot Whiting chanced to be entertaining five hundred "persons of fashion" at a single dinner-party. As we wandered over the daisied pastureland from one grey fragment to another, we realised the invisible Glastonbury all [312] the more in the peace that has come with the perishing of the visible. "Time the Shadow" has but softened the splendour. More than ever is this

"the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows."

It is only six miles from Glastonbury to Wells, one of the loveliest cathedral cities of England, not a place to hurry through, but to settle in and quietly enjoy. Lodgings in Vicar's Close, leisurely strolls through the gardens of the Bishop's Palace, hours of revery in choir and chapter-house and Lady Chapel,—it is so that one is taken to the heart of all this holy beauty. The foundation dates back to the beginning of the eighth century, but Saxon church melted into Norman, and

Norman into Early English,—substantially the cathedral of to-day, with that wonderful façade of which Fuller truly said: "England affordeth not the like." The story of the city is the story of the church, and the story of the church is one of honour and untroubled peace. Not being a [313] monastery, it was untouched by the blow that smote Glastonbury down. The rage of war has passed it by. Its bishops have left saintly memories. Above this matchless group of ecclesiastical buildings tender benignities brood like outspread wings. There is blessing in the very air.

Wells lies in a basin at the foot of the Mendip Hills, which offer tempting points for excursions. Our most uncanny trip was to Wookey Hole, where, according to a ballad in Percy's "Reliques," "a blear-eyed hag" used to dwell. A farmer, groaning with rheumatism, guided us along a rocky footpath to the cavern entrance, where an impish boy met us, gave us lighted tapers and himself literally blazed the way with a can of some lurid-burning oil. After scrambling up and scrambling down, frequently abjured by our little leader to "mind yer 'eads," we left Hell's Ladder behind us and came out into an open space known as the Witch's Kitchen. Here was the Witch herself, a sphinx-like figure made by the petrifaction of the water dripping from the roof. She received us [314] with a stolid stare, the graceless urchin threw a pebble at her flat nose, and we gladly scrambled back to upper day.

I have a pleasanter recollection of Cox's Cave at Cheddar, with its clearly defined pillars and pinnacles, some amber, some olive, some transparent, some musical. It requires but little imagination to distinguish in this fantastic world the queer assortment of "Hindoo Temple," "Mummy," "Bat's Wings," "Eagle's Wings," "Loaf of Bread," "Hanging Goose," "Rat running up a Rock," "Turkeys," "Carrots," and the splendid "Draperies." There is a place where stalagmite and stalactite nearly touch,—only one drop wanting, yet in all these years since Mr. Cox, while prosaically digging for a coach-house, discovered this elfin grotto, in 1837, that drop has not crystallised,—so slow is the underground sculptor.

All this region of the Mendip Hills, whose limestone cliffs rise sheer, terrace above terrace, is full of fascination. Traces of prehistoric man, as well as of extinct animal species, have been found in its deep caverns. In the Hyæna Den, when disclosed in 1852, the eyes of geologists could discern the very places where our shaggy forbears had lighted their fires and cooked their food. It seems [315] a far cry from those low-browed cave-folk to Lord Macaulay, who loved this West Country so well, and to John Locke, who was born in the village of Wrington,—a village which furthermore prides itself on one of the noblest church-towers in Somerset and on the decorous grave of Hannah More.

All manner of literary associations jostle one another in the town of Bath, to which at home I have heard English visitors liken our Boston. They meant it as a compliment, for Bath is a handsome city, even ranked by Landor, one of its most loyal residents, above the cities of Italy for purity and consistent dignity of architecture. To reach Bath we have journeyed east from the Mendip Hills into the valley of the Lesser Avon. Here "the Queen of all the Spas" holds her court, the tiers of pale stone terraces and crescents climbing up the steep sides of the valley to a height of some eight hundred feet.

Of the sights of Bath, the Abbey is most disappointing, and well it may be, for it was despoiled not only of its glass but even of its iron and lead by Henry VIII, and only a bleak framework left to [316] pass through a series of purchasers to the citizens. The west front wears a curious design of ladders on which battered angels clamber up and down. The interior has no "dim religious light," but gilt and colour and such a throng of gaudy monuments that the wits have made merry at the expense of the vaunted mineral springs.

> "These walls, adorned with monument and bust,
> Show how Bath waters serve to lay the dust."

The healing quality of the waters is attributed, by the veracious Geoffrey of Monmouth, to the British king Bladud, father of King Lear. This Bladud, being skilled in sorcery, placed in the gushing spring a cunning stone that made the water hot and curative. The wizard met an untimely end in a flight on wings of his own devising. He rode the air safely from Bath to London, but there fell and was dashed in pieces on the roof of the temple of Apollo. The Romans knew the virtue of these waters, and modern excavation has disclosed, with other remnants of a perished splendour, elaborate Roman baths, arched and columned and beautifully paved. It is so long since [317] the hour when I went wandering down into those buried chambers that I but dimly recall a large central basin, where languid gold-fish circled in a green pool, begirt by a stone platform, old and mossy. This was set about with pilasters and capitals and all manner of classic fragments, among which were mingled bits of mediæval carving. For a Saxon monastery was founded here, where, according to the Exeter Book, still stood "courts of stone," and the baths were known and frequented throughout the Middle Ages and in Tudor and Stuart times. But the Bath of the eighteenth-century society-novel, the Bath of which Miss Burney and Miss Austen, Fielding and Smollet have drawn such graphic pictures, owed its being chiefly to Beau Nash. The city to which this gallant Oxonian came in 1703 was a mean, rough place enough. The baths were "unseemly ponds," open to the weather and to the view of the passersby, who found it amusing to pelt the invalid bathers with dead cats—poor pussies!—and frogs. But Nash secured a band of music for the Pump Room, set orderly balls on foot, and soon won the title of King of Bath, which he made [318] such a focus of fashion that the place grew during his lifetime from its poor estate into the comely city of to-day. This arbiter of elegance maintained a mimicry of royal pomp. His dress glistened with lace and embroidery and he travelled in a chaise drawn by six grey horses, with a full complement of outriders, footmen, and French horns.

The Pump Room is worth a visit. It is an oblong saloon, with a semicircular recess at either end. At the west end is a music gallery, and at the east a statue of Beau Nash. A three-fourths square of cushioned seats occupies the middle of the room and opens toward a counter. Here a white-capped maid dispenses, at twopence a glass, the yellow fluid which hisses up hot from a fountain just behind her and falls murmuring into a marble vase. And all about, a part of the spectacle, sit the health-seekers, sipping the magic water from glasses in decorated saucers and looking a trifle foolish.

Here, or in steering one's course among the Bath chairs that claim a native's right of way in park and promenade, fancy may choose almost any companion she will. Pope hated Bath, to be sure, [319] and called it "the sulphurous pit," but not even Pope kept out of it; Beckford, the author of "Vathek," lived here; Butler, author of the "Analogy," died here; Pepys scribbled a page of his "Diary" here; Herschel the astronomer played a chapel-organ here; Lord Chesterfield's manners and Sheridan's wit found here an apt field of exercise; but for my part—and it was a scandalous choice, with the ghosts of Pitt and Burke, Wolfe and Nelson, Cowper and Scott and Goldsmith and Moore ready to do escort duty—I wished for the company of Chaucer's Wife of Bath, for such a piquant gossip could not have failed to add some entertaining items to the story of the town.

Our final pilgrimage of last summer was made to Clevedon, a lonely village which has within half a century become a popular summer resort. It lies

> "By that broad water of the west,"

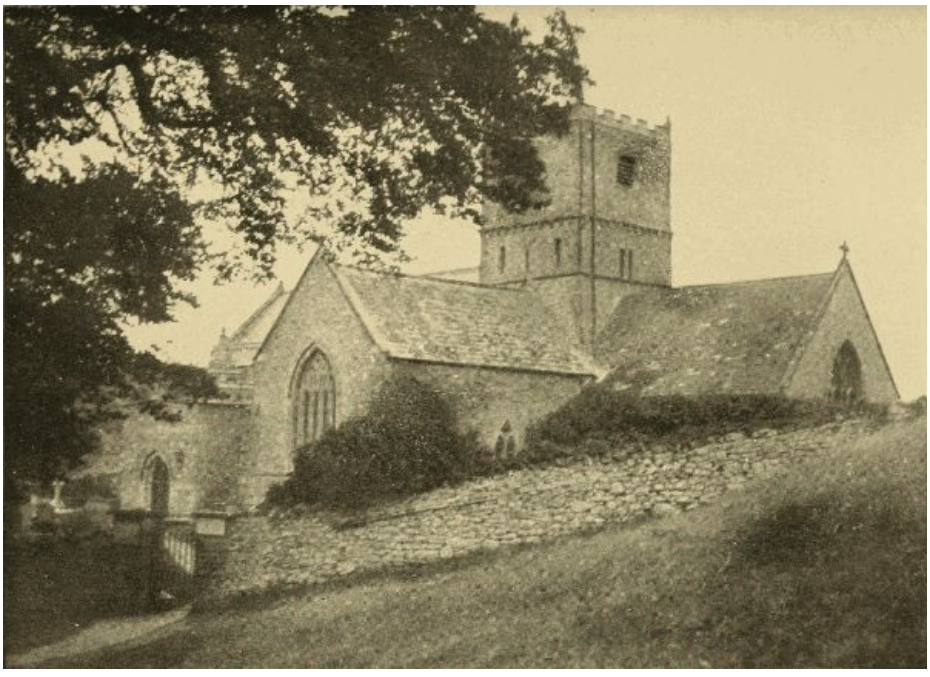
where the Severn merges into the Bristol Channel. Here is Myrtle Cottage, where Coleridge and his bride had their brief season of joy. [320]

> "Low was our pretty cot; our tallest rose
> Peeped at the chamber window. We could hear
> At silent noon, and eve, and early morn
> The sea's faint murmur. In the open air
> Our myrtle blossomed; and across the porch
> Thick jasmines twined."

