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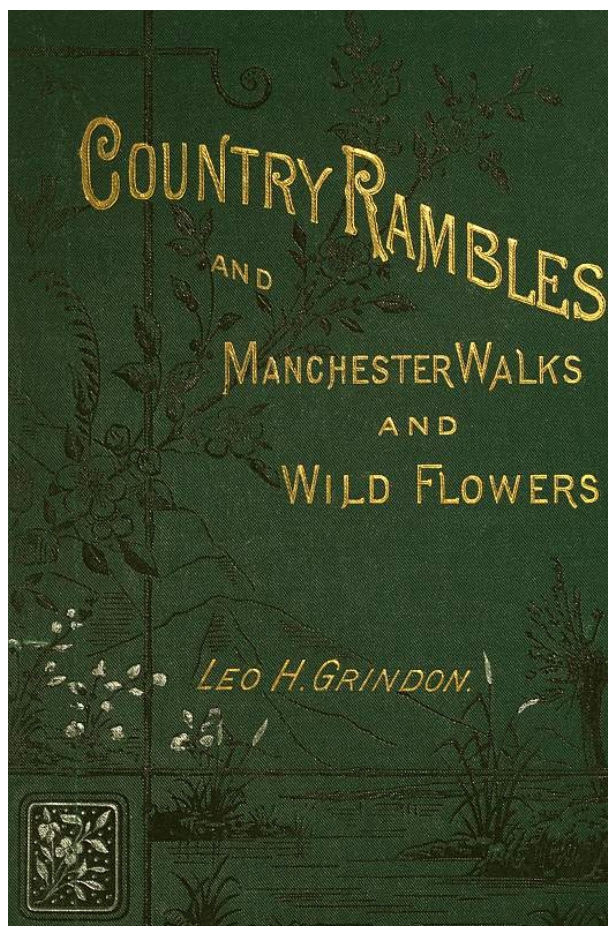
Author: Leo H. Grindon

Release date: December 7, 2014 [EBook #47578]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK COUNTRY RAMBLES, AND MANCHESTER WALKS AND WILD FLOWERS ***



COUNTRY RAMBLES.



Rostherne Mere

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COUNTRY RAMBLES,
AND
Manchester Walks and Wild flowers:
BEING RURAL WANDERINGS IN
CHESHIRE, LANCASHIRE, DERBYSHIRE, & YORKSHIRE.

BY
LEO H. GRINDON,
*Author of "The Manchester Flora," "Manchester Banks and Bankers,"
"Lancashire: Historical and Descriptive Notes," and other works.*

If thou art worn, and hard beset
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget;
If thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep
Thy heart from fainting, and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills! No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.

LONGFELLOW.

MANCHESTER:
PALMER & HOWE, 73, 75, AND 77, PRINCESS ST.
LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.
1882.

MANCHESTER:
PALMER AND HOWE, PRINTERS, 73, 75, AND 77, PRINCESS STREET



PREFACE.



THE following pages consist, in part, of a reprint of the little volume published in 1858 under the title of *Manchester Walks and Wild-Flowers*;—in part, of brief *excerpta* from the author's accounts of trips made by the Field Naturalists' Society, as given in their Annual Reports, 1860-1881. A very considerable amount of new matter will also be found.

Giving descriptions in a novel and welcome manner, of pretty places in the neighbourhood previously unknown to people in general, and indicating in various ways the pleasure to be derived from rambles in the country, the little volume spoken of is believed to have assisted, in no slight measure, to awaken and foster the present widespread local taste for rural scenes, and for recreation in the pursuit of practical natural history. It is in the hope that similar results may ensue among the present generation that the book is now partially republished. It has long been unprocurable, and is constantly enquired for. The reprinting presents also a curious and interesting picture of many local conditions now effaced.

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The preface to the original work of 1858 contained the following passages:—"No grown-up person who has resided in Manchester even twenty years, is unacquainted with the mighty changes that have passed over its suburbs during that period; while those who have lived here thirty, forty, and fifty years tell us of circumstances and conditions almost incredible. Neighbourhoods once familiar as delightful rural solitudes, are now covered with houses, and densely crowded with population; the pleasant field-paths we trod in our youth have disappeared, and in their stead are long lines of pavement, lighted with gas, and paced by the policeman. In a few years it is not improbable that places described in the following pages as rustic and sylvan will have shared the same fate, and be as purely historical as Garratt Wood and Ordsall Clough. The Botany of the district will to a certain extent be similarly affected. No longer than fifteen years ago (*i.e.* in 1840) the fields by St. George's Church, in the Chester Road, were blue every March and April with the spring crocus, and on the very spot where Platt Church now lifts its tall and graceful spire, there was a large pond filled with the *Stratiotes*, or water-aloe. If the past be a prognostic of the future, it is easy to guess what will happen to other things, and to understand how in half a century hence our present 'Walks' will have become as obsolete as their author, and the entire subject require a new and livelier treatment. A descriptive history of the suburbs of Manchester as they were fifty years ago, would be a most interesting and valuable item of our local literature. It would be as curious to the lover of by-gones as this book of to-day may perhaps appear to the Manchester people of A.D. 1900. How extraordinary would be the facts may be judged from the following extracts from De Quincey, whose youth, it is well known, was passed in the neighbourhood of Manchester. Mark first what he says of the *place* he lived in. 'And if, after the manner of the Emperor Aurelius, I should return thanks to Providence for all the separate blessings of my early situation, these four I would single out as worthy of special consideration,—that I lived in a *rustic solitude*; that this solitude was in England; that my infant feelings were moulded by the gentlest of sisters; and finally, that I and they were dutiful and loving members of a pure, and holy, and magnificent church.' And now mark where lay this 'rustic solitude.' He is describing the expected return of his father:—"It was a summer evening of unusual solemnity. The servants and four of us children were gathered for hours on the lawn before the house, listening for the sound of wheels. Sunset came, nine, ten, eleven o'clock, and nearly another hour had passed without a warning sound, for Greenhay, being so *solitary a house*, formed a "terminus ad quem," beyond which was nothing but a cluster of cottages, composing the little hamlet of Greenhill; so that any sound of wheels coming from the *country lane which then connected us with the Rusholme Road*, carried with it of necessity, a warning summons to prepare for visitors at Greenhay.' 'Greenhay' was the centre of the modern Greenheys, and the 'hamlet of Greenhill' the predecessor of the present Greenhill Terrace."

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The changes foreboded have to an extent not unimportant, already come to pass. Almost the whole of the great suburb which includes the Alexandra Park has grown up since about 1860, effacing meadows and corn-fields. In the contemplation of this new scene of busy life there is pleasure, since it signifies human welfare and enjoyment. In other directions, unhappily, the change has been for the worse, as indicated in the notes to the original portraiture of Boggart-hole Clough, Mere Clough, and the Reddish Valley. Before deciding to visit any particular place in the immediate neighbourhood of the town it will be prudent, accordingly, to read to the end. Never mind. Few things ever go absolutely. Against the losses we are able to put the opportunities for enjoyment in localities opened up by recent railway extensions,—places quite as charming as the extinguished ones—it is simply a question now of a little longer travel.

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The present volume, be it remembered, is neither a gazetteer nor an itinerary. The limits are too narrow for its making pretensions even to be a Guide-book, though the style, often, I am aware, too swift and abbreviated, may give it the semblance of one;—it proposes only to supply hints as to where and how to secure country pastimes. While constrained to leave many places with only a touch, others have been treated so admirably by Mr. Earwaker, Mr. Croston, and Mr. Waugh, that to tread the same ground would, on my own part, be alike needless and ungraceful. Others again I have described only within these few months in the "Lancashire," to which work I may be permitted to refer the reader for particulars not here given.

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Except in some few instances, I have not cared either to give minute directions as to paths and gates. One of the grand charms of a rural ramble consists in the sensation, at times, of being slightly and agreeably lost; to say nothing of the pleasure which comes of being called upon to employ our own wits, instead of always asking, like a child, to be led by the hand.

If, when visited, some of the places seem over-praised, it must further be understood that the descriptions are of their appearance in pleasant weather, in sunshine, and when cherished

companions help to make the hours glad. I can say no more than that the descriptions are faithful as regards my own experience, and that I hope earnestly they may become true to the experience of every one else. From this point of view the little book is a kind of record of what I have seen and felt during forty years.

Nothing has been written for mere "cheap-trippers." The book is addressed to the intelligent, the peaceful, and the cultivated; those who, when they visit the country, desire to profit by its inestimable sweet lessons. In many parts it is addressed especially to the young, who have ductile material in them, and are the hope of the future for us all. Neither has it been written for learned botanists or antiquaries. The botanical details are simply such as it is hoped may encourage the beginner. My main desire is to be educational, and by this I would be judged.

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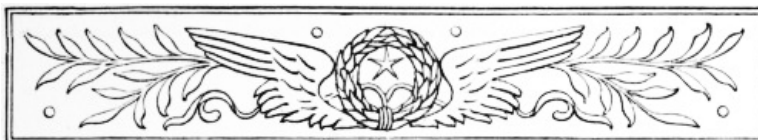
Many of the places described or referred to are strictly private. Permission to view them must therefore be asked some days before. Common-sense and the courtesy of civilized beings will prescribe in every case the proper method of procedure.

I have, in conclusion, to express my thanks to the artists who have so pleasingly illustrated the work, Mr. W. Morton, and very particularly, Mr. Thos. Letherbrow.

By some odd *lapsus calami* the passage from Wordsworth on [page 139](#) has been mis-written. The third line should read, "So was it when *my life began*."

LEO H. GRINDON.

MANCHESTER,
MAY 1st, 1882.



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Country Rambles.

Country Rambles.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTORY.

The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise.



IDE as may be the circle covered by a great town, we come to the country at last. Let the bricks and mortar stride far as they will over the greensward, there are always sanctuaries beyond—sweet spots where we may yet listen to the singing of the birds, and pluck the early primrose and anemone. We need but take our survey from a sufficiently high point, to see that the vastest mass of houses ever heaped together by man is still only an encampment in the fields. Like the waves of the sea upon the shores of the islands, the surge of the yellow corn is still close upon our borders. We need but turn our faces fondly towards rural things and rural sights, and we shall find them.

[2]

Manchester itself, grim, flat, smoky Manchester, with its gigantic suburb ever on the roll further into the plain, and scouts from its great army of masons posted on every spot available for hostile purposes,—Manchester itself denies to no one of its five hundred thousand, who is blessed with health and strength, the amenities and genial influences of the country. True, we have no grand scenery; no Clyde, no Ben Lomond, no Leigh Woods, no St. Vincent's Rocks, no Clevedon, no Durdham Down; our rivers are anything but limpid; our mountains are far away, upon the horizon; our lakes owe less to nature than to art; as for waterfalls, we have none but in our portfolios. Still is our town bosomed in beauty. Though the magnificent and the romantic be wanting, we have meadows trimmed with wild-flowers, the scent of the new-mown hay and the purple clover; we have many a sweet sylvan walk where we may hear

and many a grateful pathway under the mingled boughs of beech and chestnut. Next to a fine woman, the most delightful object in creation is a noble and well-grown tree,—a group of such trees always reminds us of a bevy of fair ladies; and dull and unthankful must be the man who, in the tranquil and sacred shades of Alderley and Dunham, cannot realise to himself the most genuine and heartfelt pleasure that trees and woods can give. If they be not so sumptuous as the oaks of Worcestershire, or so stately as the elms of Surrey, our trees are as leafy and as green, and their shadows fall as softly on the summer afternoon. The great secret in the enjoyment of nature, as in our intercourse with society, is to look at its objects in a friendly light, to make the most of them, such as they are; not invidiously contrasting them with certain other objects at a distance, but recognising that absolute and positive beauty which is possessed by the very humblest. Superadd to this the habit of connecting our own feelings and emotions with the forms of nature, and, however wanting in attractions to the mere adulator of “fine scenery,” every little flower, every bend of the branches, and sweet concurrent play of light and shade, every pendent shadow in the stream, becomes animated with a meaning and a power of satisfying such as none but those who accustom themselves to look for it *here*, can find in the most favoured and spacious landscape. Justly to appreciate the wonderful and rare, we must first learn to regard with a tender and intimate affection the common and the unpretending; in the degree that we withdraw from the latter, treating it with indifference or contempt, as surely does our capacity diminish for the former. The common things of earth are the most gracious gifts of God. None of us extract their full value, yet every man holds it in his power to make himself tenfold happier by a wise use of them. For true and continuous enjoyment of life is not attained by the gratification of high-flown and artificial wants, connected in large measure with the idea of pounds, shillings, and pence. It is found in the culture of love for common things, the untaxed game that no man can deprive us of, and which constitute the chief part of the beauties of the country. Hence the worth of nature to the poor. If the rich have their gardens and hothouses, here are flower-beds and parks, fresh from God’s own hand, without money, and without price, and greater than the estates of all the nobles in the kingdom. Hence, too, coming close to home, we may see how little reason we have to lament the absence of the grand and wonderful, since nothing less than total nakedness of surface can take from a place its power to interest and please. [3]

