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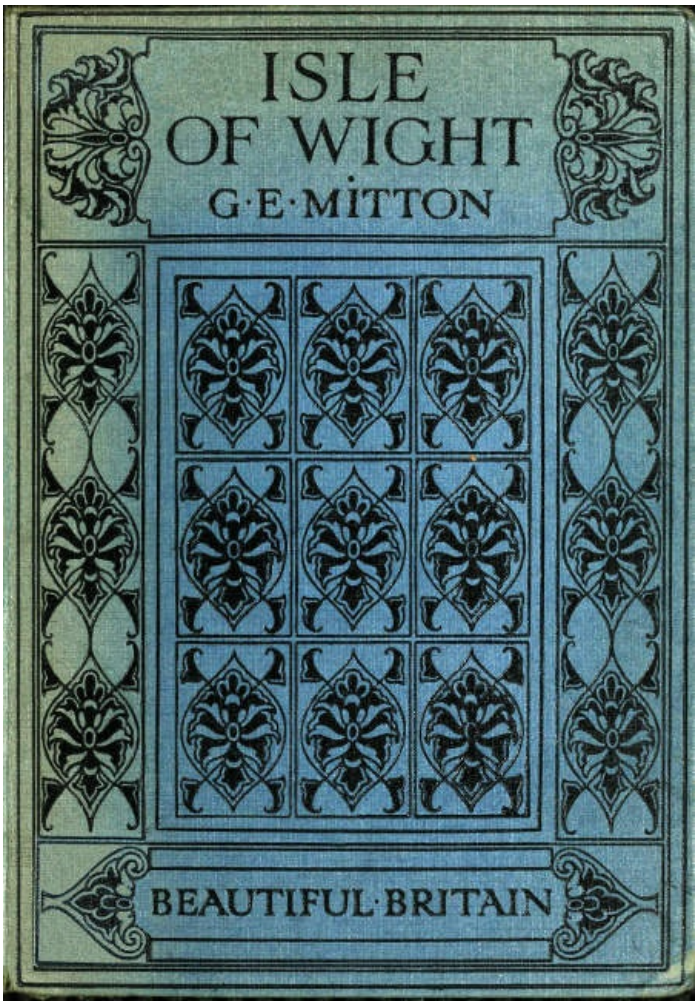

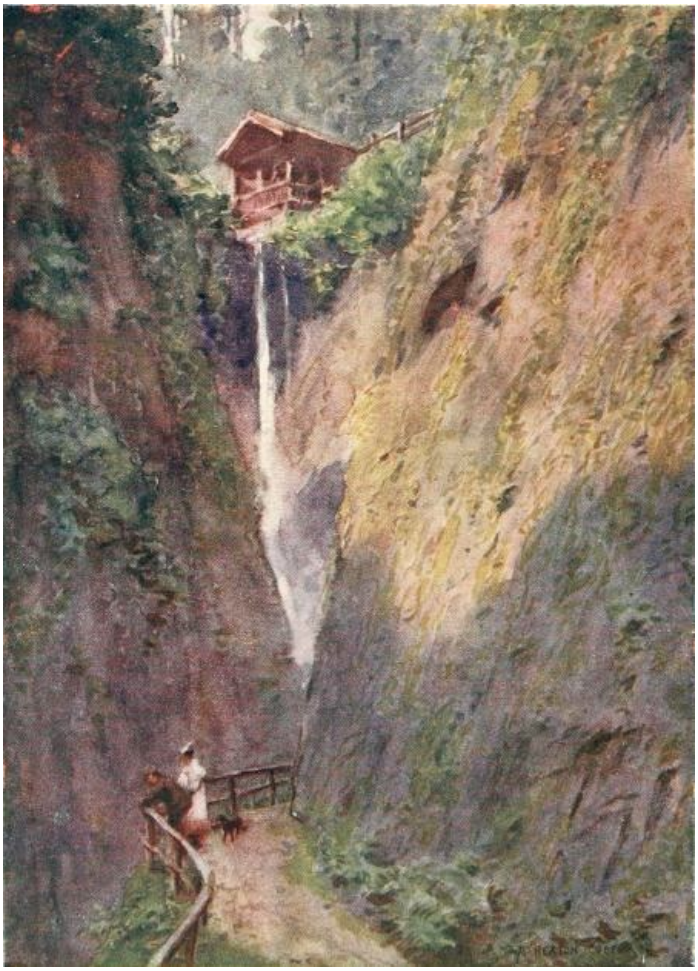

**SHANKLIN CHINE.**
**The picturesque ravine carved by a small stream on the south side of the town.**

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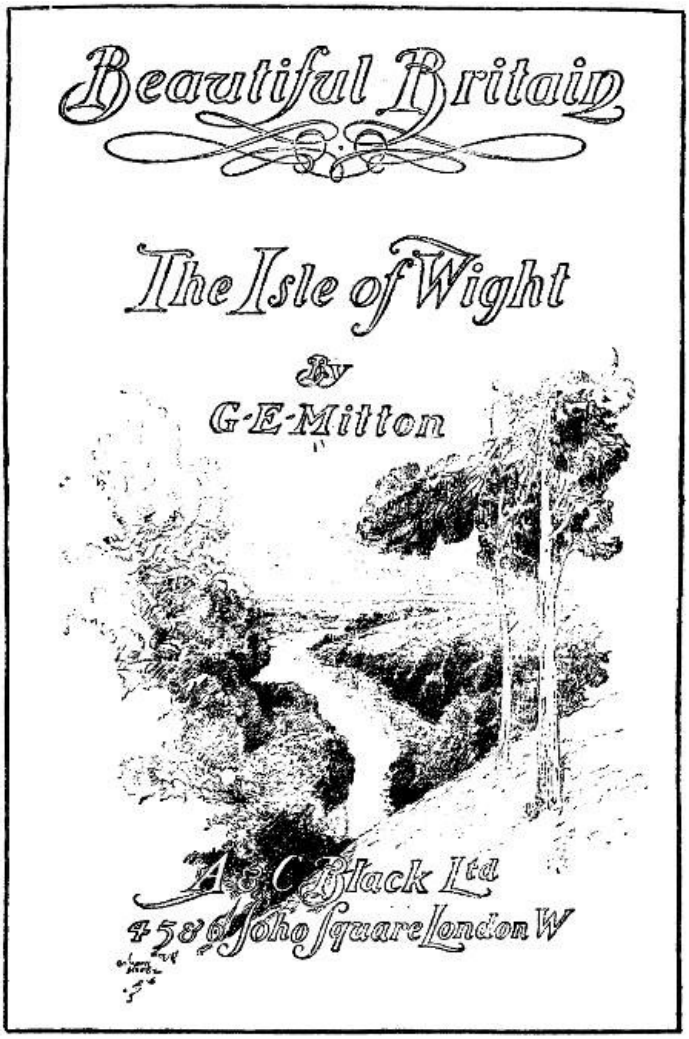

[Pg 1]

# *Beautiful Britain*

# *The Isle of Wight*

***By***

## *G·E·Mitton*

***A & C Black Ltd***
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## CHAPTER I
### THE ISLAND

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Islands have always exercised a peculiar fascination over Englishmen, perhaps because, accustomed as they are to a sense of security induced by the surrounding sea, they never feel more comfortable than when the sea is on all sides at a measurable distance. It has been the ambition of many an Englishman to possess an island, however small, of his own. But England is not particularly blessed in this matter, and we may look with envy at the fringe of islands, large and small, precipitous and flat, scattered along the rugged shores of the west coast of Scotland. The only two English islands which can claim exceptional interest are the Isle of Man and the Isle of Wight. Of the other well-known ones, the Scilly Isles and Channel Isles are too inaccessible to [Pg 6] count, Sheppey and Thanet and Holy Island too small, and Anglesea is separated by so very diminutive a channel from the mainland that it hardly seems like an island at all.