It was here that this poet of boundless promise,

> "The rapt one of the godlike forehead,
> The heaven-eyed creature,"

wrote his "Æolian Harp," his "Frost at Midnight," and other lyrics touched with an unwonted serenity and sweetness, and here that Hartley Coleridge was born.



ST. PETER'S CHURCH, CLEVEDON

But our first walk took us by the beach and across the fields to that "obscure and solitary church" where lies Tennyson's Arthur, son of Henry Hallam the historian, and himself a poet. He was in Vienna when

> "God's finger touch'd him and he slept,"

and Tennyson linked the Austrian and the English rivers in his elegy.

> "The Danube to the Severn gave
> The darken'd heart that beat no more;
> They laid him by the pleasant shore,
> And in the hearing of the wave.

[321]

"There twice a day the Severn fills;
  The salt sea-water passes by,
  And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills."

The ancient church, now but seldom opened for service, was locked, and we had to hunt for the sexton. It was dusk when he arrived, but we groped our way to the south transept and, by the light of a lifted taper, made out the pathetic farewell:

VALE DULCISSIME
VALE DILECTISSIME
DESIDERATISSIME
REQUIESCAS IN PACE

It was this tablet that haunted the restlessness of Tennyson's grief as, on moonlight nights, he would seem to see that lustre which fell across his bed slipping into the transept window and becoming "a glory on the walls."

"The marble bright in dark appears,
  As slowly steals a silver flame
  Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

"The mystic glory swims away;
  From off my bed the moonlight dies;
  And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in grey:

[322]

"And then I know the mist is drawn
  A lucid veil from coast to coast,
  And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn."

From Clevedon, from Bath, from Cheddar, from Wells, the roads lead to Bristol, which must not, if only for the sake of poor Chatterton, be ignored. This worn, dignified old city has had something of a vagrant career. Before the Norman Conquest, and for long after, Bristol stood north of the Avon and was a Gloucestershire town. In course of time it stretched across the river and lay partly in Somerset. And in the fourteenth century, when for wealth and consequence it ranked second only to London, Edward III created it a county by itself. From the dawn of its history it was a trading-mart. Nothing came amiss to it, even kidnapping, so that among its gains it gained the title "Stepmother of all England." The merchants and the mariners of Bristol stood in the front of English enterprise. Even in the time of Stephen it was deemed wellnigh the richest city of the kingdom. When a foreign war was in hand, Bristol could be counted on for a large contingent of ships and men. Its merchants lived in towered mansions, with capacious cellars for [323] the storage of their goods, warehouses and shops on the street floor, the family parlours and bedrooms above, and attics for the prentices in the sharp-pitched gables. The banquet-halls, at the rear of these spacious dwellings, were splendid with carven roofs, rich tapestries, and plate that would have graced a royal board. Even the critical Pepys, who visited Bristol after its Spanish and West Indian trades were well established, found its quay "a most large and noble place."

Bristol sailors bear no small part in the tales of English sea-daring and records of discovery. As early as 1480, Bristol merchants were sending out tall ships to search west of Ireland for "the Island of Brazil and the Seven Cities." Sixteen years later the Venetian mariner, John Cabot, probably accompanied by his son Sebastian—"shadow-seekers," the old Bristol tars would call them—had touched the coast of North America. On his return the "Great Admiral" clad himself in silk and was a notable figure in the Bristol streets. Phantasmal though it all seems in a retrospect [324] of centuries, many are the men who have drawn the gaze in these ever-moving thoroughfares,—William Canynges, "Merchant Royal," whose trade with the north of Europe probably exceeded that of any other merchant in England; Thomas Norton, fifteenth-century alchemist and dreamer, who believed that he had discovered both the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life; Captain Thomas James, for whom James's Bay is named, he whose search for the Northwest Passage is one of the heroic chapters in the annals of the sea; the Reverend Richard Hakluyt, always deep in talk with some grizzled seaman; Captain Martin Pring, proud of the load of sassafras he had brought back from Cape Cod; Colston the philanthropist, the local saint. Mere literary folk would have been embarrassed by little enough attention as they went their quiet ways. What was Chatterton to the trading, shipbuilding, ship-lading town but a bright-eyed Blue-Coat boy? And how those hard-headed merchants would have chuckled over the eager scheme of three penniless young poets, Coleridge, Southey, and Lovell, for founding a community on the Susquehanna—a [325] river of melodious name and delightfully far away—where no one should labour more than two hours out of the twenty-four!

I have been in Bristol several times, but I remember the workaday old city as I saw it first. It was September weather, and College Green was strewn with sallow leaves that flitted and whispered continually like memories of the past. A few fat sheep were in possession, together with a statue of Queen Victoria and a Gothic cross. On the south of the Green, once the burial-ground of the

abbey, stands the cathedral, the older portion, in contrast with the new, looking black and rough and massy. The jewel of this building—which was one of the few abbey churches to profit by the Dissolution, in that Henry VIII was graciously pleased, establishing the bishopric of Bristol, to raise it to cathedral rank—is its Norman chapter-house, a rectangular chamber wonderfully enriched with stone carvings and diaper work and interlaced arcades. Among the bishops on whom the silvery lights from the Jesse window, the great east window of the choir, have fallen, are Fletcher, father of the dramatist, and Trelawney of Cornish fame. With a lingering look at the [326]
Norman archway known as College gate, whose elaborate mouldings are worn on the sea-wind side, but still distinct on the other, I crossed the Green to the Mayor's Chapel, a little Gothic church of peculiar beauty, with windows that are harmonies in glass, and with monuments, among which the burgess element is marked, so old and strange, yet so naïve and natural, that the valour, love, and grief of a far past seem but held in slumber there. If the marble figures rise and talk together on All Saints' Eve, it is a quaint but seemly assemblage.

Bristol, even in the palmy days of her rum-trade and her slave-trade, was always singularly given to religion, and her churches are numerous,—St. Peter's, her mother-church, with an Early Norman tower, guarding the ashes of her hapless poet, Richard Savage, who died, a debtor, in Newgate prison hard by and was buried at his jailer's costs; St. Stephen's, whose turreted Perpendicular tower is one of the sights of the city; and many another; but supreme among them all,

"The pride of Bristowe and the Western londe,"

[327]

is St. Mary Radcliffe. This superb structure, ever since the day when Queen Bess called it "the fairest, the goodliest, and most famous parish-church in England," has gone on adding praise to praise. It is of ancient foundation, still observing, at Whitsuntide, the ceremony of rush-bearing, but it was rebuilt, in course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, by Mayor Canynges the grandfather and Mayor Canynges the grandson. It is a pity that their alabaster heads should be all scratched over with initials. It was in this church that Chatterton pretended to discover the manuscript poems of his invented monk Rowley; it was here that Coleridge and Southey wedded the ladies of their Pantisocratical choice; and every good American is expected to thrill at the sight of the armour, hanging from one of the piers, of the gallant admiral, Sir William Penn, a native of Bristol and the father of our Quaker.