While adapted to give true pleasure, if looked for in a kindly spirit, no less fertile is our neighbourhood in materials for a large and practical culture of natural science. Most of the sciences may be cultivated by Manchester residents to perfection. For geology there are certainly fewer advantages than invite men to it in the neighbourhood of some other large inland towns. But what scope there is for botany and entomology is attested by the numbers of students of both these charming sciences who have adorned the ranks of our working men during the last half century.[1] Caley, Hobson, Crozier,[2] Crowther, Horsefield, among those no longer in this life; Percival, Carter, Evans,[3] still among us, have reflected honour upon Manchester as a spontaneous working men’s college of natural history, such as might deservedly be envied by the proudest institution in the land. These men acquired their knowledge in the scenes we speak of, and from nature’s “common things.” The plants of the fields and hedgerows, the insects of the moors, were their inspiration and instruction, the source at the same moment of a thorough and pure delight; for while they are the least expensive of pleasures, the naturalist’s are also the truest and most abiding. No one inexperienced in botany would imagine how many wild-flowers are found growing about Manchester. Taking the area which would be marked out by measuring a circle round the Exchange, fifteen miles from it in every direction, six hundred different species were catalogued in 1840.[4] Buxton’s “Guide,” printed in 1849, included one hundred and fifty others, mostly accidental omissions from the earlier list. Our own “Manchester Flora,” 1858, in which everything is brought up to that time, contains over twenty more, though, in consequence of the diversity of opinion as to what plants should legitimately be included, the figures are probably much about the same as in the “Guide,” namely, seven hundred and fifty. These seven hundred and fifty comprise the flowering plants, the trees, and the ferns. The number of mosses, fungi, lichens, and other flowerless plants, usually regarded as a separate subject of study, is in the aggregate probably quite as great, making a total of some one thousand five hundred perfectly distinct forms. Not that they are all equally abundant. We must distinguish between what botanists call the “Flora” of a given district, and its vegetation. The “Flora” may be large, and yet the mass of the vegetation consist of but few different kinds, the same plants repeated over and over again, as when hills are covered for miles together with heath and whortleberries. Such is the case with Manchester. Though there are seven hundred and fifty different kinds of flowers and ferns contained in our “Flora,” probably not half the number go to constitute the general herbage of the district. Some species are very rarely met with, only once in the season perhaps. But this is so much the more pleasing to the botanist, since it keeps his enthusiasm vigorously alive. In addition to the living objects of interest so freely supplied by the fields and woodlands, Manchester naturalists have a singular privilege in the local Free Libraries and museums. The museum at Peel Park is in many departments rich and extensive, and nowhere in the world can we consult books of greater value, or illustrated more magnificently, than are to be had for the asking in Camp Field,[5] at the Chetham College, and again at Peel Park. All three of these admirable libraries contain works on botany and entomology which it is really melancholy to think are so little known by the bulk of our town’s people, when they might contribute to an almost endless delight. Let it not be supposed that we are speaking of botany, entomology, etc., as proper to be made the chief business of life. “A man,” said Dr. Johnson, “is never so well employed as when he is earning money.” Yes. One of the best friends a man has in the world is a good round balance at his banker’s, the fruit and reward of his own toil. We speak of them as employments for the *intervals* of business, which it is quite as important to occupy carefully and [4] [5] [6] [7]

diligently as the hours of business themselves. The more delight derived from the contemplation and study of nature a man can pack into his leisure moments, the keener, it is certain, will be his aptitude for his ordinary duties. It is not only delight of spirit either that comes of attention to nature; there are the salutary effects of it upon the body. Rambling in the fields, the town-cobwebs get dusted out of one's lungs, and the whole frame becomes buoyant and elastic. Good as is a bathe in the cold water, scarcely inferior, when the skin is clean, is a good bathe in the blowing wind.

With these inducements and recommendations to the love of nature so amply spread before us, we purpose introducing our readers to the principal scenes of rural beauty in the immediate neighbourhood, those sweet side-chapels in the grand cathedral which no locality is absolutely without. The experience of half a life-time has shown us that no trifling source of pleasure is such familiarity with nature as we hope to encourage. Days gone by are made brighter to recollection; the present are filled with the same pleasures; for it is the peculiar property of the happiness induced by the love of nature, that if we are trained in youth to seek and find it, when we are old it will not depart from us;—even the future is made cheerful and inviting by the certainty that, leaving us our eyes, nature for her part will never grow old nor look shabby, not even in winter, which is decorated in its own way, but will always, like the Graces, be young and lovely. That which truly keeps life going is sensibility to the romance of nature. Youth and age are measured fictitiously if we count only by birthdays. Some things always find us young, and make us young, and though love and kindness may be the best known of these, none act more powerfully than does the sweet smile of living nature. It is in conversing with nature, moreover, that we learn how foolish are affectation and sentimentalism; how poor we are in leisure for mournful musing and fruitless reverie; that the truest and most precious pleasures are those which are the manliest; how rich we are in opportunities for affection and generosity. The facilities for reaching the most charming and sequestered spots are now so great and manifold that no one need be a stranger to them. It is not as some fifteen years ago,^[6] when they were only to be reached by a long walk, which consumed the half of one's time, or by a specially engaged conveyance, the expense of which compelled one's excursions to be like the angels' visits, few and far between. The railways, penetrating every nook and corner, now enable us to reach the very heart of the country in a very little while, fresh and nimble for our enjoyment, and, when over, the same will bring us home again. Honoured for ever be the name of Stephenson! It is in facilitating men's intercourse with nature, and the purest and most ennobling recreations they can enjoy and are capable of, that the social blessings of railways have their highest realisation. Vast is their use to commerce, but still vaster their unreckoned friendship to health and healthy-mindedness. Now, also, there are more persons prepared to supply our wants in the way of "Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy *tea*." Time was when the alehouse by the roadside, or the weary walk back to town, were the only choice open to our poor hunger and fatigue. But with the Saturday half-holiday, and the impetus it gave to rural visitings, there has sprung up a readiness on the part of country folks to open their doors in a hospitable spirit, which is quite tempting and delightful; and, most assuredly, nothing forms so pleasant a conclusion to an afternoon's ramble as to sit down in a neat cottage to a comfortable farmhouse meal, with its huge broad piles of bread and butter, and inexhaustible store of green salad and new-laid eggs. There, with the sun shining aslant through the old-fashioned window, the doors open, and the breeze gently peeping in, the cows lowing in the pasture, and the very atmosphere redolent of the country, we realise the fine hearty pleasurable of a good appetite, such as only the open air can induce, and learn the sweet savour of the plainest diet when wisely earned. And this not only because of the relish which comes of the exercise in the fresh air, but of the higher relish born of that mutual satisfaction and kind feeling which always follows a friendly visit to Dame Nature. People never feel more attached to one another than when they have been enjoying the charms of nature together; while the rose mounts to the cheek, the glow comes upon the heart. We should court nature therefore, not only for our own private and personal good, but if we would quicken our reciprocal affections. Especially with regard to this latter point, is it valuable to have some definite pursuit—something to attend to in particular when we go out for an afternoon's or evening's walk. A stroll in the fields is at all times good and healthful, but when two or three go out together to look for plants, or in search of curious insects, or to watch the movements, the manners and customs of the birds, quite unconsciously there get established new and pleasing links of sympathy, which lead to happiest results, both to head and heart. Some of the firmest friendships that we know of have had their origin in the exchange of ideas over a wild-flower. One of the noblest prerogatives of nature is to make men friends with one another. In the town we stand apart, excited and repelled by selfish and rival interests; but in the tranquillity of the fields and woods, united in delightful and invigorating pursuits, jealousies are forgotten, every man is an equal and a brother. Not the least useful end either, that flows from culture of love of the country, and particularly of some science having reference to natural objects, is the perennial employment it supplies for leisure hours at *home*. Half the mischief that boys commit comes of their having no intelligent and useful occupation for their playtime. As large a portion of the lax morality of their elders may be referred to the same cause. A naturalist never has any idle moments; if he be not at work in the country, he is busy with his curiosities indoors. Little private collections of natural objects, such as dried plants, insects, fossils, or shells, are always valuable, and always pretty, and a perpetual fund of interest and amusement. To gather together such things is not only highly instructive, and an agreeable pursuit, through the prolonged and intelligent observation which it demands; it is useful also as feeding the pleasure of possession—a noble and worthy one when well directed; and it has the yet higher recommendation of providing a diary and immortal record of past pleasures. A volume of dried plants, gathered on occasions of memorable enjoyment, becomes in a few years inexpressibly precious, an aid to memory, and

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thus to the perpetuity of those enjoyments, which even pictures give less perfectly, for here we have the very things themselves that were handled and looked at during those bright and fleeting moments. Such a volume of memorial-plants now lies on the table before us, spreading before the mind the souvenirs of forty years. In another part of this little book will be found instructions as to the method of commencing such collections. Meanwhile, we have cordially to recommend the idea to our readers, especially the young, and invite them to accompany us in these rambles.

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CHAPTER II. THE ASHLEY MEADOWS, AND THE LOWER BOLLIN VALLEY.

SPRING VISIT.

O Proserpina,
For the flowers now that, frightened, thou let'st fall
From Dis's wagon!
Pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength.

SHAKSPEARE.



THE part of the country round Manchester which supplies the greatest number of different wild-flowers, and of rare kinds in particular, is unquestionably the neighbourhood of Bowdon. Next in botanical interest come the Reddish valley, extending from Stockport to near Hyde, the Disley hills, and the delightful woods in the neighbourhood of Marple; and next to these again, and perhaps equalling them, Worsley, Tyldesley, the northern side of Prestwich, and the vicinity of Clifton. Bowdon, however, with the adjacent districts of Lymm and Cotterill, stands ahead of all. It holds precedence, too, in respect of its early seasons. While other portions of our district are scarcely giving signs of vernal life, at Bowdon the spring flowers are often open and abundant, and this quite as markedly in the fields as in the gardens. The former is the more valuable and interesting part of the testimony thus borne to the mildness of Bowdon, since the life of cultivated plants is always in some measure artificial, or under the influence of human direction, whereas the occupants of the hedgerows are pure children of nature. In the pleasant little nook called Ashley meadows, lingering with its very latest campanula and crimsoned bramble-leaf, Autumn seems hardly gone before Spring prepares to change all again and once more to green. Dunham Park offers nothing important for several weeks after the Ashley meadows have flowers to show. The total, indeed, of the botanical productions of the former place is not a fifth of what may be found within a mile of Ashley Mill. It is well to note this, because many people suppose that a scene delightful in its picturesque is correspondingly rich in wild-flowers. Generally, no doubt, it is so, since the picturesque in scenery is almost always connected with great unevenness of surface, precipitous descents, rocks, and tumbling waters, these usually coming in turn, of geological conditions, such as are highly conducive to variety in the Flora. But when the charm of a scene depends, not on cliffs and cataracts, but simply on the agreeable intermixture of differently-tinted trees, a gently undulating surface, sweet vistas and arcades of meeting branches, and the allurements held out to the imagination by green forbidden paths and tangled thickets;—then, as in Dunham Park, the primitive causes of floral variety being absent, the flowers themselves, though they may be plentiful in their respective kinds, are necessarily few as to distinct species. It does not follow that where the variety is considerable we are to look below the turf for the explanation. Meadows and pastures are always more prolific

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than ground covered with forest-trees (except, perhaps, in the tropics), the reason being partly that such trees offer too much obstruction to the rays of the sun, and partly that their immense and spreading roots block up the soil and hinder the growth of smaller plants. The Ashley meadows, after all, like all other places abounding in wild-flowers, are the *miniature* of a romantic scene. For in landscape, as in history, wherever we go, we have only the same ideas on a larger or smaller scale, the great repeated in the little, the little repeated in the great. Here is the mighty forest, clinging to the mountain-side; here the extended plain, watered by its winding river; here the terrible chasm and deep ravine,—all, however, in that delicate and reduced measure which, while it gives us the type of nature universally, enables us to see the whole at one view.

