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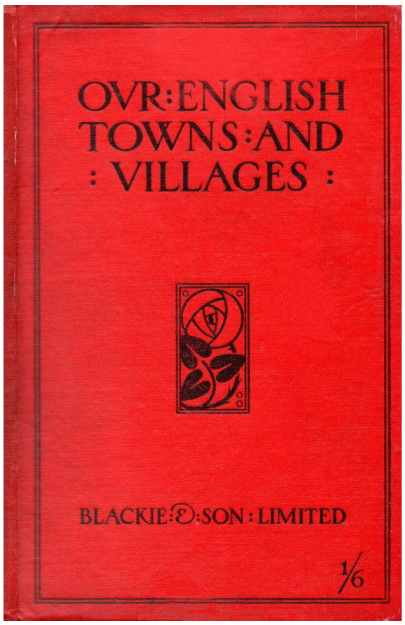

OUR ENGLISH TOWNS AND VILLAGES

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OUR ENGLISH TOWNS AND VILLAGES

BY

H. R. WILTON HALL

Library Curator, Hertfordshire County Museum;
Sub-Librarian St. Alban's Cathedral, &c. Author
of "Hertfordshire: a Reading-Book of the
County", &c.

I do love these ancient ruins,
—
We never tread upon them
but we set
Our foot upon some reverend
history.

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PREFACE

[Pg 5]

Many things connected with the history of our towns and villages have to be passed over in an ordinary school history reader. In the following pages an attempt is made to call attention in simple language, very broadly and generally, to connecting-links with the past in our towns and villages. There are many relics and customs yet remaining in many places, which, with a little care and attention to local circumstances, may be made helpful in teaching history, so that it shall be something more than a collection of names, dates, battles, and lists of eminent persons.

The book is intended as a reader, not as a text-book to be worked up for examination purposes. Its aim is rather to arouse interest in the "why and the wherefore" of things which can be seen by an intelligent and observant boy or girl in the place in which he or she lives: to do for history, and the subjects connected with it, what "nature-lessons" are intended to do in their "sphere of influence". Attention is being directed to localities, their special history, physical, political, industrial, and commercial, as it has never been before in our Educational history; and all that a special locality can contribute in the way of illustration and exemplification is worth knowing, understanding, and utilising.

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It is hoped that this book may be of some service in quickening intelligence in looking out for "things to see". The observation which is directed to noting the numbers on the motor cars, the names of locomotives, and the collection of postage-stamps and picture post-cards, can also be usefully turned, say, to noting the styles of architecture which really mark broadly great periods of our national life and development; and may help us, perhaps more than anything else, to arrange our ideas of the days of old in a proper order and sequence. An old building may be an excellent date-book.

The chapters are intended to be suggestive, not exhaustive, and may be expanded by the teacher in conversational or more formal lessons as his own predilection, taste, and judgment shall direct.

Local and County Histories, Guide-books and Hand-books will be found of great service to the teacher in dealing with special districts. The general subject embraces a very wide range of literature, but amongst books readily accessible may be mentioned *English Towns*, by E. H. Freeman; *English Towns* and *English Villages*, by Rev. P. H. Ditchfield; and the Rev. Dr. Jessopp's Essays in *The Coming of the Friars* and *Studies of a Recluse*.

In conclusion, the book is designed for older scholars who already know something of the dry bones of the history of England, and it is hoped that it may do something towards covering those dry bones with flesh, instinct with life and vigour.

H. R. W. H.

ST. ALBAN'S, *December, 1905*.

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OUR ENGLISH TOWNS AND VILLAGES

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1. A little boy, who had been born in a log cabin in the backwoods of Canada, was taken by his father, when he was about eight years old, to the nearest settlement, for the first time in his life. The little fellow had never till then seen any other house than that in which he had been born, for the settlement was many miles away. "Father," he said, "what makes all the houses come together?"

2. Now that sounds a very strange and foolish question to ask; but it is by no means as foolish a question as it seems. Here, in England, there are towns and villages dotted about all over the country. Some of them are near the sea, on some big bay or inlet; others stand a little farther inland on the banks of tidal rivers; others are far away from the sea, in sheltered valleys or on the sunny slopes of hills; some stand in the midst of broad fertile plains, while others are on the verge of bleak lonely moorlands. What has made all the houses in these towns and villages come

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together in these particular spots? There must be a reason in every case why a particular spot should have been chosen in the first instance.

3. In trying to find an answer to this question with reference to any town or village in our country we have to go back, far back, into the past. We may have to go back to ages long before there was any written history. As we go back step by step into the past we learn much of the people who have lived before us—of their ways and their doings, and of the part they played in the life and work of the country.

4. The little Canadian boy's question can be asked about every town and village in the land. There are no two places exactly alike; each one has its own history, which, however simple it may be, is quite worth knowing. The busy manufacturing town, with its tens and hundreds of thousands of people, where all is movement and bustle, has its history; and the lonely country village, where everybody knows everybody else, has often a history even more interesting than that of the big town; if we only knew what to look for, and where to look for it.

5. One summer day, a few years ago, a party of tourists was climbing Helvellyn. One of the party was an elderly gentleman, who was particularly active, and anxious to get to the top. After several hours' stiff climbing, the party reached the summit; and there, spread out before them, was a lovely view of hills and dales, of mountains and lakes. Most of the party gazed upon this [Pg 11] fair scene in quiet enjoyment; but our old gentleman, as soon as he had recovered his breath, and mopped his red face with his pocket-handkerchief, gave one look round, and then said in a grieved tone: "Is that all? Nothing to see! Wish I hadn't come."

6. He saw nothing interesting because he did not know what to look for, and he might just as well have stopped at the bottom. He came to see nothing, *and he saw it*.

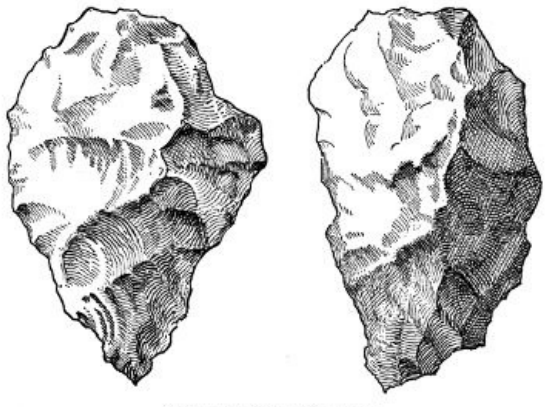
> **Summary.**—All towns and villages in England have a history. In every case there is a special reason why that town or village grew up in that particular place. In trying to find out how this came about we learn a great deal of the history of the past, shown in old names, old buildings, old manners and customs.

CHAPTER II

MEN WHO LIVED IN CAVES AND PITS

1. Man is a very ancient creature. It is a curious fact that we have learned most of what we know about the earliest men from the rubbish which they have left behind them. Even nowadays, in this twentieth century, without knowing much about a boy personally, we can tell a good deal about his habits from the treasures he turns out of his pockets. Hard-hearted mothers and teachers call these treasures rubbish, but the contents of a lad's pockets are a pretty sure indication of the boy's tastes.

2. The earliest traces of the existence of man in our part of the world are found in beds of gravel, [Pg 12] which in some places now are many feet above the level of the sea. There, in the gravel, are the roughly chipped stone tools and weapons which those early men used; tools which they lost or threw away. Almost every other trace has quite disappeared. Remains belonging to the same period have been noticed in caves in various parts of the world.



Chipped Flint Weapons

Chipped Flint Weapons

3. Here, in Britain, caves have been found where these early men have left their stone implements and remains of their rubbish. Some of the best-known of such cave-dwellings in Britain are near Denbigh and St. Asaph in North Wales; at Uphill in Somersetshire; at King's Car and Victoria Cave near Settle; at Robin Hood's Cave and Pinhole in Derbyshire; in Pembrokeshire; in King Arthur's Cave in Monmouthshire; at Durdham Down near Bristol; near [Pg 13] Oban; in the gravels in the valleys of the Rivers Trent, Nore, and Dove; in the Irish River Blackwater; near Caithness; and in a good many other places.

4. So, you see, the remains of these early men cover a pretty wide area. In the course of ages rivers and seas have flowed over the places where these stone tools had been dropped, and year after year throughout the ages the drift brought down by the rivers covered them inch by inch and foot by foot. Great changes have taken place in the surface of the land, some suddenly, but most of them very, very slowly. The land has risen, and sunk again, and long, long ages of sunshine and storm, of ice and snow, of stormy wind and tempest, have altered the surface of the country.

5. Those very ancient men, who lived in the Early Stone Age, are called **Cave-Dwellers**, because they lived apparently in caves, and **River-Drift Men** and **Lake-Dwellers**, because the roughly chipped tools are found in the *drift* of various rivers and lakes.

Summary.—The earliest remains of man are found in certain beds of gravel and in caves. They consist chiefly of roughly chipped stone implements. Such *celts* are found in all parts of England, and in caves in North Wales; in Somersetshire at Uphill; in Yorkshire near Settle; in Derbyshire at Robin Hood's Cave and Pinhole; in Pembrokeshire and Monmouthshire; at Durdham Down near Bristol; near Oban; and in the valleys of the Rivers Trent, Nore, and Dove; in the Irish River Blackwater; and near Caithness. These men are known as the River-Drift Men, the Cave-Dwellers, or the Lake-Dwellers.

CHAPTER III

[Pg 14]

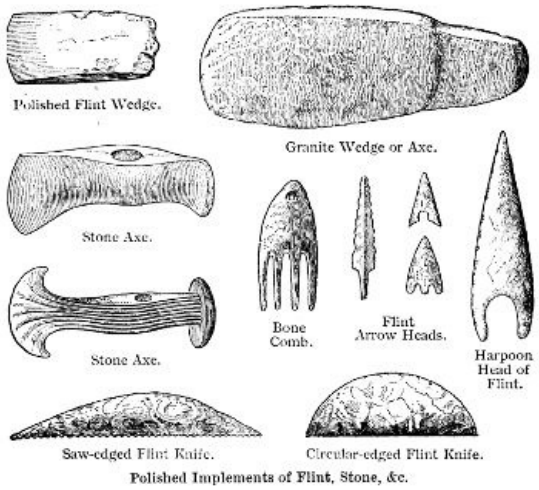
THE PIT-DWELLERS

1. Other remains not so ancient as these oldest stone implements, but still very ancient, are found nearer the surface than the remains of the River-Drift Men. They are the remains of people who, like the Drift Men, knew nothing of metals, and used stone weapons and tools, but better made. They had learned to shape and finish their tools by rubbing, grinding, and polishing them, and were, evidently, a more advanced race of men than the Cave or Drift Men.

2. For the most part we have to go to somewhat desolate parts of England to find traces of them now. In fact, those traces would long ago have disappeared had they not been in places which were so wild and difficult to get at, that it was not worth any man's while to cultivate them. The spade and the plough would very soon remove all traces of them. In fact, the plough *has* removed many traces of these ancient men, and most of the specimens of their tools and weapons, which you can see in museums, were found by men employed in ploughing and preparing the land for crops.

3. You must not suppose that we can fix a date when these men first appeared, as we can fix an exact date for the landing of Julius Cæsar, or the sealing of Magna Carta. Neither can we say for how many centuries they occupied land in what we now call Britain. It was a long period, at any rate, and during that time their manners and their customs changed very, very slowly.

[Pg 15]



Polished Implements of Flint, Stone, &c.
Polished Flint Wedge; Granite Wedge or Axe; Stone Axe; Stone Axe; Bone Comb; Flint Arrow Heads; Harpoon Head of Flint; Saw-edged Flint Knife; Circular-edged Flint Knife.

4. The lowest forms of savage life seem very much alike, all the world over. Savages are hunters, and do not as a rule cultivate the soil. Now hunters must follow their prey from place to place, so that we should expect these early men to have no settled homes. But even the earliest Pit Men had advanced beyond this lowest stage, for they had flocks and herds and dogs. No doubt they hunted as well; but they were mainly a pastoral people, and at first did not till the soil. Races of men who did not till the soil are called **Non-Aryan**. They chose for their settlements the tops of hills, and avoided the narrow valleys and low-lying lands.

[Pg 16]

5. The **Pit-Dwellers** are so called from the simple fact that they had their homes in pits—not, however, dug anywhere and anyhow. The hole in the ground is the simplest notion of a house. When in your summer holiday by the sea you see the little boys and girls digging deep holes in the sand to make "houses", they are doing in play what the early Pit-Dwellers did in real earnest.

6. The pits were usually some six or eight feet in diameter; and they probably had cone-shaped roofs, formed by poles tied together, and covered with peat. In the centre of the hut was the hearth, which was made of flints carefully placed together. The hut would hold two or three people, and the fire on the hearth was its most important feature. The hut in the centre of the group belonged to the head of the family, and other huts were ranged round it.

7. Surrounding the group was an earthen rampart for further protection; and these earthworks can still be traced in many parts of the country. The huts have gone, of course, and all that can be seen in most cases now is a number of circular patches in the turf, slightly hollowed. People living in the neighbourhood will very likely speak of them as "fairy rings". It is from a careful examination of these hollows that learned men have been able to gather much information concerning the habits of these Pit-Dwellers.

8. We English folk speak proudly of "hearth and home"; they are the centre of our social life, and [Pg 17] the idea has come down to us through all these long, long ages. The hearth and the fire upon it was the centre of the life of these men, and the head of a family was also its priest.

9. Some of the best known of these pit-dwellings are found near Brighthampton, in Oxfordshire; at Wortebury, near Weston-super-Mare; and along the Cotswolds, looking over the Severn Valley; and at Hurstbourne, in Hampshire.

10. In the course of time this race seems to have learned something in the way of cultivating the ground. The hilltops, where they built their huts, were only suited for their cattle, and in order to find soil which they could till they had to go outside their earthwork, and some distance down the hill-slope. By their way of digging the ground they gradually, in the course of many years, carved broad terraces, one below the other, on the hillsides. There are some very marked traces of such terraces still to be seen near Hitchin and Luton.[1]

11. In the course of time—how long ago it is still quite impossible to say—a race of men, more advanced than these early Pit-Dwellers, found their way to this part of the world. They were more civilized, and were **Aryans**; that is, they were cultivators of the soil. You may be pretty sure that fighting took place between the two races.

12. The newer race preferred to make their settlements near running streams. In the middle of [Pg 18] each settlement there would be an open space, or meeting-ground, usually a small hill or a mound, round which their huts were built. Beyond this was the garden-ground, then the ground where the grain was grown, and beyond that the grazing-lands. These men began cultivating at the bottom of the hillsides and valleys, and as they required more ground they would advance higher up the slopes.

13. Gradually to this race came the knowledge of metals, and we reach the **Bronze Age**, and so, step by step, we come to the **Iron Age**.

> **Summary.**—The remains of the Pit-Dwellers are found on desolate heaths and moorlands. These men used stone weapons, which they smoothed and polished. They had a greater variety of tools than the Drift Men. They were a non-Aryan race; that is, they did not till the soil. They were a pastoral people; that is, they kept cattle. Their settlements were on the hilltops. Their houses were pits, covered with a rough kind of roof, and were placed in clusters. In the centre of each dwelling was a hearth made of stones. All that can be seen of them now are circular hollows, often called "fairy rings". The clusters of huts were usually enclosed by an earthen wall or rampart. In course of time they learned to cultivate the ground. They worked *downhill*, and carved out many hillsides into broad terraces, which can still be traced in some places, as between Hitchin and Luton. An Aryan race also found its way here. These cultivated the soil, but their settlements were in the *valleys*, near running streams. An Aryan settlement had an *open space* in the centre, or meeting-ground. The huts were built round this. Then came the garden-ground, and then the grazing-lands. They began cultivating from the *bottom* of the hills, and worked upwards. In time they learned the use of metal—bronze, [Pg 19] —and gradually also they came to know the value of iron.

CHAPTER IV

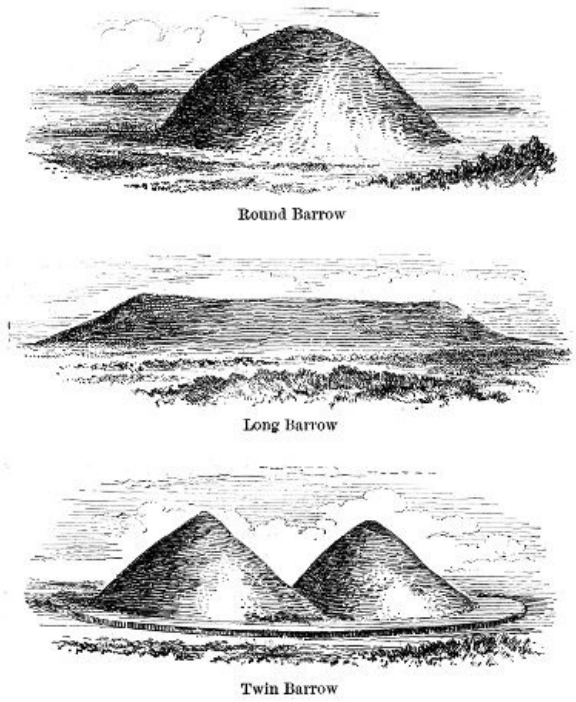
EARTHWORKS, MOUNDS, BARROWS, ETC.

1. There are still remaining, in many parts of the country, curious mounds and stones. We can say very little about them here; but though learned men have discovered much, there is still a good deal to be explained concerning them. Old-world stories put most of these strange objects down to the work of witches, fairies, or giants; some ascribe them to the Romans, or to Oliver Cromwell; others even to the devil. But most of them really belong to this period of which we are speaking—the very early part of our history, of which there is no written record.

2. **Earthworks** are of many kinds, but the very earliest are usually found on hilltops. There are

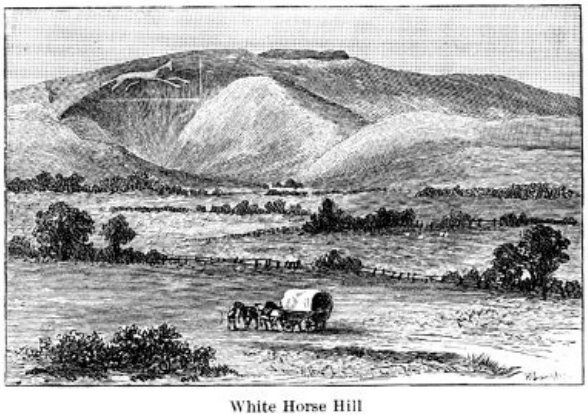
some which enclose considerable spaces of ground, bounded by an earthen rampart, with a ditch outside. Sometimes there are two such ramparts. Frequently they are spoken of as **British Towns** or **British Camps**. They appear to have been enclosures into which the cattle were driven in time of danger, and in which a whole tribe could take refuge and hold out against their enemies.

3. Then there are big mounds or heaps, called **Barrows**. Some of these are oval in shape, and are called **Long Barrows**; others are round, and are called **Round Barrows**. The Long Barrows are [Pg 20] thought to be the older kind, and were apparently the burial-places of great leaders. The Round Barrows were also burial-places; but those who raised them burned their dead. The great pyramids of Egypt are barrows, only they are made of stone, not of earth.



Round Barrow; Long Barrow; Twin Barrow

4. The **circles of stones** at Stonehenge and Avebury seem to have been connected with the [Pg 21] worship of these early people. There are many single stones, especially in Cornwall and Wales, which also seem to have been connected with religious rites; but of this we know nothing for certain. In later times they have served as boundary marks.



White Horse Hill

5. In various parts of England there are deep lanes or cuttings, which have received curious local names. There are no less than twenty-two such cuttings in different parts of England all known as **Grim's Ditch**. These, no doubt, formed boundaries, separating various tribes.

6. The **White Horse**, cut out of the slope of Uffington Hill, and several similar objects in Wiltshire, as well as the crosses—also cut in the turf—at Whiteleaf and Bledlow, may also belong to this period. Some learned men, however, have thought that they are of a later date. [Pg 22]

7. From these early men then the **Ancient Britons** appear to have descended, and they were settled here a good many centuries before the coming of the Romans. Many of the wild tales and legends, still told in country villages, about giants and fairies, have come down to us from these early times.

Summary.—There are many curious mounds and stones, about which wild tales are told. *Earthworks* are of various kinds. Those enclosed by an earthen wall or rampart are often called British towns or camps. They were places of refuge. There are two kinds of *mounds*, called Long Barrows and Round Barrows. Both were burial-places. The Long Barrows belonged to the older race. *Stone circles*, like those at Stonehenge and Avebury, had something to do with worship, and there are many stones in Cornwall and Devon which most likely were put to the same use. There are twenty-two old trackway boundaries in England all called Grim's Ditch. The *White Horse* and several other cuttings in the turf possibly belong to this same period. The old legends and tales about all these are worth keeping in mind, though at present we do not understand them.

CHAPTER V
IN ROMAN TIMES

1. Here, then, at the time the Romans first came to Britain were tribes of Britons who had been established in the country for centuries, living their lives according to the customs of their forefathers, and more or less cultivating the land. The Romans invaded the country, and, in time, [Pg 23] subdued the people. They remained masters here for nearly four hundred years, but they did not make such a permanent impression on this country as they did in some countries which they conquered—as on France and Spain, for instance.

2. We are to-day masters of India; but we have not made India English, nor are we trying to do so. The natives there go on cultivating the land according to their custom from time out of mind. They preserve their own manners, customs, and religions. In places where they come much in contact with our fellow-countrymen, they are influenced to a certain degree; but in India to-day the English and the natives lead their own lives, each race quite apart from the others.

3. So it was with the Romans in Britain. They formed colonies in various places and built towns all over the land; they had country villas dotted here and there, some little distance from the chief towns, and built strong military stations in suitable districts. These posts were kept in communication by means of good roads. Many Britons must in the course of time have adopted Roman ways and Roman civilization; but the bulk of the Britons, living away from the Roman centres, kept to their own customs, and cultivated the ground in the way their ancestors had done. They prospered, on the whole, as the Romans kept the various tribes from fighting with one another.

4. No doubt, in districts such as that which we now call Hampshire, and along the Thames valley, [Pg 24] where wealthy Romans had their country villas, Roman methods of farming were in use. The Britons would see something of Roman ways of doing things, and, perhaps, tried to copy them.

5. But the Romans have not left many marks upon our towns and villages. It is quite true that a large number of our present towns and cities are on the *sites* of, or near, Roman towns; but, in most cases, we have to dig down into the earth to find Roman remains. The most important Roman city, Verulam, has quite disappeared; and the most complete remains of a Roman town, Silchester, are near to what is now a quiet country village. The present cities of London, Winchester, Gloucester, Lincoln, Chester, Carlisle, and the towns of Colchester and Leicester, and several others, can hardly be said to have sprung from Roman towns, though they stand on their sites.

REMAINS OF A ROMAN HOUSE, EXCAVATED AT SILCHESTER (page 24)

Photo. S. Victor White & Co., Reading
REMAINS OF A ROMAN HOUSE, EXCAVATED AT SILCHESTER (page 24)

6. Most of the Roman cities were built in districts where the Britons had been strong, or where they were likely to give trouble. Carlisle and Gloucester were, for instance, **military towns**,

because they were on the borders of the Roman territory. London and Winchester were **trading cities**, and they developed much in Roman times.

7. But, when the Roman power was withdrawn, there was, in those cities at any rate, a British population, which had adopted very extensively Roman customs and ideas. For a time things went on much as they had done while the Romans were here; in fact, until the struggles with the Saxons began.

8. As a matter of fact, the coming of the Saxons began a good while before the Romans actually left. Various tribes of Saxons attacked different parts of the coast. Colchester had to keep a sharp look-out for them on the east coast; and the Romans built Portchester Castle, in Hampshire, to guard the south coast. [Pg 25]

9. Christianity had found its way to Britain during Roman times, and that helped in the work of civilizing the Britons. But we do not know very much of the early British Church. Christianity probably made more headway among the population in and near the Roman towns than in the wilder districts. The foundations of an early Christian church have been found at Silchester.

> **Summary.**—The Romans held Britain much as we hold India. They did not interfere with the manners and customs, or the religion, of the Britons. The Romans lived in their towns and villas, the Britons in their own settlements. Britons in and near Roman towns gradually adopted Roman ways. Verulam was the chief Roman city, and there were others at London, Winchester, Gloucester, Lincoln, Chester, Carlisle, Colchester, &c. These modern cities, though on the *sites* of these Roman towns, have not sprung from the Roman cities. The Saxons began to give trouble before the Romans left. Christianity came in Roman times, and the remains of a church have been found at Silchester, in Hants.

CHAPTER VI [Pg 26]

EARLY SAXON TIMES

1. The conquest of Britain by the Saxons took a long time—considerably over one hundred and fifty years. A great many people are born, and live their lives, and die, in such a period of time as that. It was only little by little that the various tribes of Saxons got a footing in England. They were the stronger and fiercer race, and the Britons were gradually subdued or driven into the mountainous regions by them.

2. Those early tribes of Saxons, who came to Britain, brought with them their own special manners and customs. As they settled down, the face of the country was gradually changed by them. They disliked and suspected everything Roman, and destroyed the towns and villas. They hated the idea of walled towns. These, therefore, were left in ruins; and the great highways, being neglected in most places, were, in the course of years, overgrown with brushwood and hidden in thick forests.

3. In some parts of the country the Saxons seem to have completely swept the Britons away, and almost all traces of them vanished; but, in other parts, there certainly were some of them left, because we have still their marks upon our language. Although most of the **place-names** in use now are Saxon or Danish, there are still a good many of British, or partly British, origin.

4. The names of many of our rivers are British or Celtic, such as Axe, Exe, Stour, Ouse, and Yare. So are many names of hills; and, in some parts of the country, the names of the villages are partly British and partly Saxon. Take, for instance, such a common name as Ashwell. Some learned men think that it is made up of two words, **Ash** and **Well**, both meaning pretty much the same thing, *ash* being British for "water", and *well* being Saxon for "watering-place". Now, if the Saxons had quite got rid of the Britons, they would not have known that a particular place was called "Ash"—they learned to call it "Ash" from the natives, but they did not know what it meant. They knew that there was a spring of water there, which they called a "well"; and so, to distinguish it from other wells in the neighbourhood, they got into the habit of calling it "Ashwell"—and the name has stuck to the place. [Pg 27]

5. In some such way as this many other place-names, partly British and partly Saxon, were formed; and they teach us this, that Saxons and Britons must have lived near each other closely enough for the Saxons to take up and use some British names.

6. There are some English counties in which you will hardly find one place-name which is not Saxon. This shows us that the Britons were either killed or completely driven away. That is the case in Hertfordshire. But in Hampshire, while most of the names are Saxon, there are many partly Saxon and partly British. This same thing can be noticed in the county of Gloucester. The Britons, then, must have been in these districts long enough for the Saxons to pick up a good many place-names. They did not understand the meaning of them, and so tacked on to them names which they *did* understand. [Pg 28]

7. The Saxons made their settlements at first away from the Roman towns and British villages. In the course of time, in a good many cases, they made settlements very close to these old sites, and we know that Saxons lived in such places as Winchester, Gloucester, and London. We find, especially in Hampshire and Gloucestershire, that near, or in, certain villages with Saxon names,

Roman remains have from time to time been dug up.

Summary.—The Saxon conquest was gradual. At first the invaders destroyed and avoided the remains of Roman cities. In some parts of the country the Britons were swept quite away, and British names forgotten. The old place names in some places show that the Britons and Saxons must have lived side by side, as was the case in Hampshire and Gloucestershire. In others, as in Hertfordshire, the Britons quite disappeared, as nearly all the place-names are Saxon. Roman remains have been found in some places with Saxon names, which seems to show that after a time the Saxons took to some old Roman sites for their dwelling-places.

CHAPTER VII
EARLY SAXON VILLAGES

1. It is with the coming of the Saxons that the history of our towns and villages really begins. For, though there are not a few places which show some connection with Romans, Britons, and Pit-Dwellers, it is mainly from Saxon times that we can follow the history of the places in which we live, with any certainty. [Pg 29]

2. When the Saxons came to Britain they brought their own ideas with them, of course. Nowadays, when English folk go to settle in a distant land, they take their English notions with them. They find, however, in the course of time, that they have to modify or alter them somewhat, according to the circumstances in which they are placed. They may find that roast beef and plum-pudding do not at all suit them in the new climate. If they are wise, they will see whether the foodstuffs used by the natives, and by folk who have lived out there for many years, are not more suitable, even though they are inclined to despise such food at first.