On my first visit, I righteously went on bustop out to Clifton, the breathing-place of Bristol, viewed the great grassy upland, with the Avon flowing muddily through a deep gorge, paced the boasted Suspension Bridge that spans the gorge, and finally, by way of tribute to "Evelina" and [328]
"Humphrey Clinker," followed "the zigzag" down to the Hotwells, whose glory as a spa is now departed. But of all that one may see in or about Bristol, nothing so impresses the mind as the big, plain, serious old town itself. It has been out-distanced in commerce and in manufacture by those giant upstarts, Liverpool and Manchester, yet it is still patiently pushing on in its accustomed track. So absorbed in business routine does it seem that one almost forgets that it has ever had other than practical interests,—that the "Lyrical Ballads" found their publisher here,—but gives one's self over to the latent romance of commerce and of trade. One wanders through Corn Street and Wine Street and Christmas Street, by Bakers' Hall and Spicers' Hall and Merchant Venturers' Hall, and—for the tidal Avon is navigable even for vessels of large tonnage—is ever freshly astonished, as Pope was astonished, to behold "in the middle of the street, as far as you can see, hundreds of ships, their masts as thick as they can stand by one another, which is the oddest and most surprising sight imaginable." [329]

The last great city in our summer path was Exeter, whose greatness is of the past. Exeter is, like Bristol, a county of itself, and yet stands, in a true sense, as the capital of Devonshire. It is, moreover, the heart of the whole West Country. "In Exeter," says Mr. Norway, a Cornishman, "all the history of the West is bound up—its love of liberty, its independence, its passionate resistance to foreign conquerors, its devotion to lost causes, its loyalty to the throne, its pride, its trade, its maritime adventure,—all these many strands are twined together in that bond which links West Countrymen to Exeter. There is no incident in their past history which does not touch her. Like them she was unstained by heathendom, and kept her faith when the dwellers in less happy cities further north were pricked to the worship of Thor and Odin at the point of Saxon spears. Like them she fought valiantly against the Norman Conqueror, and when she fell their cause fell with her. And since those days what a host of great and stirring incidents have happened here, from Perkin Warbeck beating on the gates with his rabble of brave Cornishmen, to William of Orange going in high state to the cathedral, welcomed already as a deliverer to that throne which it lay [330]
almost with Exeter to give or to withhold."

Exeter impresses the stranger to-day merely as a prosperous county-town, a pleasant cathedral city, yet in the reign of Stephen it was ranked for importance next after London, York, and Winchester, supplanting Lincoln, once the holder of the fourth place, from which it was soon itself to be dislodged by Bristol. But Exeter, seated on the hill where, in dim, wild ages a band of Britons built them a rude stronghold, beside the stream up whose reddened waters the vessels of Roman and Saxon and Dane have fought their way, does not forget. So faithful is her memory, indeed, that still the vicar of Pinhoe, a village almost in her suburbs, receives every year a handful of shining silver pieces in recognition of a deed of daring performed by a long-ago predecessor in his holy office. When the West Countrymen, bent on driving out the Danes, were in the thick of a hard fight there at Pinhoe, their supply of arrows fell short, and this plucky priest, girding up his gown, dodged through the enemy to the citadel, bringing back—so

schoolboyish were those old battles—a bundle of feathered shafts that might have saved the day. But although the Danes triumphed, Exeter has paid an annual reward of sixteen shillings to the vicar of Pinhoe ever since—a period of some nine hundred years. [331]

We rendered, of course, our first homage to the cathedral, rejoicing in the oft-praised symmetries of the interior and, hardly less, in the tender colour-tones that melted, blues into greys, and fawns into creams, with the softening of the light. The cathedral library contains that treasure of our literature, the Exeter Book, an anthology of Anglo-Saxon poetry, "one great English book of divers things, song-wise wrought," left by the will of Bishop Leofric, who died in 1072, to "Saint Peter's minster in Exeter where his bishop-stool is." Miles Coverdale, translator of the Bible, was bishop here in Tudor times, and Sir Jonathan Trelawney, transferred from the poorer see of Bristol, held for eighteen years Exeter's episcopal throne,—a "bishop-stool" most magnificently fashioned. This Trelawney was one of the "Seven Bishops" who clashed with James II and were thrown into prison. His home was in Cornwall, and the famous song, which may owe its present [332] form to the Rev. R. S. Hawker, the eccentric vicar of Morwenstow, thunders the wrath of the West Country:

"And have they fixed the where and when?
And shall Trelawney die?
Here's twenty thousand Cornishmen
Will know the reason why."

And speaking of vicars, the most hurried tourist should cast a glance up to the red tower of St. Thomas' church, for the sake of another clergyman who dared brave a king. The vicar of St. Thomas was conspicuous in the West Country rebellion against the reformed service, involving the use of an English prayer-book, introduced by law in 1549. The men of Devon and, even more, the men of Cornwall, who understood the English hardly better than the Latin, looked upon this new form of worship as "but a Christmas game" and could not "abide to hear of any other religion than as they were first nuzled in." This Exeter vicar went on chanting the Latin liturgy and wearing his old vestments, so that, for his contumacy, he was hanged "in his popish apparel" from a gallows erected on top of his own church-tower. [333]

Of the secular buildings in Exeter, we visited the fine-fronted guildhall in High Street and Mol's Coffee House in the Cathedral Yard. The custodian of the guildhall proudly pointed out the beauties of its fifteenth-century carvings, and hospitably invited us to try on the gorgeous robes of the civic dignitaries and sit in their great chairs of fretted oak, but we contented ourselves with viewing the various treasures of the old burgh on exhibition there,—gold chains of office, silver salvers and loving-cups, a huge, two-handed sword that long since drank its last draught of blood in the fierce grip of Edward IV, a portrait of the Stuart princess who, when Charles I and Queen Henrietta were in sore straits, had been born and sheltered at Exeter, and many another memento of an eventful and honourable past. We went away rapt in visions of those blithe Midsummer Eves when all the Exeter guilds, preceded by a mounted band consisting of Mayor and Alderman and Council, made the circuit of the city walls, the image of St. Peter borne before the Fishmongers, that of St. Luke before the Painters, and every other trade in like manner preceded by its especial patron saint; but Mol's Coffee House called up a later picture of [334]

"Sir Francis Drake, and Martin Frobisher,
John Hawkins, and your other English captains,"

who, with their Devonshire countrymen, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Sir Richard Grenville, Sir Walter Raleigh, used to meet in the oak-panelled hall of this Tudor mansion for such high, adventurous talk as must have made the wine sparkle in their cups.

We were a little tired in Exeter, I remember, but instead of prying out from the west wall of the cathedral, as we would have done three hundred years ago, a bit of "Peter-stone" to cure our ailments, we took a blissful drive up the Exe,—such a trickle of a stream just then that only regard for the coachman's feelings restrained us from making fun of it,—through the tranquil beauty of Devonshire lanes, by thatched cottage and lordly park and one dreamy little church after another, each with its special feature of pinnacled tower, or Saxon font, or quaint old pew, or frieze of angel frescoes. We passed a modest almshouse, perhaps the bequest of husband and wife for the maintenance of four widows or two married couples. At all events, the inscription [335] beneath a portrait head in relief ran:

"Grudge not my laurell.
  Rather blesse that Power
Which made the death of two
  The life of fowre."

Every mile of Devonshire has its charm, not to be mapped out in advance, but freshly discovered by each new lover of the moorland and the sea, of soft air and the play of shadows, of folklore and tradition, of the memory of heroes. Those who cannot know fair Devon in actual presence may find her at her best in the romances of Kingsley and Blackmore and Phillpotts. The shire abounds in sea-magic. The south coast, with its wealth of sheltered bays and tempting inlets, has so mild and equable a climate that its dreamy windings have become dotted with winter resorts as well as watering-places. Lyme Regis, on the edge of Dorset, Sidmouth and Exmouth and Dawlish, Teignmouth, whence Keats dated his "Endymion," and fashionable Torquay are perhaps the most in favour, but all the shore is warm and wonderful in colour, set as it is with wave-washed cliffs [336] that glisten ruddy and white and rose-pink in the sun. These shining headlands, about which beat the wild white wings of seagulls, are haunted by legends wilder yet. Half-way between Dawlish and Teignmouth are two red sandstone pillars, the statelier with its top suggestive of a tumbled wig, the lower standing at a deferential tilt. In these are shut the sinful souls of an East Devon clergyman and his clerk, who longed too eagerly, in the hope of their own preferment, for the death of a Bishop of Exeter.

Further down the coast the health seekers and holiday folk are somewhat less in evidence. The old, cliff-climbing town of Brixham, where William of Orange landed, goes fishing for a livelihood. Dartmouth, not so joyous to-day as when Cœur de Lion gathered there the fleet that was to win for Christendom the Holy Sepulchre, not so turbulent as when Chaucer suspected his wild-bearded seaman, little better than a pirate, of hailing from that port, not so adventurous as when one John Davis, of Sandridge on the Dart, sailed out from her blue harbour with his two small vessels, the Sunneshine and the Moonshine, to seek a passage to China by way of the Polar sea, [337] is mainly occupied in the training of midshipmen. A steamer trip up the Dart, that sudden and dangerous stream of neighbourhood dread

—"River of Dart, river of Dart,
  Every year thou claimest a heart"—

brings us to Totnes, where, on the high authority of Geoffrey of Monmouth, the first king of the Britons, Brutus, grandson of the pious Æneas, made his landing.