To get to the Ashley meadows, go by the railway to Bowdon, then along the “Ashley Road” for about a mile, and then down the lane on the left hand, which leads to Mr. Nield’s model farm. After passing through the field by the farm, there is seen a small wood upon the right, in which are many beautiful treasures, and descending a little, we are in the meadows, the Bollin flowing at the farther edge, and the mill, with its weir and water-wheel, at the extremity. The very earliest spring flowers to be gathered here are those of the hazel-nut, the willow, the alder, and the poplar. People unacquainted with botany often suppose that the latter and other timber-trees belong to the flowerless class of plants. They fancy that flowers occur only upon fruit-trees, and upon ornamental shrubs, such as the lilac and laburnum. The mistake is a perfectly natural and excusable one, seeing that the established idea of a flower is of something brilliant and highly coloured. A visit to the Ashley meadows in the month of April soon shows that there are other flowers than these. The hazel is by that time overblown, being in perfection about February; but the other trees mentioned above are covered with their curious blossoms, which in every case come out before the leaves. Those of the alder and poplar resemble pendent caterpillars, of a fine brownish red; the willow-blossoms are in dense clusters, green or lively yellow, according to their sex. For plants, like animals, have sex, and though in most cases male and female co-exist in the same flower, it happens with some, especially with the timber-trees of northern latitudes, that the flowers are of only one sex, some of them being male and others female. Occasionally the entire tree is male only or female only—the condition of the willow and the poplar, the yellow flowers of the former of which are the male, and the greenish ones the female. On the hedge-banks below these trees may be gathered the dogs’ mercury, an herbaceous plant of distinct sexes, readily recognised by its dark green, oval, pointed leaves. Soon after the appearance of these, the banks and open sunny spots become decked with the glossy yellow blossoms of the celandine, a flower resembling a butter-cup, but with eight or nine long and narrow petals, instead of five rounded ones. Mingled with it here and there is the musk-root, a singular but unpretending little plant, green in every part, and with its blossoms collected into a cube-shaped cluster, a flower turned to each of the four points of the compass, and one looking right up to the zenith. The roots, as implied in the name, have the odour of musk. On the moister banks, such as those at the lower edge of the wood, grows also the golden saxifrage, a pretty little plant, with flat tufts of minute yellowish bloom. Yellow, in different shades, prevails to a remarkable extent among English wild-flowers, and especially those of spring. The rich living yellow of the coltsfoot is a conspicuous example. The coltsfoot flowers, like those of the poplar tree, open before the leaves, enlivening the bare waysides in the most beautiful manner, or at least when the sun shines; for so dependent are they upon the light, that it is only when the sun falls warm and animating that they expand their delicate rays, slender as the finest needle, and reminding us, in their elegant circle and luminous colour, of the aureola round the head of a saint in Catholic pictures. At first sight, the coltsfoot might be mistaken for a small dandelion. It is easily distinguishable from that despised, but useful plant, by the scales upon its stem, the stalk of the dandelion being perfectly smooth. The leaves and flowers of the dandelion open, moreover, simultaneously. The coltsfoot, like the flower it imitates, holds high repute among the “yarb-doctors,” who know more of the genuine properties of our native plants than it is common to give them credit for.

On the banks of the Bollin and its little tributaries grows also that curious plant, the butter-bur. Appearing first as an egg-shaped purple bud, by degrees a beautiful cone or pyramid of lilac blossoms is opened out, bearing no slight resemblance to a hyacinth. Here, again, as happens with many spring flowers, and, strange to say, with two or three autumnal ones, the blossoms are ready before the leaves, which do not attain their full size till after midsummer. Then they hide the river-banks everywhere about Manchester with a thick and deceitful jungle, often lifted on stalks a yard high, and in their vast circumference reminding one of rhubarb leaves. After these earlier visitants come the furze, the purple dead-nettle, and the primrose; and in the hedges, again without leaves, the sloe or black-thorn, its milk-white bloom conspicuous from a long distance. The name *black-thorn*, so oddly at variance with the pure white of the flowers, refers to the leaflessness of the plant when in bloom, the *white-thorn*, or “May,” being at the corresponding period covered with verdure. But it must not be imagined that these plants follow just in the order we have named them. To a certain extent, no doubt there is a sequence. Every one of the four seasons, whether spring, summer, autumn, or winter, resembles the total of the year as to the regularity in the order of its events. The glowing apple and the juicy pear follow the lily and the rose, and are followed in their turn, by the aster and the ivy-bloom. Similarly, in smaller compass, the crocus retires before the daffodil, and the daffodil before the auricula; to expect, however, that every particular kind of flower should open at some precise and undeviating point of time, even relative, would be to look for the very opposite of the delightful sportiveness so characteristic of the ever-youthful life of nature, which is as charming,—not to say as great and glorious, in its play and freedom, as in its laws and inviolable order. The spring flowers arrive, not in single file, but in troops and companies, so that of these latter only can

succession be rightly predicated, and even here it is greatly affected by differences of shelter, soil, and aspect. Nor are those we have enumerated the whole of what may be found. At least a dozen other species arrive with the earliest breath of spring, and with every week afterwards, up to midsummer, the beautiful stream quickens unabatingly. Thoroughly to master the botany even of so limited an area as that of Ashley, requires that it be made our almost daily haunt. It is proper to add, that none of the flowers named are rare about Manchester, or anywhere in England. Almost all our first comers are universally diffused.

The phenomena of spring, as regards the vegetable world, must not be viewed as *beginning* [20] with the season in question. Spring, while the harbinger and preparation of the ensuing seasons, is itself the consummation of a long series of wonderful processes, wrought in the silence and darkness of winter, and largely beneath the surface of the earth. We never see the actual beginning of anything. Covered up though they be, by the cold snow, the artizans of leaf and flower are diligently at work even from the close of the preceding summer, and only wait the vernal sunbeam to unfold the delicate product of their labours. This is strikingly exemplified in "bulbous roots," such as those of the tulip and crocus, in which the future flower may easily be made out by careful dissection with a penknife. The hazel puts forth its infant catkins as early as September, while the rich brown clusters of the same season are but ripening, and the autumn yellow of the leaves is in the distance. Soon after this it is quite easy to find the incipient female alder-bloom of the season to come, and the rudimentary golden catkins of the next year's sawlow. Thus is the history of the flower beautifully in keeping with that of its winged image—the butterfly, which, like the flower in the bud, has been forming all along, in the grub and chrysalis, the bud-state of the perfect insect.

The river approaches the Ashley meadows by an exceedingly pleasant route, generally known as the lower Bollin valley. The whole course of the stream, from beyond Macclesfield downwards, is interesting, and at Norcliffe it begins to meander through the prettiest rural scenery near Manchester. The gentle rise and fall of the ground on either side, the plentiful and comely trees, the innumerable windings and turnings that bring with every successive field a new and pretty prospect, the sound of the rushing water, the birds saturating every grove and little wood with their cheerful poor man's music, the flowers no longer ambitious, for every bank and meadow is brimful and overflowing,—really it almost makes one fancy, when down in this beautiful valley, that we have got into those happy regions old Homer tells of, where the nepenthe grows, and the lotus,—that wonderful fruit which, when people had once tasted, they forgot their cares and troubles, and desired to remain there always, and ceased to remember even home. The difference is here, that after going thither, we love home all the better for our visit, since the heart, though it may be unconsciously, always grows into a resemblance of what it contemplates with interest and affection. No senseless fiction is it after all, about the lotus-fruit. Every man has his lotus-country somewhere; the poet has only turned into ingenious fable the experience of universal human nature. [21]

The middle portion of the valley, or that which, ascending it, lies about half-way between Ashley and Wilmslow, is occupied by Cotterill Clough, a place of the highest celebrity with the old Lancashire botanists, being not only picturesque in every portion, but containing a great variety of curious and unusual wild-flowers. Many are found here that grow nowhere else in the neighbourhood, and the very commonest attain the highest state of perfection. Hobson, Crozier, Horsefield, and their companions above-named, used to come to Cotterill regularly, both in summer and winter, gathering flowers in the former season, mosses in the latter, and not more for the riches of the vegetation, than, as Crozier once told me, for the singing of the innumerable birds. The journey, both to and fro, was entirely upon foot, and the men were often here by breakfast time. Being a game preserve, there has always been some difficulty of access to the clough, and of late years this has been considerably increased. But gamekeepers, after all, are only men, and "a soft answer turneth away wrath," so that none need despair if they will but act the part of wisdom. [22]

The approach to this pretty valley is made in the first instance from Peel Causeway station, pursuing the lane for a little while, then electing whether to continue, past Bank Hall and its seventeen yew trees, or to strike through a field-path upon the left, thence along the crest of a gentle acclivity, from which is obtained the best view we are acquainted with, of Bowdon. Although requiring some watchfulness, so as not to go astray, the upper path is decidedly the best to take. One point alone needs specially careful observation, that is, after crossing the little ravine, and emerging into another lane, to turn down it to the right, and upon arriving at a cottage upon the left, to take the path immediately *behind*. This leads over the fields, Alderley Edge a few miles in front, and Cloud-end rising grandly upon the horizon, then down a steep rough lane into a dingle called Butts Clough, beyond which there is a green-floored lane, leading to Warburton's farm, which being passed, we bear to the right, and in ten minutes more dip into the valley, and very soon tread the margin of the stream. About a mile and a half further up, we come to Castle Mill, an old-established and celebrated corn-grinding concern—and immediately opposite, the wooded slopes of Cotterill, entered by crossing a single field. The time to select for a first botanical visit to this charming spot should, if possible, be the end of April, or at least before the expiration of May. The chief rarities of the place belong to a somewhat later period, but there are several that grow here abundantly, and are in perfection at the time named, which, although less uncommon, it were a pity not to secure. Such are the goldilocks and the arum. The former, a very graceful kind of butter-cup, its name translated from the Latin one, *auricomus*, fringes the bank at the foot of the wood for a long distance with its light feathery herbage and shining yellow flowers; the other grows under the trees, and among the brushwood, and in the part of the clough through which the path leading to Ringway from Castle Mill makes its way, [23]