Of the two that stand pre-eminent the Isle of Wight cannot claim the peculiar customs and survivals that give the Isle of Man a special place, yet it has much charm of its own to compensate for this, and it otherwise fulfils all the conditions of what an island should be. It is separated from the mainland by a channel varying from one mile to six in breadth, a distance sufficient to give dignity but not to imperil approach. It is large enough to be supremely interesting, yet not so large as to be indigestible to the visitor who has only a short holiday at his disposal. It is, in fact, a little larger than London of the Boroughs and the County Council—that is to say, twenty-three miles by about thirteen, as against some seventeen by twelve. It is in shape an elongated diamond, with the extreme points lying eastward and westward, and it contains 93,341 acres. These acres are so diversified by hills and rivers, so broken up, that they count for

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twice as much as a flat surface of the same extent. The island, in fact, presents every variety of scenery, from richly wooded lanes, tiny inland villages bowered in greenery, high sweeping downs, to bold coast scenery, with chalk cliffs rising 200 feet above a sea often grand in the extreme. Ship-building at Cowes and cement works on the Medina are the only important manufactures, thus the fresh sea-air is untainted by smoke. Of the stone, Sir Richard Worsley, the chief island historian, says: "There are several quarries which produce varieties of stone applicable to different uses. Those near Quarr Abbey were once in such esteem as to furnish stone for building the cathedral at Winchester, as appears by a grant made by William Rufus to Walkelyne, Bishop of that diocese.... The stone continued in reputation till the reign of Edward III., and in the registers of Winchester it is recorded that William of Wykeham used it in building the body of that cathedral, whence it seems as if Portland stone was not then known, since it is certainly preferable to this both in colour and durability." Farms and fishing, chiefly for shell-fish and supplying the wants of numerous visitors, provide work for the inhabitants.

The island is also noted for its sheep, the mildness of its climate being suitable for early lambs, while the high chalk downs supply just the herbage most necessary for grazing. Naturally it follows that the trade in wool is good, and it has been so noted for many centuries. Drayton in his *Polyolbion*, speaking of the wool, says: "Not Leemster's self can show a finer fleece." [Pg 8]

In Sir John Oglander's Memoirs (seventeenth century) he says: "It is, and hathe bene a tax layd on this island, that it never produced any extraordinary fayr handsome woman, nor a man of any super-eminent gwyftes in witt or wisdome, or a horse excellent for goodness. I can answer that no part of England in generall, the quantitie considered, hath produced more exquisite in either species than this island."

As for visitors, honeymoon couples and invalids have a special predilection for the island, and are to be found there at all times of the year enjoying the glorious sweep and firm sands of Sandown Bay, with its record for sunshine, the sheltered warmth of Ventnor, with its mild winter and equable climate, or the many beauties of Shanklin, which claims a better summer season than its rival—apt to be, perhaps, a trifle too warm at times. The island has been called "The Garden of England," a title by which it is referred to so long ago as 1781. [Pg 9]

**SANDOWN BAY.**
**The white cliffs of Culver Down are the eastward end of the rib of chalk which has its other extremity at the Needles.**

The narrow lanes crowded in by high, many-flowering hedges, the sharp descents and sudden turns, are not conducive to ease in motoring or cycling, and cyclists who ride as an end in itself, and not as a means to enjoyment, will find they had better go elsewhere. A capable cyclist could run all round the island in a day, but much would he miss thereby! For the attractions of the island are varied, appealing to historian, antiquarian, geologist, and botanist, man of letters, and lover of scenery, no less than the sportsman, and he who loves a game. From the historic castle of Carisbrooke, with its pathetic memories, to the yachting week at Cowes, almost every kind of man can find something to interest him.

The facilities for getting about are good, for though in the northern part of the island the roads are sometimes a little rough, with stones not deeply enough set, they are always dry, being sandy; and west of Newport, and south, and also in the south-eastern corner, over quite three-quarters of the island in fact, they are excellent, dry, smooth, and firm. In spite of the hills and sudden turns, therefore, there is much to be commended to cyclists. [Pg 10]

The two railways, the Isle of Wight and the Isle of Wight Central, divide the ground between them, the former running from Ventnor to Ryde, with a branch to Bembridge, and the other, which is much the larger, covering the rest of the ground. By their peculiar position they are enabled to give certain kinds of tickets which could not be offered except on a small island. Of such are the "go-where-you-please" weekly tickets, limited only by time, and not by distance. These enable one, for the sum of about a pound, to travel first-class in any direction, and over the same lines, as often as one likes for a week; while each railway also offers cheaper tickets for its own lines exclusively, and the lower classes are correspondingly cheaper.

In this general survey we have not so far touched upon one aspect of the island which in the minds of some people looms so large as altogether to eclipse all others, and that is its attractions as a health resort.

The fortune of Ventnor was made by the celebrated physician, Dr. James Clark (1780-1870), who pronounced it to be the English Madeira. From a little fishing hamlet it grew prodigiously fast [Pg 11] into a fashionable watering-place, with good shops and fine buildings. Numerous sanatoria for consumptives, ranging downwards from the Royal National Hospital, show the opinion of its climate held by medical men in our own day.

The town, which stands on the side of a steep incline, is extremely picturesque, and some of the streets seem absolutely to tumble downwards. The different levels, however much they may add to its beauty from an artist's point of view, are, however, a little trying to the large number of invalids who come to Ventnor. Bathing, golf, tennis, and all the usual recreations are found in abundance, and the number of coaches starting for different excursions on a summer's day are legion. Shanklin differs from Ventnor in having houses above and below the cliff, instead of being planted on its side—a feat here rendered impossible by the precipitous nature of the cliffs. The two parts are connected with a lift, which does not in itself add to the beauties of the landscape, and there are also, of course, zigzag paths and graded roads, and the famous chine already referred to, by which one can reach the higher level from the lower. Shanklin faces eastward, and [Pg 12] is "round the corner" from Ventnor, which makes it not quite so warm in summer.

Sandown, again, which is northward, faces, like Shanklin, over a wide bay, and it boasts a high record in sunshine, having been, in fact, first for the whole of the United Kingdom in 1908. The sands are also exceptionally good.

These three are the best known health resorts, but visitors throng equally to the rapidly rising Totland Bay on the west, and Freshwater, Cowes, Ryde, and other places are seldom altogether deserted to their own inhabitants.

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# CHAPTER II [Pg 13]
## CARISBROOKE AND ITS MEMORIES

Carisbrooke is the central attraction for visitors, just as, by position, it is well-nigh the centre of the island. Even from childish days the picture of the patient donkey walking in a wheel to draw up water from the well, or the touching tale of the little Princess Elizabeth, who pined to death in the castle, has been familiar to everyone. The donkey who now holds the office is probably just as great an interest to the thousands of tourists—one Whit-Monday has been known to bring ten thousand—as the historical associations with which the castle is so richly endowed. The well is 150 feet deep, but that the work is not unduly hard is evidenced by the longevity of the donkeys, one of which lived to the age of thirty-two and another to twenty-one years. There are two at present, who relieve each other, both comparatively young and much petted.

Carisbrooke is bound up with the history of the island. Its origin goes back into the dim mists of [Pg 14] antiquity, and the earliest record is of a British fort which stood on the site. This was eventually succeeded by a Roman camp. The Romans called the island Vecta, or Vectis, and held it from A.D. 43 to A.D. 530, when Cedric the Saxon seized it. The Saxons used Carisbrooke as a strong place and fortified it, but when William the Conqueror established himself in England he bestowed it upon William Fitz-Osborne. One little incident which stands out in William's reign is that of the seizure of his half-brother Odo at Carisbrooke, where he had taken refuge. King William himself crossed over on this occasion and dragged out the rebel with a strong hand. (See plan of Carisbrooke, p. 62).

In the time of King Stephen, "Baldwin de Redvers made an insurrection against Stephen at Exeter, was there besieged and starved out, and then fled to the Wight, an island situate between Normandy and England, but nearer to England than to Normandy. He there occupied his castle, which was most grand built of stone and strengthened by very great fortifications. It was considered impregnable, and being well stored with provisions and plenty of water, Baldwin [Pg 15] determined to defy the King, but by the providence of God intervening the well was dried up suddenly. Baldwin on this was so discouraged that he fled to the King to ask forgiveness and to be allowed to retain his own property; but he did not get his request granted. He then repaired to the Court of Anjou, which received him with much honour" (Gesta Stephani).