"Here I am, and here I res',
And this town shall be called Totnes."

The Brutus Stone, on which the Trojan first set foot, is shown in irrefutable proof of this event. In the course of the trip, the steamer passes Greenway House, where Sir Humphrey Gilbert was born and where, it is claimed, the potato first sprouted in English soil.

But the most momentous of all these southern ports, Plymouth, wears an aspect worthy of its renown. The spell of the briar-rose has not choked its growth, although the glamour of a glorious past enhances its present greatness. As we gazed from Plymouth Hoe, a lofty crescent on the sea- [338] front, with a magnificent outlook across the long granite break-water and the Sound alive with all manner of shipping, past the Eddystone Light to the Atlantic, our thoughts, even while recognising the prosperity of this modern naval station, flew back to those brave old times when the steep streets and the high bluff rang not only with the gruff hails of bronzed sea-captains,

  "dogs of an elder day
Who sacked the golden ports,"

but with the merry quips and laughter of the gay young blades who loved to ruffle it before the Devon belles.

"How Plymouth swells with gallants! how the streets
Glister with gold! You cannot meet a man
But trikt in scarf and feather."

Sumptuous ocean liners call at Plymouth now; the terrible war-ships of England ride that ample roadstead; but we remembered the gallant little crafts of yore, the Dreadnought and the Defiance, the Swiftsure, the Lion, the Rainbow, the Nonpareil, the Pelican, the Victory, and the

Elizabeth. It was from Plymouth that Drake, "fellow-traveller of the Sunn," put forth on the voyage that circumnavigated the globe, and here he was playing at bowls when on the Hoe was raised the cry that the Spanish Armada had been sighted. But not all the galleons of Spain could flurry "Franky Drake." [339]

"Drake nor devil nor Spaniard feared;
Their cities he put to the sack;
He singed His Catholic Majesty's beard,
And harried his ships to wrack.
He was playing at Plymouth a rubber of bowls
When the great Armada came,
But he said, 'They must wait their turn, good souls;'
And he stooped and finished the game."

His statue presides over the broad esplanade, looking steadily seaward,—a sight that put us again to quoting Newbolt:

"Drake, he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',
He sees it arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

"Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
'Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore, [340]
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago.'"

It is hard to put by those visions of the Armada days even to think of Sir Walter Raleigh's tragic return to Plymouth and the block, his high heart foiled at last in its long quest for the golden city of Manoa; and I hardly dare confess that we quite forgot to hunt out the special nook whence the Mayflower, with her incredible load of furniture and ancestors, set sail to found another Plymouth on a bleaker shore.

THE FAL

The northern coast of Devonshire, with its more bracing air, is no less enchanting than the southern. Charles Kingsley, born under the brow of Dartmoor, has lavished on North Devon raptures of filial praise, but the scenes of "Westward Ho!" fully bear out his glowing paragraphs. It is years ago that I passed an August in Clovelly, but the joy of it lingers yet. Nothing that I have ever seen on this our starry lodging-place, with its infinite surprises of beauty, resembles that white village climbing the cleft of a wooded cliff, its narrow street only a curving slope, a steep [341] passage here and there smoothed into steps, where donkeys and pedestrians rub amiable shoulders. At a turn in this cobbled stairway, your gaze, which has been held between two lines of the quaintest little houses, all diversified with peaks and gables, porches and balconies, window displays of china and pots of flowering vines, suddenly falls to a tiny harbour, a pier built

out from the natural rock and hung with fishing-nets, a tangle of red-sailed boats, and a pebbly beach from which we used to watch the sunset flushing sea and cliffs. The five hundred dwellers in this hanging hamlet must all be of a kin, for Clovelly lads, we were told by our landlady, never do well if they marry outside the combe. Kindest of gossips! She tucked us away as best she could in such bits of rooms that, like Alice in Wonderland, we had to thrust one foot up chimney and one arm out of the window among the fuchsias and geraniums that make nothing, in Clovelly, of growing to a height of twenty feet. She would put us up wonderful luncheons of duck sandwiches and heather-honey and lime-water delicately flavoured from the old whiskey bottles [342] into which it was poured, when we were starting out on those long walks to which North Devon air and views allure the laziest. Sometimes we followed the Hobby Drive, a wooded avenue along the top of the cliff, where for considerable distances a wall of noble timber, beech and oak and chestnut, glistening hollies and red-berried rowans, would shut out the view, and again the foliage would open and the eye could range across an opal sea to Lundy Island. On other days we would stroll through Clovelly Court to the summit of White Cliff, known as Gallantry Bower, whence one may look at choice far out over blowing woods or tossing waves. The towering trees of the park, trees that Will Carey may have climbed, are so ancient now that ferns and mosses grow on their decaying branches. Once we picked our way over the shingles to Bucks Mill, gathering only to drop again handfuls of the curiously flecked and banded pebbles. The water seemed to have as many colours as they, tans and russets and copper-tints innumerable, with shifting gleams of turquoise and of beryl. Bucks Mill is a fishing-hamlet of some one hundred and [343] fifty souls, representing two original families, one of which, "the Browns," a swarthy and passionate race, is said to descend from Spanish sailors wrecked off the coast when gale and billow sided with England against the hapless Armada.

Another day we walked to Stoke, seven miles thither and seven miles back, to see the Saxon church raised by the Countess Elgitha in gratitude for the escape from shipwreck of her husband, Earl Godwin. All the way we were passing cottages that seemed to have strayed out of an artist's portfolio. Their rosy walls of Devonshire cob—the reddish mud of the region mixed with pebbles —were more than half hidden by the giant fuchsias and clambering honeysuckles. Even the blue larkspur would grow up to the thatch. Too often our road was shut in by hedges and we trudged along as in a green tunnel roofed with blue. Dahlias and hydrangias, poppies, hollyhocks and roses filled the cottage dooryards and gardens with masses of bloom. We asked a woman smiling in her vine-wreathed doorway how near we were to Hartland. "Win the top of yon hill," she said, "and you'll soon slip away into it." So we slipped away and were refreshed in another cottage [344] doorway by two glasses of skim-milk for a penny. We found a grave old church at Stoke, with legions of rooks wheeling about the massive tower which has so long been a beacon for storm-tossed mariners. The white-bearded verger, whose rolling gait betrayed the sailor, read to us in stentorian tones, punctuated with chuckles, an epitaph which, in slightly varied form, we had seen elsewhere in Devon:

"Here lies I at the church door.
  Here lies I because I's poor.
The farther in, the more to pay;
  But here lies I as well as they."

Our homeward walk, by a different road, gave us a clearer impression of the ranges of naked hilltops which make up the Hartland parish. Upon those rounded summits rested a mellow western light which had dimmed into dusk when we finally risked our weary bones on the slippery "back staircase" of Clovelly.

We journeyed from Clovelly to Bideford by carrier's cart, sitting up with what dignity we could amidst a remarkable miscellany of packages. Once arrived at Kingsley's hero-town, we read, as in [345] honour bound, the opening chapter of "Westward Ho!" crossed the historic bridge and sought out in the church the brass erected to the noble memory of Sir Richard Grenville, who drove the little *Revenge* with such a gallant recklessness into the thick of the Spanish fleet, fought his immortal fight, and died of his wounds "with a joyful and quiet mind." The exceeding charm of this Bristol Channel coast made us intolerant of trains and even of coaches, so that at lovely, idle Ilfracombe we took to our feet again and walked on by a cliff path to Combe Martin. Here we were startled, on going to bed, to find packed away between the thin mattresses a hoard of green pears, hard as marbles, and not much bigger, which the small boy of the inn, apparently intent on suicide, had secreted. The towered church, some eight or nine centuries old, was shown to us by a sexton who claimed that the office had descended in his family from father to son for the past three hundred years. However that may be, he was an entertaining guide, reading off his favourite "posy-stones" with a relish, and interpreting the carvings of the curious old rood-screen according to a version [346] of Scripture unlike any that we had known before. Thence our way climbed up for two toilsome miles through a muddy sunken lane, in whose rock walls was a growth of dainty fern. It was good to come out in view of the rival purples of sunny sea and heathery hills, good to be regaled on "cold shoulder" and Devonshire junket in a stone-floored kitchen with vast fireplace and ponderous oaken settles, good to start off again across Trentishoe Common, glorious with gorse, and down the richly wooded combe, past a farmyard whose great black pig grunted at us fearsomely, and still down and down, through the fragrance of the pines. We turned off our track to follow the eddying Heddon to the sea, and had, in consequence, a stiff scramble to gain our proper path cut high in the Channel side of the cliff. We walked along that narrow way in a beauty almost too great to bear, but the stress of emotion found some relief in the attention we had to give to our footing, for the cliff fell sheer to the sunset-coloured waters. We spent the night at Wooda Bay, walking on in the morning for a jocund mile or two through fresh-scented [347]

larchwoods, then across Lee Abbey Park and through the fantastic Valley of Rocks, along another cliff-walk and down a steep descent to Lynmouth, where Shelley's "myrtle-twined cottage" stands upon the beach. Lynmouth, where the songs of sea and river blend, was more to our taste in its picturesque mingling of the old and the new, of herring-village and watering-place, than its airy twin, Linton, perched on the cliff-top four hundred feet above, but both are little paradises and, having located ourselves in one, the first thing we did was to leave it and visit the other. We lingered for a little in this exquisite corner of creation, till one blithe morning we could put up no longer with the saucy challenge of the Lyn and chased that somersaulting sprite, that perpetual waterfall, five miles inland, so coming out on the heathery waste of Exmoor.