thus being reachable without more trespass than of twenty forgiven yards. Few persons fond of cultivating plants in their parlours are unacquainted with that truly splendid flower, the African lily, or *Richardia Ethiopica*, which, opening a great white vase on the summit of its stem, resembles an alabaster lamp with a pillar of flame burning in the centre; the leaves lifted on long stalks, and shaped like the head of an arrow. Keeping the figure of this noble plant before the mind's eye, as the type for comparison, there is no difficulty in identifying the arum of Cotterill Wood. The latter is essentially the same in structure, but rises to the height of only some six or eight inches instead of thirty, with leaves proportionately smaller, and the flower, instead of white and vase-like, of a pale transparent green (though often mottled, like the leaves, with purple stains), and curving over the pillar in the centre like the cowl of a monk. The pillar is of a rich puce or claret colour, and occasionally of a delicate light amber. In the south of England, where the plant abounds, the dark ones are called "lords," and the amber-coloured, "ladies." Newbridge Hollow, the Ashley Woods, and several other places about Bowdon, share the possession of this remarkable plant, which is, without question, the most eccentrically formed of any that grow wild in the British Islands. It is found also near Pendlebury, at Barton, Reddish, and several other places, but very scantily, a circumstance worth notice, because illustrating so well what the learned call botanical topography. The floras of entire countries are often not more strongly marked by the presence or absence of certain species than the portions even of so limited an area as that of Manchester half-holiday excursions. Here, too, grows in profusion the sylvan forget-me-not, the flowers of an azure that seems sucked from heaven itself. People confound it sometimes with the germander-speedwell, another lovely flower of May and June. But the leaves of the speedwell are oval instead of long and narrow, like those of the forget-me-not; and the flowers are not only of quite a different shade of blue, but composed of four distinct pieces, the forget-me-not being five-lobed, and yellow in the centre. The consummate distinction of the forget-me-not is the mode in which the flowers expand, and which, along with its unique and celestial tint, is the true reason of its being used as the emblem of constancy. Possibly enough, the pathetic legend of the knight and the lady by the water-side may have had a fact for its basis, but the flower was representative of constancy long before the unlucky lover met his death. The world, truly seen and understood, is but another showing forth of human nature, an echo of its lord and master, reiterating in its various and beautiful structures, colours, and configurations, what in him are thoughts and passions, and in the forget-me-not we have one of the foremost witnesses. This is no loose and misty speculation; but to the earnest student of nature who looks below the surface of things, a determinate and palpable fact, the source of the most fascinating pleasures that connect themselves with the genuine knowledge of plants and flowers, and of the objects of nature universally. The peculiarity referred to consists principally in the curious spiral stalk, and the store of secret buds, a new flower opening fresh and fresh every day as the stalk uncoils. It may be added, as furnishing another example of the variety in the distribution of plants, that the forget-me-not, like the arum, is wanting on the Prestwich side of the town, while the sylvan horsetail, so abundant in Mere Clough, is comparatively a stranger to the valley of the Bollin. To young people who have the opportunity of exploring the respective places, independently of the large local knowledge they acquire, it is a most instructive employment to note these phenomena, for they are all more or less intimately connected with the grandest and widest laws of physical geography—the great, as we have shown before, represented in the little—and no science will be found in after life more thoroughly entertaining or more practically useful. Besides these more choice and remarkable flowers, there are in Cotterill Wood at this period anemones and bluebells without end; while in the upper part, accessible by the path before-mentioned, and which should on no account be left unvisited, the firs and larches are at the acme of their floral pride. The flowers of these trees, like those of the hazel and alder, are some of them only male, others only female. The female flowers in due time become the seed-cones, announcing them from afar; the male flowers likewise assume the cone form, but as soon as the purpose of their being is accomplished, they wither and drop off. In the larch, the females are of a delicate pink, contrasting exquisitely with the tender green of the young tufted leaves, and conspicuous from their large size, the males being comparatively small, though noticeable from their immense abundance. In the firs, on the other hand, we are attracted rather by the male flowers, which are of a beautiful reddish buff, and on the slightest blow being given to the branch, shed clouds of their fertilising dust.

The Cotterill portion of the Bollin valley, while the primroses are in bloom, has no parallel in our district. Certain distant places, no doubt, are equally rich in this general favourite—the Isle of Wight, for instance, and the same is said of the Isle of Man, but for Manchester lovers of primroses, Cotterill is a very paradise. All the woods and lanes are full, every bank and sheltered slope is yellow with them, everywhere primroses, primroses, primroses, great handfuls, and bunches, a score every time we pluck, till wonder is exhausted and out of breath, and primroses and nature seem to mean the same thing. Such was the spectacle on the 8th of May—when this was written—the glow of bloom, which lasts in the whole perhaps for a month, being then at its height. On one occasion it was as early as April 27th. We now come to 1882. So great has been the havoc made by collectors of roots for gardens, and for sale in the market-place, that except in forbidden parts, and somewhat higher up the valley, the primrose is now almost as scarce as at the time referred to it was plentiful. Great havoc has also been wrought during the last quarter of a century by the mattock of the farm-labourer, which has likewise diminished very considerably the ancient abundance of some of the less common plants, where exposed, such as the goldilocks and the forget-me-not, though higher up the valley, like the primroses, these are still to be found in fair quantity. Never mind: the anemones, the golden celandine, so glossy and so sensitive, the cuckoo-flowers, the marsh-marigold, and a score of others, are untouched, and will remain untouched. There is something a great deal better than simple possession of the rare and

strange, and that is the happy faculty of appreciation of the lovely old and common,—a faculty that needs only culture to become an inexhaustible mine of enjoyment. Every man finds himself richer than he imagines when he puts the real value upon what Providence has given him.

For the return, we may either mount the hill, and get into the lanes which pass through Hale or Ringway, and so to Altrincham; or we may follow the downward course of the stream, by the path enjoyed in coming, as far as Warburton's farm, already mentioned. Arrived here, for variety sake, the better course is not by the tempting green lane, but through the fields below and to the left, which are full of every kind of rural beauty, and here and there gemmed with cowslips. Different paths take us either past the river again, and so by way of Ashley to Bowdon, or into the road that leads to the Downs. The latter is the shortest, but the Ashley way is the pleasanter. The distance in the whole is a trifle over that by the road, or, omitting fractions, four miles. All the way along the birds are in full trill; with this great charm in the sound, that independently of the music, the songs of birds are always songs of pleasure. *We* sing in many moods, and for many purposes, but the birds only when they are happy. No notes of birds have an undertone of sadness in them. Beautiful, too, in the early summer, is it to mark here the glow of the red horizontal sunlight, as it lies softly amid the branches of the golden-budded oak, and the milk-white blossoms of the tall wild cherries. Oh! how thoughtless is it of people to let themselves be scared away from Botany by its evil but undeserved reputation for "hard names," when, with a tenth of the effort given to the study of chess or whist, they might master everything needful, and enter intelligently into this sweet and sacred Temple of Nature.

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The interest of the Bollin valley is quite as great to the entomologist as to the botanist. By the kindness of my friend, Mr. Edleston, I am enabled here to add the following list of the Lepidoptera, which will be read with pleasure by every one acquainted with the exquisite forms and patrician dresses of English butterflies.

"The meadows," he tells me, "near the river Bollin, from Bank Hall to Castle Mill, produce more diurnal Lepidoptera than any other locality in the Manchester district, as the following select list (1858) will suffice to prove":—

<i>Gonepteryx Rhamni</i>	Brimstone
<i>Pieris Brassicæ</i>	Large White
„ <i>Rapæ</i>	Small White
„ <i>Napi</i>	Green-veined White
<i>Anthocaris Cardamines</i>	Orange Tip
<i>Hipparchia Janira</i>	Meadow Brown
„ <i>Jithonus</i>	Large Heath
„ <i>Hyperanthus</i>	Wood Ringlet
<i>Cœnonympha Pamphilus</i>	Small Heath
<i>Cynthia Cardui</i>	Painted Lady
<i>Vanessa Atalanta</i>	Red Admiral
„ <i>Io</i>	Peacock
„ <i>Urticæ</i>	Small Tortoise-shell
<i>Melitœa Artemis</i>	Greasy Fritillary
<i>Chrysophanus Phlœas</i>	Small Copper
<i>Polyommatus Alexis</i>	Common Blue
<i>Thanaos Tages</i>	Dingy Skipper
<i>Pamphila Sylvanus</i>	Large Skipper
<i>Procris Statices</i>	Green Forester
<i>Anthrocera Trifolii</i>	Five-spot Burnet
„ <i>Filipendulæ</i>	Six-spot Burnet
<i>Sesia Bombylifomis</i>	Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk
<i>Heliodes Arbuti</i>	Small Yellow Underwing
<i>Euclidia Mi</i>	Mother Shipton
„ <i>Glyphica</i>	Burnet

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The past twenty-five years, it is to be feared, have told as heavily upon the Lepidoptera as upon the primroses and the cowslips, the latter also now far between. The birds, likewise, have greatly diminished in numbers, partly in consequence of the extreme severity of the trio of hard winters which commenced with that of 1878-9. We have also to lament the death of Mr. Edleston.



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CHAPTER III. ROSTHERNE MERE.

When the month of May
Is come, and I can hear the small birds sing,
And the fresh flourès have begun to spring,
Good bye, my book! devotion, too, good bye!

CHAUCER.



HE path to the Ashley meadows offers the best point of departure also for far-famed Rostherne, for although the distance is somewhat less from the "Ashley" station, the old route past Bowdon vicarage remains the most enjoyable. Going behind it, through a little plantation, we proceed, with many curves, yet without perplexity, into the lane which looks down upon the eastern extremity of the mere; then, crossing the fields, into the immediate presence, as rejoiced in at the margin of the graveyard of the church, which last is without question one of the most charmingly placed in England, and in its site excites no wonder that it was chosen for the ancient Saxon consecration, as declared in the primitive name, Rodestone, "the lake (or tarn) of the Holy Cross."

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The peculiar charm of Rostherne Mere, compared with most other Cheshire waters of similar character, comes of its lying so much in a hollow, after the manner of many of the most delicious lakes of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and the romantic parts of Scotland; the area of the surface being at the same time so considerable that there is no suggestion, as sometimes with smaller meres when lying in hollows, of the gradual gathering there of the produce of rain-torrents, or even of the outcome of natural springs. At Rostherne one learns not only what calmness means, and what a broken fringe of diverse trees can do for still water. Contemplating it from the graveyard, we seem to have a fragment of the scenery of our beautiful world as it showed,—begging pardon of the geologists and the evolutionists,—"When the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The depth of the water is remarkable. About a third of the distance across, from near the summer-house, it is over a hundred feet, thus as nearly as possible two-thirds of the depth of the English Channel at the Straits of Dover, where the lead sinks lowest; and a third of what it is anywhere between Dover and the Eddystone lighthouse, so that our lovely Rostherne Mere may well assert its claim to be of almost maritime profundity. The area of the surface is one hundred and fifteen statute acres. In the church there is a monument which it is worth all the journey to see,—Westmacott's sculptured marble in memory of Miss Beatrix Egerton.

Rostherne, in turn, is the pleasantest way of pedestrian approach to Tatton Park, so liberally opened to visitors by Lord Egerton, on compliance with certain rules. Visitors bent on seeing Tatton only, should go part way from Bowdon by vehicle; for here, as at Cotterill, we want, as in a picture-gallery, every minute, and to let too much time be consumed in mere travel is a mistake. To make a too hasty and thoughtless use of our opportunities of pleasure is in any case to throw away the half of them; the pleasure of the country beyond all others requires a calm and unhurried step, a free and unwistful mind and eye, such as cannot possibly be if, by waste or extravagance, we are "tied to time,"—only when, by a wise economy of our resources in this respect, we liberate ourselves from care about trains and timebills, do we catch nature's sweetest smiles. The boundary measurement of this beautiful park is upwards of ten miles, and of its two thousand one hundred and thirty-five acres no fewer than four hundred are occupied by woods and plantations, with seventy-nine acres of water. Here we may stroll beneath green vaults of foliage, and be reminded of the aisles of cathedrals. Here we may contemplate the *viridis senectus* of glorious old oaks that have watched the flow of generations. Here, in autumn, we learn, from a thousand old foresters—from beech, and chestnut, and elm—that brave men, though overtaken by inclemencies there is no withstanding, still put a good face upon their fallen fortunes, and, like Cæsar, who drew his purple around him, die royally; and at Christmas, when the wind seems to mourn amid the denuded boughs, here again we feel how grand is the contrasted life of the great, green, shining, scarlet-beaded hollies that in summer we took no note of. The gardens, including conservatories and fernery, access to all of which is likewise liberally permitted, are crowded with objects of interest—one hardly knows whether inside their gates, or outside, is the more delectable. The park was up till quite recently, the play-ground of nearly a thousand deer, and still (1882) contains many hundreds. The sight of them is one of the pleasures of the return walk to Knutsford, to which place Tatton Park more especially pertains.

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Knutsford, an admirable centre, is reached immediately, by train. But it must not be overlooked that there is a very pleasant field-way thereto from Mobberley, and that the path to Mobberley itself, one of the most ancient of the Cheshire villages, is always interesting,—starting, that is to say, from Ashley station. Every portion of it is quiet and enjoyable, and those who love seclusion would scarcely find another so exactly suited to their taste. Soon after entering the fields, the path dives through a little dell threaded by the Birkin (an affluent of the Bollin), then goes on through lanes which in May are decked plenteously with primroses. The way, perhaps, is rather intricate,—so much the better for the exercise of our sagacity. Let not the "day of small things"

be despised. The Birkin is one of the little streams that in the great concourse called the Mersey does honour at last to the British Tyre. Drayton notices it in the *Poly-olbion* (1622) — [35]

From hence he getteth Goyte down from her Peakish spring,
And Bollen, that along doth nimbler Birkin bring.[7]

The church, as would be anticipated, presents much that is interesting to the ecclesiologist. Near the chancel stands the accustomed and here undilapidated old village graveyard yew, emblem of immortality, life triumphing over death, therefore so suitable,—this particular one at Mobberley the largest and most symmetrical within a circuit of many miles. Across the road, hard by, an ash-tree presents a singularly fine example of the habit of growth called “weeping,”—not the ordinary tent-form seen upon lawns, but lofty, and composed chiefly of graceful self-woven ringlets, a cupola of green tresses, beautiful at all seasons, and supplying, before the leaves are out, a capital hint to every one desirous of learning trees—as they deserve to be learned. For to this end trees must be contemplated almost every month in the year, when leafless as well as leafy. A grand tree is like a great poem—not a thing to be glanced at with a thoughtless “I have read it,” but to be studied, and with remembrance of what once happened on the summit of mount Ida.