With the treaty which provided for the succession of Henry came the re-establishment of Baldwin at Carisbrooke, whereupon he at once sank a much deeper and better well, the one which is now in existence, probably with an eye to future contingencies! The family of de Redvers, which continued long in possession, was Norman, and the description of the island as lying "between Normandy and England" is not really so absurd as it sounds in view of the fact that it was an appanage of Normandy, and when Normandy was lost to England it continued to be so, until Edward I. bought it from its "lord," Isabella de Fortibus, the last of the line of de Redvers, who is said to have had "a man's courage and lion's heart." She sold it to him as she lay dying, childless and a widow. The sum was one which in these days would be equal to £60,000. Since then it has [Pg 16] been an integral part of England. It is true that the Duke of Warwick was called King of the Island by Henry VI., but the empty title died with its only possessor. Among the Wardens and

Governors have been many whose names stand out in history: Humphry, Duke of Gloucester, Richard, Duke of York (killed at Agincourt), Piers Gaveston the Favourite, Edmund, Duke of Somerset, Anthony Woodville, who was Lord Scales in right of his wife, and became Earl Rivers when his father and elder brother were beheaded. The same fate befell him when he was only forty-one, because he had dared to espouse the cause of his nephew, Edward V., against the Duke of Gloucester.

Cromwell, the "Hammer of the Monks," was another Governor, but did not long enjoy his position; he was made Constable of Carisbrooke Castle in 1538, and it was only two years later that his downfall came. One of his last letters written to the King from the tower where he was imprisoned ends, "Your Highness's most heavy and most miserable prisoner and poor slave." Among the names of our own times there is that of Prince Henry of Battenberg, whose wife succeeded him in the honorary position at his death. [Pg 17]

**YACHTING AT COWES. *Pages 41-45.***
**Where the Royal Yacht Squadron have their headquarters, and where the famous "Cowes Week" takes place in August.**

At the time of the Spanish Armada the castle was most strongly fortified. The works were placed in charge of an Italian called Giambelli. He it was who devised the bastioned enceinte around the castle. The shape is an irregular pentagon, faced with stone and defended by a ditch. The men of the island contributed £400 to the money given by the Government, and voluntary labour was freely offered. That the work was not unnecessary was shown by the appearance of the Spanish Fleet at the back of the island. It had been looked for for many a year; as early as 1583 the island had been provided with a train of artillery, every parish giving a piece of brass ordnance, and each part of the coast had been put in charge of a "centoneer," who had watchers under him. Beacons were to be lighted to give the alarm, and the names of these show the districts: Brook, Mottistone, Swanston, Kingston, Nunwell, Yaverland, Bembridge, Stenbury, and Wolverton. At this time Sir George Carey, Lord Hunsdon, cousin to the Queen, was the Governor of the island.

When, therefore, the fleet did come, hundreds of the island folk gathered on the high cliffs to watch with nervous excitement for developments. The great galleons, lying heavily on the water, looked formidable enough, but they could not move easily, while the smaller English craft could be towed about by their long-boats. Lord Howard of Effingham himself came up, and Captain Hawkins actually took a galleon, while Sir Martin Frobisher was so sorely set upon by several at once that other ships—the *White Bear* and *Elizabeth Jones*—had to go to his assistance. The English would probably have won, but that the powder fell short, having been blazed merrily away; and the Spanish ships, being in the same plight, at length sailed off. [Pg 18]

Among the entries in the register of Carisbrooke church, written in faint, discoloured ink, is the record: "1588. The very year that the great and huge fleete of the Spanyard came to the ile of Wight was at Maudlinestide, in the yeere of our Lord God, 1588, the which God defended us, our Queene and Realm this day and for evermore, and send us truthe and quietnes within ourselves, anno 1588."

At the beginning of the Civil War it was held by Colonel Brett, and with him in the castle was the Countess of Portland, wife of the Governor of the island, and her five children. Gallantly was the castle held till there were but three days' provisions left, and the besieging hordes, fighting for the Parliament, were around the walls. Then it seemed that surrender must be made, but the Countess herself appeared on the walls with dauntless courage, and, telling the roaring mob that unless they granted honourable terms, including the lives and freedom of the garrison, she would herself put the match to the first cannon and fight till the walls crumbled, so impressed them that her conditions were granted. [Pg 19]

Sad indeed is the story of the ill-fated King Charles I., who came to Carisbrooke of his own free will after his escape from Hampton Court in November, 1647. This was not his first visit to the island; that had taken place very many years before, when, as a small boy of nine, he had been brought by his father to hunt in the great forest of Parkhurst. When he arrived as a fugitive, he was courteously received, and at first treated as a guest, but bit by bit all his attributes of royalty

were stripped from him, and he realized the bitterness of imprisonment without honour. As he grew more sensible of the hopelessness of his future, he ceased to care for his appearance, and [Pg 20] lived very quietly, eating little and reading much, such books as Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, and Bishop Andrewes' *Sermons*. While he was at Carisbrooke he was said to have written the *Eikon Basilike*, the authorship of which is now generally attributed, however, to Bishop Gauden. The King certainly did write at least one poem at the castle, one verse of which runs:

"The fiercest furies that do daily tread
Upon my grief, my grey discrowned head,
Are those that owe my bounty for their bread."

Once in the month of March, 1648, and again in the May following, he made attempts at escape abortively. The first time he found the window through which he tried to pass too narrow for his head, and the second time, though the obstructing bars had been sawn through, it was of no avail, for the plot had been revealed, and guards were waiting below. The small window which was the scene of both attempts is one of the principal details of interest for visitors.

Towards the end of the same year the King had a long conference with the representatives of the [Pg 21] Parliament at Newport, but the issue had been predetermined, and the commission might have borne as its motto the celebrated words of the tyrant to his victim: "You will be tried and convicted." Eventually the King was seized and carried over to the mainland, there, on the last day of January, 1649, to meet his death at Whitehall.

In the following August there arrived at Carisbrooke two pathetic little figures, the Princess Elizabeth, then fifteen years old, and her brother Henry, Duke of Gloucester, aged ten. The Princess was described as "a lady of excellent parts, great observation, and an early understanding." Already she was delicate in health, and deformed in figure, owing to the complaint of "rickets"; no doubt the shock of her father's terrible death had preyed upon her mind, and she was in a state to succumb rapidly to any malady. The opportunity soon came: she caught a chill at a game of bowls, which acted quickly on her enfeebled constitution, and less than a month after her arrival she was found lying dead with her face resting on an open Bible, a gift from that beloved father she had so soon followed. Thus, sculptured by Baron Marochetti, the tender attitude in which death found her remains fixed in marble in Newport Church, where she [Pg 22] was buried. Her little brother Henry was kept two years longer at Carisbrooke before being sent abroad to join the elder members of the family. He died of smallpox at the age of twenty. The children seem both to have been well treated during their imprisonment—a fact which is to the credit of the Parliamentarians. Among other prisoners the castle has held are two especially well known, Sir William Davenant and Sir Harry Vane.

One of the most impressive features of the castle is the great Norman keep, one of the oldest existing parts, which stands on an eminence, and is a prominent feature for miles around. It is reached by a flight of seventy-one steps. In interest and architectural grandeur it is rivalled by the gate-tower, chiefly the work of Earl Rivers, though he was beheaded before the building was completed. Like all historic places, the castle belongs to all ages, and is the result of slow growth, here a bit and there a bit, with added wings and walls, with rebuilding and accretions. It offers pictures from almost every standpoint, and the crumbling bits of masonry, seen in a setting of [Pg 23] trees or brushwood, carry continual delight to the observant eye. Carisbrooke well deserves the homage it receives.

The tiny priory of Carisbrooke formed a cell to a more important monastery. The monks were French Benedictines, with which Order the island has always been popular. Its ancient connection with France, combined with its own peacefulness, seems to have drawn them irresistibly. Of these settlements, those at Quarr, near Ryde, and Appuldurcombe are the most famous. Quarr was founded by the same Baldwin de Redvers who built the well at Carisbrooke, and so richly endowed was the abbey that the abbot became a personage of great consequence and dignity. By licence of Edward III. a sea-wall was built, enclosing an area of 40 acres; the wall was designed to prevent the unwelcome visits of sea-pirates, who at one time were a scourge. Many distinguished persons were buried in the abbey, including a daughter of Edward IV. At present Quarr is a farm, and among the farm-buildings many parts of the ancient abbey walls may easily be traced; it is said, indeed, that the barn was the monks' refectory.