We would gladly have turned gipsies then and there, if so we might have wandered all over and over that beautiful wild upland, and down through the undulating plain of mid-Devon, with its well-watered pastures and rich dairy-farms for whose butter and cheese the Devonshire sailors, as Hakluyt's narratives tell, used to long sorely on their far voyages. But the genuine garden of [348]
Devon is South Hams, below Dartmoor and between the Teign and the Tamar. This is the apple-country of which the poet sings:

"For me there's nought I would not give
  For the good Devon land,
Whose orchards down the echoing cleeve
  Bedewed with spray-drift stand,
And hardly bear the red fruit up
That shall be next year's cider-cup."

Little as Parson Herrick, the indignant incumbent of Dean Prior, enjoyed his Devonshire charge, the cider industry of the region must have appealed to him.

But this broad county, outranked in size only by York and Lincolnshire, has in its south, as in its north, a desolate tableland. Dartmoor has been described as a "monstrous lump of granite, covered with a peaty soil." The rocks are rich in lead and iron, tin and copper, but the soil is too poor even for furze to flourish in it. Heather, reeds, moss and whortleberries make shift to grow, and afford a rough pasturage to the scampering wild ponies, the moor-sheep and red cattle. It is
a silent land of rugged tors and black morasses, of sudden mists and glooms, of prehistoric huts, [349]
abandoned mines, and, above all, for "Superstition clings to the granite," of dark stories, weird spells, and strange enchantments. Indeed, it folds a horror in its heart,—Dartmoor Prison, where our American sailors suffered a century ago, and where English convicts are now ringed in by grim walls and armed sentries. It is said that even to-day, when a Dartmoor child gets a burn, the mother's first remedy is to lay her thumb upon the smarting spot and repeat:

"There came two angels out of the west,
One brought fire, the other brought frost.
    Out, fire! In, frost!
By the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!
    Amen, amen, amen."

Among the mysterious groups of so-called Druid stones is a circle known as the Nine Maidens, for these uncouth grey shapes were once slender girls so fond of dancing that they would not cease on Sunday, and for that sin were petrified. And still every Sabbath noon these impenitent stones come to life and dance thrice around in a circle.

CORNWALL [350]

But the veritable Pixydom lies south of the Tamar. In Cornwall, that stretch of deserted moors furrowed on either side by little river-valleys, that rocky promontory which seems to belong more to the kingdom of the sea than to England, the Celtic imagination has rioted at will. There were giants in the land in bygone days, for the wanderer among those strangely sculptured crags of granite, slate, and serpentine chances at every turn on a Giant's Cradle or a Giant's Chair, Giant's Spoon, Giant's Bowl, Giant's Key, Giant's Hat, Giant's Table, Giant's Well, Giant's Pulpit, Giant's Grave. Cornishmen have heard the music and seen the fairy dances, spied on fairy banquets, and peeped in on fairy funerals. The Small People have been gay and kindly neighbours, sometimes
whisking away a neglected baby and returning the little mortal all pink and clean, wrapped in [351]
leaves and blossoms, "as sweet as a nut." These are the spirits of Druids, or of other early Cornwall folk, who, as heathen, may not go to heaven, but are too innocent for hell. So they are suffered to live on in their old happy haunts, but ever dwindling and dwindling, till it is to be feared that bye and bye, what with all the children growing stupid over schoolbooks, and all the poets writing realistic novels, the Small People will twinkle out of sight. The Spriggans, lurking about the cairns and cromlechs, where they keep guard over buried treasures, could better be spared. They are such thievish and mischievous trolls, with such extraordinary strength in their ugly bits of bodies, it is more likely they are the diminished ghosts of the old giants. The Piskies are nearly as bad, as any bewildered traveller who has been Pisky-led into a bog would testify. The only sure protection against their tricks is to wear your garments inside out. Many a Cornish farmer has found a fine young horse all sweated and spent in the morning, his mane knotted into fairy stirrups showing plainly how some score of the Piskies had been riding him over night. And

many a Cornish miner, deep down in the earth, has felt his hair rise on his head as he heard the [352]
tap, *tap*, *tap* of the Knockers, souls of long-imprisoned Jews sent here by Roman emperors to work the tin-mines of Cornwall. The Brownies, who used to be so helpful about the house, have grown shy of late and can be depended on for assistance only when the bees are swarming. Then the housewife beats on a tin pan, calling at the top of her voice: "Brownie! Brownie!" till she sees that he has heard her and is persuading the bees to settle. Offended mermaids have choked up Cornish harbours and buried sea-coast villages under sand. If you doubt it, go and look at the little church of St. Piran—the miners' saint, who came sailing from Ireland on a millstone and discovered the Cornish tin—the church that for seven centuries was hidden under the sands and then, as the restless winds sifted and searched them, rose again to human sight. Spectral hounds bay across the moors, and a phantom coach is sometimes heard rolling with a hollow rumble along the deep-hedged roads. Ghost ships with all sail set drive by the shores on gusty nights, and the Death Ship, tall, dark, square-rigged, with black sails and a demon crew, has been known [353]
to come, in crashes of thunder and flare of lightning, for the soul of a notorious wrecker. Drowned sailors call from under the tide or speed along the strand with dripping clothes and hair. Witches, sorcerers, fortune-tellers, charmers and "cunning men" are among the historic characters of Cornwall. In fact, the Witch of Freddam still rides the seas in her coffin, stirring up storms with her ladle and broom. The luckless sailor who has set eyes on her will not see his home again. Miners, too, have their special dangers. The goblins that they sometimes chance on underground, hunched up into uncouth shapes or tumbling heels over head, are not ill-met, as their presence indicates rich lodes, but it would never do to mark a cross on the wall of a mine gallery, or to pass a snail on your way to the shaft without dropping for it a morsel of tallow from your candle. The newly dead notify their friends of the event in many a curious fashion, even by shaking the milk in the pans and spoiling the clotted cream. A woman shamed to suicide haunts her betrayer in the form of a white hare. Cornishmen cannot die easy on a feather-bed, nor in a house where any key is turned or bolt is shot, nor would they be carried to the grave by a new [354]
road, nor buried on the north side of the church. If rain fall—as in Cornwall it often does—on a bier, it is a sign that the soul has "arrived safe."

Amid all these supernatural influences, it is reassuring to know that the Devil never enters this county, having a wholesome fear of being made into a pie. His cloven hoofs once ventured across the Tamar, but he was dismayed to find that the Cornish women put everything, fish, flesh, fowl, vegetables, whatnot, into pie. By the time poor Beelzebub had partaken of fishy pie, stargazy pie —made of pilchards,—conger pie—made of eels,—lamy pie—made of kid,—herby pie, parsley pie, and piggy pie, his nerves gave way, and he bolted out of the shire so precipitately that he strewed the hills and the coast with his travelling equipment of Devil's Bellows, Devil's Ovens, and Devil's Frying-pans.

It is mainly in West Cornwall that such fantastic figurings in the rocks are referred to the Devil or the giants. On the eastern moors they are more commonly attributed to King Arthur, whose Beds [355]
and Chairs and Cups and Saucers and the Footprints of whose horse are numerous enough to put the skeptic out of countenance. But not only our first encounter, as we entered Cornwall by the east, was with King Arthur, but almost our last, as we left the Duchy by the west,—for this shire is proud to be known as the Royal Duchy, claiming that the eldest son of the Crown is born Duke of Cornwall and only subsequently created Prince of Wales. Within what seemed but a short time after crossing the broad boundary stream, dotted with sleepy craft, we found ourselves at Liskeard, a sleepy old market-town blest with a noble church on whose outer wall is a sundial with the grave motto: "So soon passeth it away." It was already late in the afternoon, but a dark, thin, bright-eyed Cornishwoman in the railway carriage had given us most cheering information. Could we drive to Dozmare Pool before sunset? Easily; it was only a round of three or four miles and would take us by the Devil's Cheesewring and The Hurlers and St. Keyne's Well. The waters of this well, she went on to tell us, have the magic property of giving the upper hand to that one [356]
of a wedded pair first drinking of them after the ceremony; and she recited with charming vivacity snatches of Southey's ballad, while a burly, red-faced, blue-eyed, beaming tourist from over the Tamar, the only man in the compartment, blurted out a gallantry to the effect that ladies ought to have their way anyhow, wells or no wells, and his silent little wife smiled a knowing little smile.