On the Cotterill side of Mobberley, or Alderley way, the country resembles that in the vicinity of Castle Mill, consisting of gentle slopes and promontories, often wooded, and at every turn presenting some new and agreeable feature. The little dells and cloughs, each with its stream of clear water scampering away to the Bollin, are delicious. The botany of Cotterill is also recapitulated in its best features; mosses of the choicest kinds grow in profusion on every bank, —*Hypna*, with large green feathery branches, like ferns in miniature; *Jungermannias* also; and the noblest plants of the hart’s-tongue fern that occur in the district. One of the dells positively overflows with it, excepting, that is, where the ground is not pre-occupied by the prickly shield-fern. Burleyhurst Wood, close by, contains abundance of the pretty green-flowered true-love, *Paris quadrifolia*, more properly *trulove*, the name referring not to the sentiment itself, but to the famous old four-fold symbol of engagement which in heraldry reappears in “quartering.” All the spring flowers open here with the first steps of the renewed season; and most inspiring is it, at a time when on the north side of the town there is nothing to be seen but an early coltsfoot, to find one’s self greeted in these sweet and perennially green woods, by the primrose, the anemone, the butter-bur, and the golden saxifrage,—and not as single couriers, but plentiful as the delight they give, mingling with the great ferns bequeathed by the autumn, as travellers tell us palms and fir-trees intermix on tropical mountains, while the *Marchantia* adds another charm in its curious cones, and the smooth round cups of the *Peziza* glow like so many vases of deepest carnelian. In the aspect of vegetation in early spring, as it discloses itself at Mobberley and at equal distance north of the town, there is the difference of a full month. Such at least was the case in 1858, the year in which these lines were written. There is no occasion to return to Ashley by the same path. Mobberley station is scarcely more than a mile from the village, and of course would be preferred when the object is to reach the latter promptly. [36]

Knutsford, celebrated as the scene of Mrs. Gaskell’s “Cranford,” commands many pleasant walks, and is the threshold not only to Tatton, but to several other parks and estates of great celebrity. Booth Hall, with its noble avenue of lindens, the winding sylvan wilderness called Spring Wood, and its ample sheet of ornamental water, decked with lilies, and in parts filled with that most curious aquatic, the *Stratiotes*, is of considerable historic interest;—Toft, a mile to the south, with its stately avenue, now of elms, in triple rows;—and Tabley, about a mile to the west, the park once again with a spacious mere, also have high claims upon the attention of every one who has the opportunity of entering. Tabley is peculiarly interesting in its ancient hall, which stands upon an island in the upper portion of the mere, and dates from the time of Edward III. Only a remnant now exists, but being covered with ivy, it presents a most picturesque appearance. When will people see in that peerless evergreen not a foe, but an inestimable friend, such as it is when knives and shears, and the touch of the barbarian are forbidden? It is the ivy that has preserved for the archæologist many of the most precious architectural relics our country possesses. Where ivy defends the surface, nothing corrodes or breaks away. [37]

Toft Park gives very agreeable access to Peover,—a place which may also be reached pleasantly from Plumbley, the station next succeeding Knutsford. Not “rich” botanically, the field-path is still one of the most inviting in the district. The views on either side, cheerful at all seasons, are peculiarly so in spring, when the trees are pouring their new green leaves into the sunshine, and the rising grass and mingled wild-flowers flood the ground with living brightness. In parts, towards the end of May, there is hereabouts an unwonted profusion of Shakspeare’s “Lady-smock.” We admit, admiringly, that it “paints the meadows with delight:”—to the first impression, when gathered and in the hand, it scarcely seems “silver-white.” A single spray in the hand is unquestionably *lilac*, faint and translucent, but still lilac, exquisitely veined. Beware. Shakspeare, when he talks of flowers may always be trusted. At all events his only error is that curious one in *Cymbeline*. [8] Viewed from a little distance, and obliquely, the effect of a plentiful carpet of this lovely wild-flower is distinctly and decidedly “silver-white.” In all things a good deal depends upon the angle at which we look, and never is the rule more needed than when the subject is one of delicate tint. They were keen observers, depend upon it, who in the Middle Ages gave name and fame at the same moment to the pretty flowers that still preserve the ancient association with “Our Lady,” the Virgin Mary. Lower Peover church is one of the few examples extant of the old-fashioned timber structure, the greater portion of the interior being constructed of oak, while externally, excepting the stone Elizabethan tower, it is “maggie,” or black and white, like so many of the old Cheshire halls and ancient manor-houses. An epitaph in the graveyard is not without suggestiveness:— [38]

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For the return walk there is a cheerful route through fields and lanes to Knutsford, entering the town behind the prison; or, for variety, there is Lostock Gralam station.

Pushing a few miles further, we find ourselves at Northwich, a place at which there is little occasion to delay, unless it be wished to inspect one of the salt mines, permission to do so being asked previously of the proprietors. At Whitsuntide the public are in a certain sense invited, and truly, a more interesting and wonderful spectacle than is furnished by the Marston mine it would be hard to provide for holiday pleasure. But at present we are seeking enjoyment upon the surface, and to this end the journey should now be continued to Hartford, the station for Vale Royal. "Vale Royal" is essentially the name of the immense expanse of beautiful, though nearly level, country over which the eye ranges when we stand amid the ruins of Beeston Castle. It is still worthy of the praise lavished on it in 1656. "The ayre of Vale Royall," says the old historian of that date, "is verie wholesome, insomuch that the people of the country are seldom infected with Disease or Sicknesse, neither do they use the help of Physicians, nothing so much, as in other countries. For when any of them are sick, they make him a posset, and tye a kerchief on his head; and if that will not amend him, then God be mercifull to him! The people there live to be very old: some are Grandfathers, their fathers yet living, and some are Grandfathers before they be married.... They be very gentle and courteous, ready to help and further one another; in Religion very zealous, howbeit somewhat addicted to Superstition: otherwise stout, bold, and hardy: withal impatient of wrong, and ready to resist the Enemy or Stranger that shall invade their country.... Likewise be the women very friendly and loving, in all kind of Housewifery expert, fruitful in bearing Children after they be married, and sometimes before.... I know divers men which are but farmers that may compare therein with a Lord or Baron in some Countreys beyond the Seas."—A considerable portion of this great expanse is represented in the still current appellation of Delamere Forest,—a term not to be understood as meaning that it was at any time covered by timber-trees, either indigenous or planted, but that it was "outside," *ad foras*, a wild, uncultivated and comparatively barren tract as opposed to districts that were well farmed and sprinkled plentifully with habitations. Trees there were, doubtless, and in abundance, but the *bonâ fide* woods occupied only a part of the "forest" in the aggregate. An idea of such a forest as Delamere was in the olden time is very easily formed. We need do no more than think of that imperishable one, "exempt from public haunt," where Rosalind found her verses, with its stream-side where the

Poor sequester'd stag,
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt
Did come to languish.

The "forest," so late as two centuries ago, comprised no fewer than eleven thousand acres of wood and wilderness. Much has now been brought under cultivation, so that only about eight thousand acres remain untilled, and of these about one-half have been planted with Scotch fir, whence the peculiar and solemn aspect which masses of conifers alone can bestow.

Entering this part of the "Vale," we are at once attracted to the beautiful park, woods, and waters, distinguished particularly as "Vale Royal," or in full, Vale Royal Abbey, the mansion,—the ancient country seat of the Cholmondeley family—being nearly upon the site of the famous monastic home founded in 1277 by Edward I. Lord Delamere liberally permits access to the grounds, the approaches to which are eminently sweet and pleasant. The railway should be quitted at Hartford, quiet lanes from which place lead into the valley of the Weaver.^[9] Thence we move to the margin of Vale Royal Mere, with choice, upon arrival, of one of the most charming sylvan walks in Cheshire, obtained by going through the wood, or a more open path along the opposite shore. To take one path going, the other returning, and thus to secure the double harvest, of course is best. So, for the final homeward journey, which should not be by way of Hartford, but *viâ* Cuddington. A drive through the glorious fir-plantations which abut upon Vale Royal carries the privileged to another most beautiful scene,—Oulton Park, the country seat of the Grey-Egertons. Here again is a sheet of lilled water; here, too, are some of the noblest trees in Cheshire, including one of the most remarkable lindens the world contains.

For the visitor to Delamere Forest there is after all no scene more inspiring than is furnished by Eddisbury. Cuddington station will do for this, but the walk is rather too long; it is best to go direct to "Delamere," thence along the road a short distance, and so to the foot of the hill. In the time of the Heptarchy, it was an important stronghold. Rising to the height of five hundred and eighty-four feet above the sea, when in A.D. 914 that admirable lady, Ethelfleda, daughter of Alfred, and widow of Ethelred, king of Mercia, sought to establish herself in positions of great strength, her feminine sagacity at once pointed to Eddisbury as impregnable. Ethelfleda, says the old chronicler, was "the wisest lady in England, an heroic princess; she might have been called a king rather than a lady or a queen. King Edward, her brother, governed his life, in his best actions, by her counsels." We have admirable women of our own living among us—women in every sense queenly by nature:—let us never forget, in our gratitude to God for the gift of them, that in the past there were prototypes of the best. Continued in her rule, by acclamation, after the death of her husband, Ethelfleda, "the lady of the Mercians," reigned for eight years. Rather more than eleven acres of the green mound we are now speaking of were defensively enclosed by her, partly with palings, partly with earthworks, traces of which remain to this day. Frail and perishable in its materials, the "city of Eddisbury," as historians call this once glorious though simple settlement, in the very nature of things could not last. A good river, essential to the prosperity of an inland town, it did not possess. After the death, moreover, of Ethelfleda, who

went to her rest in 920, the subsidence of the Danish invasions reduced the importance of such fortresses, and so, by slow degrees, the famous old "city" disappeared. The name of Eddisbury occurs, it is true, in Domesday Book, but apparently as a name and nothing besides. Places like Eddisbury are to England what the sites of Nineveh and Palmyra are to the world. Standing upon their greensward, the memory of great things and greater people passes before the mind in long and animating procession. The once so great and powerful "Queen of the East," proud, chaste, literary Zenobia, was not nobler in her way than Saxon Ethelfleda. Thinking of her, pleasant it is to note how the little wild-flowers, the milk-wort and the eyebright, the unchanged heritors of the ground, are virtually just as she left them. Upon these, in such a spot, Time lays no "effacing finger." "States fall, arts fade, but Nature doth not die." Not without interest, either, is the fact that from the name of the people or kingdom she ruled so well, comes that of our chief local river. The Mersey was the dividing line between Mercia and Northumbria, and of the former it preserves memorable tradition. All the way up the stream till we get to the hill country, the topographical names further illustrate the ancient Saxon presence. The view from storied Eddisbury is of course very extensive and delightful, including, to-day, the venerable Cathedral of Chester, Halton Castle, and the broad bosom of the river, not to mention the boundless champaign to the south and east, and afar off, in the quiet west, grey mountains that seem to lean against the sky.

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The "Delamere Hotel," to which all visitors to these regions very naturally bend their steps, is the place to enquire at for the exact way to the borders of Oakmere; most pleasing, after Rostherne, of the Cheshire waters. For here, in the autumnal sunshine, the soft wind is prone so to waft over the dimpling surface that it becomes covered with lucid ripples, while at the margin, if the "crimson weeds" of the mermaids' country are not present, there are pretty green ones that "lie like pictures on the sands below,"

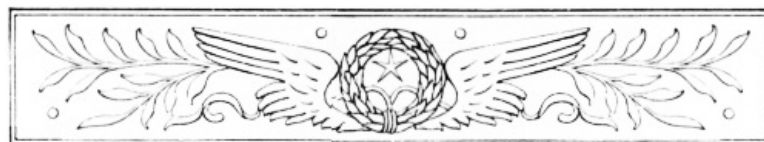
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With all those bright-hued pebbles that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon.