Now the Saxon tribes who first settled in England in the fifth century belonged to a race of people, bold, strong, fierce, and free. But they could not make their new homes exactly what their old ones had been in the land from whence they had come.

3. Like those other Aryan people, who had made their way to Britain in the Stone Age, they lived together in families. When the family became too large, some of the members had to turn out, like bees from a hive, though not in such great numbers, and set out on their travels to form new settlements, or **village communities**.

4. This idea of a village community had come down to them through many generations. The early Saxon idea of a village community was something of this sort:— [Pg 30]

5. All the men of the family had equal rights; though there was one who was the head of the family, and who took the lead. The affairs of the family were discussed and settled at open-air meetings, called **folk-moots**. The spot where these were held was regarded as a sacred place. The tilling of their land, their marriages, their quarrels, their joining with other villages to make war or peace, were all settled at the folk-moot. The question whether the younger branches of the family should leave the village and go out and form another was fixed by the folk-moot also. In the course of time many such little swarms left the parent hive, and settled farther away. But they always looked back upon the old settlement as their home, and the head of the family as their chief. They were all of one *kin*, and in the course of time they began to look upon their chief as their king.

6. Now what was the nature of the old Saxon village settlement? In its general arrangement it was very like the old Pit-Dwellers' settlement. There was the open space where the men of the village met, the sacred mound where the folk-moot was held. The houses in which the family dwelt were placed close together, round the hut of the head of the family.

Outside these was a paling of some sort, so that all the houses were within the enclosure, or "tun", as it was called; and here calves and other young stock were reared near the houses. [Pg 31] Beyond the enclosure, or tun, was the open pasture-ground and the arable land, or land under cultivation. Beyond these would be the untouched forest-land, or open moorland.

7. Each man of the tun had a share in these lands; not to deal with as he liked, but to use according to the custom of his family. The arable land was divided into strips, and shared amongst the men. However many strips of land a man might have, he could not have them for all time. The strips were apparently chosen by lot, and changed from time to time, so that all had an equal chance of having the best land. In the same way the number of cattle a man might turn out to graze on the pasture-land was regulated. The folk-moot, or meeting of the people, was a very important assembly, and through it the little community was governed.

8. Such was the mode of life to which the Saxons who came to England had been used; but they were not nearly as free individually when they landed here as their ancestors had been. More and more power had come into the hands of the chief or king, and to him the people looked for protection and guidance. In times of war, or when the tribe was invading new lands, the power of the king increased. By the time, then, that the Saxon tribes began their conquest of England, they were very much under the rule of their chiefs or kings. The kings had rights and power over their followers, which had gradually grown up by long custom, and none of those followers ventured to [Pg 32] dispute such rights and powers.

Summary.—The history of our present towns and villages really begins with the Saxons. The Saxons had been used to a settlement very like the early Aryan settlement. All the men had equal rights, and the business of the community was settled in the *folk-moot*. When new settlements were formed they looked back to the early settlement as their home: they were all of one *kin*. Gradually the chief man of the first home was looked upon as their chief or *king*. The land was shared amongst the men in strips in the common field, and the shares changed from time to time.

When the Saxons came to England they were *less free* than they had been; more power was in the hands of the chief or king, and they looked to him for leadership in battle, and he had certain rights which had grown up by long custom.

CHAPTER VIII
ANGLO-SAXON TUNS AND VILLS

1. A good many Britons no doubt settled down with the Saxons as slaves, and that probably accounts for so many of the natural features of the country—the rivers and hills—keeping their old British names. The British villages must have had names, but those villages were apparently destroyed, and the slaves would be settled near the homesteads which their conquerors set up.

2. In fixing on a place for a "tun" the Saxons would choose a valley rather than a hill, usually near a running stream, or a plentiful supply of water. At the present time nearly all over England we [Pg 33] can find villages which have not been touched by modern improvements and alterations; and most of these show something even now of their Saxon origin.

3. For instance, in the county of Rutland there is a village named Exton, which has for many centuries kept several features which show its connection with Saxon days. Its name Ex-ton seems to be compounded of the British word "ex", which means "water", and the Saxon "ton" or "tun", which means the "enclosure"—"the tun by the water". There, sure enough, flowing by the village, is the River Gwash; just such a stream as the Saxons loved. In the middle of the village is the triangular open space, or village green. Round it the houses are thickly clustered together, with hardly any garden ground at the back or in front, and most of them with none at all. Outside the ring of houses are small grass fields or closes, where calves and cows feed, and poultry run. These little fields form a kind of ring round the village, and the hedges enclosing them represent the old fence of Saxon days, which formed the "tun". Beyond this are wider pasture-grounds and big plough-lands, stretching away in several directions up the gentle slopes.

THE VILLAGE GREEN, EXTON, RUTLANDSHIRE (page 33)

THE VILLAGE GREEN, EXTON, RUTLANDSHIRE (page 33)

4. You will be able to find a good many villages which have some resemblance to Exton; they answer very closely to the Anglo-Saxon **vill** and the Anglo-Saxon town, for town and village were laid out on the same principle.

5. Now look at some little sleepy country town, and you will see much the same arrangement as [Pg 34] in the village. The wide open space in the middle, where the town pump stands, and where the market is held, answers to the village green. Though this is often spoken of as the Market Square, it is usually more like a triangle in shape than a square.

6. The old houses round the market square are built very closely one into the other, and with queer narrow alleys leading to houses behind those in front; much in the same way as the houses are clustered round the village green. Round the outskirts of the town, at the back of the houses, are small green closes or paddocks. Beyond them are the larger meadows and pastures; then the wide corn-lands and woods; and, not far away, the heath or common.

7. The Saxon settlements, the "tuns" or "vills", whether they afterwards became what we now understand as "towns" or "cities", or remained what we call villages, had all the same chief

features. Just as ordinary school-rooms are all pretty much alike, because they all have to serve much the same purpose, so the Saxon settlements were very similar in their general plan.

8. There was the open place, where people met and the folk-moot was held, surrounded by the houses of stone or wood, in which the people lived. Around these lay the grass yards or common homestead; and, beyond them, the arable and pasture lands, with patches of moorland and forest.

9. But outside the actual "tun" there would be something connected with the Saxon settlement which you would be sure to notice. After you had passed the boundary to the tun, you would see no hedgerows, or walls, dividing the land into fields. The arable land was one huge field. Its position would depend, of course, upon the nature of the soil and the lie of the land. You would not expect to find it down in the water-meadows, through which the river flowed; it would be higher up, out of the reach of floods; perhaps on the hillsides. [Pg 35]

10. Then, you would see the huge field, ploughed in long strips, about a furlong in length, that is, a "furrow long", and one or two perches in breadth. Between the ploughed strips would be narrow unploughed strips, on which, in places, brambles would grow. The heath-lands and moorlands were uncultivated tracts, where rough timber and underwood grew, which was cut and lopped by the people of the vill under certain conditions. There were no formal spinneys [2], nor wide stretches of old timber, such as we nowadays expect to see in a forest. In places the forests contained old timber, and were thick with undergrowth, and infested with wild animals, such as wolves and boars. The name **forest** was often given to an uncultivated district, not much differing from a rough common, where sheep, cattle, and swine could pick up a living.

> **Summary.**—Anglo-Saxons *tuns* and *vills* were usually in a valley near a stream, with a meeting-place or green in the middle, and the houses built round it. At the back were small closes, and all was surrounded by a fence. Outside was the big common field, reaching up the slope, and beyond these the wide pasture-grounds. In many old villages and towns something of this arrangement can still be seen. [Pg 36]

CHAPTER IX
TYTHINGS AND HUNDREDS—SHIRES

1. Though the Saxons, as they settled down in England, formed "tuns", which at first had very little to do with one another, that state of things probably did not last a very long time. In fighting the Britons they had had to act together; and, for the sake of protection and help, these separate communities had to combine. Somewhat in this way ten families in a district would form a **tything**; and the heads of the villages would, from time to time, meet together, to consult on various matters in which they were interested.

2. Then larger areas would need to be covered, as the country became more settled. Ten tythings would make a **hundred**; and, from time to time, men from all the places in the hundred would meet together and hold **hundred courts**. Most of the English counties are still divided into hundreds. In those days the hundreds were not all of the same size, because, owing to the nature of the soil, some tuns were far apart from one another, and a tything might cover a wide district, and a hundred a much larger area. If the hundred was small, that would show that the tuns were pretty close together, and that the district was populous. If, on the other hand, the tythings and hundreds were large, that would show that the district was thinly peopled. [Pg 37]

3. We have seen that new settlements were formed by portions of the family leaving the old home, and making a new tun in the most suitable place they could find. It would happen, no doubt, in favourable districts, that new tuns would spring up not very far from the mother tun; and, in the course of time, there would be a good many more tuns in the tything than there were originally. The fact seems to be, that when once the boundaries had been roughly agreed upon, they were not often altered. From being a combination of families, or tuns, the tything got to be a **district**; and it kept its name of tything long after the number of tuns in it had increased.

4. It was much the same with the **hundreds**. In time they were represented by certain districts, whose borders were known to the people living in them. The hundreds all over the country have not altered their boundaries to any great extent until quite recently. In Hampshire to-day there are thirty-seven hundreds; in Hertfordshire there are only eight; and Middlesex has now the same six hundreds which it had twelve centuries ago when a good part of the county was forest land.

5. As to the time when the hundreds became grouped into **shires** we cannot say much: the change was brought about gradually, and quite naturally. It is not at all likely that all the various kingdoms in England came together on some particular occasion and said: "Now we'll divide all our kingdoms into shires". But the hundreds did become grouped into **shires**, doubtless because it was necessary that they might act together in matters which concerned all. [Pg 38]

6. There is nothing like a threatened danger from without to draw men together. In the tun, no doubt, the villagers fell out with each other; however fairly the strips of land were shared somebody was sure to get what he did not like, and to grumble about it. Some of his fellow-villagers would take his side, and say it was a shame; and others would take the opposite side. But if the cattle belonging to the tun over the hills, or on the other side of the marsh, had been

seen on the wrong side of the **mark**, or boundary which separated the lands of the two tuns, the dispute about the strips in the field would be forgotten, and away the people would go in a body towards the offending tun "to see about it".

7. In much the same way, when the boundaries of a tything or hundred were invaded by another tything or hundred, the differences between the tuns would be dropped, in order to preserve the rights which they had in common.

8. There was strife among the Saxon kingdoms which lasted for many years, especially between the three great rivals, Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria. The lesser kingdoms were under the dominion, sometimes of one, sometimes of another of these rivals. All this fighting and settling down put more and more power into the hands of the kings. Instead of each village fighting for [Pg 39] itself, and leaving all the others to fight for themselves, it was found to be a much safer and wiser policy to join together for common protection. Now if people join together, whether in peace or war, to win a football match, or to take a city, somebody must be in authority to give the necessary orders. Hence the power of the king, and the officers acting under him, grew up by custom, until the overlordship of the king was so firmly established that no one dared call it in question.

Saxon King and Eorlderman

Saxon King and Eorlderman

9. Apparently from the smaller Saxon kingdoms we get our older **shires**. Whether the overlord [Pg 40] happened to be the King of Mercia, or the King of Wessex, the under-king continued to rule over his old kingdom, or share. When, at length, in the ninth century, the King of Wessex was acknowledged as the overlord or King of England, Wessex and Mercia, and a part of Northumbria, were gradually divided into *shares*, or shires, over each of which the King of England appointed a **reeve** to look after his interests—the shire-reeve or **sheriff**. The King of England still appoints the high sheriff of each county. An **eorlderman**, who, in the case of the older shires, was at first no doubt a descendant of the old under-king, looked after the business of the shire itself.

10. Amongst the older shires we have Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Essex, Middlesex; while the newer ones were all named after some important central town, which in each case gave its name to the shire; such are Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

Summary.—In time ten free families or tuns joined together for protection, formed a *tything*. Gradually the name *tything* was given to the *district*, though many more tuns had grown up upon it. Then the tythings had to join together, and ten of these formed the *hundred*. These, too, got to be the names of districts, and these are still in use in most counties. The divisions known as *shires*, or shares, came later. The earliest formed were those which had been little kingdoms, like Kent, Sussex, Essex, Middlesex, and Surrey. When the bigger kingdoms were broken up, they were named after important towns in the district, like Hertfordshire, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, &c. The king's officer, or reeve, in each county in time was called the shire-reeve, or *sheriff*.

CHAPTER X [Pg 41]

THE EARLY ENGLISH TOWN

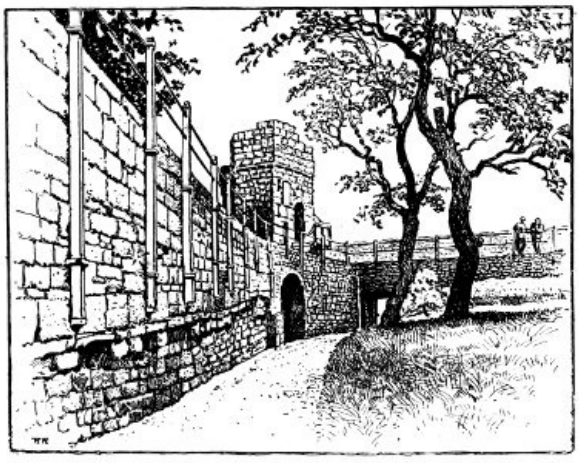
1. At first, as we have seen, the Saxons were an agricultural people, and each village or tun produced all that it needed for its own support. But in peaceful times a tun might produce more than it needed; and, by and by, something like trade and exchange between one place and another would begin. There were many places, as for example London, which in Roman times had been great places for commerce, to which ships had come bringing various kinds of goods. In time, as the Saxons settled down, they began to have new wants, and some of them began to be attracted towards places where there were more people than in their native tuns. Some men found that they could make certain articles of common use better than their neighbours could. Thus certain trades took their rise. Those who worked at them would gradually give up the agricultural labour in which everybody else in the tun was employed. We do not know the causes which led certain of these agricultural tuns to become trading-places; but it is quite certain that they did gradually grow to be what we now call **towns**.

2. We find Saxon towns springing up near the places where some of the Roman towns had been; in some cases on the actual site of the Roman city. In Gloucester and Lincoln, for instance, some of the streets to-day follow the actual lines of the Roman streets. These towns are, however, [Pg 42] really Saxon towns, not old Roman towns turned into Saxon towns. The men of these Saxon towns had lands on the outskirts of the towns, just as the village men had. Even to-day you will notice that there are many towns which possess lands called by such names as the Townlands, Townfield, or Lammas Land.

3. The men in these towns were, from the very first, more inclined to hold out against an overlord than the men in the villages were. In the first place, their numbers were greater; and then they had more varieties of occupation than the villagers, or, as we may say, had wider interests. In the trading towns, like London and Southampton, they came in contact with traders from other lands, and trade brought them more wealth. They, too, had their **folk-moots**, and they had more business to transact in them than the country villagers had. They were very particular to keep a tight hold on their rights, and were always on the look-out to gain fresh privileges if they possibly could.

4. The fence or wall, which surrounded the town, was made much stronger than that round the village; and men saw the use now of the thick walls of the old Roman cities which their ancestors had despised, for they had wealth and goods which needed protection.

5. We have seen that the power of the king gradually increased; and, as it did so, the king and the town became more necessary to each other. The town was wealthy; but it could not stand by [Pg 43] itself against all the rest of the country. The king had the power of the country at his back, and could protect it if he would. The town had to give something to the king in return for this protection. But we shall presently see more of the relations between king and town.



The Water Tower and Wall, Chester

The Water Tower and Wall, Chester

Summary.—Trading towns, like London, gradually arose: the Saxons took to trades and trading; and towns sprang up over the land. The townsmen were jealous of any overlord, and better able to make a stand against him than the men in the *vills*. Their folk-moots were important, and the men held very tightly to any privileges which the town had, and were always on the look-out to secure fresh rights. Gradually they became rich, and needed the king's protection, and both the king and the town had to depend a great deal upon each other.

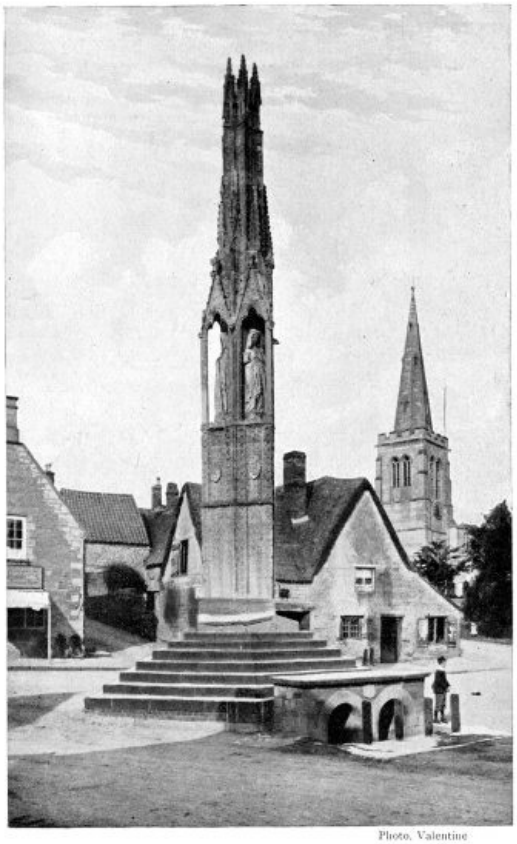
CHAPTER XI [Pg 44]

IN EARLY CHRISTIAN TIMES

1. One great and important factor in the making of Saxon England was Christianity. The first Saxons who came were heathen, and they wiped out the British Christianity, where they settled, as completely as they wiped out Roman civilization. Towards the end of the sixth century Christian missionaries were at work in the north and in the south of what we now call England; and, from that time onwards, the Church played an important part in the making of the nation.

2. So, side by side with the development and political growth of the country, came the spread of Christianity and the organization of the Church. We find that the Saxon kingdoms, following the lead of their kings, became Christian as a matter of course. Over and over again we find the kings giving up Christianity and going back to paganism, and their people following them, also as a matter of course. The conversion of England took many years to accomplish, and mixed up with the Christianity was much paganism, which was not overcome for many centuries. The Dioceses [3] of the early Saxon bishops were, roughly speaking, of the same extent as the early kingdoms, and the bishops and their clergy travelled about as missionaries.

3. As the lords or thanes of the various vills, following the example of their kings, accepted Christianity, their people followed their example. In the open places of the tuns and vills, where the folk-moots were held, Christianity was preached and the cross set up. That, probably, was the origin of most of the **village** and **market crosses**. Then, in the course of time, in some cases, a church was built on a part of the old sacred open spaces. You cannot help noticing to-day how in many towns the chief **church** is by the market-place, and in the villages by the village green. In other cases we find the church and manor-house are outside the present village. That may be because the thane's or lord's land was outside the vill or tun, and he built the church on his own land, not on the common public land in the middle of the tun. It may have happened, also, that at the time the church was first built the houses were there also; but, owing to changes, many years afterwards, the people have removed to another spot some distance away—possibly to the side of a busy main road. Then the original village has dwindled away; the houses, having fallen into ruin, have been pulled down, and no traces of them left. [Pg 45]



Photo, Valentine

CROSS AND CHURCH, GEDDINGTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

[page 45]

Photo. Valentine
CROSS AND CHURCH, GEDDINGTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE (page 45)

4. A **priest** would be appointed to work in a tun, and a portion of land would be set apart in the common fields to maintain him and to aid in carrying on the services of the church. In course of time there were certain dues and fees given to him, the paying of which became a recognized custom. Somewhat in this way **glebe lands** and **tithes** took their rise, and became a part of the land system of the Saxon people.

5. Along with the growth of churches in the tuns and vills was the founding of **monasteries**. Small bodies of men bound themselves by simple rules to live and work and worship together. [Pg 46]

Frequently they made their settlements in lonely, desolate places, which they worked to bring under cultivation. So there sprang up settlements, or convents, of these religious people, living under their own rules. Work and worship went side by side. It was a new kind of life, different from the life in the "tun" which the early Saxons were used to; but, in time, it had a mighty influence in the land, and played an important part in the making of England.

Summary.—At the end of the sixth century Christian missionaries were working in the north and in the south of England, but the progress made was very slow. The early bishops and their clergy travelled about as missionaries. In time churches were built in the vills and tuns, and a priest left in charge, who had his share in the strips of land, and in the course of time had other *dues* paid to him. Monasteries, too, sprang up. These were bodies of religious people living together to work and worship.

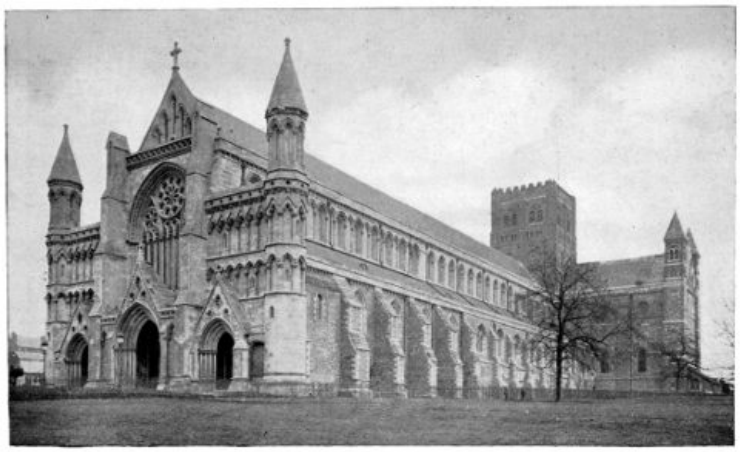
CHAPTER XII
MONASTERIES

1. The Saxons learned to respect the quiet simple lives of the early monks. They saw them toiling hard in their fields, bravely facing many difficulties and hardships, and turning the wilderness into a garden. At first each monk, from the abbot downwards, had to take his share in the toil, [Pg 47] wherever it was, and the monastery, as well as the vill, had to produce all that it needed.

2. Men, who were not very good or very religious, began to respect the lives and works of the monks. We find thanes and kings not only allowing monks to settle on some of their unoccupied land, but making over to them some of their own land, on condition that they and their children after them might always have a share in the prayers of these good men. We see, too, that whole vills came gradually into the hands of some monasteries; so that the convent became the lord of the vill, instead of a thane or a king.

3. Some convents made rapid progress, while others never prospered, but in the course of time disappeared. We have seen that the vill and the "town" grew up in much the same way, and were formed on the same plan. There are, however, a good many towns which grew up round monasteries in the first instance.

4. For example, King Offa II, at the end of the eighth century, founded the monastery of St. Alban, giving to it a wide extent of land round the ruins of the old city of Verulam. The monastery was built, and much land brought under cultivation. We find the sixth abbot, Ulsinus, two centuries later, encouraging people to settle round the walls of the monastery. That monastery lay near one of the great roads of England; many people were coming and going; so houses were built and a market was established. Churches, too, were erected for the use of the people who [Pg 48] settled in the town. The abbot was the lord of this "town", and the people dwelling in it were his tenants. He, like any other lord of a "tun", or "vill", was responsible for the keeping of order and good government on his land.



ST. ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL (page 47)

ST. ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL (page 47)

5. St. Edmund's Bury, or Bury St. Edmund's, grew up round a monastery which had been established in a lonely place; and there, also, arose in time a flourishing town, under the rule of the abbot.

6. A number of towns, which to-day are cathedral cities, grew up round the churches where the bishop and his principal clergy had their homes and chief centres of work.

7. These things only came about very gradually. The monks who settled first at Bury, or those whom King Offa settled by the ruins of Verulam, never dreamed that in the years to come their convents would be great land-owners, with many hundreds of tenants. But it was so; and the monasteries at length formed one of the most important classes of land-owners in the country;

their special rights and privileges coming to them so gradually, and so naturally, that no one realized exactly what was taking place.

8. Those who entered a monastery, or embraced "the religious life", intended to keep out of the world, and apart from its cares and worries as much as they could. But the lands left to them had to be looked after and cultivated. These did not always lie close round the monastery—very [Pg 49] frequently they were tracts of land in distant counties,—and somebody had to look after them. New possessions mean new responsibilities; and so we find that the monasteries had not only to attend to the daily round of worship and work inside the walls of the monastery, but had to carry on all the business belonging to great estates as well.

9. So in time a monastery had to use the services of many men besides monks; the monks became great employers of labour one way and another, and this attracted to their towns a good many skilled workmen.

10. The times when the Danes ravaged the greater part of the country were very trying to the life of English villages and towns. These sea-rovers came, at first, as plunderers, and the destruction of towns, churches, and monasteries was very great. Some monasteries, like Crowland [4], suffered several times, and many were never rebuilt. But, gradually, the invaders settled in England. They did not bring with them an entirely new land system. As they settled down to farming and village life, we find that land was held in almost exactly the same manner as under Saxon customs.

11. Of course there were some differences, and those who have studied the subject closely can indicate a good many points in which the Saxon and Danish land customs differed from each other. The dangers to which the Saxons had been exposed by the attacks of the Danes had put a great deal of power into the hands of the thanes and the king. Thus, by the time the Danes had [Pg 50] settled in England, every vill and tun had got into the hands of some lord or thane, or was in the king's hands. In Danish settlements there seems always to have been an overlord, who led his people in war and ruled in time of peace; though there was a class of **freemen** amongst them which had special rights and privileges.

12. But the Danes were something more than tillers of the soil; they were traders too, and "tuns" became in many places more like our "towns" and trading-places than ever they had been before. In time we find the largest towns in the Danish part of England—Leicester, Lincoln, Derby, Nottingham, and Stamford—binding themselves together to protect their trading interests.

> **Summary.**—Land was gradually left to monasteries by kings and nobles on condition that they and their families should always be prayed for. The monasteries became holders of lands, often far away from their houses, which had to be attended to. Towns grew up round many monasteries, like St. Alban's and Bury St. Edmund's, and the monastery was their overlord.
>
> The Danes brought no new land system with them to England, though amongst them there was a class of freemen. Towns grew to be greater trading-places in Danish times.

CHAPTER XIII

[Pg 51]

TOWNS AND VILLAGES IN THE TIME OF CNUT THE DANE

1. Now let us see what an ordinary village was like in the time of King Cnut, when Saxon and Dane were living pretty comfortably together, side by side, under good government.

2. We find that each vill or tun had a **lord**, an eorl, or thane, who practically owned the place and everything in it, though he could not do entirely as he liked. There was the land which belonged to him, and which was in his own hands, or occupation, as we say; that was called his **demesne**. The rest of the land was also his, but it was let out to people who had lived on the land from time out of mind—the **cheorls** or **villeins**. The lord's house was on his demesne. The villeins' houses were all together in the tun, with the grass yards for the cattle close to them, and the open fields and pasture-lands outside the tun, just as they had been in the olden days.

3. There seem to have been two classes of villeins—**geburs** and **cottiers**.

4. The geburs were the higher class. They seem very frequently to have held about 120 acres of land; they had to work on the lord's home farm two or three days a week, or pay him certain produce of the land as a rent; and they had to provide one or more oxen for the village plough, when there was ploughing to be done on the lord's farm, or in the common field.

5. In the Danish part of the country there appears to have been a class of freeholders in some [Pg 52] places, called **socmen**, but there were not very many of them. They, no doubt, had had their rights granted to them for distinguished service in the Danish wars.

6. The **cottiers** held only about 5 acres of land. They had to work for the thane or lord on certain days of the week; but, as they had no oxen, they had no ploughing to do for him.

7. Below the geburs and the cottiers were the **theows**, **thralls**, or **slaves**, who could be bought and sold. They were captives taken in war; or men who, for their crimes, had been doomed to slavery.

Serf or Theow

Serf or Theow

8. We must remember that the overlord might be the king, or a bishop; a monastery, or a thane. Their rights over their vills and tuns were much the same in each case, and their duties to those vills and tuns were also similar.

9. A very large number of vills and tuns were under the lordship of the various bishops and monasteries. It was so with towns like Winchester, Reading, Bury St. Edmund's, and St. Alban's. The custom had grown up quite naturally and in the course of many years.

10. It is pretty clear that the overlord did not always reside in his vill or tun. The tuns or vills of [Pg 53] the bishopric of Winchester, for instance, were scattered about in various parts of the diocese. It was the same with other overlords. But we find in every place a **steward**, and in each town the **king's reeve** or the **lord's reeve**. These acted for the overlord, whoever he was, and saw that the villeins and cottiers did their proper proportion of work at the right time; they saw that the lord's tolls at the markets, fairs, and ferries, were properly enforced. The steward was a most important officer in every town and village, and a great deal of power was in his hands.