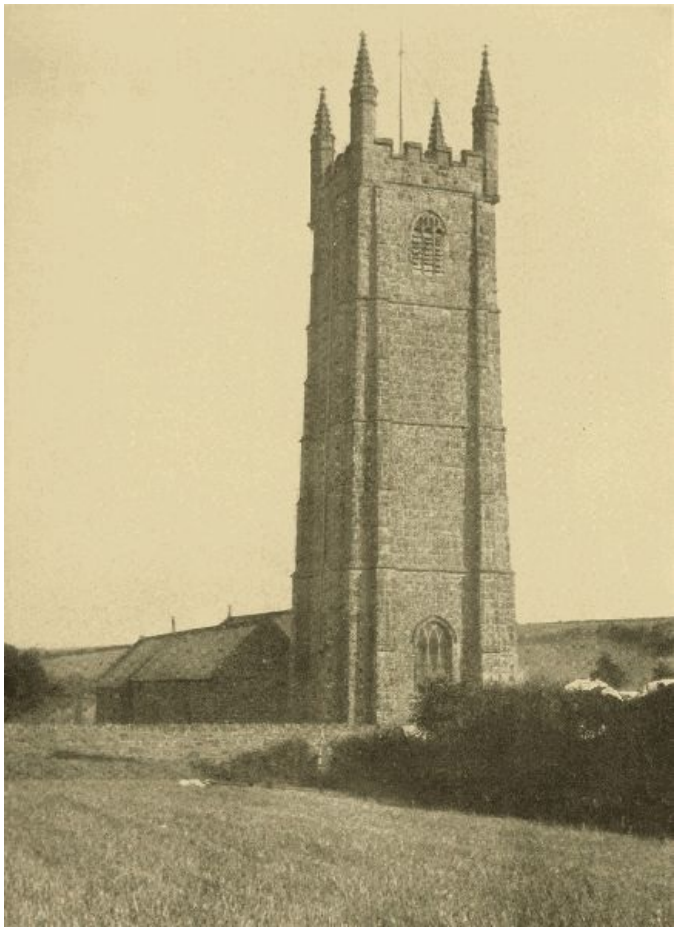
The people at the inn exchanged glances when we announced our route and although, setting out at five, we confidently ordered dinner at seven, the landlady slipped a packet of sandwiches and two bottles of ginger ale into the carriage. The coachman, thin and dark and vivid of countenance, like all the rest of this new Cornish world about us, kindly but firmly refused to include in the drive St. Keyne's Well, the Cheesewring, a curious pile of granite blocks some thirty feet high, whose topmost stone is so sensitive that it whirls about three times whenever *it hears* a cock crow, and The Hurlers, three prehistoric stone circles reported by legend, in its later Puritan garb, to be groups of young Cornishmen thus enchanted for indulging on a Sunday [357]
in the traditional Cornish sport of "hurling." Dozmare Pool was all that our determined Jehu would undertake, although he graciously allowed us, in passing, a glimpse of St. Cleer's Well. This is not as famous as the well of St. Neot the Pigmy, who endowed the sacred waters with miraculous virtue by standing in them, day after day, immersed to his neck, while he repeated the entire book of Psalms, or of various others, but it is a spring of old renown, covered over by a steep-pitched roof supported on time-worn pillars and arches. The niches of this little open-air baptistry are now empty and its pinnacles are broken, but beside it still stands an ancient cross. The lofty-towered church of St. Cleer was close by, and we entered to bow our heads for a moment under its vaulted and timbered roof.

Our coachman would allow no further pause. The sunset was already casting a crimson light over the wastes of fern and bracken and the earthscars of abandoned mines, for the hills all about contain tin and copper, which it does not pay to work. Our old white nag—I hope his name was Merlin—seemed incapable of fatigue. I half suspect he was a sorcery steed of metal. Up and down [358] the hills he scrambled with unquenchable enthusiasm. As the sun sank into a bed of bracken, we marvelled that the driver could be sure of his way across those dim and featureless moors, but he turned unerringly from one deep lane into another. As we drew nearer the Pool, that "middle mere" into which Sir Bedivere flung the jewel-hilted Excalibur, the evil powers began to array themselves against us. For the wild spirit Tregeagle, whose howling as he is chased by demon dogs has been heard all over Cornwall, is doomed for his sins in this mortal life to labour endlessly at the hopeless task of emptying Dozmare Pool. It is so deep—notwithstanding the awkward fact of its going dry in rainless summers—that not all the bell-ropes in Cornwall can reach to its bottom, and a thorn-bush, once flung into it, floated out into Falmouth harbour. The bailing must be done by a limpetshell with a hole in it and, altogether, it is no wonder that Tregeagle's temper has grown exceedingly morose. For change of occupation, he is sometimes taken to the north coast and set to spinning ropes of sand, or is given a choked-up harbour to [359] sweep out, but these tasks please him no better, and the shrieks of his torment are borne on every storm.

As we drove on, a light mist crept over the meadows and defined the course of an attendant stream. Clouds and trees took on weird aspects. There were Druid robes floating across the sky, misshapen figures crouching under the hedges, menacing arms shaken from the trees, and one wizard branch shot out and splashed our faces with unholy dew. The mist thickened and rose. The carriage left the road and bumped uncertainly along till it came to a stop at what we vaguely made out to be the foot of a hill. For by this time the clinging vapours had driven us into our waterproofs and so blurred all vision that the driver, who could not leave his fiery veteran of a horse, would not let us attempt the half-mile climb alone, but sent a shout plunging through that wet, white air and brought out some bogie of the moor embodied as a gaunt old Cornish dame to be our guide. Feeling her way with a stout stick, she led us up the hill and along a stony track where we could not see our steps nor one another's faces. When she stayed us with her staff and [360] said we had reached the pool, we could discern nothing of the sort, but reckless of life and limb we followed her down an abrupt bank and over a hummocky bit of ground to the very brink, as she assured us, of the bottomless tarn. We tried to think we saw a glimmer, although we heard not even

> "the ripple washing in the reeds,
> And the wild water lapping on the crag."

Lacking an Excalibur, I cast a stone into the invisible, hoping I might hit Tregeagle, but the hollow splash that came back aroused such uncanny echoes we all three with one accord skurried away and scrabbled back down sandy ruts to the haven of the carriage. As we gratefully munched our sandwiches, we reflected that perhaps the mystical mere was more impressive so than if we had actually beheld that little fresh-water pond, about a mile in circumference and some eight or ten feet deep, lying on its mid-Cornwall tableland with the crest of Brown Gilly rising up behind. Our eyes had told us nothing that we could urge against Malory's geography, with its sea-route from Dozmare to Glastonbury.



CHURCH OF ST. COLUMB MINOR

> "Then Sir Bedivere took the King upon his back, and so went with him to that water side, and when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. 'Now put me into the barge,' said the King; and so he did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they sat them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head, and then that queen said, 'Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas; this wound on your head hath caught overmuch cold.' And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere cried, 'Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies?' 'Comfort thyself,' said the King, 'and do as well as thou mayst, for in me is no trust for to trust in. For I will into the vale of Avalon to heal me of my grievous wound.'" [361]

But the Cornish mist in which Arthur fought his last "dim, weird battle of the west" was to us no longer a fable.

> "A death-white mist slept over sand and sea;
> Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
> Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
> With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell
> Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
> For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
> And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
> And some had visions out of golden youth, [362]
> And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
> Look in upon the battle."

Now that we had braved Tregeagle and done the deed, that heavy mist thinned away as suddenly as it had gathered, and when, at ten o'clock, we reached our inn, the sky was bright with stars, and a great moon was slowly drifting up from the horizon.

But the paramount Table Round locality in Cornwall is Tintagel on the western coast where Arthur's Castle stands and where, moreover, the hushed tide brought him first from the mystery of "the great deep."

> "For there was no man knew from whence he came;
> But after tempest, when the long wave broke
> All down the thundering shores of Bude and Boss,
> There came a day as still as heaven, and then
> They found a naked child upon the sands
> Of wild Dundagil by the Cornish sea;
> And that was Arthur."