The borders of Oakmere abound with curious plants. One of the rarest of British grasses, the *Calamagrostis stricta*, grows here. The locality is also a noted one for the *Utricularia minor*, though we do not find that interesting fern of the Vale Royal wood, the *Lastrea Thelypteris*.

Contemplating this lovely mere, whether from Eddisbury, or its own borders, and remembering the many similar waters close by, [10] a group, after that one to which Windermere leads the way, without parallel in our island, it is impossible not to feel curious as to their history. The simple fact appears to be that all, or nearly all the Vale Royal meres are referable to the existence, underneath, of great salt crystal beds which give occupation to the people of Northwich. The surface-soil of the Cheshire salt district consists of a few feet of drift-sand or clay. Below this there is a considerable depth of "New red marl," and below this there is good reason to believe there is a nearly continuous bed or deposit of the crystal. The "new red sandstone" rock in which these deposits are embedded, is very porous and much jointed. Water is constantly filtering into them from above; the salt crystal, exposed to its action, slowly dissolves into brine, which, as the height is at least a hundred feet above the sea-level, slowly drains away. Then the overlying strata gradually sink; depressions are caused, of less or greater magnitude, and in course of time these become basins of water. Mr. Edw. Hull, the distinguished geologist, considers that should the process go on, the whole of the valley of the Weaver will some day be submerged. Most of the salt sent from Cheshire is prepared from this natural brine. To extract the crystal is not so cheap as to let the water do the mining, then to pump up the solution, and evaporate it.

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CHAPTER IV. CARRINGTON MOSS.

"Will you walk into my parlour?" said the spider to the fly:
"'Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy."

OLD SONG.



SHOULD any of our unknown companions in these rambles be vegetarians, they will please here take notice that Carrington Moss is in the summer-time a scene of ravenous slaughter such as cannot but be exceedingly painful and shocking to them. It will appear the more repulsive from the high character for innocence ordinarily borne by the destroyers, who are the last beings in the world we should expect to find indulging in personal cruelty, much less acting the part of perfidious sirens. Having given this warning, our friends will of course have only themselves to blame should they persist in following us to the spectacle we are about to describe; and now it only remains to say that the perpetrators of the deeds alluded to are *plants*! People are apt to look upon plants simply as things that just grow up quietly and inoffensively, open their flowers, love the rain, in due time ripen their seeds, then wither and depart, leaving no more to be recorded of their life and actions than comes of the brief span of the little babe that melts unweaned from its mother's arms. This is quite to mistake their nature. So far from being uniform, and unmarked by anything active, the lives of plants are full from beginning to end of the most curious and diversified phenomena. Not that they act knowingly, exercising consciousness and volition,—this has been the dream only of a few enthusiasts,—but taking one plant with another, the history of vegetable life is quite a romance, and scarcely inferior in wonderful circumstance to that of animals. So close is the general resemblance of plants to animals, as regards the vital processes and phenomena, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to point out a single fact in connection with the one that has not a counterpart, more or less exact, among the other. The animal world is a repetition in finer workmanship of the vegetable. As for harmlessness and inoffensiveness in plants, these are the very last qualities to be ascribed to them. Pleasant are fragrant flowers, and sweet fruits, and wholesome herbs, but these tell only half the tale. No wild beast of the forest rends with sharper teeth than grow on thorn-trees of different kinds; if the wasp darts its poisoned sting into our flesh, so does the nettle; if snakes' bites be mortal, so is the venomous juice of the deadly nightshade. Not in the least surprising is it, then, that we should find certain plants indicating a propensity to prey. [48] Animals of lower degree as regards every other disposition of life, why should they not participate in this one? That they do so is plain. Though as a rule, plants feed upon watery and gaseous matters, supplied by the earth and atmosphere, the members of at least two curious tribes, the *Sarracenias*, and the *Droseraceæ* or "Sundews," depend not alone on solutions of manure, or other long-since-decayed organic substances, prepared by chemical action, but collect fresh animal food on their own behalf. The latter include the plants that may be seen engaged in their predatory work upon Carrington Moss. [49]

Before entering upon the consideration of them, we may take the opportunity, furnished by this long word *Droseraceæ*, of saying a little about the "hard names" so often charged upon botanical science. It is continually asked what need is there to call flowers by those excruciating Latin titles. Why cannot they have plain English names? Why must all our names be

Like the verbum Græcum,
Spermagoraiolekitholakapolides,
Words that should only be said upon holidays,
When one has nothing else to do?

Many make it a ground of abstaining from the study of botany altogether, that the names are so hard to learn, as if every other science and species of knowledge, including history and geography, were not equally full of hard words. But look now at the simple truth of the matter. Very many of the common or "English" names of flowers are in reality their botanical or Latin ones, as fuchsia, laburnum, camellia, geranium, iris, verbena, rhododendron, so that it is not a question of language after all. To be consistent, these names should be left to the professional man, and "English" ones be manufactured in their place; it is clear, however, that they can quite easily be learned and spoken, Latin though they are, and if some can be mastered and found simple enough, of course others can. Besides, what would it advantage us to substitute really English names for them? Nothing would be gained except a synonym, by saying, as we might, "crimson-drop" instead of fuchsia, or "golden-rain" instead of laburnum; while very much would be lost in precision by using a name of obscure and uncertain origin, and upon which even one's own neighbours might not be agreed, instead of a term fixed by the great leaders in the science of botany, whose judgment all respect, and which is accepted by every nation of the civilised world. It is quite as necessary to call plants by determinate scientific names as to call a certain constellation Orion, and a certain island Spitzbergen. Botanists do not call plants by Latin names simply out of pedantry, or to make their science difficult, but for the sake of clearness and uniformity. None of the botanical names are so hard as it is fancied; the Lancashire botanists in humble life have no trouble with them; the real difficulty is in not caring anything about the objects they are applied to. We do not find those who make so much outcry about the Latin names particularly anxious to learn the English ones either. The English names are not thrown overboard by their Latin companions. All true botanists, so far from rejecting or despising English names, love them and continually use them, substituting the Latin synonyms only when scientific accuracy requires. [50] [51]

Let us now proceed to the sundews, first describing the way to their habitation. All the mosses about Manchester possess these curious plants, but Carrington Moss is the most readily accessible, lying only a little distance south-west of Sale. From the station we go for about a mile

in the direction of Ashton-upon-Mersey, then turn up one of the lanes upon the left, and look out for a grove of dark fir-trees, which, being close upon the borders of the moss, is an excellent guide. The edge of the moss is being drained and brought under cultivation; all this part, along with the ditches, must be crossed, and the higher, undisturbed portion ascended, and as soon as we are up here we find the objects of our search. Among the heather are numberless little marshes, filled with pea-green *Sphagnum*, and containing often a score or two of the sundews, some of them with round leaves, about a third of an inch across, and growing in flat rosettes of half-a-dozen; others, with long and slender leaves that grow erect. Every leaf is set round with bright red hairs, which spread from it like eyelashes, while similar but shorter hairs cover the surface. When the plant is full-grown and healthy, these hairs exude from their points little drops of sticky and limpid fluid, which, glittering like the diamonds of Aurora, show the reason of the poetical English name, sundew. Directly that any little fly or midge comes in contact with the sticky drops, the unfortunate creature is taken captive, just as birds are caught with bird-lime. Held fast in its jewelled trap, the poor prisoner soon expires; and then, either its juices or the gaseous products of the decomposition, appear to be absorbed by the plant, and thus to constitute a portion of its diet. This is rendered the more probable by the experiments of the late Mr. Joseph Knight, of Chelsea, who fed the large American flycatcher, the *Dionæa*, with fibres of raw beef, and found the plant all the better for its good dinners. Certainly it cannot be asserted positively that the *Drosera* is nourished by its animal prey, but it is difficult to imagine that so extraordinary and successful an apparatus is given to these plants for the mere purpose of destroying midges, and that the higher purpose of food is not the primary one. On the larger leaves may generally be seen relics of the repast, shrivelled bodies, wings, and legs, reminding one of the picked bones that strew the entrance to the giant's cavern in the fairy tale. Sundew plants may be kept in a parlour, by planting them in a dishful of green moss, which must be constantly flooded with water, and covering the whole with a glass shade. Exposed to the sunshine, their glittering drops come out abundantly, but the redness of the hairs diminishes sensibly, owing, perhaps, to their being denied their natural prey. The flowers of these singular plants are white, and borne on slender stalks that rise to the height of three or four inches. The roots survive the winter.

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Carrington Moss is further remarkable for the profuse growth of that beautiful flower, the Lancashire asphodel, which, at the end of July and the beginning of August, lights it up with flambeaux of bright yellow. Here also grow the *Rhyncospora alba*, the cranberry, the *Andromeda*, and the cotton-sedge, all in great abundance; and on the margin, among the ditches, luxuriant grasses peculiar to moorland, and the finest specimens of the purple heather that are anywhere to be seen so near Manchester. The rich sunset-like lustre of this sturdy but graceful plant renders it one of the loveliest ornaments of our country when summer begins to wane into autumn. Branches, gathered when in full bloom, and laid to dry in the shade, retain their freshness of form and pretty colour for many months, and serve very pleasingly to mix with honesty and everlastings for the winter decoration of the chimney-piece. Intermixed with the heather grows the *Erica tetralix*, or blushing-maiden heath, an exceedingly elegant species, with light pink flowers, collected in dense clusters at the very summit of the stalk. The immediate borders of the moss, and the lanes approaching it, are prolific in curious plants. To go no further, indeed, quite repays a visit. July is the best time. Then the foxgloves lift their magnificent crimson spires, and the purple-tufted vetch trails its light foliage and delicate clusters beneath the woodbines; and the tall bright lotus in coronets of gold, and the meadow-sweet, smelling like hawthorn, make the lady-fern look its greenest, while in the fields alongside stands, in all its pride of yellow and violet, the great parti-coloured dead-nettle, which here grows in luxuriant perfection. Up to the very end of autumn this district is quite a garden to the practical botanist. Where cultivated and uncultivated land adjoin, just as where land and sea come in contact, there is always found the largest variety and plenty, alike of vegetable and of animal life; and nowhere is this more marked than on the borders of Carrington Moss. The cottages near the moss are but few. Tea may be procured nevertheless, if we are content to run the risk of there being no milk, which, like fish by the sea-side, is often a scarce thing even in the heart of the country; but on a pleasant summer evening, when everything else is fair and contenting, he must be a grumbler indeed who would let *this* spoil his enjoyment. Half a loaf enjoyed with one's friends, far away in the sweet silence of nature, and a happy walk home afterwards, with loving faces right and left, is better, ten times over, than a luxurious meal got by coming away prematurely. All this part of the country is remarkable also for the luxuriance of its culinary vegetables. The rhubarb is some of the finest grown near Manchester, and it is quite a treat to look at the beans.

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Another way to the moss, available for residents at Bowdon, is through Oldfield, and by Seaman's Moss Bridge, where we cross the Warrington railway, to Sinderland, looking out when thus far for a lane upon the right, bordered first by birch-trees and afterwards by oaks. All these lanes, like those on the Ashton side of the moss, are remarkably rich in wild-flowers and ferns, the latter including the royal fern, or *Osmunda*, and in early summer show great plenty of the white lychnis, called, from not opening its petals till evening, the *vespertina*. The pink-flowered lychnis, the "brid-e'en" or "bird's eye" of the country people, is, like the telegraph office, "open always." Here we may perceive the use of Latin or botanical names; for "bird's eye" is applied to many different plants in different parts of England, so that a botanist at a distance who might chance to read these lines could not possibly tell what flower was meant, whereas, in "Lychnis vespertina" there is certainty for all. Whoever is fond of blackberries and wild raspberries would do well to make acquaintance with these pretty lanes; whoever, too, is fond of solitude—a state not fit for all, nor for any man too prolongedly, but a true friend to those who can use it. If we would thoroughly enjoy life, we should never overlook the value of occasional solitude. It is one of the four things which we should get a little of, if possible, every day of our lives, namely, reading,

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good music, sport with little children, and utter seclusion from the busy world.