Appuldurcombe (curiously pronounced with a strong accent on the last syllable) was a [Pg 24] Benedictine abbey of importance also. After the dissolution of the religious houses it fell into the possession of the Worsleys by marriage with an heiress. The name of this family is indelibly written in the annals of the island, because for three centuries its leading men took part in all public movements; many of them also were Members of Parliament in the happy days before the Reform Bill, when the island sent six members to represent its opinions, instead of one as at present! Several of the Worsleys succeeded one another in the office of Governor of the island. The first owner of Appuldurcombe was James Worsley, who married its heiress in 1510. His son entertained King Henry VIII. and Cromwell at Appuldurcombe, and two years later, when Cromwell was beheaded, the office of Constable of the island, which he had held, was bestowed upon Worsley. The great mansion belonging to the family was built in 1710. It stands in a fine park, where there is on the crest of the hill a gigantic obelisk, put up in 1774 to the memory of Sir Robert Worsley by his descendant Sir Richard. This is still conspicuous, though it was shattered by lightning, and the huge blocks hurled hither and thither. It is chiefly notable as [Pg 25]

marking a spot from which one of the finest views in the island may be seen—a view embracing Freshwater on one side and Culver on the other.

**THE UNDERCLIFF. *Page 53.***
**Is a beautiful portion of the coast stretching from Ventnor to St. Catherine's Point.**

The Sir Richard to whom the obelisk is due was really the most distinguished of his family. James Worsley, his grandfather, had collected materials for a history of the island, which Sir Richard edited and compiled. It is still the principal authority. He was a Privy Councillor and a widely-travelled man, while the objects of art he collected on his travels formed a costly museum. He died in 1805, childless, and the property passed to the Earl of Yarborough in right of his wife.

Carisbrooke is only a mile or so from the chief town of the island, Newport, though it must be added that Ryde claims the distinction of being the largest town. Newport has been said to "stand at that spot marked by Nature for the capital of the island, at the confluence of the two streams into which the estuary of the Medina is divided." In its first charter the town is called "the new borough of Mede."

The wide estuary of the River Medina comes up to the town, and enables considerable trade to be water-borne. Further down are large cement works, and small vessels bearing timber, malt, wheat, and coal come right up to the junction of the streams which feed the estuary, one of which, the Lugley, comes down from Carisbrooke. [Pg 26]

The church is modern, but has a high tower, and stands well. There is very little of interest in it, the chief monument being the beautiful marble one to Princess Elizabeth already alluded to, which was made at the expense of Queen Victoria. That and a fine old pulpit put up in 1658, and carved richly with allegorical figures representing all the virtues, besides the graces and arts, are really all there is to see.

Newport does not lay itself out much for visitors, holding itself with dignity as the capital—a place for a resident rather than the floating population which so enriches the coast towns in the season. The Jacobean Grammar School, wherein the historic Conference, culminating in the Treaty of Newport, took place between the King and the Parliament, is by far the most interesting object in the town. The discussion on the Treaty of Newport was not the final act before King Charles's death, but it was an important turning-point. Rumours of violence were abroad toward [Pg 27] the close of the Conference, and the King's guards were doubled in order to prevent his possible escape. They were "not only set before the house and at every window, but even within doors also; nay, sentinels at the King's very chamber-door, so that the King was almost suffocated with the smoke of the burning match in their gun-locks." The King's followers were alarmed, and urged him to escape. Colonel Cooke had the password which would take him forth; horses were ready at hand; a vessel was waiting Cooke's orders at Cowes; and the only question was, would the King avail himself of these means? His answer was: "They have promised me, and I have promised them; I will not break first."

The next morning the King was aroused by a great knocking at the door, and when he asked what it was, he was told that some officers had come from the Parliamentarians to remove him to Hurst Castle. A jolting, heavy-wheeled coach was brought to the door, and in it he was carried off *en route* for Hurst Castle.

Perhaps the most exciting episode in the history of the town was when the French landed on the island in 1377 and burnt it completely, while those of the population who were not slaughtered [Pg 28] ran away. So complete was the destruction that it is said no one returned to live there for two years.

The Medina is the principal river of the island, and its name has been connected with the root of "middle" or "mid," and is supposed to be related to the names Medway and Maidstone. The only two other rivers are both, oddly enough, named Yar, and besides them there are numerous streams.

Parkhurst, now chiefly associated with the closely-guarded prison, was at one time a forest for

hunting of over 3,000 acres. It was so from the Conqueror's time, being mentioned in Domesday Book under "Watching Wood," which is rated lightly because part of the land formerly belonging to it has been taken into the King's park. A curious little record which has been preserved tells us that in the reign of Edward III. one John Maltravers should in the season for buck-hunting attend the King at Carisbrooke for one day, at his own charge both for himself and horse, and afterwards to remain so long as the King wanted him, but at the King's expense.

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# CHAPTER III

[Pg 29]

## CONCERNING LITERARY MEN AND MAKERS OF HISTORY

For such a small area the island can boast a surprising number of literary associations. That which remains pre-eminently the first is the long residence of Tennyson at Farringford, near Freshwater; this lasted for more than half his life, though in the end the poet was so worried by those tourists who wished to "see" him, in the same simple style they went to see Carisbrooke or the Zoo, that he built himself a new home near Haslemere, and thither retreated during that part of the year when he would be most likely to be pestered in the island. There is no doubt that, though he was morbidly sensitive to public notice, he would have greatly missed it had the incense not been offered him, and he certainly did not discourage attention by his bizarre habit of dressing, which made even those who did not know him by reputation turn to stare at him in the [Pg 30] street. Keats is another in the first rank of poets which the island can claim. He wrote part of *Endymion* while on a visit to Carisbrooke, and *Lamia* in a cottage at Shanklin; the part where this cottage stood was renamed, in his honour, Keats' Green.

At the back of the island is Brixton, called Brighstone, where formerly Bishop Ken and Samuel Wilberforce were rectors. The former was here from July, 1667, to April, 1669, and here composed his famous hymns, while Wilberforce wrote his *Agathos* under the shelter of the same trees.

Another association which must be classified here, though in reality it contains very little of the real "literary" essence in the true sense of that much-abused word, is that of Legh Richmond, curate of Brading in 1809. He wrote the *Annals of the Poor*, of which the best known is *The Dairyman's Daughter*. Why his very mediocre performances should have travelled far and wide over the world, and been translated into numerous languages, is one of the mysteries attaching to books. These writings were merely little tracts written for edification, and without the smallest [Pg 31] literary flavour. Yet they are still remembered, and have in the aggregate sold in thousands. The grave of Elizabeth Wallridge, the prototype of the dairyman's daughter, is one of the show spots on the island, and the coaches from Ryde to Carisbrooke make a détour to permit passengers to visit the churchyard at Arreton where it is. Her cottage is also pointed out to wondering visitors, who probably have never heard her name, and go away with the vaguest notion as to what it is all about.

Miss Elizabeth Sewell, a prolific writer for girls in the early part of the nineteenth century, lived near Shanklin. Her *Amy Herbert* was much beloved of girls two generations ago, but would now be considered insufferably tedious.

Fielding's account of his landing at Ryde has often been quoted, and, though he was only a visitor, and not a resident, is worth considering. He came by water from Rotherhithe to the island, a voyage that took fifteen days, and he records in his journal: "This day our ladies went ashore at Ryde, and drank their afternoon tea at an alehouse there with great satisfaction; here they were regaled with fresh cream, to which they had been strangers since they left the Downs." [Pg 32] The ladies were his wife and daughter and a friend. Fielding himself was at the time very infirm, and there was "between the sea and the land at low water an impassable gulf, if I may so call it, of deep mud, which could neither be traversed by walking or swimming." There were great difficulties. At length, "after being hoisted into a small boat, and being rowed near the shore, I was taken up by two sailors, who waded with me through the mud, and placed me in a chair on the land, whence they conveyed me afterwards a mile further, and brought me to a house." Here the accommodation seems to have been most primitive, and the author's description of it is in much detail. Though Newport was a town when Ryde was a mere collection of huts, the latter now outnumbers the former in residents, and is a fine, large, clean town, with a good pier and handsome shops.