The high, bleak, rugged and desolate tract of Bodwin Moor, at whose heart is Dozmare Pool, lies between the four towns of Liskeard, Bodwin, Launceston and Camelford. This last was our starting-point for Tintagel. We had reached Camelford by a day's journey from Penzance, setting [363] out by train through a country seamed all over with abandoned surface diggings of the tin mines, pierced by shafts and defaced by heaps of mineral refuse to which heather was already bringing the first healing of nature. We had our nooning at Newquay and would have been glad to linger on its broad beach, looking up at the twin barrows where sleep, according to tradition, two kings of long ago,—kings who fought on that open headland a whole day through and fell together at sunset, each slain by the last thrust of the other. But we pressed on by carriage, hardly glancing at the long, low, stately towered church of St. Columb Minor, and cutting short our survey of the curious old panels, so richly carved with sacred emblems—pelicans, crosses, the instruments of the Passion, the pierced hand, a heart within a crown of thorns, the lamb, the wafer and the cup —in the brother church of St. Columb Major. From the depths of our Cornish road shut in by banks and hedges some ten or twelve feet high, we eyed the ripe blackberries hanging well above our reach; we saw a blazing rick on one side and, on the other, a maze of white butterflies [364] circling among the fuchsia trees; we met a group of rustic mourners pushing a bier set on wheels; and just as the hedges began to open here and there, giving us vistas of wheatfield, moor, and sea, we found ourselves at Wadebridge, a little town with a street of ivy-greened houses dignified by a grey church-tower. We crossed a stone bridge of many arches that seemed too big for its river, and took train for Camelford. On our right we had the granite masses of Brown Willy and Rough Tor and presently, on our left, the great gashes of the Delalobe slate quarries.

ARTHUR'S CASTLE, TINTAGEL

These held the close attention of a Cornish miner who, after forty years of fortune-seeking in Australia, was coming home to Camelford for a visit. He drove up with us in the rattling wagonette, gazing on ragged hedge and prickly furze as a thirsty soul might gaze on Paradise. The fulness of his heart overflowed in little laughters, though the tears were glistening on his lashes, and in broken words of memory and joy. He kept pointing out to us, mere strangers that we were, not noting and not caring what we were, the stiles and streams and rocks associated with special events of his boyhood and youth. As we went clattering down into the little stone [365] huddle of houses, we had to turn away from the rapture in his eyes. Brothers and sisters were waiting to greet him, with tall children of theirs that had been to him but names, yet the human welcome could hardly penetrate through his dream, through his ecstatic communion with the scene itself. As we were driving out of Camelford early the next morning, we caught sight of our grizzled Cornishman once again, standing in one of those humble doorways with the shining still upon his face.

A man like that would make anybody homesick and, to speak impartially, we thought that Camelford was far less worthy of such emotion than two villages we severally remembered over sea. We fell out of humour with the poor old town, would not hear of it as the Arthurian Camelot,

> "a city of shadowy palaces
> And stately,"

and disdained the tradition that the blameless king fell at Slaughter Bridge. My athletic comrade, however, to the admiration of a flock of little schoolgirls, swung herself down the riverbank to [366] see his tombstone and reported it as reading:

Caten hic jacit filius Marconi.

The drive to Tintagel was through a world of slate,—slate everywhere. There were slate walls, slate houses, heaps of slate-refuse, banks of broken slate feathered with gorse and heather,

yawning mouths of disused slate quarries. We passed through defiles where slate was piled cliff-high on either side. Slate steps led up to the footpaths that ran along the top of the hedge-banks. By way of this forsaken region we came to a sleeping town. Tintagel Church lay before us, hoary, silent. Not a soul was in the streets,—not the fierce ghosts of Gorlois and of Uther Pendragon, nor the sad ghost of Igraine, nor the loving ghosts of Tristram and Iseult. We left the carriage and climbed by slippery paths to Arthur's Castle, which is no castle, but a colossal confusion of tumbled rocks, some heaped and mortared once by human hands, some grouped in the fantastic architecture of nature. There we sat astonished and dismayed, for the place is like a robber hold, [367] a den of pirates fortified against the land, rather than a court of chivalry. But the scene was superbly beautiful. The ocean on which we looked was a dazzling blue, and far to north and south stood out the stern, dark outlines of the coast. The sunshine that filled the surf with shimmering tints gleamed on the white plumage of a gull enthroned on the summit rock of the castle,—most likely the spirit of Guinevere, for Arthur, when he revisits Tintagel, comes as the Cornish chough,

"Talons and beak all red with blood,"—

a bird which no true Cornishman will shoot.

The monstrous crags and huge fragments of old wall were cleft in a fashion strongly suggestive of

"casements opening on the foam
Of perilous seas in fairylands forlorn,"

and we shuddered to imagine with what stupendous force the terrible tides of winter must beat against that naked coast.

We realised what the fury of the sea-winds here must be as we strolled through the churchyard, whose slate slabs are buttressed with masonry and, even so, tip and lean over those graves too [368] old for grief. All is ancient about Tintagel church, and most of all the Norman font whose sculptured faces are worn dim and sleepy with innumerable years, each year bringing its quota of babies for the blessing of the holy water.

BOSCASTLE

We had to leave it,—the mysterious Titanic ruin with its bracken blowing in the wind, the sheep, chained in couples, that prick their silly noses on nettles and furze, the old church, where bells tolled without ringers on the day that Arthur fell, the old wayside cross, the old stone dovecote in the vicarage garden, but not the cliffs and the sea. For we drove up the coast to Boscastle, pausing on the way—and that was our mistake—to see the little church of Forrabury. This is the church that longed for a peal of bells to rival those of Tintagel, but when the vessel that brought the bells was waiting for the tide to take her into the harbour, and the pilot was thanking God for a fair voyage, the captain laughed and swore that it was only their own good seamanship they had to praise, whereupon a mighty billow, far out at sea, swept down upon the ship and overwhelmed her, only the devout pilot escaping with his life. And ever since—so ballad and [369] guide-book assured us—the tower of Forrabury church has stood voiceless, though a muffled knell, when a storm is coming up, is heard beneath the waves. What then was our righteous wrath on finding this venerable edifice all newly done up in pink frescoes,—yes, and with an ornate bell-rope of scarlet twist hanging beneath the tower!

The harbour of Boscastle is a rock-walled inlet somewhat resembling that of Pasajes in the north of Spain. Curving promontories shut in a tidal stream that runs green in the sun and purple in the shadow. Swift lines of creaming foam glint across where the river yields itself up to the strong currents of the sea,—a sea which, as we saw it that brilliant September afternoon, twinkled with

myriad points of intolerable light.

How can the pen cease from writing about Cornwall? And yet it must. There is a devil—a printer's devil—that counts our idle words. I may not tell of wind-swept Morwenstow, where Tennyson and Hawker roamed the wave-fretted cliffs together and talked of the Table Round, nor of lofty [370] Launceston, with its ivied Norman keep and great granite church whose outer walls are covered with elaborate carving. The sculptured figure of Mary Magdalen at the east end, lying on her face in an attitude of extreme dejection, is regularly stoned by the boys for luck, and flints and shards were lodged, when we saw her, all over her poor back. I may not tell of Bodwin, either, with its memory of a mayor who took a prominent part in the West Country revolt against the reformed service. As a consequence, when the agitation was over he was called upon to entertain the royal commissioner, who hanged his host after dinner.

It is a pity not to have space to suggest the softer beauties of the south coast. From Truro, after a visit to its new cathedral with its holy memory of Henry Martyn, we drove by way of Sunny Cove to Malpas. The gulls were screaming as they sought their dinner on the flats, and a man, wading through the pools, was gathering up belated little fishes in his hands. We sailed between wooded banks down the Fal to Falmouth, which is watched over by the garrisoned castle looming on Pendennis Head. The old port lies in picturesque disorder along the inlet, while the new town [371] stands handsomely on the height above. Here we saw, in lawns and gardens, a semi-tropical vegetation, yuccas, acacias, bamboos, aloes, palms, and pampas grass. Would that there were time to tell the smuggling scandals of the Killigrews, that witty and graceless family who ought to have learned better from their Quaker neighbours, the Foxes! It was by a Killigrew that Falmouth was founded in the reign of the first Stuart, and Killigrews made merry in Arwenach House, and made free with the merchandise of foreign ships, for many a pleasant year. The time when piracy could be counted an aristocratic amusement has gone by in Falmouth, as well as the bustling days when this port was an important packet station whence coaches and postchaises went speeding up to London. It is now putting on the gentler graces and coming into repute as a winter resort, though it has not yet attained the popularity of Penzance.

On our way from the one to the other we passed through the mining town of Redruth, near which, in the hollow known as Gwennap Pit, Wesley addressed vast audiences. On one occasion [372] the number was reckoned as thirty-two thousand. "I shall scarce see a larger congregation," he wrote, "till we meet in the air." The more mystical doctrines of Fox took little hold on the rough fishermen and miners of Cornwall, but Wesley practically converted the Duchy, turning it from the most lawless corner of England, a lair of smugglers and wreckers, into a sober, well-conducted community. As little flames are said to be seen playing about a converted Cornishman, Wesley's path across the county must have been a veritable Milky Way. In such natural amphitheatres as Gwennap Pit, it may be that the Cornish Miracle Plays, so far excelling the English in freedom of fancy and symbolic suggestion, were given. We looked wistfully from Hayle over to St. Ives, with its long line of fishing boats tied up like horses to a church fence, but since we could follow only one road at once, held on our way to Penzance.