The number of mosses and moors in the neighbourhood of Manchester makes it interesting—as in the case of the Cheshire meres, to know something of their origin. The wonderful discoveries of geology, with regard to the crust of the earth, and the successive deposition of the strata of which it is composed, claim our attention scarcely more than the history of the surface, which has undergone changes quite as momentous to the welfare of man, and no part of that history is more curious, perhaps, than that of the mosses. Wherever a moss now extends in wet and dreary waste, it would seem that there was once a plain or expanse of tolerably dry land, more or less plentifully covered with trees and underwood, but subject, by reason of the depressed level, to frequent inundation, just as we see the fields at Sale and Stretford flooded every now and then at the present day. The falling of the older and weaker trees, in consequence of the long-continued wetness, and the want of a steady and complete outlet for the accumulated waters, would soon cause the place to assume the character of a marsh,—neither land nor lake,—and now semi-amphibious plants would not be slow to spring up, for wherever such conditions of surface are exchanged for dry ones, plants of that nature appear as if by magic. The morass thus formed and occupied, would in a single season become knee-deep in the very same kind of mixture as that which now forms the outer skin of Carrington Moss, viz., heather of different kinds, cotton-sedges, and bog-moss. Every successive year the original mass of roots and stems would be left deeper and deeper beneath by the new and upward growth of the vegetation above; till at last, saturated with wet, and pressed by the weight of the superincumbent matter, it would acquire the compact form which is now called “peat.” The original moisture of the place, instead of diminishing, would be incessantly reinforced from the clouds, and the lapse of a few centuries would pile up on the surface of the once dry ground, a heap many yards in vertical thickness of half-decayed, half-living heath and moss, with sundews, cotton-sedges, and asphodels on the top. The branches of the trees drowned and entombed at the beginning, would remain where they fell, slowly decaying, but retaining their character well enough to be recognised, and hence wherever a moss is now drained, and portions of the original deposit are dug out, there are generally found mixed with it branches and fragments that in a measure may be likened to fossils. Carrington Moss, in parts where drained, is strewn with such bits of the silver birch, declared by the shining whiteness of the bark. The trees that these bits belonged to no doubt grew tall and leafy on the spot that is now their sepulchre and memorial. Flowers and seeds of bog plants are also found low down in the moss, almost as fresh as if newly fallen. In the middle, these vast vegetable tumuli are often twenty or thirty feet deep. In any part a walking-stick may be plunged in for its full length, and though by stepping and standing on the denser tufts of heather, it is quite easy to walk about dry-shod, it is quite as easy by uncarefulness, especially after wet weather, to be in a pool of water up to the ankle in a few minutes. There is no *danger* in walking upon the mosses, merely this little risk of getting wet-footed, which is more than compensated by the curious objects that may be found upon them. In winter and dull weather they are desolate enough, but on a summer afternoon full of reward. Owing to their immense capacity for absorption, many mosses swell into mounds higher than the surrounding country, as happens at Carrington; and after heavy rains this enlargement is so much increased that distant objects are concealed from view until evaporation and drainage have caused subsidence to the ordinary level. Before Ashton Moss (between Droylsden and Ashton-under-Lyne) was drained, trees and houses were often lost to view for many days, by persons residing on the opposite side. [56]

That this is the true origin of the mosses is rendered fairly certain by the circumstance of works of human art having often been found at the bottom. When Ashton Moss was drained, there were found under the peat a Celtic axe and some Roman coins; [11] and in another part, at the foot of one of the old stumps of trees, a quantity of charred wood, betokening that a fire had once been lighted there. The coins would naturally suggest that some old Roman soldier had had a hand in the kindling, and the well-known fact of the extensive felling of trees by the Romans, both in road-making, and to aid them in the subjugation of the country, has led to the belief with some, that to these people may partially be attributed the origination of the mosses. The trees and scattered branches encumbering the ground, are supposed to have checked the free passage of floods and other water, which, becoming stagnated, gradually destroyed the growing timber, and eventually led to the results described above. Baines (History of Lancashire, iii. 131) says of Chat Moss, that it was originally the site of an immense forest, but was reduced to a bog by the Roman invaders, at a period coeval with the first promulgation of the Christian religion. It would probably be no error to assert with Whitaker, that the whole of the country round Manchester, and not merely the site of Chat Moss, was, at the time of the Romans, covered with trees. One thing is quite certain, namely, that the formation of the mosses is comparatively recent, and probably much within one thousand eight hundred years. They appear to rest universally on a clayey substratum, and it is very interesting to observe that where the peat is wholly removed, for the purpose of fuel, as upon Holford Moss, near Toft and Peover, the clay surface being then laid bare, birch-trees spring up unsown. The seeds of these trees must have been lying there since they ripened, unable to vegetate previously for want of air and the solar warmth. It is quite a familiar phenomenon for plants to spring up in this way from seeds that have been buried for ages, especially on earth laid bare by cuttings for railways and similar works; so in truth it is no more than would be expected in connection with the clearing away of peat, and the restoration of the under-surface. The tree next in frequency to the birch, as a denizen of the old *silva*, appears to have been the oak. [57]

“Moors” are a more consolidated form of mosses. Seated, most usually, on higher and more easily drained ground than the mosses, they have in some cases preserved a drier nature from the first; in others, they have become drier in the course of time, through the escape of their [58]

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moisture by runnels to lower levels; and in others again, they have allowed of easy artificial draining, and conversion to purposes of pasturage and tillage, or at least over a considerable portion of their surface, and have thus disappeared into farm-land. The most extensive and celebrated mosses about Manchester, still undrained, are Chat Moss, Carrington Moss, and Clifton Moss, near the Clifton railway station, on the left hand of the Bolton-road. Fifteen years ago (*i.e.* in 1843), White Moss and Ashton Moss might have been included in the list, but both of these are now largely brought under cultivation. The most celebrated moors are now nearly all under the power of the plough, as Baguley Moor and Sale Moor, while Newton Heath is covered with houses.

The above chapter was written in 1858. The story of the sundews has now become an old familiar one, having been placed prominently before the world by Dr. Hooker during the 1874 meeting of the British Association, when the novelty of the theme attracted universal attention to it. It has been dealt with also by Mr. Darwin and many of his disciples. The facts described have all been verified, though there is still considerable difference of opinion in regard to the digestive process. This question is one we cannot pretend to go further into at present; it remains for the rising generation of Manchester, and other local physiologists, to recognise the value of the opportunities they possess in having the plants themselves so close at hand. Upon Carrington, however, the Droseras seem to be less plentiful than they were forty years ago. The draining at the margins appears to have favoured the growth of the heather, as well as to have rendered the moss less swampy. If deficient here, there are plenty elsewhere, the sundews being to peat-bogs what daisies are to the meadows. Since 1858 the approaches to the moss from the Manchester side have also been a good deal altered, and enquiry must now be made of residents in the neighbourhood when seeking the most convenient means of access.

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Extending so far in the direction of Dunham, the wooded slopes of which latter are plainly visible from all parts, wet Carrington,—

Water, water, everywhere,
And not a drop to drink,—

excites new relish for the shades of its beautiful park. Few are the inhabitants of our town to whom Dunham is unknown, and who fail upon every new visit to find in it a poem and a jubilee. The greater number of the trees were planted by George, second Earl of Warrington. He was born in 1675, and died in 1758, so that his exemplary work may be considered to date from the time, as to its beginning, of Queen Anne, and the oldest of the trees to have been growing for nearly two centuries, since, of course, it would not be acorns that were placed in the soil, but saplings, already stout and hearty. Wandering amid the rich glooms they now afford, occasional breaks and interspaces disclosing green hollows filled with sunlight, or crested knolls that seem like sanctuaries; delicate pencillings of lighter foliage throwing into grand relief the darker and heavier masses, in this sweet land there is never any sense of sameness,—we are awakened rather to the power there is in perfect sylvan scenery, as well as in that of the mountains, and the sea-margin, to elevate and refresh one's entire spiritual nature. Very pleasant is it when we can simultaneously thank God for creating noble trees, and let the mind rest upon a fellow-creature as the immediate donor. Many of the old Dunham oaks date considerably further back than the time indicated. England is dotted all over with individual trees, the age of which is rightfully estimated by centuries, and Dunham Park is not without its reverend share.

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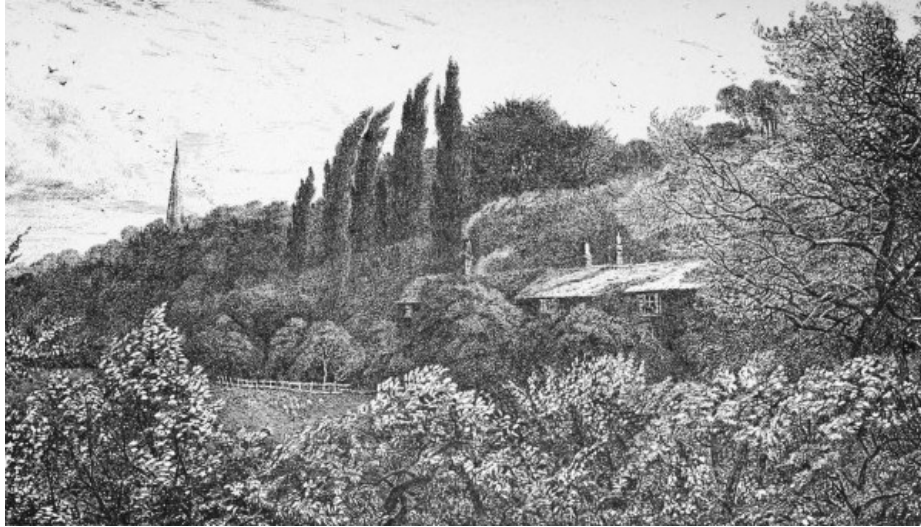
Emerging from the park, past the old mill—beloved of sketching artists—there are pleasant footways across the meadows that conduct eventually to Lymm. To trace them was, in the by-gones, a never-failing enjoyment. Now we go to Lymm direct by train, finding there, as of old, one of the most beautiful of the Cheshire waters; in this case, however, of origin very different from the Vale Royal meres. The water at Lymm, romantic and picturesque as are its surroundings, is simply a vast reservoir, brought into existence by the construction of the viaduct at the foot. The site now occupied by the water was originally a little vale, down which flowed a streamlet called the Dane. Becoming very narrow where the roadway now is, to throw a barricade across was easy. The construction of this gave distinctiveness also to the "dell," the pretty hollow, full of trees, into which, when the water is high, the overplus, creeping under the road by a concealed channel, springs so cheerily. Ordinarily, it must be confessed, there is little more than a thin trickle, but after a day or two's heavy rain, down it comes, with a joyous double leap, in great sheaves and waving veils, the more delectable since the cascade in question is the only one in this part of Cheshire, or anywhere upon the Cheshire side of the town.

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The pleasantest time to visit this beautiful neighbourhood is the very end of July. The wild cherries are then ripe, and glisten like coral amid the green leaves; and in the water there is a rosy archipelago of persicaria blossom. Beyond the plantation, at the upper extremity, the surface is often so still and placid that every flower and leaf upon the banks finds its image beneath, the inverted foxgloves changing, as the calm gives way to ripples, into softly twining spirals of crimson light. When the shores are laid unusually bare through drought, they furnish abundance of the beautiful shells of the fresh-water mussel, *Anodonta cygnea*, often four inches in length, externally olive-green, and possessed inside of the pearly iridescence so much admired in sea-shells. Many, however, are broken, the swans being fond of the contents. To see the water to its full extent, visitors should continue along the hill-side, opposite the church, and as far as the grove of trees. With permission of the proprietor, it is a great gain, on arrival there, to cross by the rustic bridge, and, turning to the left, ascend the little valley called "Ridding's Brook." The botany of this part is truly rich,—in March the slopes are yellow with the wild daffodil, and in late summer the bank is gay with purple lythrum. The special interest of the valley lies, after all, in its curious dropping and petrifying spring. At the further extremity, upon the right, the steep clay

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bank, instead of receding, is hollowed underneath for the length of a hundred yards or so, the upper edge projecting to a considerable distance beyond the base, so as to overhang the stream, and form a sloping roof to it. The surface is completely covered with luxuriant moss, and from the land overhead comes an incessant filter of water, which at once nourishing the moss and entangled in it, causes it to hang down in long vegetable ringlets. At a distance they seem soft, but examination shows that every drop has brought along with it a particle of earth, which being deposited in the very substance of the moss, is gradually converting it into stone. Every cluster, externally so green and living, is in its heart a petrification.



Tho. Letherbrow.
Oldfield, Dunham.