Dr. Arnold of Rugby was born at West Cowes, and a tablet marks the house; but his early education was carried on by an aunt in East Cowes, with which he is more closely associated; for even after he became a schoolboy at Winchester his holidays were passed in the island. He [Pg 33] speaks of his father's house at Slatwoods, East Cowes, as the "only home of his childhood."

**FRESHWATER BAY. *Page 51.***
**Is at the western end of the island where the chalk forms the cliffs, which are eaten into picturesque arches.**

Among the associations rather historical than literary must always come first that of Queen Victoria at Osborne. The name is said to be a corruption of Austerbourne, or oyster-bed. The Queen had been in the island a good deal as a girl, her mother having taken Norris Castle, near Cowes, for the sake of her daughter's health, in 1833. When Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort accompanied the King of the French to Portsmouth in 1844, they saw the Isle of Wight, and early in 1845, the following year, they bought the estate of Osborne, afterwards adding to it considerably. It was to Sir Robert Peel that the first idea of buying the estate was due. The Queen, writing to her uncle, Leopold, King of the Belgians, shortly after, says:

"You will, I am sure, be pleased to hear that we have succeeded in purchasing Osborne, in the Isle of Wight, and, if we can manage it, we shall probably run down there before we return to town for three nights. It sounds so snug and nice to have a place of one's own, quiet and retired, and free from all woods and forests and other charming departments, who really are the plague of one's life." [Pg 34]

The old house was pulled down, and the new one built, under the personal superintendence of Prince Albert, from designs by Cubitt. The chief features of the house are the two campanile towers, which stand up high above the trees, otherwise the building is not especially picturesque. The grounds were laid out by the Prince, and he also had a farm for scientific agriculture. When the Royal couple were finally settled in the house, the Queen wrote to her uncle, saying: "I wish you could be here, and hope you will come for a few days during your stay, to see the innumerable alterations and improvements which have taken place. My dearest Albert is so happy here, out all day planting, directing, etc., and it is so good for him. It is a relief to get away from all the bitterness people create for themselves in London."

This was just at a time when the bitterness and jealousy against Prince Albert were at their height, and his unpopularity was making itself felt in many directions—a source of great distress to the Queen.

The Queen and Prince were down at Osborne several times before their own house was actually finished, and they began to go on yachting trips from the island. One time they were so blown about in Portland Roads that they nearly came to grief, and Prince Albert was very seasick indeed. Another time they went even as far as the Channel Islands, and it speaks well for the Queen's capacity as a sailor that she was able to give lessons to her children, the Prince of Wales and Princess Royal, while on board. From the Channel Islands they passed to Falmouth, to present the little Prince to the inhabitants of his Duchy of Cornwall. [Pg 35]

"A beautiful day again," wrote the Queen, "with the same brilliant blue sea. At a quarter to eight o'clock we got under weigh. There was a great deal of motion at first, and for the greater part of the day the ship pitched, but getting up the sails steadied her. From five o'clock it became quite smooth, and at half-past five we saw land; and at seven we entered Falmouth Harbour, where we were immediately surrounded by boats. The calmest night possible, with a beautiful moon when we went on deck; every now and then the splashing of oars and the hum of voices were heard, but they were the only sounds, unlike the constant dashing of the sea against the vessel, which we heard all the time we were at Jersey." In writing to Lord Melbourne on April 3, 1845, she says: "The Queen had intended to have written to Lord Melbourne from Osborne, to thank him for his last note of the 19th, but we were so occupied and so delighted with our new and really delightful *home* that she hardly had time for anything; besides which the weather was so beautiful that we were out almost all day. The Queen refers Lord Melbourne to Mr. Anson for particulars of the new property, which is very extensive, as she is not at all competent to explain about acres, etc. But she thinks it is impossible to imagine a prettier spot—valleys and woods which would be beautiful anywhere, but all this near the sea (the woods grow into the sea) is quite perfection; we have a charming beach quite to ourselves. The sea was so blue and calm that the Prince said it was like Naples. And then we can walk about anywhere by ourselves without being followed and mobbed, which Lord Melbourne will easily understand is delightful. And last, [Pg 36]

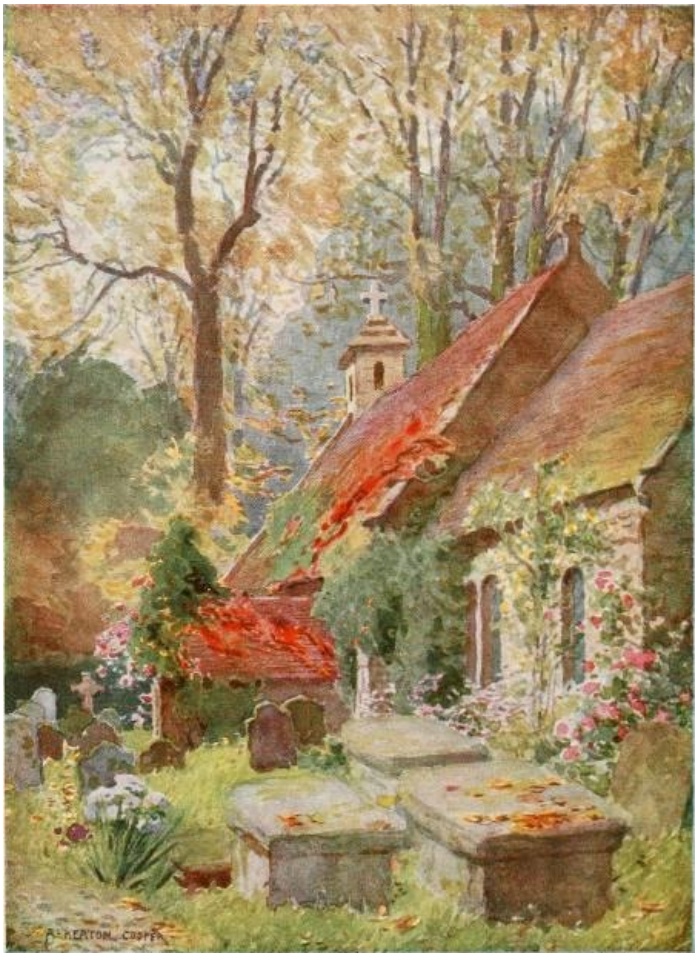
not least, we have Portsmouth and Spithead so close at hand that we shall be able to watch what is going on, which will please the navy and be hereafter very useful for our boys." [Pg 37]

When they finally got into their house, in 1846, they gave a house-warming, which is thus described by one of the guests: "Our first night," she says, "is well spent. Nobody smelt paint or caught cold, and the worst is over.... After dinner we were to drink the Queen's and the Prince's healths as a house-warming. And after it the Prince said, very naturally and simply: 'We have a psalm in Germany for such occasions, meaning a prayer to bless our going out and coming in.'" So the Royal pair settled down in what was to them perhaps more of a real home than any other of their residences. The model farm was a great joy to the children, who grew up simply amid the trees and fields on the edge of the sea. The Queen herself took up the part of an ordinary country lady while at Osborne, and visited the poor in their homes, sitting by the bedsides of the sick and reading to them. The Prince passed his time as a country gentleman, looking after his estate and cultivating it. Many times were they visited by the crowned heads of Europe, and all the numerous relatives among the foreign royalties. Baron Stockmar, the Prince's tutor, was a [Pg 38] welcome guest, and made shrewd observations on the development of the two he had first known as children. Many of the Queen's letters relating to the great events which made up her outer life are dated from Osborne. While she stayed in happy seclusion her hand was ever on the wheel, and she missed nothing, though the roar of wars and the terror of political upheavals might have seemed far distant.