11. Then in the ordinary country vill there was the **faber**, or smith; the **mason**; the **pundar**, or man who looked after the fences and hedges and drove stray cattle into the pound. The simple ordinary trades were found in the country villages then, as they are now; but the craftsmen, the most skilled workmen, had become for the most part dwellers in the towns. Even in very early times we find craftsmen in towns formed into trades' unions or **guilds**, to protect their special trades.

12. Now the land was shared amongst the villeins and cottiers in strips, usually containing an acre or a half-acre, in the common fields of which we have heard before. The villein did not have all the strips belonging to his holding set out side by side—they lay in different parts of the great open field. Crops had to be sown according to the custom of the vill or tun, and according to a fixed order. Wheat and rye would be sown one year on a part of the great field; barley, oats, and beans the next year; and the third year the land must be left fallow. The lord's land had to be [Pg 54] treated in the same way.

13. On the pasture-land and in the meadows the villein and cottier had the right to turn out a certain number of cattle, according to the size of their holdings. The crops, whether of hay or corn, had to be cleared from the fields by certain fixed days, so that cattle might be turned out to graze. You will still find, in some towns, that certain of the freeholders, or burgesses, have the right to turn a certain number of cattle on certain lands for a part of the year between fixed dates.

14. Then, on the rough commons or heaths, there were also grazing rights for the lord and his tenants. The tenants might "top and lop" the trees growing there at certain times, but they might not cut the trees down—that was the lord's right. There were also rights of cutting turf and heather, and the turning of hogs into the forest; all these rights were ruled by "custom", which bound both the lord and the tenants.

15. The lord, or steward, or reeve, held **courts** or meetings at regular intervals. At first these took place in the open air, like the old folk-moots; but in time they came to be held in a court-house. The court was a meeting, presided over by the lord or his steward, to see that the customs of the place were kept up; to call to account those tenants who had failed to do their share of the work; to put new tenants into the places of those who had removed or died; and to punish offenders.

16. This last right, of punishing offenders, was one thought to be of vast importance. In the early [Pg 55] days the men of the tun were bound together to keep the peace, and to see that it was kept; and they were strong enough to keep evil-doers in check. In the trading tuns or towns especially, the right was valued very highly; but, at the time we are now treating of, the right to exercise punishment was in the hands of the overlord, though the men of the place had still some voice in the government of their town. The right to have a **gallows** was one eagerly sought for, and held very firmly; not because people particularly wanted to hang one another, but because the gallows represented to them the highest power of government. The towns had lost most of their rights in this respect, but they had never forgotten those they had had, and were always on the alert to get back any lost right, or to gain a new one, which should help them to obtain the privilege of self-government.

Summary.—Each vill had an overlord, who might be the king, a bishop, a noble, or a monastery. Land held by the lord was his *demesne*. Those who lived on the land were *villeins* or *cheorls*. Villeins were divided into *geburs* and *cottiers*. Geburs held about 120 acres each, did so many days' work on the lord's land, and supplied an ox for the village plough. Cottiers had only 5 acres. In Danish districts there were some *socmen*, or freemen. The *thralls*, or serfs, were a lower class still. Each vill and tun had a steward, who looked after the lord's interests, and courts were held regularly in each. The right of a gallows was a sign of right to govern, and so it was much valued, especially by the trading towns. The faber or smith, mason, and pundar were the common trades in the vills.

CHAPTER XIV

[Pg 56]

CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES IN DANISH AND LATER SAXON TIMES

1. In speaking of our towns and villages we are obliged to make mention frequently of churches and monasteries. At the time when Cnut was king, each vill or tun had its church and its priest to minister in it. There were parts of the land, in the common fields and pasture, mixed up with the villeins' strips, set apart for the support of the services of the Church, the maintenance of the priest, and the care of the poor. In time various dues and customs were also paid to the priest for certain things which he was expected to do.

2. There are very few churches still standing which have any parts of their structure dating from before the time of King Cnut. In the early days churches were very simple buildings, built mainly of wood, and in the Danish wars most of them were destroyed.

3. In the tenth century there was a very general belief that the world was coming to an end at the end of the thousand years after the establishment of Christianity; so there was not much actual church-building going on. But in King Cnut's time a revival of interest in church-building took place, and there are in a good many of the old churches of England little bits of work in the walls, or very rude carvings over the doorways, which belong to this time. Unless such work is pointed [Pg 57] out to you by one who understands something about these matters, you will not be likely to discover it for yourself, any more than you are likely to discover the traces of the pit-dwellings, of which we spoke in an early chapter.

4. These parish churches and parish priests were under the control of the bishop, who had his chief church or **cathedral** in some important place in his diocese. Those cathedrals were generally served by colleges of clergy, called canons.

5. These were the **public churches**. But besides them there were colleges and monasteries, which were **private societies** of men living together. Some of the religious houses were in towns, as we have seen, and others were in wild desolate places. Every religious house, whether a monastery for men or a nunnery for women, had its church, which was the private chapel of the house, and not open to the public. In the course of years these private chapels were built as huge churches, much larger than the parish church. Even now you may see close to a big college church a much smaller parish church, as for example St. Margaret's Church, which stands by the side of Westminster Abbey. As more land came into the possession of these religious houses, the monks had more business with the outside world, for, as landlords, they had to see that their lands were turned to good account, and cultivated according to the notions of the day.

6. The monasteries, especially in their early days, were great centres of good and useful work. Those who founded them, or gave them lands, did so because they felt they were doing excellent [Pg 58] service for the people, and they wanted to have a share in the work, and to be remembered in the prayers of the monks. Founders of religious houses believed that they were getting something worth having in return for the lands which they gave.

7. In the wild times of the Danish invasions the monasteries were looked upon as places of safety for the weak and helpless. But they were not always safe places. People sometimes, when the country was in a disturbed state, would send their valuables to the nearest monastery. In time the Danes got to know of this, and many a religious house was attacked and sacked by them on account of the tales they had heard of the marvellous wealth hidden there.

8. A story is told of a worthy person living near St. Alban's monastery at a time when a visit from marauding Danes was expected. One market-day he sent a number of heavy iron-bound chests, guarded by armed men, through the market to the monastery. Everybody, of course, turned to look, and talked about the affair. As a matter of fact the chests only contained stones; the treasure was carefully hidden somewhere else, till all danger was thought to be over. That plan was used to put the Danes "off the scent", as we should say.

9. All the land that did not go with the tuns and vills in early days was apparently regarded as belonging to the people, and was called the **folk-land**. The king came to be regarded as the custodian or guardian of these folk-lands. Little by little they became the **property of the king**, [Pg 59] until practically he could do what he pleased with them. It was from these folk-lands—which in early times were probably scraps of land which nobody thought to be worth very much, since the nearest vills and tuns had never taken them in—that kings gave land to bishoprics and

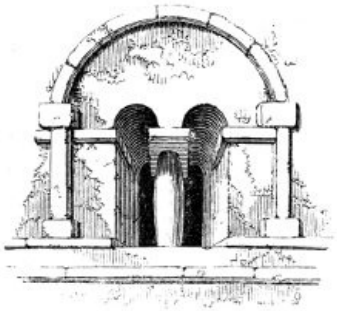
monasteries. By and by these rough lands became very valuable; but in most cases it was the labour, the skill, and the brains of the monks of the early days which turned the waste lands into fruitful fields.

Summary.—Each vill had its church, but there are none of these old churches now standing. Bits of stone-work belonging to that time are sometimes found built into old church walls. The early churches were mostly of wood. The monastery churches were often very large, but they were not public churches. In times of danger, monasteries were looked upon as places of safety. The waste lands which did not belong to any tun or vill in early times were called *folk-land*, and belonged to the people. The king was regarded as the guardian of these lands, but in time they were looked upon as his private property. Land given to monasteries was often very rough, but the care the monks gave to it in time made it fertile.

CHAPTER XV
LATER SAXON TIMES

1. Every old town and village has got its oldest house, of course. You will most likely have heard people trying to be funny about it, and saying they think it must have been built in the year One. [Pg 60] There is, we may pretty safely say, no house now standing exactly as it was in the days of King Cnut and the later Saxon times. But even yet there are some buildings standing, and still in use, which have certain parts which were erected in those times. These buildings are mostly churches, and in various parts of the country, indeed in almost every county, something belonging to this age can be pointed out.

2. Churches built of stone in those days had very thick walls with very small windows. The east end of the chancel was usually semicircular, forming an *apse*. The wall between the chancel and the nave was pierced by a narrow, low, round-headed arch. Most of the windows had plain, round-headed arches, and in some of them, dividing the opening into two parts or "lights", were stone pillars with bulging stems. Some of the doorways had triangular heads, others had round heads. There are some very curious bits of sculpture over some of these doorways. The meaning of them was quite plain, no doubt, to the people who carved them, but they are very difficult for us to understand. They represent the ideas which the Saxons had of good and evil, and of the strife going on between them.



Saxon Baluster Window (Monk-wearmouth Church, Durham)

Saxon Baluster Window (Monkwearmouth Church, Durham)

3. King Edward the Confessor had been brought up in Normandy, where church-building was in [Pg 61] advance of anything in England. He encouraged Norman ideas in building, as well as in other directions, and so prepared the way for the coming of the Normans. Some parts of the buildings connected with Westminster Abbey were built at that time.

4. We do not know much of Saxon castles, though the Saxons had their strongholds and fortified places.

5. The houses in which the people lived were most of them in those days built of wood. There was not much difference, except in size, between the house of the king, the thane, and the villein. There was the hearth, on which was the fire; and the room or hall in which it was placed was the chief building, close to which, very gradually, other buildings arose. Apparently the buildings had a framework of timber, filled in with wood, wattled together like hurdles. In the more important buildings, stone gradually came into use.

Saxon Doorway (Tower of Earls-Barton Church)

6. The monasteries and convents each had the buildings in which the monks lived grouped round the church. After the Danish wars the buildings improved, stone taking the place of wood.

7. Even in the towns wood was chiefly used for the ordinary house; though, as we should expect, stone was used in the more important buildings, and in the wall round the town. [Pg 62]

8. What we understand by comfort in a house was absent. There was the fire on the hearth in the middle of the floor; in this room the people of the house, from the highest to the lowest, had their meals; and there, on the floor, most of them slept at night. Cooking was almost entirely done in the open air.

> **Summary.**—In most towns and villages the oldest building now in use is usually the church. Some churches have remains of Saxon [5] work in them. The style was very plain: the chancel usually had an apse or semicircular end; the windows were round-headed and sometimes had pillars with bulging shafts; doorways were round-headed or triangular. King Edward the Confessor prepared the way for Normans and Norman ways of building. The Saxons had strongholds, but they were not castle-builders. Ordinary houses were usually of wood, and consisted of a room or hall, with a hearth in the middle; in this room the family slept. Most of the cooking was done in the open air.

CHAPTER XVI
IN NORMAN TIMES

1. When Duke William of Normandy became King of England, the power of the Crown was greater than it had ever been before. All the old folk-land had become **king's land**. Many knights had followed Duke William from Normandy into England, and expected to be provided for by their leader. The lands belonging to King Harold, and those of the Saxon eorls who had died fighting at Senlac, King William regarded as his own. These he granted to his followers, on condition that they acknowledged him as their overlord, and followed him in war when required. This was a stricter condition than had ever before been required in England. The Normans were used to it, and it did not seem at all strange to them. [Pg 63]

2. Neither was it so very strange to the Saxon nobles and thanes. Most of them were allowed to keep their estates if they took the **oath of allegiance** to the king, as the Normans did. Of course they grumbled: it was only natural that they should do so; but if they did not acknowledge the king in this way they were looked upon as rebels, and lost their lands.

3. King William was very careful, in the grants which he made, not to put too much power into the hands of his nobles. The old **vills** of Saxon times were now pretty generally called **manors**. When the king granted land, it was not given in huge slices—whole counties, halves, and quarters of counties—to this great follower of his or to that one. Between the old vills, or manors, there were often wide stretches of the king's own land, the old folk-land. If he had granted to a Norman knight a quarter of a county, or so, he would have been giving away much of his own land. [Pg 64] Besides that, the king did not mean his followers to become too powerful.

4. He granted the land in separate manors. It is quite true that in every county we can, so to speak, put our finger on some Norman knight, and say that he got the lion's share of the manors in that county. Thus in Hampshire there was Hugh de Port, and in Hertfordshire Eustace de Boulogne. But their manors did not all lie side by side, nor were they conveniently close together. Just as a villein's holding was spread out in various fields, so the manors, or fief, which a knight held under King William were often scattered over various counties.

5. At the time of the Conquest a very large number of manors belonged to bishoprics and monasteries. Now the Normans were a Christian race. The Norman Conquest was not like the Saxon or the Danish Conquest—a rush of heathen, bent on plunder and bloodshed. Bitter as the strife was, it was not as bad as those invasions had been. There was something which the Normans and the later Saxons both respected, and that was their **religion**. The Normans were a particularly religious and devout people, stern and cruel as they were. The lands of the Church

and of the monasteries were not interfered with to any extent. King William, however, took care that they were in the hands of people whom he could trust.

6. The story is told that the Abbot Frederick of St. Alban's, who did not love the Normans, once [Pg 65] remarked to King William that he owed his easy conquest of England to the fact that so many of the manors were held by monks and clergy, who could not and would not bring out their men to fight.

7. The king replied that that must be mended; for enemies might again invade the land, and he must have men whom he could depend upon to meet the foe. At that time a great tract of land between St. Alban's and London belonged to the Abbey, and the abbot allowed Saxon outlaws to infest it, who were a great nuisance to the Normans. As the land had been given by former kings, the king at once took half of it back again, in order to clear out the outlaws. Abbot Frederick had said too much. He fled away to the Camp of Refuge at Ely, and King William would only accept as abbot a Norman and a friend of his—Paul de Caen.

Summary.—After the Conquest the power of the king increased. The manors of Saxon nobles who had opposed King William were granted to his own followers. Other Saxon nobles kept their lands if they took the oath of allegiance.

The land was given in manors and groups of manors. Between many of these there were large stretches of the king's own lands. The lands of bishoprics and abbeys were not much interfered with; but the king took care that only those were accepted as bishops or abbots who would be loyal to him.

CHAPTER XVII [Pg 66]

IN NORMAN TIMES (*Continued*)

1. The king, then, granted manors to his followers, and to such Saxon eorls and thanes as were willing to hold their lands on the same conditions as the Normans. If they objected, as from time to time a good many of them did, they had to go.

2. Now, though every manor had a lord, where the lord held many manors it was quite impossible for him to be living in the manor-house of each of them, and looking after his estate himself. He could, if he chose, let out some portions of these manors to a man beneath him in rank, on exactly the same conditions as the king had granted to him. The man must swear to be his vassal, and appear, when required, with his proper number of men, to fight his lord's battles. He, in his turn, might let parts of the lands to others under him.

3. By this means the king could command a pretty large army. He would summon his great vassals, they would summon their vassals, each of whom would in turn summon his followers; and so from every manor men would be called to fight. It was something like the old nursery tale: "The fire began to burn the stick; the stick began to beat the dog; the dog began to worry the pig; and so the pig began to get over the stile".

4. If the lord was not living in the manor-house there was someone there to represent him, and to look after his interests. In scores of manors the people never set eyes on their overlord; but they [Pg 67] felt the grip of his power through the **steward of the manor**. Now, though the steward could not go against the customs of the manor openly, there were many ways in which he could make himself very disagreeable to the people under his care. He was there to grind what he could out of the tenants for the lord, and he took care to grind for himself too. It seems to have been quite an understood thing that he was to get what he could out of the manor for himself, so that very often villeins and tenants had anything but an easy pleasant life.

5. The Norman Conquest did not interfere with the customs of the manors, and the life on an ordinary manor went on very much the same in King William's reign as it had done under King Edward the Confessor. About twenty years after King William I had come to the throne, that great survey, recorded in **Domesday Book**, was made. Learned men who have studied the Domesday Book closely have discovered many things connected with the life of people in England at this period. We can even see what parts of the country suffered by opposing King William, and which districts had submitted quietly to him.

Summary.—The great tenants could let out their manors to others beneath them; and these in turn to others beneath them. In this way the king could get together a big army.

On the manors the *steward* was a most important officer, and the tenants saw more of him than of their lord. The customs of the manors were not altered by the Conquest, and the condition of the people on the land was very little changed.

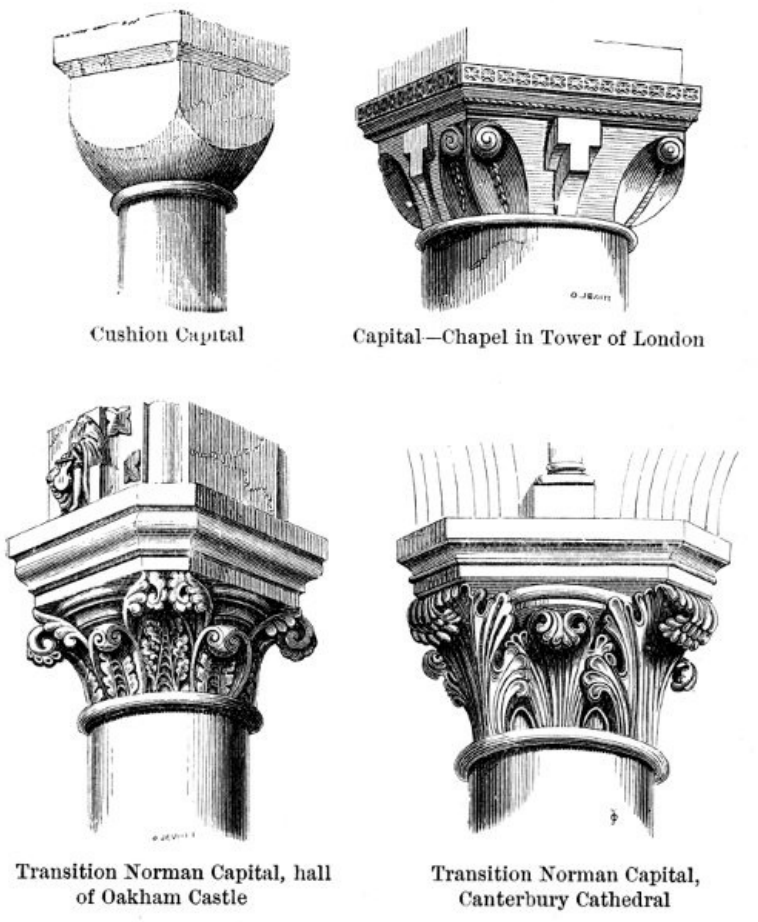
Domesday Book, drawn up twenty years after King William came to the crown, gives us [Pg 68] much information as to the state of the country at that time.

CHAPTER XVIII
IN NORMAN TIMES: THE CHURCHES

1. When we speak of Norman times we must bear in mind that they lasted for over 130 years—say from 1066 to 1200. That period covers a good many years, and consequently a good many changes took place. Now this period is marked by a particular style of architecture known as Norman or Twelfth Century.

2. With the coming of William the Conqueror to England began a great period of building in this country. There was what we may almost call a "great rage" for **founding** or establishing **religious houses** and **churches**, and for **building castles**. All the religious houses have gone, and nearly all the castles, but in their ruins we can see specimens of Norman work. In a large number of old churches we can see very good examples of this style. In Hampshire especially there is scarcely one old church, even in the most out-of-the-way village, which has not some Norman work to show.

3. You will expect to find that the style of building altered somewhat during that long time. In the beginning it was very plain, but gradually it became more ornamental. At first there were plain, [Pg 69] round-headed arches and heavy stone pillars, with boldly cut caps to them. But in the time of King Henry II, and later, we find the mouldings of the arches, and the caps of the pillars, ornamented more and more with bold carvings. There is a vast difference between the plain, almost ugly Norman work, in St. Alban's Cathedral, which was begun about the year 1077, and [Pg 70] the Norman work which can be seen in Durham Cathedral, or the west door of Rochester Cathedral. The St. Alban's builders had no stone at hand to speak of, but any amount of Roman tiles from the ruins of Verulam. They could not build anything very ornamental, but they could and did build something vast and imposing. In most of the cathedrals there are very fine specimens of later Norman work.



Cushion Capital; Capital— Chapel in Tower of London; Transition Norman Capital, hall of Oakham Castle; Transition Norman Capital, Canterbury Cathedral

Photo. S. B. Bolas & Co.

GALILEE CHAPEL, DURHAM CATHEDRAL (page 70)

Photo. S. B. Bolas & Co.
GALILEE CHAPEL, DURHAM CATHEDRAL (page 70)

4. We see, towards the end of the period, from the way in which the Norman arches were used to intersect each other, and form two pointed arches within a round-headed arch, that a change in style was showing itself. Towards the end of Norman times, in the reigns of Richard I and John, we reach what architects call the **Transition Period**, when the Norman style was gradually changing into the **Early English**, or Pointed Style. The choir of Canterbury Cathedral is one of the best-known specimens of this Transition Period. Just as changes took place in the style of the buildings, so, too, the life of the nation changed. All the changes were not improvements; some, indeed, were changes for the worse.

Photo. Valentine

CHOIR OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL (page 70)

Photo. Valentine
CHOIR OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL (page 70)

Summary.—The Norman period lasted for 130 years, from 1066 to about the year 1200. The round-headed style of building, called Norman, lasted through this period. It became more ornamented as the years went on. In the latter part of the time the style began to change. St. Alban's Cathedral and Durham Cathedral have examples of plain and highly ornamental Norman work. The choir of Canterbury Cathedral gives an example of Transition work at the end of Norman days.

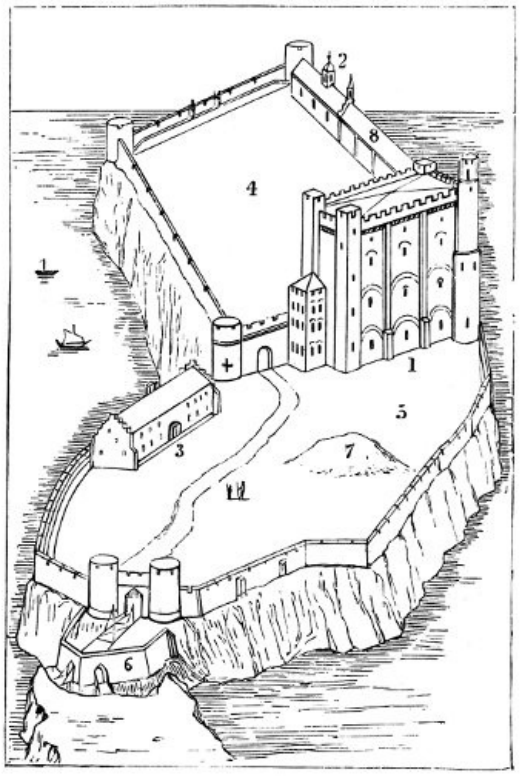
CHAPTER XIX

[Pg 71]

CASTLES

1. The passion for building castles in England had begun before the Norman Conquest; but during the Norman period a great many castles (about 1100, it is said) were built in various parts of the country. They were not all of the same size, strength, or importance. Some were royal castles, belonging to the king, who placed each one in charge of a constable or warden. These were necessary for the defence of the country. We should expect to find important castles, for instance, at such places as Carlisle, Ludlow, Gloucester, Dover, and London. We can, too, trace lines of castles along the Scottish and Welsh borders; and there were no fewer than twenty-five in the county of Monmouth alone.

2. Many castles were placed on the site of Saxon strongholds, and of strongholds dating from still earlier times. Others were built where the overlord thought they would be of service to him in protecting his interests and keeping his tenants in order. So it often came to pass that the castles were built close to, or in the very heart of, a town or city. Frequently the castle was at once the protection and the terror of the neighbourhood.



Norman Castle.—From a drawing in Grose's Military Antiquities.—1, The Donjon-keep. 2, Chapel. 3, Stables. 4, Inner Ballium. 5, Outer Ballium. 6, Barbican. 7, Mount, supposed to be the court-hill, or tribunal, and also the place where justice was executed. 8, Soldiers' Lodgings.

Norman Castle.—From a drawing in Grose's Military Antiquities.—1, The Donjon-keep. 2, Chapel. 3, Stables. 4, Inner Ballium. 5, Outer Ballium. 6, Barbican. 7, Mount, supposed to be the court-hill, or tribunal, and also the place where justice was executed. 8, Soldiers' Lodgings.

3. It is curious to note that some of the greatest castles-builders of the time were bishops. There was Bishop Gundulph of Rochester, who built the Keep of Rochester Castle and the White Tower in the Tower of London. There was Bishop Henry de Blois of Winchester, who built a number of [Pg 72] castles on lands belonging to his bishopric. Strange as it may seem to us that bishops should be great rulers and leaders of armies, it did not strike the people of those days as at all extraordinary or improper. A bishop was as much a ruler as the king, and had territories to look [Pg 73] after and keep in order. In those days he was quite as able to carry out these duties as the boldest baron of them all, and could give and take hard knocks with the best of them.

4. The great castle-builders had no love for the traders in towns and cities; indeed they looked down on that class. But they found them very useful. Towns attracted traders by land and by water; and every town, every bridge, and every ferry belonged to some lord or other. No goods could be brought into or taken from a town, or carried across bridge or ferry, without paying toll and custom to the overlord. But he had certain duties to perform in return, in protecting the town and its trade; and the better the protection the more traders came to pay toll, and the better it was for everybody concerned.

5. So we find, near many of our ancient towns and cities, a castle, or its ruins—or perhaps only the site is left—where the lord of the town kept a number of men to protect the town and district, even when he was not there himself.

6. If there was no love lost between the lord of the castle and the townsmen, there was still less between the latter and the soldiers. The soldiers were inclined to take liberties, and to be insolent and oppressive. As they had it in their power to "make trouble", if not kept in good-humour, the townsmen put up with much for the sake of peace and quietness.

[Pg 74]

Summary.—The Norman period was a great castle-building age: 1100 strongholds were then built in England. Castles were not all of the same size or importance. There were royal castles, especially on the border-lands, as at Carlisle, Ludlow, Gloucester, and Dover. Every noble regarded a castle as a necessity. Castles were built near towns, partly to protect them, partly to keep them in order. Castles and towns were necessary for the protection and encouragement of trade. Townsmen and the men-at-arms in the castles were very jealous of each other. Some of the bishops were great castle-builders, because they were great landholders, not because they were bishops.

CHAPTER XX
CASTLES AND TOWNS

1. However useful a castle might be in protecting the overlord's tenants and property, the sense of security was always a great temptation to quarrel with other lords. With strong kings, like William I and Henry I, the danger of disorder was not so great, as they knew how to keep their great barons in check. But in the time of King Stephen, during the long years of civil war, the barons were divided into two parties, and each castle became a centre of strife.

2. The baron in his castle had his men to keep. These he did not pay in regular wages. He fed, clothed, and armed them after a fashion; and, to give them something to do, would rake up some old grievance with a neighbouring baron, make an attack upon his property, and let his men plunder, burn, and kill to their hearts' content. Then the other baron would retaliate. [Pg 75]

3. It is easy to see that the conditions of life in England were most unsettled in the reign of King Stephen. There was no safety in town or village, and the dwellers on the manors must have suffered most severely. Their own lord would send and gather in all their store to victual his castle from time to time: his enemy would send *his* men to seize what they could. It made very little real difference to the villeins which side won; *they* suffered, as they were heavily oppressed by both parties. Their own lord expected his dues just the same, war or no war, famine or no famine, whether he or his enemy had carried off the best part of the corn and cattle or not; and he would take his pick of the men on his manors to fill the places of his men-at-arms who had been put out of action.

4. Many of the barons became little better than monsters of cruelty, and their castles "nests of devils and dens of thieves". One of the very worst of these was Geoffrey de Mandeville, who had large estates in Essex and Hertfordshire. His castle of Anstey, in Hertfordshire, was a den of fearful wickedness. He and his men neither feared God nor regarded man; nothing was sacred to them—they spared neither church nor monastery, town nor village.

5. Dreadful tales are still told of the cruel deeds done in the deep dungeons of nearly all these old castles by the "bold bad barons" of the time of King Stephen.

6. When Henry II became king he put a stop to these disorders, and large numbers of the castles were pulled down; but the evils they had caused lived long after, and were the source of much trouble. [Pg 76]

7. It is said that "Everything comes to those who know how to wait", and the townsmen, under the rule of a great lord, knew how to wait. Great as the lord of the town was, whether he was baron, bishop, or the king himself, he could not do without the town—and the town knew it. People were sometimes short of ready money in those days, just at the very time when they needed it most urgently.