THE LIZARD LIGHT, CORNWALL

Beautiful for situation, the "Holy Headland" looks out over waters exquisitely coloured toward

"the great Vision of the Guarded Mount,"

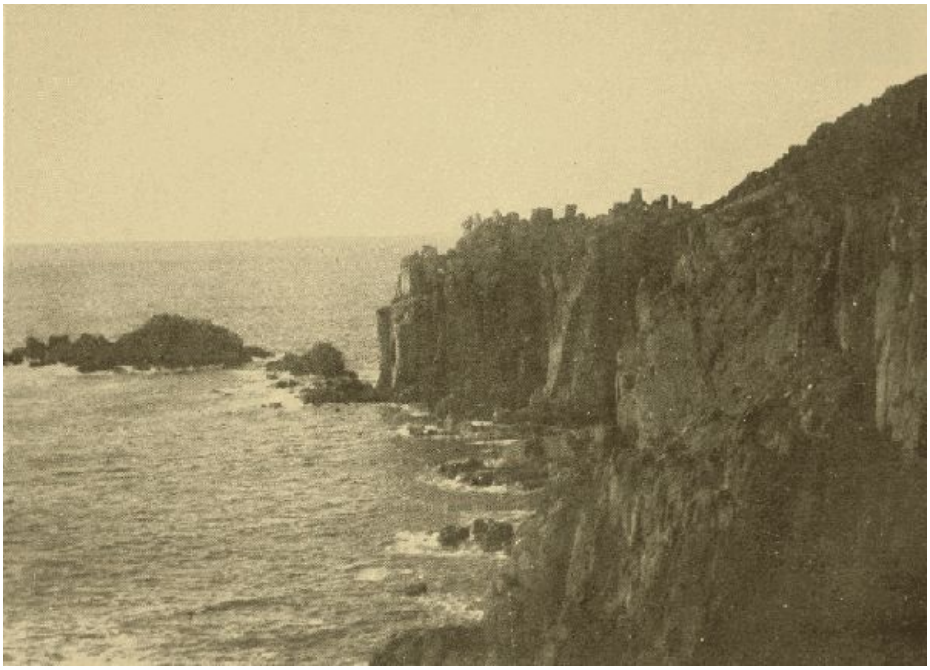
[373]

St. Michael's Mount, a solemn cone, fortress-crowned, above which a praying hermit, when the setting sun was flooding the skies with splendour, might easily have deemed he saw the guardian wings of the Archangel. As all Cornish children know, this mount was built by the giant Cormoran and rose, in those days when Mount's Bay was a fertile plain of several parishes, from the midst of a forest, "a hoare rock in a wood." It was the scene of the glorious exploit of Jack the Giant-Killer, who was afterwards appointed tutor to King Arthur's eldest son in that special branch of

warfare. Cornwall is so fond of its old giants that it sometimes, so folklorists say, confuses their deeds with those of the saints. But it loves its saints, too, who are said to be more numerous than the saints in Paradise. Cornish churches stand open all day long, and old Cornwall's affectionate name for the Virgin was "Aunt Mary."

The view ranges on across Mount's Bay to The Lizard, that peninsula so beautiful with its serpentine cliffs and Cornish heath, the wildest and loneliest part of all wild and lonely Cornwall; but our route lay to its companion point on the southwest. Our driver literally knew every inch of [374] the road and pointed out to us cross after cross, and cromlech after cromlech,—such vague old stones, worn featureless and almost formless, built into walls, half sunken under the turf, embedded in banks, peering at us from across a field, thrusting a grey visage through a hedge,—sometimes a mere time-eaten stump, sometimes a heathen monolith with the afterthought of a crucifix rudely graved upon it, sometimes a complete square cross. These last we often found in churchyards, set up on stone platforms approached by a flight of steps. Such was the one we noted in the churchyard of St. Buryan, another of those long, low, lofty-towered old churches characteristic of Cornwall.

As we neared Penberth Cove, the Atlantic opened out to view, its sparkling turquoise relieved by one white sail. It was in Penberth Cove that there once lived a bedridden old woman, a good old soul, about whose one-roomed cottage the Small People, to divert her, used to sport all day, catching her mice and riding them in and out of holes in the thatch, dancing the dust off the rafters and giving trapeze and tight-rope performances on the cobwebs. The valley runs green to [375] the sea and we left the carriage for a walk across the fields, a walk diversified by stiles of all known species, to Treryn Castle. This monstrous fastness of heaped rock and jagged crag was built by a giant who was such a clever necromancer that all he had to do was to sit in the Giant's Easy-chair, to whose discomfort we can testify, and will the castle to rise out of the sea. For latter-day necromancy, our guide pointed out Porthcurnow Beach, where, he said, six submarine cables land. He was a native of the coast, a fisherman, and gave us eyes to see the gulls rejoicing over their feast of pilchards, and ears to hear the whistle of a young otter. The Lion of Treryn is the Logan Rock, but we first encountered, in our scramble over the crags, Lady Logan, a stumpy personage whose hood and skirt, though recognisable, are of the Stone Age fashion. This granite beauty is so sensitive in her feelings that she trembles at a touch. As we climbed higher among the rocks, in the exhilarating air, we won views ever more wonderful of rolling green billows shattered into clouds of spray upon the shore. The Logan itself is an enormous rocking-stone,—a [376] boulder weighing some seventy tons delicately balanced on cubical masses of rock. It does not, like the rocking-stone in Burma on which a little pagoda has been built, oscillate in the wind, but swings at a sturdy push. It was formerly more easily swayed than now, for a mischievous young Goldsmith, nephew of the poet who was himself so prankishly inclined, undertook in 1824, when commanding a revenue cutter off this coast, to dispel the popular notion that no human force could dislodge Logan Rock. On the eighth of April, though the first would have been more appropriate, he landed with a crew of eight men, meaning to tip the stone over into the sea. But he only succeeded in moving it some four feet to the left and, even so, found his escapade an expensive one, for it cost ten thousand dollars to replace the ponderous mass—as the anger of the people compelled the Admiralty to order him to do—on its original pivot. With all his efforts, he could not hit the perfect poise, and whereas Logan Rock once had the power of healing sick children who were rocked upon it, that spell no longer works. It was not the right hour for us to [377] ascertain whether touching the stone thrice three times would still make a woman a witch. This test should be undertaken at midnight, when a battalion of sympathetic hags, mounted on stems of ragwort, would be hooting encouragement from their favourite rendezvous at the towering crag south of Logan Rock known as Castle Peak.



LAND'S END

We returned to our carriage and drove on. The fields of gorse and heather suddenly slipped over foaming reefs and we were at Land's End. Great waves were churning themselves white against the ledges. A few sails glinted on the horizon; a few gulls were perching on the rocks; but we were, at first, aware of nothing save the steep, broken wall of granite and the strange, compelling song of the Atlantic. By degrees we noted light-houses, bays, and a curious cavern, with such wave-eaten arches as we had seen at Biarritz, beneath our very feet. We walked along the edge of the cliffs, green with turf to the sheer plunge. At places, indeed, the heather runs down the rocks to meet the tide. We passed close by gulls that stood unstartled in this their own domain of crags and spray-dashed gorges, eyeing severely the approach of uninvited guests. [378]

The sun was setting and we could distinguish the Scilly Isles like gold cloudlets resting on the sea. Between these islands and Land's End once bloomed the lost Arthurian realm of Lyonesse. But weary of the past and its dim fables, our hearts followed that rippling line of splendour further and further west, far out across the Atlantic to the land of hope and promise, the strong young land that fronts the future, vowed to the great adventure of human brotherhood.

The University Press, Cambridge, U. S. A.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Blaze.

[2] Made.

[3] Inquire.

[4] Irons.

[5] Mad.

[6] From the account given by Sir William Dugdale, the celebrated antiquary, who was born at Shustoke, eight miles west of Nuneaton, in 1605, and educated at Coventry. "The Antiquities of Warwickshire" he published in 1656. He died in 1686, and his tomb, with his own inscription, may be seen in the chancel of Shustoke Church.

[7] Leland.

[8] "Gregory's Chronicle." In "Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century." Camden Society: 1876.

[9] Tennyson's "The Holy Grail," 36-64.

Transcriber's Notes:

Obvious printer's errors repaired. Otherwise, unusual spellings and grammar--including hyphenation inconsistencies--were retained as in the original.

P. 253, "Both fine and cleane..."; Although opening quotes usually indicate a new stanza, in this case there was no blank line between this line and the line before it.

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.