It was fitting that she should die in a place so intimately connected with her domestic life, and where she had been more free from ceremonial than elsewhere. She died at Osborne on January 22, 1901, at half-past six in the evening. For some little time previously it had been noticed that she showed a tendency to sleepiness in the daytime, that she suffered from aphasia, and that her faculties were not as they had been; but, by the etiquette that hedges royalty, these things were kept as far as possible secret, and her death came as a shock to her people; so long had she reigned it seemed impossible to think of England without Victoria. The dining-room was made into a chapel by the removal of the furniture and draping of the walls with crimson. The coffin [Pg 39] was set on a dais surrounded by tall silver candlesticks. Upon it was a pall of white satin and lace, and upon the pall a small crown and one of the Queen's robes of crimson velvet and ermine. Indian and Scottish attendants watched at first, and were afterwards replaced by the 1st Grenadier Guards. Victoria herself had chosen the manner of her funeral; she was to be buried with military honours as a soldier's daughter. On February 1 the coffin was borne forth to Cowes, there to be placed on the Royal yacht *Alberta*. Thus was her body borne to the mainland along an avenue miles in length composed of warships, British on the one side and on the other those of Germany, France, Portugal, and Japan. The minute-guns boomed and bells tolled, and the scene was one of the grandest and most impressive ever enacted on English shores.

Whippingham Church, built by the Queen not far from Osborne, is more like the model for a child's brick palace than anything else. Here is buried Prince Henry of Battenberg, once Governor of the island. The church is enriched inside with many memorial gifts from the Royal Family.

At Queen Victoria's death Osborne Cottage was left to Princess Henry of Battenberg, who [Pg 40] succeeded her husband in his office. But Osborne House itself was turned into a home for invalids and convalescent officers, of which there were a great number just after the South African War. Part of the house is still kept as a show place, and many of the pictures, though more interesting than beautiful, are worth seeing, while the collection of Indian and other objects makes a veritable museum of many of the rooms. In the grounds, in queer conjunction, is the famous Royal Naval College, which is for first joined cadets, the younger boys, who pass on afterwards to Dartmouth. It is said that Osborne gives the finest education in the world, and no doubt the two eldest sons of King George, who have been educated there, will have a special love for the island for the rest of their lives, on account of their early association with it.



**BONCHURCH OLD CHURCH, NEAR VENTNOR.** ***Page 57.***
**This is one of the smallest churches in England and belongs to Norman times.**

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# CHAPTER IV
## YACHTS AND MEN-OF-WAR

[Pg 41]

Cowes is without rival in the world as a yachting place and the most celebrated of all yacht clubs, the Royal Yacht Squadron, has its headquarters here. During Cowes Week, in the beginning of August, distinguished visitors flow in such numbers to the place that the accommodation is strained to the utmost. Cowes follows Ascot and Goodwood, and is patronized not only by titled persons of every kind, but by millionaires of the newest type, to say nothing of crowned heads from Europe. Yachting is indeed the sport of Kings, and money flows like water. Though many of the wealthy owners find quarters aboard, there are enough to take up all the rooms that Cowes can supply, and princely are the prices paid for what is, in some cases, most old-fashioned and inconvenient accommodation. Perhaps the very contrast of the narrow winding street and the [Pg 42] curious old houses may have an attraction of its own for those who usually live in mansions or castles. The club-house is on the sea-front, and has a jetty at which only members or officers of the navy have the privilege of landing. Sir William Davenant passed some of his imprisonment in what is now the club-house, and wrote there his poem *Gondibert*. Beyond the club is the part of Cowes quaintly called Egypt, though why no one seems to know; perhaps it was merely due to the idiosyncrasy of the former owner of the large house standing here.

A few practical hints on yachting at Cowes and on the anchorage there may be added:

The Solent is one of the best cruising grounds in England—some say in the world—for small yachts such as can be handled by amateurs. It combines the safety of an inland lake with the excitement of occasional rough seas: and in case of bad weather coming on there is always a safe port within a few miles. Moreover, its many creeks and inlets afford opportunities for dinghy explorations in the midst of pleasant scenery, while the yacht is left safely anchored in harbour. But this cruising ground has certain difficulties also to be reckoned with; the shore lines are so [Pg 43] broken, the tides so peculiar, and the beacons so confusingly numerous, that a few hints may be acceptable.

First, as to the yacht. Any amateur yachtsman should be capable of managing, with the assistance of a companion, a yacht of from 5 to 8 tons. Such a yacht should have accommodation for two in the cabin and one in the forecastle, who may either be a friend, or a paid hand, man or boy.

It is of course much the pleasantest if one possesses one's own yacht, or can at any rate do

without professional assistance; failing this, it is possible to hire a yacht by engaging one early in the season; later on it is difficult to find a suitable craft. As a rule, the owners of small yachts do not care to let them to strangers without a man; and rightly so, for although the Solent is a safe cruising ground, yet accidents are quite possible, especially in the crowded harbours, owing to the strength of the tides. The cost of hiring a 5 or 6 ton yacht, with one hand, used to be from £4 to £6 a week. The price varies according to the place she is hired from, the length of time, the arrangements about food for the "hand," the time of year, etc. For early or late in the season, the [Pg 44] terms will be less than at its height. The best plan is to advertise in the yachting or local papers, stating the kind of craft required. And if a suitable yacht cannot be found at Cowes or Southampton, it may be as well to try Lymington or Poole, at which places, especially the latter, the price will probably be considerably less. Excellent centre-board boats of 3 to 4 tons, with large open cockpits, easily handled by one amateur, can be had at about 10s. a day from the boat-owners on the West Quay at Southampton. Such craft seldom have sleeping accommodation, but they are very handy for cruising among mud-banks, as the drop keel "acts as a pilot," and can be lifted if one gets caught. When hiring one of these boats, see that there is an anchor and a warp on board.

The yachts anchor in Cowes Roads, the small ones inside the harbour, on the east side of the red and white chequered buoys which mark the fairway. It is forbidden to anchor in the fairway. Be careful not to anchor too near the "Shrape Mud," a large spit running out from the eastern shore, or you will ground at low tide. If this part of the harbour be too crowded, you can run up above [Pg 45] the floating bridge between East and West Cowes, into the Medina River, remembering, however, that the tide runs very strongly in and out of the harbour, causing danger in light winds. If you decide to take up a berth in the Medina, drop your anchor in the channel, and then warp in near the bank, making fast to some of the yachts lying on the mud. This will get you out of the way of the barge traffic, which is considerable.

There is nothing much to say about Cowes, except in its connection with yachting. The two parts of the town are joined by a floating bridge, which takes every sort of vehicle over as well as crowds of foot-passengers.

In an island so small as Wight every man must know the sea and be at heart a sailor, and even were he not born so the proximity of Portsmouth and Southampton with their men-of-war, affording constant opportunity for seeing the latest constructions in battleships, would arouse the feeling in him.

The island, lying across the harbour, forms a splendid natural breakwater to our strongest port; and it is by a special providence that in the ages long ago this part was so broken off from Hampshire and separated by the sea, or great part of the value of this coast would have been [Pg 46] lost. The Solent has, however, dangers of its own, and the constant shifting of sandbanks makes its navigation a precarious job.

> "And to the northe, betwixt the foreland and the firme,
> She hath that narrow sea which we the Solent terme,
> Where those rough ireful tides, as in their straits they meet
> With boystrous shocks and rores each other rudely greet,
> Which fiercely when they charge and sadlie make retreat,
> Upon the bulwark forts of Hurst and Calsheet beat."
>
> DRAYTON.

There are several shipwrecks which have occurred here and at the other side of the island which may be said to have become classic. The best known of all was the terrible loss of the *Royal George* off Ryde in 1782. This was one of the most extraordinary accidents that ever befell our navy. It was just before the Peace of Versailles, while England needed every ship she had. It had been feared that Gibraltar was in danger, and the *Royal George* of 100 guns, one of the finest ships then in the navy, was ordered out to relieve the place. While still in the Solent it was found she needed a slight operation of careening, and she was inclined over a little to enable the [Pg 47] workmen to get at their job without putting her back into dock. There were over nine hundred men in the crew, and besides them at least three hundred women and children who had come to see them off and take a last farewell. The ship was in command of Admiral Kempenfeldt, who was writing in his cabin at the time. A sudden squall struck the vessel and sent her far over first to one side and then to the other, and before anyone had time to realize the danger she swung upright and went down like a stone. Only about four hundred souls out of all on board were saved, the Admiral himself perishing with the majority. Afterwards bodies came ashore at Ryde in great numbers. This dreadful catastrophe would certainly have lived for ever in the annals of English naval history, but it was made still better known by the poem which the poet Cowper wrote on it, familiar to every school child, beginning:

> "Toll for the brave, the brave that are no more."