8. You will remember that the **Crusades** began in the reign of King William I. Now and again the crusading "fever" took hold of some of these Norman barons, and many wanted to go to fight the Turk—especially when there was not much fighting going on at home. But crusading was a costly business, and of course there was a good deal of rivalry between these crusading knights as to who could raise the best-furnished troop of men. The baron would be glad to get together as much money as he could. So the chance came to many a town to advance money to their lord. He, in return, would grant to the town the right to collect the tolls and customs payable to him for a term of years; or perhaps on condition that they allowed him so much every year out of the tolls collected.

9. Bishops, too, were often in urgent need of money, for there were many calls upon them. The monasteries were, at this period, beginning to do so much expensive building, that often they, too, were glad to get money by granting to the townsmen privileges for which they were willing to pay. [Pg 77]

10. Then there were other towns, not depending so closely on a baron or bishop or monastery, which wanted to gain similar privileges of levying toll and custom. These would petition the king for the right to be given to them too, to levy dues, in return for a large sum of money paid down, or for a yearly payment to the king.

11. The towns were becoming strong, and they gained considerable rights during this Norman period. As far back as the time of King Cnut we find, in some districts, towns banding themselves together to protect their trade and interests. This was the case with Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Stamford, and Lincoln.

Summary.—In the time of King Stephen castles became dens of robbers, and their owners were nearly always at war with each other. The Crusades attracted many fighting barons when there was no war at home. They needed money to fit out troops to go abroad, and in many cases the towns found the money on condition that they got certain rights to levy tolls and customs. Bishops and monasteries in want of ready-money often let out or parted with their rights to towns in a similar manner.

Towns began to be very powerful, and sometimes joined together to protect their interests. This was the case with the towns of Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Stamford, and Lincoln.

CHAPTER XXI

IN NORMAN TIMES: THE MONASTERIES

[Pg 78]

1. The hundred years after the Norman Conquest was a great period of building. It was a time for establishing or *founding* new **religious houses**. Something like 389 such houses were opened during this period, so that they played a very important part in the history of the times. The Normans were not very much interested in the English religious houses which they found already established here. In fact, a good many of them, since the times of the Danish invasion, 200 years before, had got into very bad order, and were in need of reform. Little by little, as Norman bishops and abbots were appointed over these Saxon religious houses, reforms did take place, but not always very easily or quietly.

2. At the time of the Conquest the religious houses in Normandy were in a far better state than those in England. Their members lived better lives, did better work, and set a much better example of godly living and working. There were several **new orders** or societies of monks, which had their head-quarters on the continent of Europe. These interested King William's companions more than the old English monasteries, because they and their fathers had helped to establish them.

3. So we find, as the Normans received lands here in England, and founded religious houses, most of them were connected with the monasteries across the sea, and were ruled by abbots who [Pg 79] lived across the sea. Such branch houses were generally called **priories**, and the kings and barons who founded them gave them manors and parts of manors, sometimes taking them from the older Saxon monasteries and cathedrals. [6]

4. Then, too, there were the old Saxon houses, like St. Alban's Abbey, Westminster Abbey, and Glastonbury Abbey: they were reformed and improved, and to them, too, lands were given in various parts of the country, often far away from the mother house. Thus St. Alban's Monastery had important lands in the neighbourhood of the River Tyne, and a daughter house was opened there called **Tynemouth Priory**. So, you see, there were two kinds of priories in England: one class attached to English religious houses, and the other to Norman or foreign religious houses. In time the foreign priories received the name of **alien priories**.

5. All these religious houses had some interest in the land, and all of them, to a greater or less degree, were landlords. In some cases the lands given to them were manors which had been managed and tilled in the same way for hundreds of years. The only change was that the lord of the manor might be a society or religious house instead of a baron. Each of the manors had its steward, its villeins, and so forth, like any other in the land. But a good deal of the land given to these new religious houses had never been occupied before.

6. Though some of the monasteries, like St. Alban's and St. Edmund's Bury, were in towns, there [Pg 80] were others, especially those founded in these Norman times, far away from towns, in pathless woods or deep dales, like Rievaulx, in Yorkshire. Others, like Ramsey and Thorney, were in lonely fens and marshes. Here the monks themselves set to work, as in the earlier days, and tilled the ground, keeping up their regular services in their little church most carefully—praying and working. Gradually their lands improved; other lands came to them; more labour was needed; and so, little by little, tenants took holdings on their lands, and farmed them for the "house", on much the same conditions as in the older manors.

7. We find that in many of the monasteries attention was given to other occupations besides agriculture. Some, especially those in towns, like St. Alban's, became in this period great seats of learning. All of them wrote the books they used, and some of them were particularly famed for their writing and illuminating. In fact, they were the **book-producers** of the age, and very little of the work of learned ancient scholars could have come down to us had it not been for the careful, painstaking work of simple monks quite unknown to history.

8. Some of the abbeys in the west of England, like Bath Abbey, had a good deal to do with opening up the **wool trade**, which in the Middle Ages became the staple trade of the south and west of England. Flaxley Abbey, in Gloucestershire, developed **iron-smelting**.

9. In the monasteries men could quietly think and work, and use the talents they had, without [Pg 81] being called away to fight or do the unskilled work of the world. In these early times there were no other places where men could lead quiet, thoughtful lives, and "think things out", and then put them into practice. The men in the monasteries were not all equally good or religious or clever, but the work done in and through these old institutions was most important and most valuable to the country.

Summary.—Many new religious houses were founded [7] in Norman times. The Norman barons were more interested in establishing branch houses of Norman monasteries than in those they found [8] in England. Branch houses of the various monasteries were called *priories*, and those which belonged to foreign monasteries were called *alien priories*.

All the monasteries were landholders. Some of them took over old manors, others had uncultivated land given to them which in time became manors.

Some monasteries, like St. Alban's, Westminster, and Glastonbury, became great centres of learning. Others, in out-of-the-way places, encouraged various trades—Bath did much for the wool trade of the west of England; Flaxley developed iron-smelting.

CHAPTER XXII
EARLY HOUSES

1. When we go from a big modern manufacturing town into an old town or village, we cannot help noticing the old buildings, the ancient churches, the old town-hall, the alms-houses, and the old houses with their plastered fronts, tiled roofs, and huge chimney-stacks. [Pg 82]

2. As years go by, the number of these old houses gets less and less. In the course of time many of the smaller ones especially, which have been neglected and allowed to fall into bad repair, become dangerous to live in. The sanitary inspector and the medical officer of health condemn them as unfit for human habitation, and the houses are shut up. Then, perhaps, they stand empty for some years; mischievous boys throw stones and break the glass left in the queer little windows; bill-posters paste notices of all kinds on the doors, walls, and window-shutters; holes are knocked in the plaster, bits of the woodwork are torn away, chalk-marks are scrawled on the walls, and the buildings very shortly look disgracefully untidy. Then some day the "house-breaker" appears on the scene, and the houses, which have stood for centuries, are cleared away, and modern buildings take their places.

3. Thoughtful people, who know something of the history of the town or village, are always sorry to see old buildings disappear; because there is much to be learned from them, and they help us to recall many things of great value and importance which we very easily lose sight of.

4. But, old as the houses in our streets and villages are, there are very few of them which date back more than three hundred or three hundred and fifty years. Most of them only date back to the time of Queen Elizabeth—the latter part of the sixteenth century. [Pg 83]

5. There are, however, a number of fine old houses which have work in them of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and some people can point out to you traces of work in some old houses of an earlier date than that. There is at Lincoln, for instance, a fine old stone house called "the Jew's House", which was built late in the twelfth century. But stone houses for ordinary people, both in towns and villages, were very rare then—wood was the common material. Of course in parts of the country where stone was plentiful and wood scarce, stone would be very largely used. For instance, amongst the Cotswolds stone has always been the handiest material for building walls, and for covering roofs. [Pg 84]

Norman Dwelling.—The Jew's House, Lincoln

Norman Dwelling.—The Jew's House, Lincoln

6. Nowadays, both in town and country, houses are commonly "bunches of bricks". The Romans knew how to make bricks or tiles, and in places near old Roman cities Roman tile is still to be seen, which has been used up over and over again in the walls of old buildings. The big tower of St. Alban's Cathedral is built of Roman tiles which had been used centuries before in the walls of Roman houses in Verulamium. That tower has been standing as it is now for over 800 years.

7. But in Saxon times the *art* of brick-making was lost, and Saxons and Normans, it appears, were quite ignorant of it. There is an old brick house—Little Wenham Hall, in Suffolk—which is believed to have been built in the latter part of the thirteenth century. That is the oldest brick house in England. In the fifteenth century the art of brick-making had been rediscovered, and it

seems to have been imported from Flanders. The old palace at Hatfield is one of the brick buildings of this period; but brick did not come much into use until quite a century later. In the county of Middlesex, where there is found clay which is very suitable for brick-making, the art was not used to any great extent till the time of King James I. After the Great Fire of London, in the year 1666, there was a great demand for bricks, and the use of that material has quite changed the character of the houses in our towns and villages.

THE OLD PALACE, HATFIELD (page 84)

THE OLD PALACE, HATFIELD (page 84)

Summary.—The oldest buildings in a town are usually the church, the town-hall, and alms-houses. Most of the houses with gabled roofs and plastered fronts do not go back farther than the time of Queen Elizabeth. There are a very few houses older than this: one at Lincoln, called the Jew's House, dates back to the twelfth century. Wood was the common material for house-building; but in *stone districts*, like the Cotswolds, stone took the place of wood. Brick is now the *ordinary* material for house-building. The Romans made and used tiles, but the art was lost. The earliest *brick* houses, like Little Wenham Hall in Suffolk, were built of material brought from Holland. The art of brick-making began to revive in this country in the fifteenth century, but was not very extensively practised till after the Great Fire of London, in 1666, in the neighbourhood of the metropolis.

[Pg 85]

CHAPTER XXIII

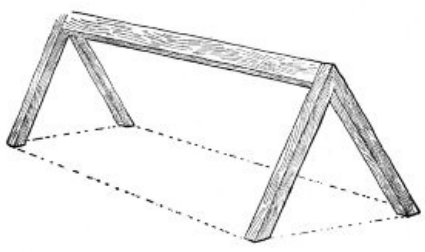
EARLY HOUSES (*Continued*)

1. For many centuries the houses of the villeins and cottiers did not alter very much in their general plan. You will remember that in those old pit-dwellings the hearth and its fire was the centre of the home. The room, or space round the fire, gradually became larger, especially in the houses of the thanes and eorls, till we get the hall, with the hearth in the middle, and the hole in the roof to let out the smoke.

2. All through the later Saxon and Danish times, and in the Norman period, the hall was the most important part of the house. As the years went on, and the style of building altered, the walls, the windows, and the roof became more beautiful and ornamental, becoming most magnificent in the fourteenth century, or Decorated Period. Gradually other buildings were added to the hall for comfort and convenience.

[Pg 86]

3. So far as we know, the house or hut of the villein was a very simple affair before the time of the Norman Conquest. Two pairs of poles were set up, sloped and joined at the top, and connected by a ridge pole something after this fashion—



The space between was then filled in by other poles and wattle-work. This was plastered with clay, and covered with turf or rough thatch. There seems to have been a pretty regular length for this building, which was long enough to take four stalls for oxen. That required about 16 feet, and

was called a "bay". The villein and his oxen were all housed under one roof at first. When another bay was added, the size of the house was doubled, and so on. In the course of time the houses were improved; side walls were raised of wood framing, and the sides were filled in with wattles and covered with clay. [Pg 87]

4. In the course of years these houses or huts grew out of date, and were replaced by others in much the same style, but gradually improving in comfort and workmanship. In the villages there was not much alteration down to the fourteenth century. When a house in a manor or village was pulled down, and was to be rebuilt, the manor court kept a sharp eye upon the building operations to see that the new walls did not encroach upon the highway, or upon the lord's land. No addition could be made to the house without the consent of the overlord. Customs in the villages changed very, very slowly, and so it is that, though the houses in out-of-the-way villages have been rebuilt over and over again, there are many lath-and-plaster houses standing now round village greens, built between two and three hundred years ago, on old foundations which date back to Saxon times.

5. So for many hundreds of years an ordinary village house was, to our way of thinking, a very wretched, comfortless place. Even as late as the time of Queen Elizabeth a countryman's house is thus described:—

> "Of one bay's breadth, God wot, a silly cote,
> Whose thatchèd spars are furred with sluttish soote
> A whole inch thick, shining like blackmoor's brows
> Through smoke that down the headlesse barrel blows.
> At his bed's feete feaden [9] his stallèd teame,
> His swine beneath, his pullen [10] o'er the beam."

Summary.—The *hearth* was the central feature in the early pit-dwellings. The space round it gradually became larger and grew into the hall in Saxon days, and the hall, or house-place, remained the chief part of the house for centuries. As architecture improved, so did the appearance of the halls in important houses. Gradually other rooms were added. [Pg 88]

The hut of the villein was very simple. At first only like a rough roof, with sloping sides, in time this roof was raised on side walls. They usually were about 16 feet in length, and such a length was called a bay. Though built and rebuilt time after time, the style did not vary much for centuries for such houses as these.

CHAPTER XXIV
EARLY TOWN HOUSES

1. Houses in towns have been more frequently rebuilt and altered in various ways than those in the villages. The chief material used in building was wood, as it was in the villages, and one of the great dangers in the Middle Ages was that of fire. In the towns this danger was greater than in the villages, and fires happened more frequently.

2. The leading men in a town had more money to spend, and the increase of business, or a desire for change, led them to improve their houses. It was easier for a wealthy townsman to get leave from the "corporation" or guild to rebuild his house than it was for the villein in the village to get the leave of the manor court.

3. The thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries all saw a great growth in architecture; they were the Early English, the Decorated, and the Perpendicular Periods of architecture. In most of the old churches, and in many of the old mansions, we have specimens of all these periods; but not very many of the town houses founded in the Middle Ages, and still standing, are much earlier than the fifteenth century. In that age there was a great development of wood-work, and there is hardly one old town which has not some wood-work of that time in some of its old houses. [Pg 89]

4. The rich and prosperous townsman rebuilt his house according to the fashion of his time; but through all the three centuries the general arrangements of the dwelling-house did not alter very much.

5. In some parts of London, and in many country towns, you can see that some of the shops in the main street are reached from the pavement by a little flight of steps. Below the shop there is a big light cellar, and the small boy or girl who wants to look in at the shop window has to "tiptoe" very much in order to do so. Now, that arrangement is just a little relic of the old town house of the Middle Ages.

6. The house was usually quite narrow, and had a gable facing the street. It was built over a cellar of stone, often arched and vaulted very much like a church. There were steps from the street down to the cellar, and these steps had to be protected, or accidents were certain to happen to careless foot-passengers. Then, too, there were steps up to the room over the cellar, which formed the shop and workroom in one. The front of the shop would be open, like a stall, and there would probably be a passage through to the back of the house. [Pg 90]

7. Above the shop would be another room or rooms, over which, in the open space under the roof,

was the great attic running through the house. This attic was often kept as a store-room, and goods were hoisted from the street by a crane; but, in later times, it would be formed most likely into little sleeping-rooms, very small, very dark, and very unhealthy.

8. Most of the work would be done in the shop, where the master, his workmen, and apprentices all did their share. The apprentices would sleep in the shop at night, and very probably the workmen as well. It was quite a usual thing for all the establishment to work and live and sleep on the premises. The rooms occupied by the master and his family at first were few in number; separate bedrooms only came into use very gradually indeed.

9. The walls of the house above the cellar were usually of wood, and the front towards the street was often skilfully and beautifully carved. In some English counties still there are very fine specimens of these old town houses; those at Chester, Shrewsbury, and Ludlow, for instance, are famed all over the world.

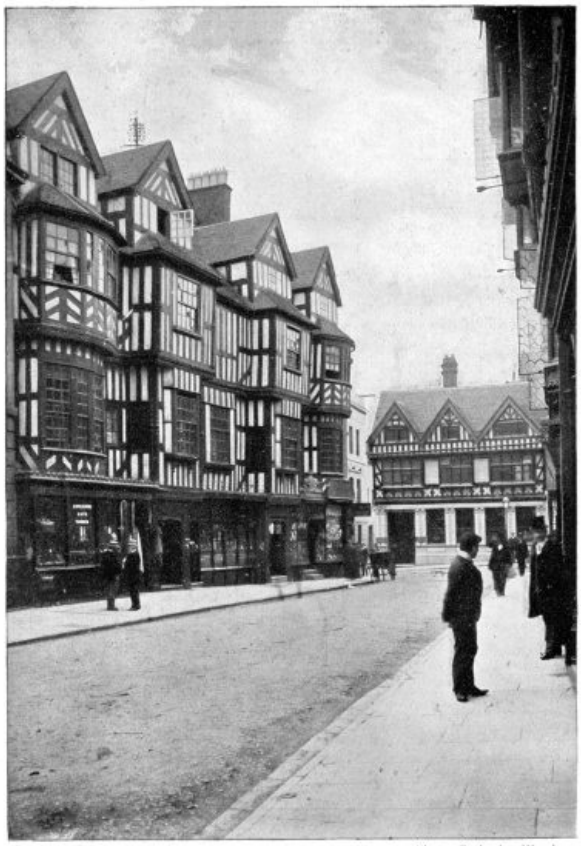


Photo. Catherine Ward

IRELAND'S HOUSE, SHREWSBURY (page 90)

Photo. Catherine Ward
IRELAND'S HOUSE, SHREWSBURY (page 90)

10. We must not suppose that all the houses were equally splendid, or equally well built; there was then, no doubt, bad building as well as good. In fact there must have been some very careless building in early days, and especially so in Norman times. It is a curious fact that almost every big Norman church tower tumbled down because it was badly built, even though Norman work looked very massive and substantial. [Pg 91]

11. Merchants and wealthy tradesmen took great pride in their houses, and the wood-work and furniture in them were splendid. Kings and nobles were no better housed than these wealthy townsmen, nor did they have more of the comforts of life.

12. But the poor! There were always the poor and the outcast in every town; but they did not exist in the enormous numbers of later years, or of the present day. Their wretched little hovels were huddled together in close alleys, and life in them must have been very cheerless. It was, however, somebody's business to look after them. The religious houses, the churches, the colleges, all did their part in distributing food at their gates daily. Many wealthy people, both nobles and citizens, did likewise; and to give **alms to the poor** was a work of charity which no self-respecting citizen thought of shirking. Then, too, the guild or corporation kept a sharp look-out upon the poor; strangers were turned out of the town, and the people punished who had taken them into their houses.

Summary.—Town houses were often rebuilt, owing to the fact that fires were common, and townsmen had more money to spend on building. They consisted of a cellar of stone, a shop, a room or rooms above, and a big attic. All the work was done in the shop, and there the men and apprentices slept at night. The wooden fronts of these houses were often very handsome, and specimens of those built in the fifteenth century may be seen at Chester, Shrewsbury, and Ludlow. [Pg 92]

All the building of those days was not equally good, but some of the best has lasted. Wealthy townsmen were as well housed as kings and nobles. The poor were not crowded in the towns. It was a work of mercy to look after the poor, and the poor were kept very largely by the places to which they belonged. Strangers were not admitted into the towns, and so many wanderers were kept away.

CHAPTER XXV
LIFE IN THE TOWNS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

1. Disease was one of the great dangers always lurking in a town. Plague of some kind or other was never very far away, and it frequently made its presence felt. People had not realized the sinfulness of dirt.

2. The best-drained buildings were the monasteries and colleges. Near the ruins of every big monastery, from time to time, underground passages have been discovered, many of them big enough for a man to walk along upright, and leading nobody knows where. When these were found, people shook their heads and said: "Ah, those old monks; you don't know what they were up to. They made these secret passages, going for miles and miles underground, so that they might get in and out of the monastery, and be up to all sorts of mischief, without anyone being the wiser." [Pg 93]

3. Many wonderful tales have been told about these underground passages; but, as a matter of fact, most, if not all of them, have turned out to be **sewers**, which the monks made from their monasteries to some water-course, so that the sewage might be safely carried away. The monks were usually in advance of the townsmen of those days in sanitary matters. No doubt a sanitary engineer of the present day would be able to point out how much better the drainage-works could have been carried out; but the monks set an example in this matter which, bit by bit, the rest of the nation began to follow.

4. The chief streets of the town and the market-place were paved with huge lumps of stone, sloping towards the middle of the street from the houses on each side of the way, a gutter or "denter" running down the middle. When a heavy shower of rain fell, the water flushed the gutter more or less. If the street happened to be pretty level, the gutter, or denter, was just an open sewer all the year round; and it did its deadly work in poisoning the worthy citizens, high and low, rich and poor, though they did not realize it. Those towns were the best drained which were perched on a steep slope, so that the contents of the gutter found their way speedily to the nearest water-course.

5. There were no great manufacturing towns in those days. Most of the ordinary articles used by the townsfolk were manufactured in the town itself, and much of the work went on in the open air. The butcher killed his animals in the street, before his shop, and that added to the horrors of the gutter. But then all the butchers in a town were located in one part of it. Even now most old towns have got a Shambles, or Butchers' Row, or Butchery Street, or place of similar name, near the market-place. Other trades had their own parts of the town, where they made and sold their goods. Cordwinder Street or Shoemakers' Row are still common street names. The smith and the armourer did much of their work out in the open street; the joiner put together there any big piece of wood-work which he had in hand; the wheel-wright "shut" his tyres; the chandler melted fat and made candles. The streets of the town must have been very noisy and very "smelly". [Pg 94]

6. There were no footways for passengers. Wagons, drays, and wheel-barrows there were, but carriages had hardly been invented, and coaches and light-wheeled vehicles had not been dreamt of.

7. No doubt the tradesmen were expected to clear up the mess they made in front of their houses, and the apprentices had to sweep up. But that usually meant only drawing the rubbish together to the great refuse-heap close to the house, which the fowls and the pigs, to say nothing of the children, speedily managed to scatter. Now and then these heaps would be carted away to a spot outside the town; but usually the street was looked upon as the handiest place into which to fling any refuse from the houses. However clean the citizens' houses might be inside, and however richly ornamented the wood-work, plague and pestilence was always very near. [Pg 95]

8. Still, though many persons died, and were buried close by in the little churchyard, where for hundreds of years the dead had been buried, people lived, and throve, and did good work. For one thing, they lived a great deal in the open air, and they were not so much afraid of draughts in their houses as we are.

9. The **water-supply** of a town was a very important matter. Here, again, the monasteries and colleges frequently led the way, and showed how water might be brought by pipes from a distant spring. It was not an uncommon thing for water to be brought in this way to a "conduit" in the market-place, whence the people fetched it as they needed. Many a good wealthy citizen has performed the pious work of providing his town with a supply of water. Parts of old water-pipes, some of wood and some of lead, laid for such a purpose, have often been discovered in recent years.

10. Usually, however, a town had to depend upon wells for its water-supply; and with open gutters running through the town it is very easy to see that many of these wells supplied water

which, at times, could not have been pure, however bright and clear it may have looked.

11. In the villages the dangers arising from want of proper drainage and from impure water were not quite so great as in the towns. Yet even now, in this twentieth century, how to drain our villages properly, and provide them with a good water-supply, are questions needing attention in many places. We have seen that the houses in the villages were usually close together, and men had not realized that dirt is one of the greatest enemies of mankind. There are a good many people, even in our time, who see no great harm in having pigsties, refuse-heaps, and manure-heaps close to their houses. [Pg 96]

12. One of the most loathsome of the diseases common in the Norman times and later was **leprosy**. The lepers *were* kept out of the towns, but at first very little was done for them. The refuse of the markets, and the food that was so bad that it had to be carted outside the town, was thought to be good enough for them. Gradually, however, we find **hospitals for lepers** established. They were not what we understand by hospitals, places where sick folk could be doctored and nursed and cured; they were religious houses which poor lepers might enter, and in which they might have safe shelter, care, and attention for the rest of their sad lives. They were always built outside the walls of the towns.

13. **Other hospitals** for poor and suffering people were also established. They were not large buildings, with wards holding scores of people. They were little religious houses, each with its chapel and priests to carry on its services, providing homes for small numbers—perhaps half a dozen or a dozen.

14. Kings, bishops, earls, and citizens all took part in this good work. Every founder expected that every day "for ever" he and his family should be prayed for by the inmates. Some hospitals were "founded" or established as thank-offerings for escape from some great danger; some to "make up" for some wrong that had been done and could never be put right, and to show that the founder was "really sorry"; some were built for good reasons, others for selfish reasons. Nowadays we arrange fêtes and demonstrations for our hospital funds, and we are asked to buy tickets, because "it's a good cause". We get some enjoyment for ourselves and help the hospital; thus, as it were, doing good and receiving good at the same time. [Pg 97]

> **Summary.**—The monasteries in the Middle Ages were the best-drained buildings. "Underground passages" often met with near old monastery ruins were, for the most part, *sewers*. The gutter which ran down the middle of the town streets formed a kind of sewer. Towns on the slope of a hill were the best drained. In the Middle Ages there were no big manufacturing towns. Each town supplied most of its own wants. Different trades had their own quarters in the town, which is shown in some old street-names. Refuse was left lying about the streets, and the dead were buried in churchyards in the town. In some cases water was brought from a distance in wooden or leaden pipes to "conduits" in the town. Most towns depended on wells, which were often tainted with sewage matter. *Leper hospitals* were founded and placed outside the walls of nearly all the towns. Other hospitals sprang up in the towns. None of them were large, or at all like our hospitals. They were alms-houses and homes, not places where folk went to be healed.

CHAPTER XXVI [Pg 98]

THE GROWING POWER OF THE TOWNS

1. Back in early Saxon times we find that the inhabitants of a town were banded together to keep the peace, thus forming a society pledged to each other—the Peace or Frith Guild. It lost nearly all its *real* power in later Saxon and Norman times. But it did not actually die out, and it appears that from this Frith Guild what we now understand by a **corporation** took its rise. The guild was a great power in some of the Saxon towns; only those belonging to it could trade in the town, and its members were very slow to admit outsiders to share in their privileges.

2. We have seen that the free, or nearly free, **tuns** gradually came under the power of an overlord—the king, a bishop, a baron, or a monastery, as the case might be, and very little real power was left to the guild. The overlord appointed a **reeve** to look after his interests, and the government of the place was in his hands. Yet the old Frith Guild seems to have regulated matters connected with the *customs* of the town, which did not interfere with the lord's rights.

3. When we reach Norman times we have come to a period during which the towns improved their position. The Norman Conquest led to increased trade with the Continent. The great building operations here attracted skilled workmen and craftsmen to this country. These men naturally found their way to the towns rather than to the villages. They were protected and encouraged by the Norman nobles, who preferred *their* work to that of the Saxons. Although they might be foreigners, these strangers had ideas of freedom and liberty which fitted in very well with the town's ideas of self-government. Then, too, these craftsmen were bound together in trade societies or guilds, and that made them strong and worthy of consideration in the places where they settled. [Pg 99]

4. A **charter** to a town granted and secured to it certain privileges, and a town with a charter became a **borough town**. The king granted a good many charters to towns during the Norman

Period. A town which wished a charter had to pay heavily for it. But it was quite worth while for the town to secure the right which a charter gave it—the right to manage its own affairs. What a town most desired was to be free from the authority of the king's officer, to choose its own port-reeve, who could preside over the court of the town, so that the town might not have to appear before the hundred court. By paying an annual rent to the king, however heavy the amount might be, the town hoped to escape from the many extra fees and taxes which the king's officers put upon it. It could then settle its own disputes, raise its own taxes as it needed them, and punish its own evil-doers.

5. In many cases bishops, barons, or religious houses were the overlords of districts containing important towns, and those towns managed to get charters from their overlord as other towns had from the king. By so doing they could get out of the power of the sheriff or shire-reeve. Charter or borough towns have most of them been very particular to preserve their rights and privileges. [Pg 100]

6. If you live in a small country borough town, or city, you will notice that two different benches of **magistrates** sit in the town-hall to hear police cases; and there are two different **courts of justice**, though held often in the same room. There are first of all the **Borough Sessions**, at which the **mayor** of the borough presides, and which deal with cases arising in the borough, whether trifling or serious. Then, on another fixed day in the week, in the very same building, another body or bench of magistrates sits. These gentlemen usually come in from country places outside the town, and the cases brought before them have to do with the mischief done in the villages and country parishes. These magistrates have nothing at all to do with offences committed within the borough. These are the **county magistrates**, and their court is called the Petty Sessions, or the **County Sessions**.

7. Some offences are too grave for the borough or county magistrates to settle, and they have to be tried by a higher court of justice, which has greater powers than the Court of Petty Sessions, the Court of **Quarter Sessions**. The bench of this court is made up of magistrates drawn from all parts of the county, and a jury of twelve men, householders, from different parts of the county, has to be sworn to hear the evidence in the cases to be tried. The jury decides whether the man is proved to be guilty or not, when they have heard all that can be urged for and against him, and the magistrates decide what his punishment is to be, according to law. [Pg 101]

8. There are some cases too grave or too complicated for the Court of Quarter Sessions to decide, and these have to stand over to the **Assizes**. These Assizes are held three times a year in the county town of each county, and every prisoner in the county jail must be accounted for. The court is presided over by one or more of the **king's judges**. These are trained lawyers, and they attend in the king's place, and are treated with much pomp and ceremony.

> **Summary.**—The Frith or Peace Guild in Norman times had lost most of its power in the towns, but it did not die out. Our *corporations* have sprung from these. Towns were always trying to get out of the power of the overlords' reeve or the shire-reeve, and gradually many of them got the right of appointing their own reeve. That right was granted by *charter*, usually from the king. That is the beginning of our present *borough towns*. The mayor in them is the chief magistrate. In many country towns two different courts are often held in the same building: the *Borough Sessions*, at which the mayor presides, deal with offences done in the town; and *County Sessions*, at which magistrates from the country district round deal with offences outside the borough. *Quarter Sessions* deal with graver matters four times in the year, and about three times a year one or more of the king's judges comes to the county town, and *Assizes* are held for graver matters still.

[Pg 102]

CHAPTER XXVII

THE VILLAGES, MANORS, PARISHES, AND PARKS

1. We have seen that in Norman times the whole country was, so to speak, the king's. There were the great lords who held "fiefs" or possessions directly from the king, which consisted of manors in various parts of the country—sometimes a number of manors pretty close together,—often with big stretches of unoccupied land between them, over which the king had full control. Out of these unused districts the king could, and did, often make new grants of land.

2. As years rolled on, the **manors** became more valuable, and new manors were formed. In the earlier days the manor and the **parish** meant much the same thing; but in course of time, though the boundaries of the parish did not alter much, the number of manors increased in some parishes from one to two or three, or even more.

3. In many cases the mode of life on these manors went on unchanged for centuries, the tenants of these different manors going to the original **parish church**, and the parish priest ministering to the people in all the manors in his parish. In other cases daughter churches, or **chapels of ease**, were built in the newer manors, and provision was made for the support of a priest to minister to them. These have in some instances been erected in the course of time into separate parishes; but many remained as parts of the mother parish, though they might be several miles away from the parish church. [Pg 103]

4. All through the Norman times there was a tendency to make new manors, and this gave rise to so many difficulties that the practice was stopped in the time of King Edward I.

5. In all parts of England to-day we have **parks**, belonging to big mansions; and our big towns and cities have their **parks** too, which are usually recreation-grounds for the people. A park in Norman and in Early English times was very different in appearance from our parks, whether in town or country. Just as the king had his great forests for hunting wild beasts, so in the later Norman times the great lords were anxious to enclose pieces of waste and forest land for the same purpose.

6. As we have seen, there were in early times vast tracts of wild, uncultivated, unenclosed land, partly wooded and partly heath lands, between the manors, which belonged to the king. The king alone could give leave to make a park. In the reign of King Henry III especially we find many such parks were "empaled". Of course the nobles had to give something to the king for this privilege.

7. Many of the old parks in England, now celebrated for their fine timber and beautiful scenery, date back to this period; but they were at first much wilder, and the trees then were neither so many nor so fine as they are now. The deer in them to-day just serve to remind us of the "wild beasts" with which they were stocked.

8. The laws for preserving the wild beasts and the game in these parks and forests and chases were very strict, harsh, and severe. Many of these new parks took away from the villeins, who lived in the neighbourhood, certain rights and privileges which their forefathers had had "time out of mind". [Pg 104]

9. Though the land could not be bought and sold outright, manors became divided and subdivided, let and underlet, for various terms of years, and in many curious ways, so that in time the profits, or the income, of a manor, instead of going straight to the lord of the manor, might be going to half a dozen different persons and places. For instance, the half of a manor might be divided amongst several people for, say, twenty years, or for the lives of three or four people; but at the end of the twenty years, or on the death of the last of those persons, it must go back to the lord of the manor, who could keep it in his hands, or let it out in other ways to quite a different set of people.

10. It is not very difficult to understand that the management of an estate of many manors, broken up into many small portions, became very complicated. **Records** of all these various transactions had to be made in writing and carefully kept, and copied and re-copied time after time. People who understood all the "ins and outs" of the laws relating to the possession of land became very important and very busy.

11. There are immense numbers of documents, some of them dating back to Norman and even earlier times, still in existence. The **Record Office**, in London, has many thousands of documents connected with the king's business; the monasteries each had their own records, but most of them disappeared in the sixteenth century; every old estate has such documents; and many of the old manors have still records going back many centuries. Of course thousands more of these old documents have been lost, some destroyed purposely, and others through carelessness and ignorance. Some have been burnt in times of danger, when their owner, knowing that there were documents amongst them which might get him into trouble, and cost him his head, set fire to bundles of papers and parchments. Others have been stored away in dark, damp cellars, and forgotten for years and years; and rats and mice have nibbled them away, or mildew and damp have caused them to rot. [Pg 105]

12. Those that we have left can still be read, and it is surprising to find in many cases how well they have been preserved all through the centuries. The letters are very often beautifully formed, and the whole still clear and distinct. They were written in Norman French and Latin, the latter being the language in which law business was carried on for many centuries.

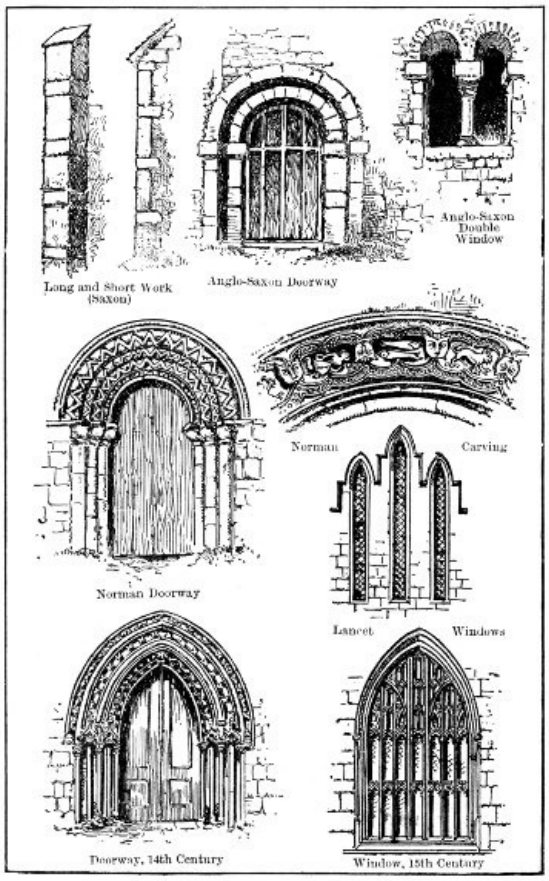
> **Summary.**—New grants of land were constantly being made by the king out of his own land. Manors were divided and new manors made down to the time of King Edward I. Then a single manor would often be let out in different portions to various tenants for a term of years, but they always came back to the lord of the manor. He could not sell his land outright.
>
> *Parks* for hunting were portions of "forest" taken in by leave of the king. They began to be common in the time of King Henry III. The trees were not as fine as they are now. Only the deer in them remain to remind us of the "wild beasts". [Pg 106]
>
> The manors being let out in so many portions, there was much writing to be done relating to them. Many of these documents are still in existence, and can be read. The Record Office in London is the place where most of the old records belonging to the king are kept. All towns have their records, and a large number of manors have them also. The documents of that period were always written in Latin or Norman French.

CHAPTER XXVIII

TRACES OF EARLY TIMES IN THE CHURCHES

1. In most villages the **church** is the chief old building in the place, and it is a good thing to be

able to tell the time to which its different parts belong. It will help us to fix in our minds the different periods, or steps, in the history of our country. Never be ashamed to ask questions about an old building. It will be a very strange thing, indeed, if you cannot find, in every town and village, *somebody* who has a keen interest in old buildings, and who will delight in pointing them out to you. Nearly every local newspaper in the country, from time to time, prints odds and ends connected with the history of the neighbourhood. If there is anything about an old building that you want explained, you can easily write a short letter to the editor of the paper, and there is sure to be someone who will take the trouble to answer your question, and help you to understand. [Pg 107] [Pg 108]



Architectural Features

Architectural Features

Long and Short Work (Saxon); Anglo-Saxon Doorway; Anglo-Saxon; Double Window; Norman Curving; Norman Doorway; Lancet Windows; Doorway, 14th Century; Window, 15th Century

2. An old parish church has a good deal to tell us about the history of the parish and its people, and if you know something of the history of the place in which you live, you will know something *worth knowing* of the history of your country, which will help you to be a good citizen.

3. There are, as we said in a former chapter, some few churches which have little bits of Saxon work left in their walls and windows. In a great many more we shall see some Norman work, especially in pillars and arches and doorways. That Norman Period takes in the reigns of all the kings from William I to the time of King John, from the middle of the eleventh century to the end of the twelfth, down to the time of Magna Carta.

4. When we come to the time of Magna Carta we are in the thirteenth century, when pointed arches came into use. Through the reigns of King Henry III and King Edward I a great deal of building in that style went on. In almost every parish some alteration was made in the church in that century; and probably in the chancel there are one or two old windows, which will be pointed out to you as having been first put in during that century.

5. You may, perhaps, find a very old battered figure of a man in chain armour, the sort of armour in which King Edward I went fighting in the Third Crusade, in Wales, and in Scotland; in which Simon de Montfort and Wallace and the Bruce fought. Some of these effigies have the legs crossed—some at the ankles, some at the knees, and some at the thighs. It used to be said that these represented crusaders; but nobody seems really to know what was the meaning of the cross-legged effigies. [Pg 109]

Effigy with Crossed Legs in the Temple Church, London

Effigy with Crossed Legs in the Temple Church, London

6. Then there are some flat stones, lying in the pavement, with inscriptions running round the edge in strange worn letters, with perhaps an ornamental cross also cut the whole length of the stones. These are the cover-stones of the graves where some great baron or land-owner was buried, and they belong to the thirteenth century, and some are even of earlier date. They are called **incised slabs**.

7. In this same century another kind of cover-stone for a grave came into use, especially in the southern and eastern parts of England. Metal was fixed in the incised slabs, and the portrait of the knight and his lady, the merchant or the lawyer, the bishop or priest was engraved on the metal, showing the person in the kind of dress he wore during life. It is said that there are about 4000 of these **brasses** still left in England. Some of them have been sadly damaged and worn. They do not all belong to the thirteenth century, as this kind of memorial of the dead was used during several centuries—in fact, well on into Queen Elizabeth's reign, at the end of the sixteenth century. The oldest brass in England, showing a man in armour, is in Surrey, in Stoke D'Abernon Church. Brasses are very valuable, as they show us the kinds of armour and dress worn in particular centuries. [Pg 110]

> **Summary.**—There is not much Saxon work left in any of the old churches, but a good deal of Norman work, in round-headed arches and doorways. The Norman period lasted from King William I to King John. Pointed arches then came in, and in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there was much church-building and alteration.
>
> Battered *effigies* of cross-legged figures in armour belong to this period. *Incised slabs* were originally the cover-stones of graves. In the thirteenth century *brasses* came into fashion, and they show us changes in costume, as they were used down to the time of Queen Elizabeth.

CHAPTER XXIX

TRACES OF EARLY TIMES IN THE CHURCHES (*Cont.*)

1. The fourteenth century is covered by the reigns of King Edward II, King Edward III, and King Richard II. The architecture became much more ornamental, and there is a good deal of fine stone-carving. Many beautiful window-heads and doorways belong to this period. A good many aisles were added to the old naves; many of the old Norman towers were rebuilt, and crowned with graceful spires; but the work is not all equally good. [Pg 111]

2. There are a great many **tombs** in the churches in various parts of the country, and much money was spent upon them in this and in the next century. They are raised some two or three feet from the ground; the sides are divided into panels and ornamented with rich carvings and shields of arms, brilliantly coloured and gilded. On the top of the tombs are to be seen effigies carved in stone of the man and his wife, lying on their backs, with hands clasped. The men are usually in armour, and their wives in the dress of the time, with strange-looking head-dresses. Many of the effigies are much defaced and battered, but there are others of them well preserved

still. It was in the latter part of the fourteenth century that great attention began to be paid to shields of arms, and heraldry became an important science.

3. But in the middle of the fourteenth century, during the reign of King Edward III, there came a time of great distress. There were the long years of war with France, years of famine and the **Black Death**. That meant a period of great distress for the country; all classes suffered, and there was much discontent and disorder. These bad times left their mark upon the buildings, especially upon the churches. In some churches work can be pointed out to you which was begun before the time of the Black Death on a grand scale, but finished off in a much plainer manner—apparently years after it was begun. The work had been started, but bad times stopped it, and it [Pg 112] had to wait. Those who had begun it never saw it finished, for the pestilence carried them away; and, long afterwards, those who did finish it were not well enough off to carry out the design as it was at first intended.

4. Still, all through these centuries much was spent on the churches, not only by the great nobles, not only in monastery buildings and the cathedral churches, but on the ordinary town and village churches as well.

5. The wealthy **wool-merchants**, especially in the fourteenth century, spent much on the building and decoration of churches. Some of the finest churches in the eastern and western counties of England owe much to them. Then, too, it was quite a common thing for the various **trade guilds** in a town to have a little chapel, or an aisle, or an altar in the parish church, which the guild undertook to keep up. One guild tried to outdo the others in this matter. All the craftsmen of those days belonged to a trade guild of some sort, and much good artistic work was done, which found a place in the churches.

6. People took much interest in their churches, and we find them leaving money towards their upkeep, towards making a statue, or doing some carving, or even keeping a light burning. Whatever may have been their reasons for so doing, the fact that they did so is very clear.

7. They used their churches in ways that may seem strange to us; but they looked upon them as their own, and were evidently in many cases proud of them. Each parish annually chose its [Pg 113] **churchwardens**, who had charge of the buildings and the furniture, and these were responsible to the bishop, as well as to the people of the parish. Every now and then the bishop visited the parish, or sent someone to do so in his name. Enquiry was made as to how the priest and the people carried out their duties towards each other. Complaints were heard, and attempts made to set matters right. Some of the reports which were made on such occasions have come down to us, and show often much disorder, and at times much that was evil. But we must not forget that good was also being done then, which was not talked much about.

> "The evil that men do lives after them,
> The good is oft interred with their bones."

Summary.—The kings of the fourteenth century were Edward II, Edward III, and Richard II. There was much ornamental stone-work then done; *aisles* were added to the naves, and towers and spires built. *Altar tombs* came much into use, with effigies, panelled sides, coloured shields of arms, and rich carving. The *Black Death* divided the century into two parts, and work done after that time was often much poorer than before, because the country was poorer. As the century went on, building revived. The great *wool-merchants* of the east and west of England were great church-builders. *Trade guilds* often looked after parts of churches. People were proud of their churches, and often left presents to them in their wills. *Churchwardens*, who had charge of the churches, were important officers at that period.

CHAPTER XXX [Pg 114]

CLERKS

1. Changes took place much more slowly in the Middle Ages than they do now. First of all, the population was very much smaller, and hundreds and hundreds of acres, now covered by big manufacturing towns, were then unoccupied land.

2. At the time of the Norman Conquest the whole population of England only numbered about 2,000,000 people; and in the time of King Henry VII it was only 4,000,000; so that, in the course of 400 years, the population had only doubled itself.

3. The people were not crowded into the towns. For instance, in the time of King Edward III, Colchester was one of the large towns, yet it had only 350 houses, in which 3000 people lived, all told. There were only nine larger towns in the country at that time.

4. The bulk of the people were living in the villages, in the various manors, not in the towns. Many things prevented the population from growing very rapidly—disease, famine, and war kept it down. Death was the punishment for a very large number of offences, so that it is not to be wondered at that the population did not increase very fast.

5. The population was divided into two distinct classes—those who were **clergy**, or **clerks**, and those who were not. By "clergy" we understand, in these days, "ministers of religion"; but the [Pg 115]

word had a very different meaning in the Middle Ages.

6. In early Saxon times religion and learning were very closely related. Colleges and monasteries were centres of learning, and bishops, abbots, priests, and monks took the lead in matters in which a knowledge of reading and writing was required. Folk who had a leaning towards learning naturally became connected with colleges or monasteries. They began as scholars, and then were admitted, or **ordained**, to one of the lower orders of the ministry—often when they were still only boys.

7. There are many thousands of boys to-day who are choir-boys. In early times those admitted to such an office as that had to be ordained, or set apart for the purpose, by the bishop. That ordaining made them **clerks** or clergy; and they were under the authority of the bishop or his officers. If they did wrong, they were tried and punished in the **bishop's court**.

8. In the course of years there grew up, side by side, two different sets of courts of justice, the **Church Courts** and the **King's Courts**, which were guided by different laws. The laws which ruled the Church Courts were much more merciful than those which ruled the civil or King's Courts. Death was the punishment for almost every offence tried in the King's Courts and in the Manor Courts; but in the Church Courts the punishments were much less severe, and the culprit had a much better chance of "turning over a new leaf".

9. If a man was brought before the King's Court charged with a crime, he could call for a book. If he could read a few sentences, that was taken to show that he was a clerk, and he could claim to be tried by the Church Court. That is, he could claim "benefit of clergy". [Pg 116]

10. You can readily see that such a state of things, however good it may have been at the first, was dreadfully abused in the course of time. What at first had been merciful and just became in time mischievous and dangerous. The great struggle between King Henry II and Archbishop Thomas à Becket had to do with the power of these two sets of courts, the Church Courts and the King's Courts—it had to do with government, *not* with religion and religious matters.

11. Clerks, or the clergy, were drawn from all classes of society, from the royal family down to the serfs on the manors. In fact, before the time of the Black Death, the only way in which a serf could become a freeman was by buying his freedom or by becoming a clerk. A serf who wanted his son to rise to a better position than his own would try to get him made a clerk; for the moment he became a clerk he was a **free man**.

12. But to attain his purpose the serf must first have the permission of his master or overlord. All overlords were not tyrants by any means. The serf might do his master a good turn—save his life, for instance—and in return his master would set him free, or allow his son to be taught by the priest and ordained; or he might let him join a college or monastery.

13. Many and many a priest, clerk, or monk, rose from being a serf or a villein in this way; so many, in fact, that a writer in the twelfth century complains that villeins were attempting "to educate their ignoble offspring". Later still, Piers Plowman complains that "bondsmen's bairns could be made bishops". [Pg 117]

14. There was a very sharp line of division between clerks and those who were not clerks, and the privileges which clerks had, led to much squabbling and many disorders.

15. Kings and nobles employed clerks on their business, for the simple reason that they were able men. From the clerks, too, were drawn the men whom we should now call **lawyers**. We have seen that there was a vast deal of writing to be done in those days in connection with the towns and the manors. Amongst these clerks were good men and bad men; some who loved learning for its own sake; some who found that it paid better than anything else; and others who misused their privileges, did much evil, and brought the name of "clerk" into sad disgrace.

> **Summary.**—The population of England in the Middle Ages was small. At the Conquest it numbered 2,000,000, and in the time of King Henry VII it was only 4,000,000. It was kept down by famine, wars, and death-punishments, as well as by disease.
>
> The population was divided into two great divisions, *clerks* and those who were *not clerks*. Religion and learning in early days went together. Clerks were under the rule of the bishop, other folk under the king's rule. "Benefit of clergy" in time was misused. Clerks were needed for the king's business, and to do all sorts of work where learning was required. From them sprang the *lawyers*. Clerks were drawn from all classes of society, and they were very popular, because it was the only way by which the son of a serf might become a *free man*. Many of the greatest clerks rose from very humble origin. Many of these clerks greatly misused their privileges, and in time their order, or class, got to be much disliked. [Pg 118]

CHAPTER XXXI

FAIRS

1. The word "Fair" calls up to our minds all sorts of wonderful sights and sounds—the stalls with their wonderful "fairings" and "goodies"; the shows and the shooting-galleries; the "flying horses" and the "conjurors"; the wonderful caravans and cocoa-nuts; the musical instruments of all sorts,

from the mouth-organ and "squeaker" to the steam-organ of the roundabout.

2. Many such fairs are still held in every county, and they connect the present day very closely with the life of bygone days. It is "all the fun of the fair" which draws people to them mostly nowadays, but in some of them there is still important business done; people are attracted to them for **trade** as well as for **pleasure**.

3. Some of these fairs are held in big towns, such as Lincoln and Carlisle. At Barnet a great horse fair is held every year in September. But some big fairs are held away from any large town, such as the big sheep fair at Weyhill, in Hampshire. At Stourbridge, in Cambridgeshire, a fair is still held; it is quite an ordinary one now, but in the Middle Ages it was one of the most important fairs, not only in England, but in Europe—a kind of Nijni-Novgorod, where East and West met. [Pg 119]

4. In some places the business part of the fair has now quite died out, and a few stalls, a roundabout, a shooting-gallery, and swings are all that can be seen on a fair-day.

5. The word "fair" comes from an old word which means a "feast" or festival. There are many villages which still have their annual **village feast**, more important to the village than Christmas or a "Bank Holiday". Houses are turned out and cleaned from top to bottom; everything must be made fit to be seen "for the feast". It is a great meeting-time for families, and the boys and girls who have gone away to work in some big town try to get back for a few hours to their native village, to "the old house at home".

STOURBRIDGE FAIR, IN THE MIDDLE AGES (page 119)

STOURBRIDGE FAIR, IN THE MIDDLE AGES (page 119)

6. In the beginning the village feast was connected with the parish church—it was the festival of the saint after whom the church was named. That day was a holiday, and all the people went to church as a matter of course. The church was the gathering-place, and, in the porch and the churchyard, and on the village green, friends, neighbours, and relatives met and had a time of rejoicing.

7. So many people coming together attracted pedlars and hawkers, who spread out their goods on the green, in the churchyard, and in the church porch itself. People who met but seldom used the chance of doing a little business with each other. Little by little, then, the "feast" became a "fair", and in many cases was a very important business and trading meeting. [Pg 120]

8. Now it did not suit the ideas of people in those days that outsiders should come into their village and buy and sell as they chose. You know how the boys living in one street even nowadays object to the boys from another street coming to play in their street—"You go and play in your own street". So in very early times the lord of the manor began to regulate these things. Outsiders who brought their goods for sale had to pay a "due" or "toll" to the lord of the manor to be allowed to trade; and the right of receiving tolls for fairs became one of an overlord's privileges.

9. The people in the towns, who were more interested in trade than the people in the villages,

saw how very important and profitable a fair was—that it was something "with money in it"—and the towns were very anxious to get the right to hold one or more annual fairs. But the overlord, the king, had a voice in the matter, because each stall set up, and each bale of goods, brought in "by right" an income.

10. The king had the right to grant, almost to whom he pleased, the privilege of holding a fair; and the privilege was much sought after. Towns, as we saw in a former chapter, got **charters** from the king, which very often gave to them this right. But it was quite a common thing for the [Pg 121] king to make a grant of an annual fair to a religious house which he wanted to benefit, without much cost to himself, and the profits of the fair went to support the house. The king's nobles did the same kind of thing.

11. All the shops in the place where the fair was held had to be shut while the fair was on, and nothing could be bought or sold except in the fair. The tradesmen of the place had to pay their tolls to the person or public body to whom the fair had been granted, just as the strangers coming into the town did.

12. Fairs lasted in some cases for only one day; in others for two, three, or more days, and sometimes as long as a fortnight, during which time, whether the inhabitants liked it or not, all trade had to be carried on only in the fair. That was one of the things which caused jealousy between the trading class and the religious houses, and often led to much ill-feeling and disorder.

13. Then, too, the king could grant to any person the right to go to any fair in the country without paying toll and duty. Of course those persons to whom the king granted this right had to pay him very heavily for this privilege, but you can see that it was quite worth their while. Foreign merchants and Jews [11] often had such privileges granted to them, and that partly accounts for the great dislike there was to these classes of people.

14. Many of the religious houses had entered into trade too, and very often the same privilege of [Pg 122] putting their goods on the market was granted to them. Members of a religious house could often travel from place to place without having to pay tolls and duties which other folk had to pay. That might be quite right and reasonable when they were on some religious duty or errand of mercy, but when it was connected with buying and selling the goods produced or manufactured on the monastery lands it was "rather hard", as we should say, on the traders. The grievance grew up gradually, but it caused very often a bitter feeling between the towns and the religious houses in them.

> **Summary.**—Fairs are usually now only for pleasure, though in many places, like Lincoln, Carlisle, and Barnet, they are important business meetings. The most important fair in the Middle Ages in England was at Stourbridge. It was a kind of Nijni-Novgorod.
>
> The Fair was at first the "feast-day" of the parish church. It brought people together, and pedlars began to sell their goods on such occasions. Gradually the overlords regulated these meetings, and strangers had to pay toll. Kings granted the right to hold fairs to towns and religious houses, and the privilege was much sought after.
>
> Freedom from paying tolls was also a privilege which the king could grant. It led in time to many squabbles between townsmen and the religious houses.

CHAPTER XXXII [Pg 123]

MARKETS

1. One of the pleasantest sights, to a Londoner at any rate, is the market-place of an old-fashioned country town on a market-day. In many such towns the weekly market is held, in the open air, in the same place where it has been held for centuries. Probably none of the houses round the market square are as old as the market, but the buildings, altered and rebuilt as they have been, take us back several centuries, and speak of days long gone by.

2. A good many towns have built covered markets. Some of them are near the **old market-place**, but in other cases the market is now held in quite another part of the town. Cattle-markets, which used to be held in the open street in a busy thoroughfare, are now often held in places more suitable for that purpose some distance away from their old quarters.

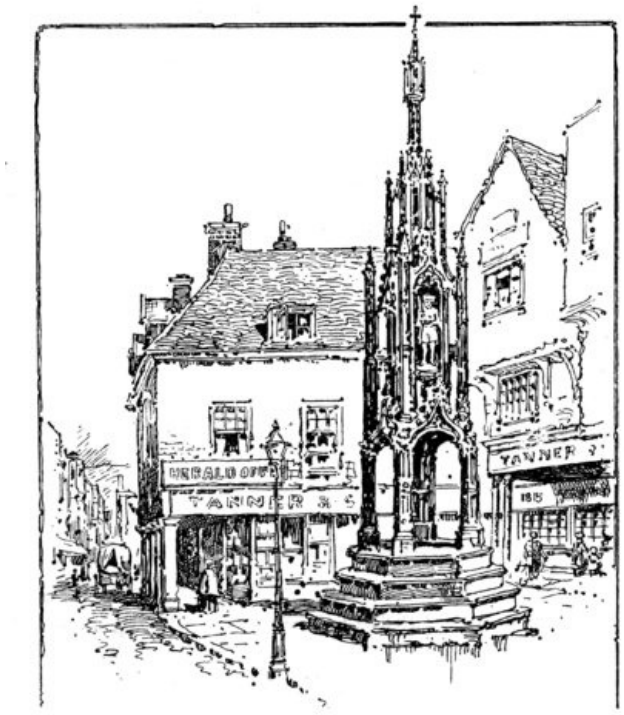
3. Corn-markets are held in most market-towns, frequently on the same day as the general market, and many towns now boast a **corn exchange**. Then, too, in some places there are markets held in connection with the chief trade of the neighbourhood.

4. The **market-house** is often a curious building. You may almost speak of it as "a big room on legs". There is a large room standing on stone or wooden arches. The open space underneath serves to shelter some of the market stalls, and a staircase leads up from the street to the room [Pg 124] above, where the town council holds its meetings. On the roof of this building is a turret containing a clock, and perhaps a fire-bell and a market-bell. There is such a quaint old market-house still standing at Amersham, in Buckinghamshire, but so many of these old buildings have been pulled down to make way for larger structures, in which the town can carry on its business, and where the various officers can have their offices, that the town-hall is mostly now a smart

modern building.