A somewhat similar catastrophe happened just about a hundred years later on the other side of the island. In 1878 the *Eurydice* was passing along by the Undercliff under full sail. She was a [Pg 48] training-ship, full of young lads, and the strong wind which could be felt in all its fury on the Downs above hardly touched her in the shelter below. Owing to some dreadful carelessness,

however, she turned the corner still under canvas, was caught suddenly by a frightful squall, and thrown on her beam-ends. She never recovered, but went down straight in an awful tempest of sleet and snow which added to the horror and confusion. Of all the promising boys on board only three were picked up by a passing boat, and two alone survived.

St. Catherine's lighthouse stands not far from here, on the most southerly point of the island; its flashlight, said to be the most powerful in the world, throws a beam equal to 15,000,000 candles, and warns ships afar off of the dangerous coast. It is peculiarly appropriate that there should be a lighthouse here, for, so long ago as 1323, Walter de Goelyton built a chapel on Chale Down dedicated to St. Catherine, assigning certain rents to a chantry priest to say mass, and also to provide lights for "the safety of such vessels as chanced to come on that dangerous coast during the night." At the Dissolution the whole income was seized by the Crown.

**GODSHILL. *Page 58.***
**Is one of the prettiest villages in the island.**

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# CHAPTER V

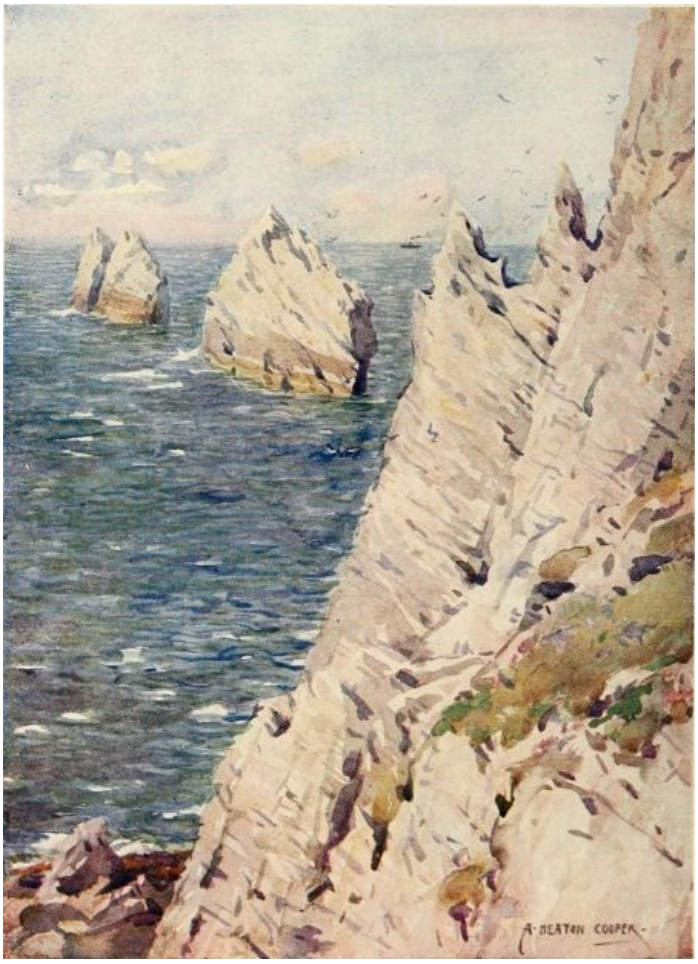
[Pg 49]

## THE SCENERY AND HOW IT CAME TO BE

So curious and diversified is the geology of the island that it has been described as a microcosm of geology, for it contains in itself every kind of stratified rock. This geological variety shows itself markedly in the scenery; in fact, there are few places where the influence of geology on scenery can be so well studied. For instance, at Alum Bay, near the Needles, the whole of the strata from the chalk to the fluvio-marine formation are displayed in unbroken succession. The colours in these cliffs are wonderfully striking, ranging from gamboge and terra-cotta through ochres and red-browns, so that the whole is like shot silk seen in certain states of sunlight. As many people come to see the Alum Bay cliffs as the better-known Needles. The effect of the two together is most wonderful, because the coloured cliffs contrasting with the chalky white sharp-toothed crags and the brilliant blue of a summer sea are gorgeous in the extreme.

[Pg 50]

The razor-edged Needles can really be seen best from a boat, because, looked at from above, they naturally lose in foreshortening, and do not seem to tower out of the water so much as they really do. The only way in which their height can be measured from the shore is to note the apparent smallness of the lighthouse at the seaward end, which is quite a respectable-sized building, standing eighty feet above high-water mark. All home-coming captains look out for the Needles' light, which shows white for fourteen miles westward and red for nine miles south. The ships which have weathered long voyages feel they are home again once they sight that light, but alas! many times, owing to the dangerous fogs in the Channel, the light is hard to pick up, and the captain has to creep along cautiously, aware that he may easily be out of his reckoning, and much too near a singularly dangerous coast. The tallest pinnacle of the Needles at the landward end, known as "Lot's Wife," was broken off many years ago by the waves.




**THE NEEDLES**

Quite as striking a feature of the island as the Needles are the wonderful chalk downs which run [Pg 51] from Freshwater Bay to Culver. The range is broken by a fault at right angles to its main axis, and in this fault is the valley of the Medina. The little River Yar, oddly enough, rises within a few yards of the beach on the south side of the island at Freshwater, and running north through a gap in the chalk falls into the sea at Yarmouth on the north side. Freshwater Bay in itself is a curious formation, a break in the sweeping cliffs which culminate in two horns on the two sides, while the actual beach is of the tiniest proportions, so that the sea, gradually narrowed as it rolls in, breaks with terrific force in a south-west gale. On the highest point of the cliff, near the west end, there used to be a beacon, now replaced by a cross to the memory of Lord Tennyson. The cliff at this place is 490 feet high.

The range of downs is called by various names, such as High Down, Afton Down, Shalcomb Down, Mottistone Down, Brixton Down, Apes Down, Bowcombe Down, Gallibury Down, Rowborough Down, Lemerston Down, Gansons Down, Gatcombe Down, Chillerton Down, Mount Joy, St. George's Down, Arreton Down, Messly Down, Ashey Down, Brading Down, and Bembridge Down. All or any of these afford fine walks with sweeping views on a clear still day, [Pg 52] but on a windy day they are best avoided, as the short slippery grass surface slopes steeply down to tremendous cliffs, and there is more than one record of an unfortunate individual taken unawares. As might be supposed, the island is celebrated among golfers, and there are excellent links, some of them upon the Downs, and the game claims the attendance of its devotees from Bembridge to the Needles.

The chines, or ravines, are another feature of the scenery found in great variety; the best known of these chines is that at Shanklin. This is full of luxuriant verdure and overgrown with a tangle of trees and shrubs, and has been formed by the action of water hollowing for itself a way into the cliff, and eating back and back. It seems almost incredible to believe the streams now seen can have been the agency for these deep cuttings, and yet there are proofs beyond dispute. As is often seen in cases where the ground has been laid bare by one cause or another, the soil thus uncovered is far more productive than the surface soil exhausted by continued growth, and thus the variety and richness of the trees and creepers in these chines are wonderful. On a hot [Pg 53] summer's day the sunlight falls gently in patches between the black shadows thrown by the towering walls of the chine or by the thick foliage, and the warm closeness is full of the murmur of bees and insects. On a dank day, however, when dripping trees and green slime send out exhalations, these chines are melancholy to the last degree, even in summer.

Blackgang Chine, which is almost equally popular, differs from that at Shanklin in being a great cleft between towering bare cliffs which look as if they had been built up in giant blocks.

The Undercliff is a special and very striking feature of the island. It is a strip of land lying under a great cliff along the south side; it is from a quarter to half a mile broad, and the cliff overlooking it is as perpendicular as those usually found only above sea-beaches. Bit by bit the cliff has

broken away in great masses, and the pieces lie as they have fallen, embedded in a tangle of greenery which has rapidly veiled them. As the Undercliff faces south, and is sheltered by this continuous wall of chalk and sandstone, it may be imagined that in summer it is intensely hot.