5. The **stalls** set up on the market-day are of the same simple kind as those which have been used for centuries. It is curious to notice how the different trades keep to different parts of the market-place—butchers in one place, green-grocers in another, and fishmongers in another. Just as the trades had their special quarters in town, so they had in the market. Things have altogether changed as far as the shops are concerned, but the setting out of the market is almost exactly the same to-day as it was five hundred years ago.

6. The **market-cross** still remains in some towns, but the cross itself has in many cases disappeared long ago. In some places the steps and the lower part of the cross still remain, but there is a kind of open shed built round it to form a shelter. Some of these shelters are very ornamental, like those at Chichester and Winchester. It is not an uncommon thing for such a cross as that to be called the Butter Cross, from the fact that around the cross was held the butter-market. Some of these shelters are quaint rather than beautiful, and cover the town pump, [Pg 125] which is now carefully locked up. In some places a drinking-fountain stands where once the cross stood. At the cross a good deal of business was done. The mayor or his officers would read out public notices there on the market-day, that everybody might hear. Not far from the cross was the **cage**, where folk who had been "taken up" were set for a time. The **stocks**, the **pillory**, and [Pg 126] the **whipping-post**, in the seventeenth century, were usually here in the market-place, not far from the cross.



Market Cross and portion of Shelter, Winchester

Market Cross and portion of Shelter, Winchester

Photo. Valentine

CASTLE AND BUTTER MARKET, DUNSTER, SOMERSETSHIRE [page 124]

Photo. Valentine
CASTLE AND BUTTER MARKET, DUNSTER, SOMERSETSHIRE (page 124)

7. There is much to see in a market-place on a market-day. If the market-day is Saturday, you will find the place thronged with people, especially at night; and even quite small towns are then so

crowded that you wonder where the people come from.

8. Fairs, in the Middle Ages, provided for much of the **wholesale trade** of the country, and markets for the **retail trade**. The two were very much alike, and the rights to hold an annual fair and a weekly market mostly went together.

9. Some places had, and still have, more than one market a week. In many places the market has quite died out now, but in the early days one of the first steps of a "tun" towards becoming a "town" was to obtain the right to hold a market. There are many of our modern towns which have grown up in manufacturing districts, near great railway centres, or near docks and railway-stations, which have no market. Nearly all of our old towns, however small they may be, have, or at one time *had*, the right of holding markets.

10. Nobody can set up a stall in the market as he pleases. On the market-day you will see the **beadle** going about from stall to stall taking the toll from each stall-holder. In many cases he wears an old-fashioned dress trimmed with gold lace. Now this reminds us of the time when no one except a freeman of the town could trade freely. The stall-holders were outsiders —"foreigners"—and had to pay to the town a toll, or due, for permission to sell in the town. In our day you can go and settle in any town you please, and open a shop just as you like, but you cannot so easily take a stall and sell in the market: you must pay the **market toll** even now. Such tolls go towards the expenses of the town, and help to keep down the rates. [Pg 127]

11. In the market the town and the country meet. In these days, when the produce of the country can be quickly sent into the heart of the largest town, the country provision-markets are not of as much importance as they once were, but they are very useful and very popular still.

12. There are many places where the market beadle rings a **bell**—in some towns it is a handbell, in others a bell in the clock-tower—to give notice of the opening and closing of the market. In former days, if a man dared to sell anything before the bell was rung in the morning, or after it had rung in the evening, he was very severely punished.

13. There were proper town officers appointed by the mayor and corporation to look after the markets, and to see that goods were sold at the proper market price, and that there was no cheating in weight and measure.

Summary.—Markets in the open are often held on the same spots where they have been held for centuries. In some towns covered markets have been built, and more convenient cattle-markets. Different kinds of provisions are sold still in different parts of the market. In some places the Market Cross is called the Butter Cross. Here public notices were given out, and ill-doers flogged, put in the *stocks* or *pillory*, or in the *cage*. Markets are still very popular, especially on Saturday nights. Stalls in a market have to be paid for, and the tolls are usually paid to the market beadle. Town and country meet in the market, and in olden times they were the chief means for providing the towns with food. [Pg 128]

CHAPTER XXXIII
SCHOOLS

1. The earliest schools in England were held in the **monasteries**, and were intended for boys and young men who were to be trained as priests, missionaries, or monks. There were famous schools at Canterbury, York, and Jarrow in the seventh and eighth centuries. In King Alfred's time, at the end of the ninth century, great attention was paid to the teaching of both girls and boys. Later still, in the tenth century, we find the teaching of the young attracting great attention.

2. Latin was taught in these schools, and many of the scholars became famous students and deep thinkers. In the course of time others, besides those intending to become monks and priests, were also taught, and became clerks and found various employments, as we have seen, in civil business.

3. Gradually **other schools** sprang up, outside the monasteries and cathedrals, which were not meant for monks or priests, though they were at first connected with monasteries, colleges, and cathedrals. For instance, in Norman times, not very long after the Conquest, there were **grammar-schools** at Derby, St. Alban's, and Bury St. Edmund's. [Pg 129]

4. When we think of these schools we must not picture to ourselves great buildings to hold two or three hundred boys, such as we see now; nor must we suppose that there was a great rush of pupils to them. Boys did not go to school from nine till twelve, and from two till four, with plenty of time for cricket, football, and sports of all descriptions. School work was very hard, and was regarded as a serious business. There was a great deal of learning by heart to be done. You see, books were few and costly, and a man's best reference library was his own well-stored memory. No doubt this hard work helped to train the memory, and was good discipline for the scholar.

5. In the monasteries and colleges, where boys were trained to sing in the **choir**, they had to learn their services by heart. In the ordinary services there were long psalms and passages of Scripture attached to them which differed for every day, and the boys had to know these perfectly in Latin. For hours and hours every day the little fellows were drilled in the services till

they were word-perfect. There were something like seven services to be learned for each of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year.

6. We talk of Latin nowadays as a dead language, but it was anything but a dead language in the Middle Ages. School was held all day long, from quite early in the morning; and during school-hours woe betide the lads if they talked in any other language but Latin. [Pg 130]

7. Choir-boys had to be taught in the **song-school** as well, how to sing their services, and the music was just as difficult as the words and had also to be learned by heart.

8. In the parish churches the priest and the parish clerk had boys whom they trained to help in the services. The services were much simpler and shorter than those in the monasteries; but they were in Latin, and had to be known by heart.

9. In the grammar and other schools the boys were drilled in the works of old Latin scholars in much the same way, and in some cases in Greek authors as well, with a certain amount of arithmetic and science.

10. There were no long weeks of holidays to look forward to at Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, and in the summer; but during the year there were many holy days kept, which were holiday, on which neither school-boys nor villeins did their ordinary work. Thus, no doubt, school-boys managed to get a fair amount of play, and found time for getting into mischief.

11. For instance, at St. Alban's we read that in the year 1310 the boys were forbidden to wander or run about the streets and roads without reasonable cause. If a lad did so, he was to be sought for and punished by the master "in the accustomed way"; and every boy knows what that was. Then, too, the scholars must not bear arms, either in school or out of school. That was to prevent [Pg 131] them from fighting with the townspeople. It is very curious to notice that even nowadays there is often no love lost between "grammar boys" and "town boys"; they can get up a quarrel almost as easily in the twentieth century as they did in the thirteenth.

12. Boys took part in acting the **earliest plays** that were represented in England. At first the plays dealt with religious subjects, and were called "Mysteries" and "Miracles"; and these plays and shows became very popular in England. Geoffrey de Gorham, in early Norman days, taught a school at Dunstable, and wrote one of these plays called St. Catherine. He borrowed vestments from St. Alban's Abbey, in which to dress some of his characters; but on the following night his house somehow caught fire, and his books and the borrowed vestments were destroyed in the flames.

13. In the cloisters of some of our old cathedral churches and colleges, such as Gloucester and Westminster, on some of the old stone benches, there are holes and scratches still to be seen where school-boys of long ago played games with marbles and stones.

14. By the thirteenth century there seem to have been schools in all the chief towns. Though they may not have held very many scholars, they were not intended for the sons of well-to-do people only; they were for **poor scholars** as well. Thus, at St. Alban's, provision was made for sixteen poor scholars, and the same kind of provision was quite common. There was some chance, even [Pg 132] in those days, for a lad with "brains" to get on in the world. In fact, we know that in those Middle Ages a good many men rose "from the ranks" to hold high office in the state. There was, for instance, Thomas à Becket. He was born in London, and not ashamed to be known as Thomas of London. Then there was Thomas Scot, who rose to be Archbishop of York and Chancellor of England in the fifteenth century, who was known as Thomas of Rotherham, after the place where he was born. William of Wykeham, that great founder of schools, is still known by the name of the little out-of-the-way Hampshire village where he was born—Wykeham. Winchester College, the first of our **public schools**, was founded by him. His real surname was Longe, and the motto he chose, "Manners Makyth Man", is worth putting up in every school in the land.

Photo. Valentine
WINCHESTER COLLEGE (page 132)

15. But there were dunces in those days too, who made little or no use of their opportunities, and

others who turned them to bad purposes.

Summary.—Schools began in the monasteries, and those at Canterbury, York, and Jarrow were famous in the seventh and eighth centuries; and King Alfred was a great promoter of schools. Soon after the Conquest other schools began at Derby, St. Alban's, and Bury St. Edmund's. Learning had to be by heart, as books were few. Latin was the great language of learning in the Middle Ages. There were frequent holidays, though they did not last for weeks at a stretch. Boys took part in the early *Mystery Plays*, which were the origin of our stage plays. By the thirteenth century there were small schools in most towns, and provision was made for poor scholars. Many great men, like Thomas à Becket, Thomas of Rotherham, and William of Wykeham, rose from such schools as these. [Pg 133]

CHAPTER XXXIV
UNIVERSITIES

1. Now, just as the tide flows and ebbs, so in England did interest in learning rise and fall during the Middle Ages. Schools of all kinds had their good times and their bad times. Sometimes we find the thirst for learning being shown in one direction; then it almost died away for a time; revived again, and took another direction.

2. At first we see it going in the direction of making monks and priests and missionaries; then in making able men who could take part in the civil business of the manor, the town, and the country; and then, in the thirteenth century, it began again to take a turn towards learning for learning's sake.

3. As we get near to the thirteenth century, we find the beginnings of our English **universities**. A university was a corporation or body of learned men who bound themselves together to teach, and who got the sole right of appointing teachers in their districts. A man could only have leave to teach after his knowledge and ability had been well tried by them; and when that leave was given he was said to take his **degree**.

4. The opportunity of getting wider knowledge and higher teaching attracted scholars, lads and young men who had had their early teaching in the small college and grammar-schools. They were encouraged and in many ways helped to go to the university. Gifts were left to their old schools to help the likely boys to go to the university; many of the monasteries and colleges sent their pupils there, and it was looked upon as a pious work and a work of mercy to help poor scholars in this way. [Pg 134]

5. Scholars flocked in hundreds to various universities, and we find Oxford and Cambridge rising as university towns. We cannot say exactly when this began, but we read that in King John's reign, in the year 1209, there was a great "town and gown" riot at Oxford. Three of the gownsmen were hanged as a punishment; so about 3000 of the rest left Oxford and went to other universities, and Oxford was deserted for a time. These facts show that by the beginning of the thirteenth century, just when the Early English style of architecture was coming into fashion, universities, with their "higher education", were very important.

Photo. Taunt & Co., Oxford.

CLOISTER QUADRANGLE, MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD (page 136)

Photo. Taunt & Co., Oxford
CLOISTER QUADRANGLE, MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD (page 136)

6. At first it seems that the scholars at the university lived in the town, where they chose or where they could, attending the various lecture-halls. Then various people seem to have hit upon the plan of setting up houses in the town, and letting the rooms to the scholars, so that a number of them might live together. Thus they were divided up into different sets. These houses were

called **hostels**, and we find them at Cambridge in the beginning of the thirteenth century.

7. Early, too, in this same century a new religious order found its way to England—the **Friars**. [Pg 135] The Dominican Friars were a very learned teaching order, and when they settled at Oxford they greatly strengthened the work of the university and kept it alive and active.

8. A Surrey man, Walter de Merton, Chancellor and Bishop of Rochester, was the inventor or founder of **colleges** at the universities as we know them to-day. In the hostels the scholars did pretty much as they pleased, chose their own officers, and made their own rules. There was much disorder after a while; many quarrels and fights took place between one hostel and another, as well as with the townsfolk. Merton spent twelve years in thinking out his plan, and at last, in the year 1264, he founded or established the first of the Oxford Colleges.

9. The old monasteries and colleges in the early times had been founded to keep up a continual round of worship, work, and learning; the special work of these new colleges was to promote learning and fellowship. In many ways they were like the older convents; but the work of education was the chief object of these new foundations, and we find teachers and taught, governors and pupils, living under the same roof, under rule and order.

10. Merton's idea was soon afterwards followed at Cambridge, where Peterhouse College was opened in the year 1284. During this century, too, we find a rival university springing up at Stamford; but, owing to the opposition of Oxford and Cambridge, it was snuffed out, though there [Pg 136] are still standing some interesting buildings which were connected with it. College after college, at both Oxford and Cambridge, has been founded since then; each one has its own special laws and government, which have been altered from time to time, and for many centuries now they have been cities of colleges, unlike anything else in the country.

11. Many old customs are kept up still at Oxford and Cambridge; the scholars and officials of the colleges and universities go about in their gowns, as they have done for centuries, and each university has still rights and privileges in the government of the town which have naturally come to it in the course of time. The town and the townsfolk have their interests and government; so that there are two authorities, side by side, responsible for law and order. The gown and the town depend upon each other; and in days gone by they have, times without number, misunderstood each other, and quarrelled, and fought.

12. In the reign of King Edward III Oxford was the most famous seat of learning in Europe. Many of its students were foreigners, but, as everyone could talk Latin as well as he could his native language, they had no real difficulty in making themselves understood.

Summary.—Our *universities* began about the thirteenth century. A university is a corporation, or body of learned men banded together to teach. Scholars were attracted to the universities from the schools, and encouraged and helped to go to them. *Hostels* were gradually started for scholars in the university town. The Dominican Friars were a [Pg 137] great teaching order. Walter de Merton was the founder of the first Oxford College; by that means the teachers and taught lived together. The object of these colleges was to promote learning. Stamford had a university for a time. Many old customs are still observed in a university city. Oxford in the reign of King Edward III was the most famous university in Europe.

CHAPTER XXXV

CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE BLACK DEATH

1. In the middle of the fourteenth century, in the reign of King Edward III, came the Black Death. It carried off half the population of the country at least, and all classes of society felt its effects.

2. We have said that in some of the old parish churches you can see, by some of the work done just after this time, that the builders were very much poorer than they had been, and had to finish off in a very plain fashion work begun on a grand scale. You must remember, too, that there were several different kinds of land-owners or overlords—the king, the great lords, bishops, colleges, and monasteries. The manors, of which these estates were made up, in the course of centuries were divided and subdivided in many ways as the land became more valuable. Many people might thus have an interest in one manor which a couple of hundred years before had been in the hands of one person only. That made law business very complicated when these little [Pg 138] parcels of land changed hands.

3. Though manors could not be bought and sold outright, little by little money was paid to have bits of manors and the various rights in manors let out, or **leased**, for a term of years. This was especially the case with property in towns, and with lands belonging to corporations, like colleges and monasteries, which were often scattered about in various parts of the country.

4. On the manors in the country districts the same thing was going on, though perhaps more slowly than in the towns. It became much more convenient for the villeins and cottiers, and other tenants of a manor, to pay a **rent** to the lord instead of actually working on the lord's land. At first this rent was paid in the produce of the land—a few hens or eggs, a calf or a lamb, or so much corn, till by and by we find actual payments in money as rent.

5. Then, too, a class of **labourers** had gradually sprung up on the manors. As the tenants and villeins began to pay to the lord a quit-rent, instead of working so many days a week on the land, the lord of the manor had to employ persons to do the work on his home-farm. These would naturally be the cottiers and serfs on the manor—the "landless men"—who thus became what we know as labourers.

6. All these had to be accounted for in the **manor court**, which was held regularly every few weeks. If a labourer was missing he was sought for, and brought back to the manor, which he might not leave without his lord's permission. It is quite true that if he could only remain unclaimed in some borough town for a year and a day he was no longer bound to the lord of his native manor; but the towns did not encourage strangers, as we have seen. If, however, labour happened to be wanted in the town, no doubt his being there would be "winked at", and no notice would be taken of his "harbouring" there. [Pg 139]

7. But it was not an easy matter for a labourer to get away from his native manor. After the Black Death, labour became very scarce, for on some of the manors almost every tenant and labourer died. All over the country land-workers were wanted badly; and tenants and landlords, when they were so hard pushed, were glad to employ almost any man who appeared, and they did not trouble to ask whose "man he was" or whence he came.

8. The wages of the labourers, of course, went up; but before very long the landlords saw that that would not do; it made their farming so much more expensive, and so their incomes were less and less. Law after law was passed to get the labourers back to their native manors, and to keep down the price of labour.

9. All classes of overlords, and especially the colleges and monasteries, had much difficulty in working their lands, and so the custom of letting them out in **farms** increased a good deal after the Black Death.

10. At first the owners let out these farms with a certain amount of stock on them. They were let for so many years, or for so many lives. At the end of the time the farm had to be given up and the stock replaced as it had been at the first. The land belonging to the farm was mixed up with the land of other tenants in the manor, in the big unenclosed fields, and had to be farmed still according to the old customs of the manor. Some of the very oldest farms existing to this day began in this kind of way, and there are possibly a few of the very oldest farmhouses which were first built early in the fifteenth century. [Pg 140]

> **Summary.**—Manors were much broken up and underlet in various ways, and *rent* was gradually being paid in place of personal service. *Labourers* had taken the place of serfs, but until after the Black Death they were tied to their native manors.
>
> After the Black Death land began to be *farmed out*; that is the beginning of our oldest farms. The farms were not compact, but the land lay about in strips in the big common fields.

CHAPTER XXXVI
WOOL

1. The two great industries of England in the Middle Ages were **agriculture** and **wool-raising**. The wool was the finest grown in Europe, and attracted hither merchants from the Continent. They travelled through England—in the Cotswold and Hampshire districts, for instance—and bought wool largely. But in pretty early days England began to **manufacture cloth** of various kinds; and that, too, became an important article of export. This manufacture was especially strong in the eastern and western parts of the country. [Pg 141]

2. Weavers from Flanders were encouraged to settle in various parts of England, by several of the Norman kings, soon after the Conquest. This was the case in Gloucestershire, for example; but the manufacture declined in the reigns of King John and King Henry III. In the reign of King Edward III it was again introduced.

3. As the country began to recover from the effects of the Black Death, the cloth trade became a very flourishing industry, and English **wool-merchants** became a very wealthy and powerful body. These have left their mark on the churches of the land pretty plainly. At the end of the fourteenth century, and in the fifteenth, some of the finest Decorated and Perpendicular work was done, and a large number of churches, especially in Suffolk, Gloucestershire, and Somersetshire, have magnificent towers, which were built at this period. It is pretty safe to say that where to-day you find a little village with a big church—very much larger than the place now needs—with a good deal of work belonging to the Decorated and early Perpendicular periods, that those places were once engaged in some branch or other of the wool and cloth trades.

4. Many of the fine brasses of which we spoke in a former chapter cover the graves of merchants "of the staple", as these great wool and cloth traders were called. Then, too, some of the very finest timbered houses, with their richly carved fronts, as in Chester and Shrewsbury, were built at this same time. [Pg 142]

5. We have spoken before of the **trade guilds**. These, too, after the Black Death period,

increased in power and wealth. Each guild looked well after the interests of its own craft. It regulated the number of apprentices which a craftsman might have, the hours of work, the rate of pay; it made provision for helping its members in sickness and need; and it saw to burying them decently when they died. Guilds took a lively interest in their parish churches, helped sometimes in forming new schools, hospitals, and alms-houses, and had regular times for meeting together for business and for feasting. They were good to their members, but very hard on those who were not of their number. [Pg 143]

Guildhall, London. From an old print in the British Museum

Guildhall, London. From an old print in the British Museum

6. From the members of these trade guilds in a town the town guild, or **corporation**, was formed to rule the town according to its ancient customs and charters, and to obtain for the town as many new rights and privileges as possible. There is much in the corporation of a great city like London, with its many companies, or guilds, which is connected with city life and work of the Middle Ages.

Summary.—*Wool* and *agriculture* were the great industries of the Middle Ages in England. English wool was an article of export, and English cloth also, in later times. Norman kings had introduced Flemish *cloth-workers* here, but the trade died down in the time of King Henry III.

After the Black Death it revived greatly, and *wool-merchants* became a very rich and powerful body. Many of the fine church towers, in Suffolk, Gloucestershire, and Somersetshire especially, were built by them. This was a period, too, when *trade guilds* were very strong.

CHAPTER XXXVII
THE POOR

1. From early Christian times in England to **relieve the poor** was looked upon as a Christian duty, and every church and religious house took its part in the work as a matter of course. You will remember that in early days there was not much moving about of people from one manor to another, so that it was not at first difficult to know the sick and the needy in each place, whether in town or country. Many religious houses or hospitals were founded for the purposes of relief. They were not on a large scale, but there were a good many of them. In the fourteenth century **pilgrimages** were very popular, and many pilgrims were always to be found on the road. [Pg 144]

2. We must remember that there was another side to a pilgrimage besides the religious one. A pilgrimage was one way of travelling and seeing the world. Indeed it was almost the only means by which a poor man could travel and have change of scene. Permission was given for that purpose because it was regarded as a religious act. It is not at all surprising that folk who wanted to see the world often took advantage of a pilgrimage from no very religious motive. Pilgrims could always find food and lodging at a religious house on their way, and there were scores of places in England to which pilgrimages might be made, to say nothing of a journey to the Holy Land, or to the shrine of St. James of Compostello, which were two grand pilgrimages.

3. In time pilgrimages became somewhat of a nuisance, for many of the people taking part in them were anything but pious; and, towards the end of the fourteenth century, strict measures were taken to prevent beggars and servants from wandering from one hundred to another on pretence of going on a pilgrimage. Each had to have a letter, properly signed by an officer of the hundred, giving him leave.

[Pg 145]

Canterbury Pilgrims

4. But beggars and wanderers increased. We find some towns, in Tudor times, taking steps to put down **beggars**. In the early part of the sixteenth century vagabonds found in London were to be "tayled [12] at a cart's tayle", and collections were made for the poor weekly, and distributed at the church door. In the year 1536 there were fifteen hospitals and four lazar-houses in the city of London. At the dissolution of the religious houses all these were seized, but the city managed to save St. Mary Spital, St. Thomas's Hospital, and St. Bartholomew's Hospital. The city found that it could not get enough money to keep even one of these going, so a tax was levied for the purpose. Bishop Ridley and others tried to draw up a scheme for finding work for the poor, [Pg 146] teaching them to make caps, feather-bed ticks, nails, and iron-work.

5. Other towns tried the same plan, and the king and Parliament issued many orders about the treatment of the poor and vagabonds. But it was much easier to issue these orders than to carry them out, and the beggars increased in numbers and in impudence in spite of all. In 1547 it was ordained that a sturdy beggar might be made a slave for two years, and if he ran away, then he was to remain a slave for life. The sons of vagabonds were to be apprenticed till they were twenty-four years old, and their daughters till they were twenty years of age, and if they rebelled, they were sent to slavery. The idea was to train them to work.

6. In all this the difficulty was, how to find the money to carry out these schemes. The king had swept away all the goods and gifts which had been made to monasteries, churches, and hospitals; the free-will offerings of many generations had gone into the pockets of the king; the institutions which had been founded to help the poor had become the private property of the king's favourites. It was not likely that people would be very keen to offer their money for the relief of the poor, and though urged to give what they could, they were very backward in doing so. Later on, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, the dwellers in each parish were urged to find work for the labourers in their parish; but the beggars still wandered and the poor still abounded.

7. In the year 1572 some very **severe laws** were made concerning vagabonds. A man who was [Pg 147] convicted a third time of being a vagabond was to be punished with death. Habitations were to be found for all the poor belonging to a parish; no strangers were to be allowed to settle in a parish; and each parish was to be taxed for the relief of the poor. At the same time, every parish was to find something to do for all the poor who were able to work. Usually a stock of wool, hemp, and flax was bought, and the poor were supposed to be taught to spin. Each county was also to provide a House of Correction, where those who would not work should be forced to do so.

8. To keep down the number of poor people in a parish, order was given that only one family might live in one house, and no new house might be built in the country unless it had 4 acres of ground attached to it. In the cities of London and Westminster, and for three miles round them, no houses were to be built except for persons worth a specified amount. Houses might not be divided into tenements, nor might lodgers be taken in.

9. All this was to keep people as much as possible in the places where they belonged. The **churchwardens and overseers** had to attend to the relief of the poor. There are, belonging to a good many parishes in England, **old account-books**, showing how these officers raised and spent money on the **relief of the poor**. Some of these books go right back to this time, though most of them begin a good deal later. These officers had to keep a very sharp look-out. Of course they did not want the poor-rate to be any higher than they could help, so strangers coming into [Pg 148] the parish were quickly tracked and hindered from gaining a settlement there. Vagabonds and strolling players were hurried out of the parish, and in some cases whipped. The stocks, the whipping-post, and the cage were set up near the churchyard gate, and they were in pretty constant use.

10. The officers were very anxious, too, to prevent any **travellers** from falling ill in their parish. Those who were sick, and could possibly be moved, they shifted on to the next parish, lest they should become chargeable to the parish. Some parishes spent a good deal of money, and the officers much time, in conveying people out of their bounds. That led, we may imagine, to many disputes between parishes, and gave the court of Quarter Sessions a lot of work to do; for amongst the many things which Quarter Sessions had to attend to was the carrying out of the Poor-Laws.

11. Parishes had to look after and to support their own poor in much the same way right down to the early part of the nineteenth century, less than a hundred years ago.

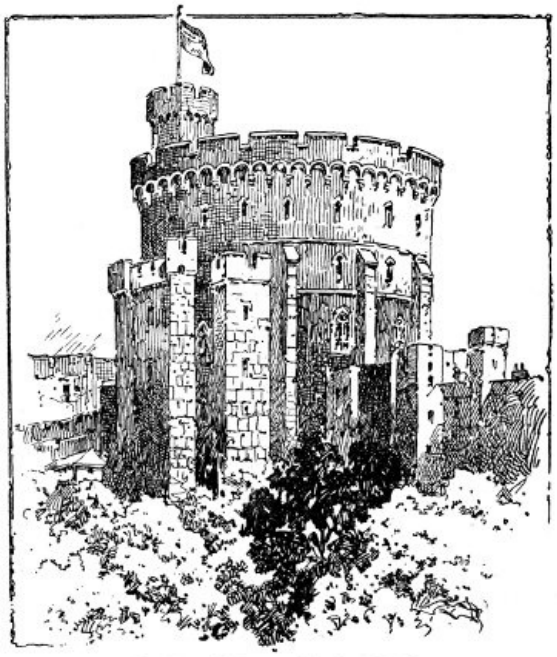
Summary.—*Relieving the poor* was, in early times, a Christian duty. The poor belonging to a place were then easily known. Wandering from place to place was discouraged. *Pilgrimages* became very popular, as it was the chief way by which poor people could travel and see the world. In later times pilgrims were often idle vagabonds.

In the sixteenth century some attempts were made to restrain vagrants, and to find work for the poor. After the religious houses had been got rid of, the duty of doing this was thrown on the parishes, and gradually *rates for the relief of the poor* came into being. The officers who specially looked after the poor were called *overseers*. Most parishes have still the old account-books, which show how the money was raised and spent for about two hundred years. Our present poor-law came into being less than 100 years ago. [Pg 149]

CHAPTER XXXVIII
CHANGES IN HOUSES AND HOUSE-BUILDING

1. In the time of King Edward III, that is, in the fourteenth century, there was a great change in the arrangement of castles and castle-building. We cannot say much about it here, it would take too long; but the changes made show that there was a desire to make the castle, not merely a strong defence against an enemy, but also a dwelling-place for the baron, his family, his servants and men-at-arms. Many buildings were added for comfort and convenience. In fact, a castle became a kind of little town.

2. William of Wykeham, that great master-builder, was not only a builder of churches and colleges, but a castle-builder as well. The great Round Tower at Windsor Castle, and other parts of that building still in use, are his work. The general arrangement of the Tower of London will give us an idea of the sort of habitation a castle of the fourteenth century was intended to be. In fact, we may say that every old castle, which is still inhabited, has considerable indications of work done in this and the following centuries, to fit it to be a comfortable dwelling-place as well as a fortress. [Pg 150]



The Round Tower, Windsor Castle

The Round Tower, Windsor Castle

3. A good many houses, too, were protected by walls, and sometimes even called "castles", though they were not what we usually understand by the term. Many of these were **moated houses**, the moat forming the first line of protection. Then came the battlemented wall, within which the house proper was built.

4. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were stirring war times, and the nobles kept up bands of armed men, who lived close to, and even in, their strong houses and castles. In the fifteenth century, during the long period of the Wars of the Roses, there was much work for these "men-at-arms to do". This constant warfare weakened at length the power of the barons. Sometimes the Yorkist king, sometimes the Lancastrian king was in power; and whichever side got the upper [Pg 151]

hand the king seized the property of the nobles on the other side.

5. As a matter of fact the nobles killed each other off, and when Henry Tudor, a Lancastrian, became king, there was an enormous amount of power in his hands; and he used it so as to keep a closer grip of it.

6. The towns and the traders had no liking for war, and they were quite satisfied to see the government of the country in the hands of a strong king. The new nobles, whom King Henry VII made, had most of them sprung from the merchant and trading class.

7. These new men, and even the king's own friends and supporters, were not allowed to keep bands of armed servants or retainers, able to turn the scale of a battle against the king. The Earl of Warwick, the "King-maker", had played that game several times; and it was through Lord Stanley bringing his men over from King Richard III's side to the side of Henry in this way that he had won the Battle of Bosworth, and placed the English crown on Henry's head.

8. After becoming king, Henry VII determined that these bands of armed men, who would follow the whistle of their lord, must be put down. He therefore set to work cautiously, but he had his way. The nobles might no longer keep hosts of servants in livery as they pleased. The king cut down the numbers, so that he might be in a position to say to any of his nobles that his good word he did not want, and his bad word he cared nothing at all about. [Pg 152]

9. You will remember the story of King Henry VII and the Earl of Oxford. The king went to pay the earl a visit, and his host, to show him honour, had two long lines of stout retainers, all armed and dressed in his livery, drawn up to meet him. He did all in his power to show honour to the king. When the visit was over, the king said to the earl:

"I thank you, my lord, for your good cheer, but I may not endure to have my laws broken in my sight; my attorney must speak with you."

10. Then there was "trouble"; and the earl thought himself very fortunate in getting out of the "scrape" by paying a small fine of £10,000. It was very awkward for a man to be a noble in Tudor times. He never knew exactly where he was. The king might be making a great fuss with him one day, clapping him in the Tower a few days after, and then chopping off his head and ornamenting London Bridge with it.

11. Well, this did away with the necessity for big fortified houses which might contain barracks for soldiers, and so we find that the new houses, built in Tudor times, were less like fortresses than they had been before. More attention was now paid to the size and convenience of the rooms. This sixteenth century was a great time for the building of large houses; indeed, the new nobles had better ideas of what a comfortable house was than the older barons had. [Pg 153]

> **Summary.**—In the time of King Edward III many Norman castles were altered so as to be more comfortable dwelling-places. Most of them could hold bands of men-at-arms.
>
> King Henry VII put down these large bands of retainers, and the new nobles whom he made were not allowed to keep up bands of men-at-arms. The need for castle-dwellings was gone. The new nobles were most of them raised from the merchant class. They had great ideas of comfort, and the age of Tudor houses began.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE RUINS OF THE MONASTERIES AND THE NEW BUILDINGS

1. In early Tudor times our towns were much more picturesque than they are to-day. That was chiefly owing to the fact that there were in every town so many religious houses, colleges, and hospitals. These buildings all had grounds of their own in the town, some more, some less; but these open spaces and garden grounds, though they were not open to the public, all helped to make the town airy, and to give variety to the view.

2. The buildings themselves were all different, and many of them were hundreds of years old. Towers, spires, turrets, gables, gateways, and archways in all styles of architecture abounded. There were, of course, many things in the towns which we should not have liked, but they had a pleasant variety which our modern towns have not. Thousands of streets in our towns are just rows and rows of houses, all alike, all ugly, and very dull and dreary to look at and to live in. [Pg 154]

3. In the reign of King Henry VIII all the religious houses were suppressed, and given up into the king's hands. The life that had gone on in them for centuries came to an end. Both in town and country districts there were many people besides those who actually lived in them to whom this made a great difference—people who, in one way or another, got their living out of the monasteries. Shutting up the monasteries threw all these people, so to speak, out of work. That meant a great deal of suffering.

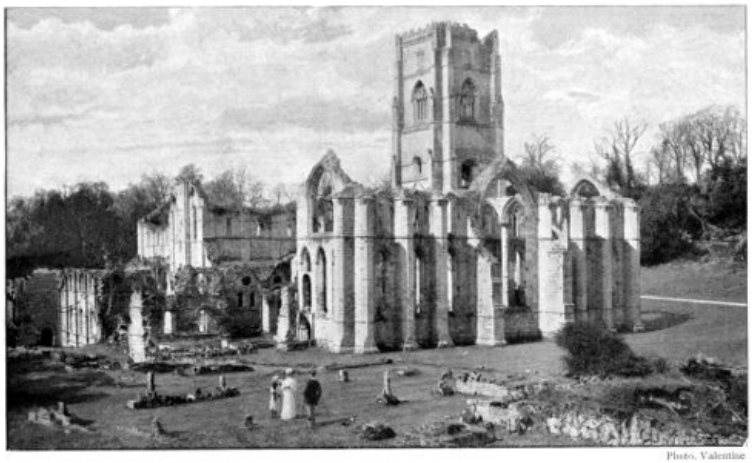


Photo. Valentine

FOUNTAINS ABBEY, YORKSHIRE, ONE OF THE MONASTERIES RUINED BY HENRY VIII (page 154)

Photo. Valentine
FOUNTAINS ABBEY, YORKSHIRE, ONE OF THE MONASTERIES RUINED BY HENRY VIII (page 154)

4. Nowadays, if a factory which has employed a number of people is suddenly closed, it means suffering for those who have been employed there and for their families. Now, though the monasteries did not employ people in the way in which a factory does, it did affect in many ways those who lived and worked and depended on them.

5. In these days, if people are thrown out of employment in one place they are free to go and seek it in another; but that was not the case in the reign of King Henry VIII. If they wandered from [Pg 155] their native towns and villages they were treated as vagabonds. It is true that the new persons, to whom the monastery lands were granted, were supposed to do for the people on the land—the poor and the sick—what the monasteries had done for them. But what they were *supposed* to do and what they *did do* were very different things.

Old Timbered House, at Presleigh, Radnorshire, dated 1616

Old Timbered House, at Presleigh, Radnorshire, dated 1616

6. It is pretty easy to see how things worked. A wealthy man managed to get a grant of the property of several monasteries at a very cheap rate. He did not want these places to live in; he wanted to make money out of them. The first thing that he did was to strip the buildings of [Pg 156] everything which would fetch any money. The lead was usually the most valuable part of what the king had left. The roofs would be stripped, the graves broken open to get at the leaden coffins, and the windows smashed for the sake of the lead. Then the building was left standing a ruin. The poor people of the district had been used to receive food daily at the monastery gate, and no doubt had grumbled at the quality and quantity of the food often enough. But now it was no use going to the monastery gate, for the place was a ruin. They could not go to the new lord's house, for that might be miles away. Even if they did find him, he might be the owner of three or four such ruined monasteries. How could he be quite sure that they were the poor he was bound to relieve? And so the poor folk lost the daily food on which they had depended.

7. Then as regards the land. The new landlord, perhaps, might farm his fields; in which case the rents, instead of going to the monastery, went to him. But he was not always on the spot, and very frequently the land was let out to tenants; an agent or steward collected the rents, and the tenants never saw the landlord. But many of these new owners found that the management of the estates caused them a lot of trouble; and, naturally enough, they wanted to get as much money out of the property as they could at the least cost to themselves.

8. Now there was in this sixteenth century still a great demand for wool, and many of these landlords found it would save trouble to turn these monastery lands into **sheep-runs**. A very few [Pg 157] men could look after a great many sheep, and there would be no bother about keeping up buildings and barns. If the people were got off the land, there would be no poor to bother about relieving. So it came to pass that much land, which had been cultivated for many centuries, went out of cultivation, and the people were turned adrift. It was a hard state of affairs. The rights which they had had to relief from the religious houses were taken from them, and the means of getting their living also taken away; they were robbed of their employment, and punished for wandering, for not working, and for begging.

9. There were, of course, many instances in which the new landlord came and lived near the old monastery. In some cases the old buildings were altered and turned into a dwelling-house; in others the building material was used for building a brand-new house close by. Where this was the case the old custom of relieving the poor who came to the gate did not quickly die out.

10. For instance, at Standon in Hertfordshire, there was a house belonging to the Knights Hospitallers. When the house was dissolved, much of the property at Standon went to Sir Ralph Sadleir, who had been secretary to Thomas Cromwell, the "hammer of the monks". He owned Standon Lordship, and when the poor were no longer relieved at the Hospitallers' House, in the village, they trooped from Standon up to Standon Lordship, about fifty of them, every day. That custom of relieving the poor was kept up there for many years. [Pg 158]

> **Summary.**—Most of the picturesque buildings belonging to the religious houses were stripped of all that was valuable and let go to ruin. The new owners, many of them, lived away from their property; and, as *wool-farming* was very profitable then, much arable land was turned into sheep-runs. That threw many out of employment, and increased the number of *vagrants*. The new owners were expected to do for the people on their lands what the monks had done, but very few of them did so. The custom of relieving the poor at the gate of the great house was kept up in some few cases, as at Standon Lordship, in Hertfordshire.

CHAPTER XL
THE NEW HOUSES OF THE TIME OF QUEEN ELIZABETH

1. There were, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, in all parts of the country, hundreds of bare, gaunt ruins where once had been flourishing houses and centres of life and work. It may seem strange to us that the materials left were not sold and cleared away, and the sites made tidy. We must remember, however, that people could not build houses either in town or country as they chose. In Queen Elizabeth's reign the laws against building new houses were very strict indeed, so that there was not a very great demand for building material. Then, too, the quantity of such stone and wood in all these many buildings, in every town and almost every village, was enormous, so that the material was not worth much. The ruins were left, a sad and sorry sight, for many a long [Pg 159] year.

2. In the towns some of the buildings were turned by their new owners into private houses, and the parts of the monastery were put to strange uses. Nobody seemed to mind; the spirit of destruction seemed to be in the air. Then, as years went on, and buildings needed repair, or roads wanted mending, the old ruins were the handiest places from which to get a load of stone; and so, with leave or without, many loads of stone were carted away from them.

3. We said just now that there was no encouragement given to the building of new houses in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and yet most of the most picturesque old houses in our towns and villages still standing were built at that time. These, however, were not new houses; they were rebuilt on old sites, *improved* according to the ideas of the time.

4. You will notice in country places a great many houses built somewhat after this style. Many of them are now cottages, but they were not built for cottages; they were the ordinary houses in which yeomen lived in the sixteenth century.

5. There was the hall or house-place—an oblong room in the centre,—on to which other rooms were built, forming a wing at one end, or often a wing at each end, with gables towards the street, and projecting upper stories. A great deal might be said about this kind of house, but there is only space for a very short account of it.

6. The house was built upon a foundation of stone or brick, so that the wooden sill should be [Pg 160] above the ground-level. Into this wooden sill strong upright posts of timber, quite rough, some 8 or 9 inches square, were set. The posts at the angles were larger, often being butts of trees placed roots upwards, so that the upper story might project. Then on the main posts beams were laid, the ends projecting, upon which the framing of the upper story was set. It was just a timber skeleton, into which other timbers were set 8 or 9 inches apart. In later times these timbers were wider apart, and curved or diagonal braces were often used, but at first the uprights were pretty closely set.

Old English House

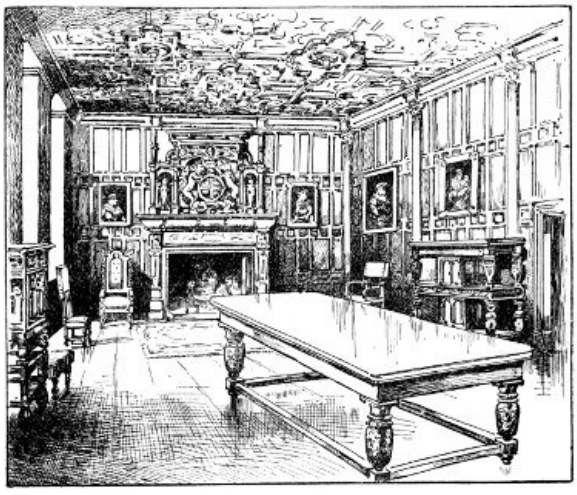
Old English House

7. The spaces between the uprights were then filled in with lath and plaster, flush with the wood-work. In some parts of the country brick was used instead, set in a herring-bone fashion. In later times, when the lath and plaster had decayed, the spaces were often filled in with brickwork laid in the ordinary way. Then again, in other cases the wood-work of the house shrank and left gaps between the lath and plaster and the wood, so the whole of the outside has been covered with plaster, or weather-boarded and painted or tarred, or hung over with tiles. [Pg 161]

8. The windows were small, and sometimes in the upper story one was built out, forming an oriel. The roofs were high pitched, in many cases tiled, but more often thatched. In these old houses the **chimney-stack** is a great feature outside, and the huge fireplace, with its wide chimney-corners, takes up half the house-place inside. From most of these nowadays the old hearth is gone, and a small chimney-breast has been bricked up to take a modern range; but the old chimney-corner, with its funny little window, can usually still be traced.

9. There are quite a large number of **village inns** of this kind. Very often these are the oldest and most picturesque buildings left in a village, except the church. It is these old-fashioned houses which make village scenery so pleasing to the eye after the dreary rows of bunches of brick, with holes in them for windows, covered in with slate, which fill the streets of our towns, all alike and all ugly.

Summary.—There were ruins in every town and nearly every village in the days of Queen Elizabeth. Gradually the stones were carted away for building purposes and for road-mending. There were many restrictions on building new houses. Most of the quaint old houses, with overhanging stories and high-pitched roofs, belong to the time of Queen Elizabeth. They were built on older foundations. The wood-work in later times has been in some cases filled in with brickwork, in others covered with boarding or hung with tiles. In those houses the chimney is usually at one end of the house, and the queer little window on one side shows where the chimney-corner once was. [Pg 162]



An Elizabethan Interior

An Elizabethan Interior

CHAPTER XLI

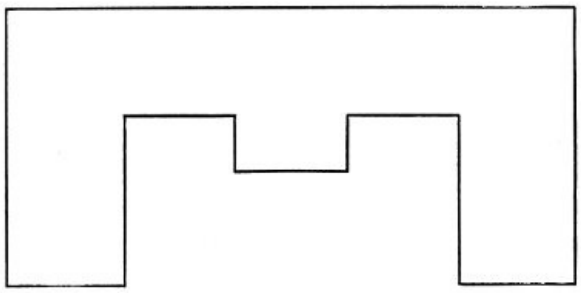
LARGER ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN HOUSES

1. We have said that the Tudor period was a time of building of big houses and mansions. Every [Pg 163]
county in England has some such houses to show. Many of them were built of **stone**, some partly of **brick and stone**. Their style shows that the English or old fashion of Gothic building was dying out. Italian ideas and Italian ornament were coming into favour. No doubt one reason why so much of the old work was ruthlessly destroyed was because it was out of fashion. It is astonishing, even in these days, how much good work is destroyed just because it has gone out of date. Among the most famous of these houses we may mention Burleigh House "by Stamford Town", Haddon Hall, and Knebworth; and, belonging to a rather later date, Hatfield House.

HADDON HALL, FROM THE STEPS (page 163)

Photo. Photochrom Co., Ltd.
HADDON HALL, FROM THE STEPS (page 163)

2. For a big house the idea was to build it round a quadrangle. Smaller houses were in plan very like the half-timbered houses of the yeomen, only on a larger scale, and more richly ornamented. The hall and its wings were extended considerably, and, with a handsome porch, formed in plan a big capital **E**, thus:—



Some people have thought that this plan was chosen in honour of Queen Elizabeth, but the truth [Pg 164]
is that it was the most convenient form, and fitted in best with the ideas of the time. It had grown up quite naturally, in the course of many generations, from the simple hall with the hearth in the middle, the beginnings of which we saw in the huts of the pit-dwellers.

3. Quite early in the fourteenth century **brick** had begun to come into use for building, but the first bricks were probably imported from Flanders. Hull, which had been founded by King Edward I, had many buildings of brick, and by about the year 1320 it had brick-yards of its own. Flemish weavers were encouraged to settle in England by King Edward III, and they used brick in buildings which they set up. There are a good many houses in the eastern counties and in Kent still standing, which show Flemish and Dutch ideas.

4. Cardinal Wolsey's palace at Hampton Court is a good specimen of the brickwork of his time; and all through the reign of King Henry VIII the chief material used was brick, terra-cotta [13] being employed for mouldings and ornament. This was chiefly the work of Italian artists, and they produced also some very beautiful ceilings in plaster-work [14] for many of their fine houses.

Photo. Photochrom Co., Ltd.
HAMPTON COURT PALACE (page 164)

5. After King Henry VIII's quarrel with Rome fewer Italians were employed, and English artists were left to work out these new ideas in their own way. From about the middle of the sixteenth century the use of terra-cotta dropped out, and moulded and shaped bricks began to be used, [Pg 165] though stone was used for the more ornamental portions.

6. When we reach the reign of King James I, we find that the leading architect was Inigo Jones. We do not hear very much of **architects** during the Middle Ages. The man employed to do the actual work was allowed to select his own materials and carry out his own ideas pretty much in his own way. But in the sixteenth century the architect became a more important person than the craftsman, and the craftsman had to work according to the pattern and design provided for him.

7. The **Jacobean [15] houses** show that the old English styles of building were being left behind, and a newer type of house, plainer and heavier, was taking its place. The Civil War was a very bad time for architects and craftsmen, but after the Restoration a better time came to them again.

8. The Great Fire of London, which swept away almost every mediæval building in the city, gave a great *impetus*, or push forward, to building. You can quite understand that, with so much building going on, the work would be somewhat hurried and very much plainer than it had been. So London became a city of bricks and mortar. Middlesex has large quantities of good brick-earth; and, though bricks were made in that county long before the Great Fire, the Great Fire developed the industry greatly. There was a worthy old Royalist knight of Hammersmith, Sir Nicholas Crispe, who, after the execution of King Charles I, went over to Holland, as so many [Pg 166] other Royalists did. There he watched very closely bricks and brick-making, and when he came back to England he introduced many improvements in the art of brick-making along the Thames valley.

> **Summary.**—Italian ideas gradually were adopted in place of Gothic. Many of the finest houses, like Burleigh House and Haddon Hall, belong to this time. The Elizabethan house often took the form of a letter **E**.
>
> Brick has been used in Hull and in other places on the east coast from the thirteenth century, but the brick at first was imported from Flanders. It came into fashion about the time that Cardinal Wolsey built Hampton Court Palace. Italian artists were much employed at first, and *terra-cotta* and *plaster* were much used.
>
> After the Great Fire of London brick became the chief building material in London, and the houses became much plainer. Sir Nicholas Crispe, after the Restoration, introduced many improvements into brick-making along the Thames valley.

CHAPTER XLII
CHURCHES AFTER THE REFORMATION

1. Not very long after the dissolution of the monasteries the churches had a very bad time to go through. It is perfectly marvellous how rapidly some people, who were in power, discovered that the valuable ornaments and fittings in them were so very wicked and superstitious, that the only thing to do was to seize them for the use of the king as his private property. No attempt was made to apply the money taken for the benefit of the parishes; it was shamefully and shamelessly [Pg 167] squandered. The buildings were very badly treated, and everything in some of them that could be defaced and destroyed was so treated. The changes made in religion under the Tudor kings and queens were so many, and so violent, that ordinary everyday people could not understand them, and deeply religious people were driven in opposite directions. There was bitter persecution for

all who did not fall in with the will of the Tudor sovereign, whether Catholic or Protestant, and good men had to suffer and to die on both sides for their faith.

2. All who did not attend their parish church, and take part in the services which those in authority considered to be most fitting, were regarded as bad citizens, and treated as such. We cannot wonder that the parish churches were allowed to go to decay. English people had spent much money on their churches right up to the time of the Reformation. Then they saw the gifts they and their forefathers had made abused or stolen. People were not disposed to do much for their churches after that. In some cases, especially in country places, where the leading people were Catholics or Puritans, it seems as if they purposely let the parish church, to which they were compelled to go by law, get so thoroughly out of order that they might be able to say that there was no church to go to.

3. Many of the houses built during Tudor times had **secret chambers** and hiding-places, which were known only to a very few persons. And such hiding-places were much used, in the times of Queen Elizabeth and King James I, by priests, who ministered in secret to those who clung to the old faith. [Pg 168]

4. But though the churches were much out of repair, in some of them stately and costly **monuments** were erected in the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries. They were different from the monuments set up before the Reformation, and were usually built against a wall. They were of various coloured marbles, the effigies lying under circular-headed canopies, supported by columns in the Italian style. The effigies of man and wife were usually represented clad in robes of state, coloured, their children kneeling round the tomb in various attitudes.

5. By and by, instead of the effigies being represented as lying on their backs, with hands clasped, they were shown lying on one side, supporting their heads on their hands. There are many such monuments in Westminster Abbey, and in almost every old town church one or more can be seen.

6. It became a very common practice for one of the old **chapels**, built on to the parish church, to be set apart as the private burial-place of a great land-owner. Many new chapels were built for this special purpose. In them we may see specimens of the different fashions in monuments from Tudor days, or earlier, right down to the present time.

> **Summary.**—Much was destroyed in the churches during the violent changes made in the form of worship. In some cases the churches were let go to decay, so that there might be no church to go to. There were secret chambers built in many Tudor houses, where those in danger might hide. [Pg 169]
>
> It was a great time for setting up splendid monuments in the Italian style, usually brilliantly coloured and ornamented.

CHAPTER XLIII

BUILDING AFTER THE RESTORATION: HOUSES

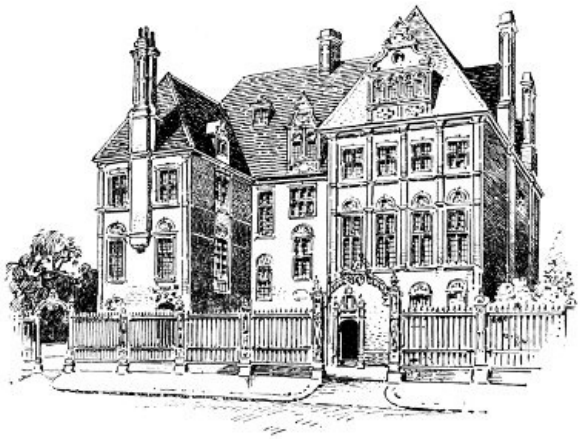
1. The most notable architect after the Great Fire of London was Sir Christopher Wren, and his master-piece is, of course, St. Paul's Cathedral. He designed, too, most of the city churches. The style was adopted in various parts of the country by various noblemen for building great houses. Brick was regarded as too mean a material for such very grand houses, and stone was used for facing them.

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON: SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN'S MASTERPIECE (page 169)

Photo. Valentine
ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON: SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN'S MASTERPIECE (page 169)

2. In the houses which Wren built brick was very largely used. He introduced rubbed bricks, and had them laid with very close joints. We have some very fine examples of such brickwork in gables of various forms in the early part of the eighteenth century—the reign of Queen Anne.

3. Designs for houses did not improve in beauty as the eighteenth century went on. Many of the houses were very substantially built, and were arranged with an eye to comfort and convenience. The hall, which had been the centre of the old English home, became smaller and smaller; the kitchens were placed below the ground-level, and in towns were often reached by a flight of steps down from the street to the **area**, which is still so common in London streets. [Pg 170]



House in Queen Anne style, South Kensington

House in Queen Anne style, South Kensington

4. The **front door** of the house became the great ornamental feature of the building, approached by a flight of steps often protected by very handsome iron railings. Attached to many of the railings still are light upright posts for carrying an old-fashioned oil-lamp. Just a few of these **lamp-carriers** have extinguishers, which were for the use of the link-boys, when on dark nights they had safely lighted the master of the house through the dangers of the streets to his own front door.

5. The brickwork of these houses had become very plain, and less and less stone was used for ornament—a little over the principal windows, and the boldly cut quoins at the angles of the house. Most of the windows were merely oblong openings in the blank wall. [Pg 171]

6. The great point aimed at was to get a handsome **doorway**. Sometimes a portico was built out, supported by stone pillars having richly-carved capitals. In other cases a canopy, supported by half-columns, or by brackets, was placed over the doorway. Stone was sometimes used for these canopies, but wood was more common. These wooden canopies and brackets are often very fine pieces of joinery and wood-carving. The canopy sometimes takes the form of a kind of big shell, the ornaments and pattern being finely moulded, and the cornice being deeply and boldly cut. These canopies were painted, and the tops covered with lead to protect them from the weather. As you walk along the streets of an old town, which has not been too much modernized, you will be almost sure to see some specimens of this kind of work.

7. The thick panelled doors of these houses are often grand pieces of work, which would rejoice the heart of a joiner who loves his craft. So many boys now are taught something of joinery at school that there must be a good many of them who know enough to see the beauty there is in a good piece of work, even though it may be quite plain.

8. Another feature in these doorways is the window over the door, intended to give light to the hall. We call it the **fan-light** because it was usually made somewhat in the shape of an open fan, and you will find in fan-lights some very pretty designs cleverly put together. [Pg 172]

9. About the middle of the eighteenth century **stucco** came into fashion. It was easy to handle, and ornamental patterns could be readily produced. The ornamental stone and wood-work was imitated in plaster. Like all mere imitations of good work, it soon became poor, and showed itself to be a sham; but it was very fashionable. There was such a rage for it that the brickwork of a house was often covered with a smooth coat of it, and the whole painted white, or cream colour. Some of the old houses of good sound brick were covered in this way, and it was often used to cover up very poor bricks and brickwork. Good plaster-work, no doubt, often served a purpose in keeping out damp, but it was very formal, and not very beautiful.

10. In the middle of the same century a fancy for **Gothic architecture** revived, and many brick buildings were built with pointed arches, doorways, and windows, with turrets and pinnacles, all covered with plaster-work and cement, imitating Gothic mouldings and carvings; but it was only sham Gothic, and not at all satisfactory.

11. Indeed we may say that, as the century went on, houses did not become more beautiful. As the population increased in the town, streets of houses sprang up, some large, some small, built in rows and crescents and terraces, in which all the houses were alike; and very dull and drab and mean-looking many of them have become. When they were built they were made to look neat, or even smart, in front, but little care was taken about the appearance and convenience of [Pg 173]

their backs. They were not arranged in such a way that each might have a proper amount of light, and that a free current of air could pass through them and around them.

12. In some respects we have improved our houses, but we have much to learn yet. We have, for instance, yet to see that *all* houses, however small, shall have a proper number of bedrooms, large, light, and airy—for we spend one-third of our lives in them. We have also to see that both beauty and fitness shall be properly considered in building a house. Too often no care is taken to provide proper places where food and clothing can be kept, and where that very necessary but unpleasant process of washing and drying of clothes can be carried on without spoiling the comfort and health of the household. Every house needs a bath-room as much as a grate, for where dirt is there is disease, suffering, and death.

Summary.—Stone was used for facing large brick houses in the time of Sir Christopher Wren and at the beginning of the next century (Queen Anne's reign). Wren introduced *rubbed brick*, laid with close joints, and the specimens of that period are very good. As the eighteenth century went on, beauty declined. The hall became a mere passage, and the windows were oblong holes in the brick walls. The *doorways* were often handsome, with porticoes and canopies, some of stone, some of wood. Many of these remain in old town and village streets. The *iron-work* of that date is often very good indeed. The doors themselves were usually plain, but well made and solid. The windows over the [Pg 174] doors, usually called *fan-lights* from their original shape, give many varieties of shape.

Stucco came into use about the middle of the eighteenth century, and became very fashionable, carving being imitated in plaster, and often covering very poor work. Gothic began to revive, but plaster, not stone, was used, and it was a very poor imitation. The fashion for building whole streets, rows, and terraces of houses in the same style came into use.