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# CHAPTER VI
## FOOTPRINTS OF THE INVADERS

[Pg 54]

Among the antiquities of the island the Roman villa at Brading must certainly rank first. This was discovered by the late Mr. Hilton Price, F.S.A. The villa consisted of a central block with a wing on each side. The central part was doubtless occupied by the owner, and the two wings by his slaves and soldiers. There are traces of two distinct periods of occupation, and indications that the villa was ultimately destroyed by fire. In the course of the excavations tiles, broken pottery, coins, bronze implements and other things were unearthed in quantities.

The writer on the Isle of Wight in the Victoria County Histories says:

"Not quite the whole of the villa probably has been explored; the baths, for instance, are not yet found. But we have ample details, and can form a general judgment. The villa at Brading was [Pg 55] neither of the best period nor of special size and splendour, but neither was it a farmhouse. It must have been the residence of men of the upper classes, owners (we may suppose) of broad acres all around. They may not have possessed great wealth or many articles of luxury; they may have carried such things away with them when they abandoned the house. Some time in the dim period of which we know so little, early in the fifth century, the place was burnt by enemy or accident, and the Romano-British life which it had sheltered came utterly to an end."

If there are no baths there is at all events an excellent specimen of a hypocaust, or Roman heating arrangement, to be seen. The chief interest for visitors, however, lies in the well-preserved specimens of mosaic flooring which have been said by some authorities to be among the finest of their kind in England; this view, however, is not held by the writer quoted above, who says: "The Brading mosaics are elaborate and ambitious; let us add that their execution does not wholly lack spirit. But as artistic achievements they are not successful. They must unquestionably be ranked beneath the best specimens of mosaics found both in England and [Pg 56] abroad."

However this may be to the specialist, the designs are exceedingly interesting to the ordinary observer, who will gaze with great delight at the quaint representation of Orpheus playing on the lyre and surrounded by animals, as well as at the pastoral designs in the other rooms. A small charge is made for entrance, and the lesser objects are preserved in cases for more convenient inspection.

Other Roman remains, including coins, have been found at many places in the island, and the traces of a villa at Carisbrooke. Of remains other than Roman there are not many, the principal find being that at Arreton, where, at the opening of some barrows on the downs, knife-blades, spearheads, and coarse pottery of the Anglo-Saxon times were unearthed beside the skeletons with which they had been buried. At Rowborough there are some very curious remains of "pit-dwellings." In the first of the valleys where these are to be found there are ten pits, each twenty to thirty feet wide and more or less circular. Some are now filled up with a growth of brushwood. Above the last pit a long excavation runs up the valley for some twenty or thirty yards, and this [Pg 57] may be an old road. A good deal higher up there is a large basin-like excavation. In the second valley there are seven pits, and in the third about eighteen. It is possible that these may not be dwellings, but remains of very early attempts at chalk-getting.

The churches of the island, looked at as antiquities, are disappointing, for though there is a good deal of Norman work in some of them they have often been very fully "restored." Brading holds itself to be the oldest church in the island, and there is in it much Norman work, and even fragments of something older. There are also some interesting tombs, including that to Sir John Cherowin, who died in 1441.

The best known of all the churches is perhaps that at Bonchurch, always attractive to visitors. The surroundings are perhaps responsible for this as much as the little old building, now disused, and said to be in danger of slipping into the sea, even though this is the "sole wholly Norman structure on the island." It was built in 1070, restored very fully in the seventeenth century, and finally disused in 1850. The beauties of the neighbourhood are well described by Mr. Hope [Pg 58] Moncrieff: "The mildness of the climate is attested by huge arbutus growths, recalling those of Killarney, by fuchsias like trees, with trunks as thick as a strong man's wrist, and by scarlet geraniums of such exuberance that a single plant will cover several square yards of wall in front of a house.... The road is much shut in between walls of private grounds, within which are enclosed some of the finest spots, such as the 'Pulpit Rock,' a projecting mass of sandstone marked by a cross, and another known as the 'Flagstaff Rock.'"

The new church, with "its sadly beautiful graveyard," is on the hill above. The church at Shalfleet should certainly not be omitted, for its Norman tower with the carved tympanum ranks high among its kind. The rude sculpture represents a figure resting his hands on two animals, and the subject has been interpreted as David contending with the lion and the bear.

At Whitwell Church, oddly enough, the present chancel was originally a chapel dedicated to St. Rhadegund, and the south chapel was the chancel.

A quaint memory is enshrined in the name of Godshill, one of the prettiest of the island villages, [Pg 59]
of which the story is told, as it has often been told of other places, that at the building of the church the stones laid in place by masons at the foot of the hill on the selected site were miraculously transported to its summit night by night, as a sign that the church was to stand there, and there it was accordingly built. It is in a very striking situation, hardly sufficiently indicated by the picture, and it contains a painting of "Daniel in the Lions' Den," attributed to Rubens.

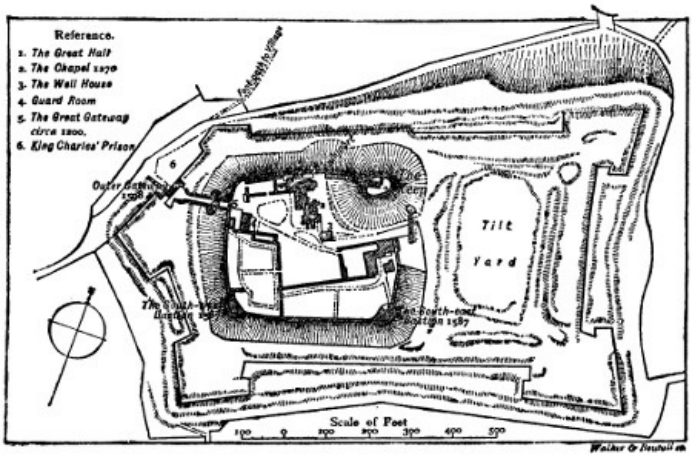
The inhabitants of the charming little cottages chiefly live in summer-time on the profits of making tea for visitors, and are strenuous rivals.

From Godshill came forth the sole native of the island whose name has come down to posterity in connection with the Reformation, and his, alas! with infamy. This was Dr. Cole, a turncoat of the worst kind. He was born at Godshill about 1520, and was an ardent Protestant under Edward VI., holding the position of Warden of New College, Oxford; he used the power of his position in the narrowest spirit. With the accession of Mary his views completely altered, and he reaped the reward in being made Provost of Eton and Dean of St. Paul's. He was also selected to preach the [Pg 60]
funeral sermon at the burning of Cranmer, a congenial task indeed for one who had been Cranmer's friend! However, there is no convert so enthusiastic as he who has his zeal to prove, and he gave the oration at St. Mary's, Oxford, "when on a stage set up over against the pulpit of a mean height from the ground the archbishop was placed in a bare and ragged gown and ill-favouredly clothed with an old square cap, exposed to the contempt of all men."

Dr. Cole was also sent over to Ireland to suppress the new converts to the reformed faith there. He stayed the night at Chester on the way, and could not forbear boasting about his commission. The landlady overheard, and having a brother a Protestant in Dublin, she managed to steal the commission from the little case in which the doctor carried it, and to substitute for it a pack of cards. Dr. Cole did not discover his loss until he arrived in Dublin, and with great seriousness presented the commission, as he supposed, to the Privy Council. On the opening of the box there fell thereout the pack of cards, to the no small confusion of the envoy!

He returned to England to secure its renewal, but while on the return journey he was awaiting a [Pg 61]
favourable wind to make the passage across the Irish Channel once more, he heard of the death of Queen Mary, and thus the Irish reformers were saved! It is said that Queen Elizabeth, on learning the story, allowed the landlady, Mrs. Edmunds, a pension of £40 a year for the rest of her life. As for Dr. Cole, he was put in prison, where he died in misery and ignominy.

[Pg 62]




**GROUND-PLAN OF CARISBROOKE CASTLE.**

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[Pg 63]

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