CHAPTER XLIV

BUILDING AFTER THE RESTORATION: CHURCHES

1. After the Reformation the churches, as we have said, were much neglected for a long time. They were used in a different way from what they had been in the Middle Ages—a great deal more was thought of preaching and hearing sermons. People grew to be very particular as to where they sat in church, and to have a seat in accordance with their dignity and importance. **Pews** became very important things. Churches were not heated in those days, though the services were very long, for sermons often lasted for an hour or two. No doubt one reason for making pews so high was to keep off draughts. The great people of the parish seemed to try to outdo each other in the height of their pews. Some of the grand pews had canopies to them, like old-fashioned four-post bedsteads, and they were hung round with curtains. In later times they even had fireplaces, with poker, tongs, and shovel all complete.

2. Gradually the whole floor-space got filled up with pews, some square, some oblong, all shut in [Pg 175] with doors, and with seats like shelves running round them. The fashion of having pews shut in with doors lasted for several centuries; indeed you may see them still in some churches, though they are not nearly as high as they once were.

3. The churches needed repairs from time to time in the seventeenth century, and a few, a very few, new ones were built. But money was not spent upon them as it had been in the Middle Ages. They were patched up and mended for the most part as cheaply as possible. In very few cases was any attempt made to make them as beautiful as the houses which were being built at the time.

4. After the Restoration there arose a great interest in **bells** and bell-ringing. At the end of the seventeenth century a great many rings of bells were hung in the old steeples and belfries, which had to be altered to receive them.

5. The **monuments** set up in the churches in the reign of King Charles II were somewhat smaller than they had been. They were often **tablets** on the walls, ornamented with curious carvings of skulls and cross-bones, cherubs' heads, curtains, and festoons of flowers and fruits, often finely carved. You will not find in churchyards many **grave-stones** or tombs of an earlier date than 1660. The **head-stones** were then very small, and had little on them except "Here lyeth the body of" so-and-so, and the date.

6. A great many churches were built in London after the Fire. They were furnished with high [Pg 176] pews, usually all of the same height, and having doors. The wood-work, especially of the pulpit, reading-desk, and organ-case, in these churches is mostly very fine. A celebrated carver of this period was Grinling Gibbons, and he and his pupils did a great deal of such work, both in churches and houses.

7. In other parts of the country Wren's work was imitated in some of the new churches then built, and in some of the old ones which were altered or rearranged. One of the best specimens of work done at this time is to be seen at Whitchurch, in Middlesex.

8. Not very many new churches, however, were built until the beginning of the nineteenth century, except in some of the towns which had grown up from country villages. In and round

London most of the villages increased so much in size that the little old parish church was much too small for the population. Galleries were put up in them in all sorts of queer places, to provide more seats. More room still being wanted, many churches were pulled down, and larger buildings set up.

9. The new churches of the latter part of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth centuries were simply big oblong rooms. The outsides were often copies of parts of Grecian temples. They were crowned with towers and spires somewhat like those on Wren's churches, but not nearly so handsome.

10. Inside, the church was fitted up with a gallery running along two sides and across one end. In [Pg 177] the end gallery a big organ was placed, and on either side of it, high up, near the ceiling, were smaller galleries, one for the charity-school boys, the other for the charity-school girls of the parish. The galleries and floor of the church were filled with high pews. On the floor opposite the organ were three huge boxes, rising one above the other. The lowest box was for the parish clerk, the middle one was the reading-desk, and the highest was the pulpit, which was often provided with a sounding-board, not unlike an umbrella. The altar was in a little niche behind the pulpit. Chapels were fitted up in much the same way.

11. Under all these churches and chapels were **vaults**, in which people were buried, but not in the earth. The coffins were placed on shelves, one above the other, round the vault. On the walls of the church above were often **tablets** to the memory of people lying in the vaults below. These, by the nineteenth century, were for the most part simply slabs of white marble, with black or grey borders. There was hardly any carving at all on them; only inscriptions or epitaphs, and texts.

12. The **churchyards** were used for burials, and by the middle of the nineteenth century most of them were crowded with tombstones. In London nearly all are now laid out as open spaces; many of the grave-stones have quite disappeared, and those which remain are rapidly perishing.

13. When we remember that the churchyards of the old churches had been used as burial-places in many cases since the early days of Christianity, and even before that, we can easily grasp the [Pg 178] fact that the earth had been used over and over again for burials. About the middle of the nineteenth century the nation came to the conclusion that burials in churches and crowded town churchyards should no longer be allowed. The practice was dangerous to the living. So **cemeteries** were opened in districts away from the towns and homes of the people. Towns have grown so fast that many of these cemeteries are now surrounded by houses, and are the centres of big populations.

14. About the year 1840 interest began to be taken in the old English styles of building, and a taste for **Gothic architecture** arose again. Since that time places of worship of all descriptions have for the most part been built in some sort of Gothic. When you read that such and such a church or building is in the fourteenth or fifteenth century style, you must understand that it is not a copy of a church built in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, but that its window-heads, doorways, arches, and fittings are *in the style* of the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Most of these modern buildings are of brick, only faced or dressed with stone. It is pretty safe to say that there is no old church standing which was built entirely in the fourteenth century, and has remained unaltered from that day to this.

15. In our towns almost every tower and spire which we see is a modern building, though the *styles* may vary from Norman to Perpendicular and seventeenth century. Modern buildings, [Pg 179] churches, halls, public offices, and private houses are mostly imitations of the work of past ages. There is no nineteenth-century style of English architecture. Some day, perhaps, England may develop a new style of architecture, such as the world has never yet seen, but at the present time we can only copy and adapt the work of those who have gone before us.

Summary.—*Pews* came much into use in churches after the Reformation, and the sides were very high. In the seventeenth century very few new churches were built, but many rings of bells were placed in the towers. The *monuments* became tablets, ornamented with skulls, cross-bones, &c. The oldest *tombstones* in churchyards are not earlier than 1660. In Wren's churches there is much fine woodwork.

In the eighteenth century the new churches built were oblong rooms, fitted up with galleries on three sides, having *high pews and a tall pulpit*. Corpses were buried in *vaults* under these churches and chapels, but by the middle of the nineteenth century burials in town churches and churchyards came to an end.

About 1840 a liking for *Gothic architecture* revived, and the churches and chapels since then have been built mostly in one or other of the Gothic styles. The nineteenth century has no style of architecture of its own.

CHAPTER XLV

SCHOOLS AFTER THE REFORMATION

1. A little of the property which had belonged to the religious houses was saved and turned to useful purposes. Just a very few of the old alms-houses were allowed to continue their work, like [Pg 180]

St. Cross at Winchester, and some schools and colleges were founded.

2. There are some of those schools which bear the name of King Edward VI. But Edward VI was only a lad of sixteen years of age when he died, so that he had practically nothing to do with either the good or the evil which was done in his name. In other towns, besides London, good men set to work and managed to get back some small part of the property of old religious houses for school work. In some places they were allowed to have part of an old ruin, which they patched up and made to serve as a school-room. This was the case, for instance, at St. Alban's, where the Lady Chapel of the monastery was the grammar-school until about twenty-five years ago.

3. It is quite true to say that many of our present **grammar-schools** rose out of the ashes of the monasteries. But they were not great buildings to hold scores of scholars. Many of them were only founded for ten or twelve scholars from a particular town or district. The sum set apart for a master to teach them was very small, so that he was usually allowed to take other scholars who paid for their education.

4. These schools had their "ups and downs", but many of them in the eighteenth century were in a very bad way. Some had scarcely any scholars, and the buildings were much out of repair. However, most of them are alive and active to-day, and many of them have histories of which they may be proud, and a past which should help them to excel in the future. [Pg 181]

5. Children were often taught in the church and **church porch** in country places. John Evelyn was so taught in the early part of the seventeenth century, and many more people could read and write than we sometimes imagine; but knowledge was not within the reach of all.

6. The condition of the poor occupied a good deal of attention, and the **poor-laws** were used to improve matters in many ways. At Norwich, for instance, in the year 1632, a children's hospital was provided for boys between the ages of ten and fourteen. They were to be taught useful trades, and fed and clothed. For dinner they were to have 6 ounces of bread, 1 pint of beer, and, on three days of the week, 1 pint of pottage and 6 ounces of beef; on the other four days, 1 ounce of butter and 2 ounces of cheese. For supper they were to have 6 ounces of bread, 1 pint of beer, 1 ounce of butter, and 2 ounces of cheese. For breakfast every day they had 3 ounces of bread, 1/2 ounce of butter, and 1/2 pint of beer.

7. About the year 1685 the Middlesex magistrates established a "College for Infants", as they called it, where poor children might be trained and taught; and the same plan was followed in other places.

8. Then, too, about the same time, we find private persons establishing **charity schools** for a similar purpose. The boys and girls, however, in these schools were not always boarded and fed, but lived at home and went to school day by day. The rules drawn up for them by their founders [Pg 182] seem very quaint and almost laughable to us. We must remember that there were good reasons for those rules when they were made. There were charity schools in almost every town, and most of them were carried on in the old way till well into the nineteenth century.

9. The **dress** of the school-boys looks queer to us, because it is the style of dress worn when the school was founded. A **blue-coat** boy wears still the dress worn in the sixteenth century. The little **charity-school boys** wore leather breeches, coloured stockings, coats of a quaint cut of brown or blue or green or grey, and flat caps, with two little pieces of fine linen fluttering under their chins—bands as they were called. This was the boys' dress of the seventeenth century, and they wore it long after it was out of fashion. The girls, too, had frocks and cloaks of a wonderful cut and colour, white aprons, and "such mob-caps".

10. They went to school in queer old buildings on Sundays and on week-days. They were often taken to church, where they were perched up aloft by the organ in dreadfully uncomfortable galleries, so uncomfortable that it is a wonder that some of them did not fall over into the church below. There they led the singing—what little there was. Their hours in school were pretty long, but they managed to get in a very fair amount of play, and always had time for falling into mischief.

11. People often laugh at these old-fashioned charity schools, and the work they did. That is a [Pg 183] pity, because they were founded long before Parliament troubled itself about the education of the people. All honour to those good old-fashioned men and women who did what they could to provide teaching and training for poor boys and girls, and to put them in the way of being able to earn their own living.

Summary.—Most of Edward VI *grammar-schools* were founded out of small portions of property which had belonged to religious houses. Generally they were only for a small number of scholars. In the eighteenth century many of these schools were in a very poor condition. Most of them now are alive and flourishing. In the seventeenth century a good many attempts were made to teach the children of the poor on a small scale. Some took charge of the children altogether; others, the *charity schools,* were day-schools. These lasted without much change till the middle of the nineteenth century. The blue-coat boys' dress and the dress of these charity children was the dress of the time when they were founded.

CHAPTER XLVI

APPRENTICES

1. From many of these old-fashioned schools boys and girls were apprenticed. Connected with old parishes there are still funds for so placing out boys and girls.

2. All through the Middle Ages the only way by which a man could become a craftsman was by being first of all an **apprentice**, and the rules by which a lad was bound to a master were very strict. Things did not alter much in this respect in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth [Pg 184] centuries. An apprentice was always bound for seven years in the presence of magistrates. The master had to find his apprentice in food, clothing, lodging, and to instruct him in his art, or "mystery" as it was called. The apprentice lived in his master's house, and was bound to serve him.

3. His master could chastise him if he was idle or "saucy", and even have him sent to the house of correction for further punishment. Both masters and apprentices could complain of each other to the magistrates at the Quarter Sessions, and the hearing of the complaints often took up a lot of time. According to many of the complaints, of which records still exist, some of the apprentices must have had rather a hard time—"seven years, hard". Some complained of having to eat mouldy cheese and rotten meat; others, of their ragged clothes; others, that their masters beat them with pokers, hammers, pint-pots, to say nothing of whips and sticks; prevented them from going to church; and others, that their masters turned them out-of-doors, or ran away and left them. The masters, on their side, often complain that their apprentices are idle, that they rob them, that they stop out at night and keep company with bad characters, and so on. So it seems they did not always get on well together.

4. But then there were the others—those who made the best of it. Where the master did his duty, and the apprentice took pains to learn, they got on pretty well together. It was not an easy life for [Pg 185] the apprentice, but it made him a craftsman.

5. In some parts of the country, in manufacturing districts, there were little schools where children were taught **straw-plait** and **lace-making**. Then, especially in villages, the parish clerk, or some old lady, kept a **small school**, in which a few boys and girls picked up a little reading, writing, and arithmetic.

6. **Elementary schools**, out of which our present schools have grown, began about a century ago. Many and great changes have taken place since then, and knowledge is within the reach of every boy or girl to-day.

> **Summary.**—Many boys and girls were put out as *apprentices* from old charity schools, and many parishes have still funds for apprenticing boys and girls to trades. For centuries a man could only become a craftsman who had been an apprentice. The apprentice had to serve for seven years, and the life was often very hard and trying, but it made good craftsmen in many cases. There were *plait schools* and *lace-making* schools in some parts of the country, and almost every village had its *little school* taught by the parish clerk or an old lady. Our present *elementary schools* began less than a century ago, and they have passed through many changes already.

CHAPTER XLVII
PLAY

1. In all the many centuries of our history there have been boys and girls; and, whatever has been going on in the world around them, they have found time to play. Many of their games go back so [Pg 186] far in the history of man that their origin is forgotten. Yet there are games which children play now just as they did in the days of Queen Elizabeth; and those queer rhymes, which you know so well, and understand nothing about, have been repeated, some of them, since England began to be England.

2. There is plenty to say about games, but not enough space to say it all here. There are some games which come and go as regularly as the seasons. The queer part of it all is: Who starts the game? As sure as the early spring evenings arrive you will find boys playing at marbles. Town or country, it does not matter, all at once "marbles are *in*". Nobody says it is "marble season"; nobody ever yet found the boy who brings out the first marble of the season. Somehow a *something* inside a boy tells him it is "marble" time, and the marbles appear in his pocket.

3. It is just the same with "tops"; they come and they go with absolute regularity. They come as if by magic, and by magic they disappear. When the errand-boy, who has left school a month or two, stops, basket on arm, to watch the game, you may be sure that it is the height of the season. When the ground is occupied by the little chaps who have just come up from the infant school, and the errand-boy passes whistling by on the other side, it is quite certain that the season is over and gone.

4. These are games that want no clubs, associations, nor subscriptions. Yet they are governed by [Pg 187] time-honoured rules, which have never been written down, but must be strictly observed, or there is much talking and wrangling over the game.

5. **Sports** have an important place in the life of towns and villages nowadays; but, though cricket and football are old games really, they have not always been as popular as they are now. **Cricket**, in some form or other, was played in the thirteenth century; indeed all games where a ball is used are more or less ancient. It seems to have been played at Guildford as early as 1598, but modern cricket only dates from the middle of the eighteenth century. Kent seems to have led the way, and Hampshire was the home of the game in 1774.

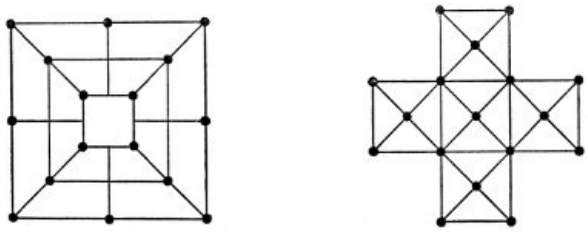
6. **Football** has almost driven every other game out of our towns, but it is only within the last thirty years that it has become so popular. Football of some kind has been played for many centuries, especially in the streets of towns. Kingston, Chester, and Dorking, amongst other places, have a custom of playing football on Shrove Tuesday. The story as to how the custom arose is the same in most of these places.

7. Far back in the ninth century a party of Danes ravaged the district and attacked the town. The townsmen made a brave stand against them till help came. Then the Danes were defeated, their leader slain, his head struck off, and kicked about the streets in triumph. That is said to have given rise to the custom; but it was a very hideous football.

8. Football was not always regarded with favour. Folk often wanted to play football when their lords and masters wanted them to practise with their bows and arrows. So the young men and apprentices were frequently told what a dangerous game it was, and over and over again it was forbidden. Football was always apparently a game over which the players fell out, much as they do now. Nearly four hundred years ago a worthy gentleman wrote of the game:— [Pg 188]

"It is nothyng but beastely fury and extreme violence, whereby procedeth hurte, and consequently rancour and malice do remayne with thym that be wounded".

9. There are some places where the school-boys of long, long ago have left their marks. In the cloisters at Westminster Abbey and Gloucester Cathedral, for instance, are some roughly cut marks in the old stone benches, forming the "tables" or "boards" on which they played some almost forgotten games with stones.



Summary.—*Children's games* are very ancient, and the rhymes have been handed down from very early times, so that we do not know now what they mean. Marbles, tops, and hop-scotch are games which come and go regularly, and are governed by unwritten rules. *Football* and *cricket* are old games. Both games have altered very much. The marks of some old games, which were played with stones, are still to be seen in the cloisters at Westminster and Gloucester. (See cut on previous page.) [Pg 189]

CHAPTER XLVIII
GOVERNMENT

1. There was not much change for many centuries in the way in which towns and villages were governed.

2. The borough towns, which gained their charters back in the days of King John, or King Henry III, had them confirmed by various kings in later times; but the powers of the towns were not much altered. The **corporation** of a borough was usually made up of men chosen by the freemen; but if the freemen did not admit many persons to the freedom of the borough, the power of electing, in the course of years, fell into the hands of a very few people.

3. This was what actually happened in a very large number of cases, and at the end of the eighteenth century there were many old boroughs which were governed by "close corporations"—the bulk of the people living in the borough having no voice in the management of the affairs of the town. All that was altered in the early part of the nineteenth century. Many of the old boroughs lost their privileges, as they had become such small unimportant places. All other boroughs now have regular elections of town councillors by the rate-payers each first of November. The councils elect the mayor on each 9th of November. [Pg 190]

4. The **mayor**, and some of the inhabitants of the borough, are also magistrates and attend to police cases; while the **town council** looks after matters connected with sewers, lighting, paving, and cleansing the streets of the town. It has now also charge of educational affairs.

5. In London and large towns, where there is much **police-court business**, there are special magistrates who attend to nothing else.

6. In country places, for centuries, the **manor court** governed the manor; but gradually, and by Tudor times, most of the power of the manor court, or court leet as it was sometimes called, had

passed into the hands of the **Vestry**. This consisted of the parish officers and rate-payers in the whole parish. It was called the Vestry, because its meeting-place was the vestry of the parish church, or even the church itself.

7. The relief of the poor and the care of the highways provided the vestry with most of its business. The **churchwardens** had special care of the property of the Church, but in Tudor times they were also charged with the relief of the poor. To help them in this work two **overseers**, at least, in each parish, were chosen every year. All the rate-payers were liable to serve in turn if elected, unless they could show a good reason for not serving. The elections took place about Lady Day. The vestry fixed what rates were to be made, and the overseers collected them. But the overseers had to be admitted to their office, and all rates allowed, by two justices of the peace, before they were legal. [Pg 191]

8. It became necessary, as the poor-law business increased, to have constables to help the overseers in keeping an eye on strangers, vagrants and beggars who came into the parish. These, too, had to serve for one year. In big parishes they were assisted by a **beadle**, and had, with the help of all the inhabitants in turn, to keep **watch and ward** at night. Very unpleasant work they had to do in towns and places just outside towns. This duty of watching and warding had to be carried out until towards the middle of the nineteenth century, when our present system of **police** was established. Beadles and constables had to see to the whippings, which were so common, and to setting people in the stocks and the cage; to moving sick and diseased wretches on to the next parish, and other unpleasant duties.

9. The **surveyors of the highways** had to see that each person who was liable did his share of the work of the highways, or paid for having it done. But by far the most important business was that of the churchwardens and overseers. They had to settle in what houses the poor folk were to live, who were to look after them, what allowance was to be made for them. The poor usually had their money paid to them at church, monthly. Then the overseers had to see that every able-bodied man was at work, often having to provide the work, to place out apprentices, and to supply flax or wool for the women and children to spin. Sometimes the poor were boarded out; some of them lived in cottages, or in the poors' house which the parish built. Then, too, these officers had to relieve beggars, and persons passing through the parish. [Pg 192]

10. This work of providing for the poor was very difficult and very anxious, especially at the end of the eighteenth and in the early part of the nineteenth century.

11. Then **poor-law unions** were formed, and **union workhouses** built, in which the helpless poor might be better cared for, and vagrants and wanderers find a night's lodging. We have not a perfect plan yet, by any means. The difficulties of how to deal with the poor who, through no fault of their own, cannot help themselves, and how to deal with those who are lazy and will not work, are very great.

12. The work of the old vestries has now passed to the **Parish Councils,** the **District Councils,** and the **County Councils**. The work is important, and has much to do with the welfare of our towns and villages. We must not expect that these bodies can do everything at once, or that they will make no mistakes. If we know something of the past history of our towns and villages it will help us to form a right judgment concerning difficulties which have to be met in the present, and so to act that those who come after us may be able to go on building upon our work, that there may be nothing to undo, nothing to blame, but that future years may say of our times:

"They knew how to work, and they worked on right principles". [Pg 193]

Summary.—In the course of centuries the government of most boroughs got into the hands of few people. This was altered early in the nineteenth century. Borough towns now choose a certain number of members, and the councils elect a mayor. The mayor is a magistrate; in the large towns of England trained lawyers are appointed magistrates to act in the police courts.

In country places much of the power of the manor court got into the hands of the vestry. The vestry made the rates required, and chose churchwardens, overseers, surveyors of highways, every year. In towns the inhabitants had to keep "watch and ward" in turn, till the police force was organized in the nineteenth century. Each parish looked after and provided for its own poor till early in the nineteenth century.

The work of the vestries is now done by Parish Councils, District Councils, and the County Councils.

CHAPTER XLIX
SOME CHANGES

1. There was not much alteration in the outward appearance of the villages and the "look" of the country round them for many centuries. Indeed even now many of the villages themselves are not greatly altered in their general arrangement. Down to the times of the Tudor kings the old land and manor customs had gone on since Saxon days, changing but very slowly. Many of the class which had been villeins in the Middle Ages had become yeomen; some had got lands of their own, and some land on the old manors, which they rented. But they did not alter very much the old [Pg 194]

way of treating the land, and it was only gradually that **farmhouses** sprang up away from the villages.

2. In some parts of the country these lonely farmhouses are more common than in others. There are, for instance, a good many in the Weald of Sussex which sprang up first as huts in forest clearings, and afterwards became houses with farm-buildings attached to them.

3. On the borders of great lonely heaths and commons we can often see very old and very small cottages, with walls of clay, or wood, or stone, according to the district in which they happen to be. Long ago some **squatter** built his little hut here, and out of pity, perhaps, or carelessness, the lord of the manor took no notice. There he remained, year after year, until custom allowed him to look upon it as his own; and in time it actually became his private property. Such squatters in lonely places were often looked upon more or less with fear by the timid folk living in the distant village. They did not care to do or say anything to upset the stranger, fearing for the safety of their sheep, cattle, and poultry. Many little holdings and small farms began in this way.

4. Many of the **farms**, though they were separate holdings, still had strips in the big fields of the parish. The crops were sown and gathered according to the ancient customs, and the cattle turned into them and out on the waste lands at certain seasons, just as they had been in the Middle Ages. [Pg 195]

5. But about the beginning of the eighteenth century there was a pretty general movement towards breaking up these big fields into separate parts, and letting each farmer have his portion to himself, so that he might know exactly what land was his and what belonged to his neighbour. So it came to pass that **Enclosure Acts** were passed for parish after parish. The old common arable fields were divided amongst those who had rights in them. Then many of the old wastes, heaths, commons, and marshes were treated in the same way.

6. That caused a great change in the appearance of the parish. Instead of the fields in long, straight strips, with unploughed balks between them, the strips belonging to each farmer were thrown into one, and **hedgerows** planted. In time they became smooth fields, separated from each other by hedges, in which grew here and there timber trees. The old cart-tracks, winding across and round the common fields, in time became **lanes** bounded by high hedges. The trackways across many of the old wastes and commons in a similar way were turned into lanes, and the waste broken up into fields. Still a good deal of the waste land was left, and has never yet been enclosed. So far as we can see now, this is not likely to happen, because we feel more and more every year that, for the sake of the health and recreation of the people, it is absolutely necessary to preserve them as open spaces.

7. The fields, the hedgerows, and the lanes which delight us so much in the country are, most of them, some two hundred years old. [Pg 196]

8. When the farm had its own separate fields allotted to it, it became convenient for the farmer to live in the midst of his land. So we find the farmhouse and its buildings, with a few labourers' cottages, a long way out of the village, and away from the church. If you take notice you will find that from this outlying farmhouse there is usually a pretty straight field-path to the parish church.

9. Then, too, in parishes through which a big main road ran, as the traffic on the road increased, houses of entertainment for man and beast became necessary; **ale-houses** and **inns** sprang up, with little farmsteads round them. **Coaches** were put on many roads in the time of King Charles II, and had regular stopping-places, and these little inns often became important centres of business. Gradually hamlets sprang up round many of them.

10. The roads were so bad that horses frequently cast their shoes, tires came off wheels, and wheels came off carts and coaches; so under many "a spreading chestnut-tree" a little smithy and wheel-wright's shop arose. A smithy is always a centre of life and news, as everybody knows. You can see to-day, along many of our roads, sheds and shops being opened, where broken-down cycles and motor cars can be repaired and supplied with odds and ends which they may happen to need.

11. Thus **hamlets** have grown up away from the old village green, its church, and its manor-house. In scores of places the hamlet has become of more importance than the old village, and has grown into a little town, where new churches and chapels and public buildings have sprung up. [Pg 197]

12. Then there are the **districts** where new industries and manufactures have been planted. That is too large a subject to deal with here, but think of the great changes these have wrought on the face of the country in the coal and mineral districts of England in the last two hundred years.

13. Again, there are the **railways**. Notice how little townships have grown up round the railway-stations, especially on the main lines in districts near a big town. Houses spring up for the hosts of people who, like streams of human ants, hurry to the station to catch the early morning trains, and, as the afternoon wears into evening, come again from the station to snatch a few hours' rest at home.

14. We have said nothing of

> "The beauty and mystery of the ships,
> And the magic of the sea",

and the part they have had in the making of our towns and villages. This subject would require a

book all to itself, and then we shall only just have begun to think about it, and to find out how little we know and understand of the things which go to make up our daily lives.

15. Yes, the life of our towns and villages is a very interesting subject. Nature and Man each works for and with the other; both are full of mystery, life, and beauty, if we could only use our eyes to see, our intelligence to understand, our hearts to sympathize, and our hands to work. [Pg 198]

Summary.—The earliest *farmhouses* began as settlers' huts in such forest regions as the Weald. *Squatters* gradually got little holdings near lonely heaths and commons. *Separate farms*, with farm-buildings and labourers' cottages attached to them, date from about the middle of the eighteenth century, when the *old common fields* began to be enclosed. *Fields and hedgerows and country lanes*, as we see them now, mostly began then. *New hamlets* sprang up by main roads as coaches came into use: an ale-house and a forge were usually the first buildings.

New towns have sprung up in manufacturing districts and round railway-stations.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Also between Hitchin and Cambridge, at Clothall, in Herts, in the Chiltern Hills, on the steep side of the Sussex Downs, in Clun Forest, in Carmarthenshire, and in Wilts.

[2] Spinneys are plantations of trees growing closely together.

[3] A diocese is the district over which a bishop rules.

[4] In the Fens.

[5] When we speak of Saxon work in buildings we mean work done between the time of King Cnut and the Norman Conquest—the first half of the eleventh century.

[6] The Cistercian houses here in England, however, were always known as *abbeys*, though Citeaux, their head-quarters, was in France.

[7] *founded*, that is, established.

[8] *found*, that is, discovered.

[9] *feaden*, that is, feed.

[10] *pullen*, that is, poultry.

[11] The Jews were expelled from England A.D. 1290.

[12] That is, whipped at a cart's tail.

[13] *Terra-cotta* is a compound of pure clay, fine sand, or powdered flint.

[14] See the picture on p. 162.

[15] *Jacobean* means of the time of James I and on to James II.

Transcriber's Notes:

Text appearing in illustrations has been replicated along with the illustration caption.

Some presumed printer's errors have been corrected. These are listed below with the original text (top) and the replacement text (bottom).

Westminster Abbey, As more p. 57
Westminster Abbey. As more

magis-strates [end-of-line hyphen] p. 101
magistrates

plainly At the end p. 141
plainly. At the end

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