[Larger image](#) (180 kB)

Very pleasant walks, of entirely different character, are to be found also, when at Lymm, along the great alluvial flat bordered by the river, and which reaches to Thelwall. Thelwall was once a port for ships! When founded by Edward the elder, about the year 923, the stream was so much wider and deeper that, according to tradition, the Danish invaders came this way in vessels, landed, and established a camp or fortress at Mickley Hill, the mound, now covered with fir-trees, which marks the point where the Bollin enters. Up to about 1855, or before the water was so defiled, the Mersey at this part, and more particularly near Statham, was to the sportsman supremely attractive. It was visited in the winter by many curious birds, including the sheldrake, the widgeon, the teal, and occasionally the wild swan. Lymm village contains several objects of archæological interest. Near the centre are the remains of an ancient cross, the lower steps of which are cut out of the solid rock; and close by, upon an eminence, is Lymm Hall, an ancient building, once, like most others of its kind, protected by a moat. Lymm church tower is as high above the sea-level at the base as Bowdon old tower is at the top. The shrubs in the gardens, owing to the altitude, are often reached, in tempestuous weather, by the salt of the Irish Sea. Near Lymm there are many other very interesting places. Oughtrington Hall and Agden Hall, in the Dunham direction; High Legh, with its ancient and beautiful little church, covered with ivy; and Warburton, again noted for its church, are all, in their respective ways, full of attraction. Warburton church is one of the three in Cheshire which, as at Peover, were built in the quaint old "black and white" or "maggie" style. Only a portion, however, of the original remains at Warburton, new structures, very odd in complexion, having been added at various times. The stone part is dated 1645,—the tower, about a century old, and fortunately now ivy-mantled, is of *brick!* The yews are no doubt contemporaneous with the foundation, say about seven hundred years of age.

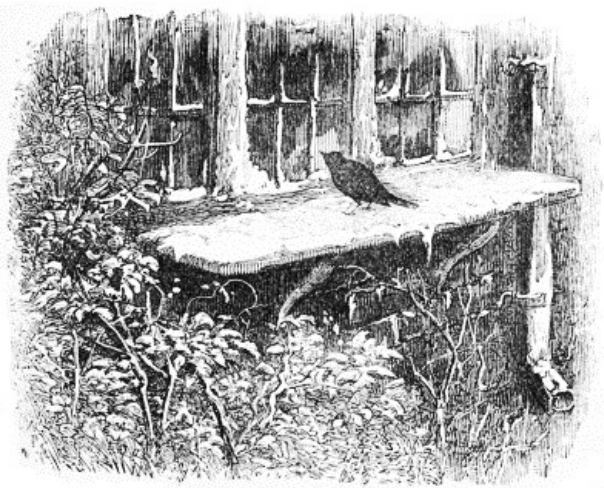
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Latchford, the station next beyond Thelwall, is a good point of departure for Hill Cliff, the lofty and beautiful eminence upon which Warrington so prides itself. The view from the summit is considered by many the most varied and extensive in Cheshire—justly so, perhaps, since upon the east it extends to Alderley, and upon the west to Moel Famma. Another route to Hill Cliff is by the original line to Warrington, through Eccles, from Victoria station, the same which leads on to Norton for Norton Priory, Norton Park, and Halton Castle; to Frodsham, for its glorious hills, and to Chester. The views from the Frodsham hills cover, like those from Hill Cliff, a most charming variety of scene,—Halton Castle, Weston Point, Rock Savage, the Aston Woods, and the winding Weaver, with its many craft, being all embraced at once. The best way of procedure, in order to enjoy the hills thoroughly, is to take the Helsby portion first, beginning at the station of that name, then to cross the valley and ascend the Overton part. If considered too much for a single day, there is amply enough for a couple of separate visits. Norton Park, made up of undulating and flowery glades, with the Priory in the centre, is little less enjoyable than Tatton, though the spectacle of the dire mischief wrought by the fumes from the adjacent alkali-works, apparently irreparable, is very sad; Halton Castle has its chief attraction in the record, for the precincts, of well-known historical events; the interest of the river consists in its identification with one of the most important branches of the local commerce. Before going so far in search of enjoyment, it is wise to remember that long before reaching even Lymm, the line *viâ* Broadheath gives access to quiet fields that in summer evenings are rich in pleasant influence, those in particular which lie west of Dunham Massey. A very delightful rural neighbourhood, almost contiguous, has also now

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been opened up by the "Cheshire Midland." Urmston, Flixton, and Glazebrook are centres from which it is difficult to move unprofitably. Very much of course depends upon the amount of disposition to be pleased that we carry with us, and upon one's progress in the culture of that finest of the fine arts—the art of seeing.



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CHAPTER V. GATLEY CARRS.

We live by admiration, hope, and love,
And even as these are well and wisely fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend.

WORDSWORTH.



HERE is not a more delightful ride out of town, at any season of the year, than through Rusholme and Didsbury to Cheadle. The country is on either hand fertile and pleasantly wooded, and in many places embellished with handsome grounds, while gardens and shrubberies succeed one another so fast that the road seems completely edged with them. The variety of trees presented to view is greater than upon any other road out of Manchester. In the five miles between Ducie-street and Abney Hall, we have counted upwards of forty different species, some of them by no means frequent in these parts, while others are uncommonly fine examples of their kind. The finest sycamore, and, after the great horse-chestnut between Singleton and Besses-o'-th'-Barn, perhaps the finest tree of any sort near Manchester, as regards either symmetry or altitude, stands upon the lawn of Mr. T. H. Nevill's house at Didsbury, the second on the Manchester side of the College. Oak, willow, elm, poplar in three different kinds, lime, ash, and beech, both green and purple, are also represented very fairly. There are examples, too, of walnut, of negundo, and of tulip trees. A noble specimen of the last-named stood not far from the Didsbury sycamore until about 1855, and was covered with flowers every season; but, like the cedar in the grounds adjoining Mr. Callender's late residence at Rusholme, which was another of the finest trees on the road, fell a victim about that time to the axe of "improvement." Each was a cruel case of what Miss Mitford well calls "tree murder." Such trees cannot be replaced in less than three generations; the sycamore at Mr. Nevill's is already over a hundred years old; so near to Manchester, it will probably be impossible ever to see the like of them again; let us hope, then, that what remain will be cherished. Cut them down when they become ruinous, if you will,—though nothing makes a more beautiful ornament of true pleasure-grounds than the torso of an ancient tree from which the living glory has departed,—but spare them as long as vigorous life endures. So numerous are the lilacs, laburnums, chestnuts, thorns, both white and red, and other gay-blossomed contributors to this charming arboretum, that from the end of May till the middle of June the road is one long flower-show. Before these commence their gala, there are the apple and pear trees; earlier yet the silver birches, covered with their pendent catkins; and in the autumn we seem to have flowers over again in the scarlet berries of the holly and mountain ash.

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Not only is the road beautiful in itself, but to residents upon the Greenheys and Chorlton side of the town, the opportunities which it provides of access to scenes of rural beauty are peculiarly advantageous. Stretford way, there is nothing worth mention till we reach Dunham. There are plenty of quiet lanes, it is true, and the farm-land is well cultivated; but in landscape, the whole of the great plain intersected by the Bowdon Railway is totally and admittedly deficient. With Didsbury, on the other hand, we enter a country fit for a Linnell. We may turn down by the

church to the river-side, and follow the stream through pleasant fields to Northen; or we may push forward another mile, cross the Mersey at Cheadle Bridge, and strike into a scene of such singular and romantic beauty, and so thoroughly unique in its composition, that we know of nothing in the neighbourhood to liken it to. This is the place called "Gatley Carrs." It is easily found. Immediately the bridge is crossed, take the broad path through the meadow on the right, and look out for the chimney of Mr. Jowett's corn-mill. Go through the mill-yard, and over the brook, then through another field or two into a lane red with refuse from a tile-croft, and in a little while there will be seen, again upon the right, a cluster of cottages and barns. These surround a bit of sward called "Gatley Green," which must be traversed, and after a hundred yards further walk by a runnel of water, we have the Carrs straight before us. The term "Carr" is of Gothic derivation, and denotes an expanse of level land, near a river, covered with alders or other water-loving trees. Such is the character of the scene here. An extensive and verdant plain, smooth and level as a bowling-green, stretches from our feet away to some undiscoverable boundary, its further portion covered with tall poplars, entirely bare of branches for half their height, and leafy only towards their summit, the trunks standing just near enough together to form a grove of pillared foliage, and just far enough apart for every tree to be seen in its integrity, and for the sunshine to penetrate and illuminate every nook. They are not the kind of poplar commonly understood by the name—the slender, spire-like tree, which is quite exceptional even among poplars—but one of the species with ample and spreading crowns. The number of trees is immense—at a rough guess, perhaps a thousand. They were planted by the late Mr. Worthington, of Sharston Hall; the timber, though almost useless to the joiner, being well adapted for cutting into the thin, narrow strips called "swords," upon which it is customary to fold silks. The path commanding this beautiful view runs along the upper margin of the plain. It is somewhat elevated above the grass, and keeps company with a stream, the opposite bank of which rises still higher, and is covered with oaks and ferns. The superiority of position thus afforded, though trifling, gives to the plain the aspect of a vast amphitheatre, and so calm and delicious is the whole scene, so tranquil and consecrated the look of the untrodden wood, that it seems surely one of the sacred groves of the Druids, and one can hardly think but that presently we shall see the priests enter in grand procession, in their white robes and ancient beards, and carrying the golden knife that is to sever the misletoe bough. In the evening there come effects of yet rarer charm, for then the declining sun casts long interlineations of shadow across the level, and lights up every leaf from underneath.

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The botany of the Carrs corresponds in extent with that of Mobberley, though in many respects quite different. The greatest curiosity, perhaps, is the toothwort, or *Lathræa*, that singular plant which, disliking the solar ray, lives recluse in woods and groves, often half-concealed in dead tree-leaves, and scarcely lifting its cadaverous bloom above the surface. Here also grows the *Poa nemoralis*. The meads yield occasional specimens of a pretty rose-coloured variety of the creeping bugle, and are so rich in wild-flowers in general as to form, along with the woods beside the stream, quite a natural botanic garden. The further part of the wood, towards Sharston, is, no doubt, the abode of many plants of interest, and only wants searching out. The reputation of a given locality for rare plants comes not infrequently of some one of ardour having gone to work upon it; innumerable places, were they thoroughly explored, would rise from unimportance into fame. Happily, as regards Gatley Carrs, Mr. Edward Stone, son of the able and well-known chemist, whose collection, both of indigenous and exotic plants, in his garden at Cheadle, has done so much good service to the cause of botany, is devoting himself to the task.

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The stream above-mentioned curves, after a little while, to the right, and the path changes to the opposite side. It is at this point that the extent of the wood is developed, and that we turn to go homewards. If time permit, it is well to continue awhile along the middle path in front, and visit first the Upper Carrs, which, as seen from the terrace that runs all the way from Cheadle to Baguley, are remarkably beautiful. The wood, as here disclosed, is full of invitation, and where the branches stand asunder, we see great prairies, the green grass all a-glow with red sorrel blossom, and dotted with islands of radiant white, where that giant of field flowers, the great moon-daisy, shows its pride. This noble ornament of our meadow-land, called on the other side of the Tweed the "horse-gowan," is one of the class of flowers called "compound," being made up of some hundreds of "florets" or miniature flowers, enclosed in a kind of basket. An average specimen has been found to contain five hundred and sixty, and a fine one no fewer than eight hundred. The florets are disposed in exquisite curving lines, exactly resembling the back of an engine-turned watch. What has the ingenuity of man ever devised that has not its prototype somewhere in nature? The chalice holding this remarkable flower is of the most elegant construction, and in form like an acorn-cup. Moving on by the brookside, after crossing it at the bridge, we soon enter a spacious meadow upon the left, and find ourselves again in sight of the Mersey. On the bank of the stream, just before quitting it, may be seen the wild red-currant, making, with its neighbours, the wild raspberry and the wood strawberry, a show of native fruits without parallel in this neighbourhood. The meadow is of exuberant fertility, owing to the annual flood from the river. Leaving it, we come next to a rising ground, planted with white willows, and from this emerge into a lane, and so over the brow of the hill to Northen churchyard. Northen, of course, becomes a resting-place, and a very pleasant one it is. Both church and churchyard deserve examination. The former contains a neat monument to the memory of Mr. Worthington, the planter of the poplars in the Carrs, and another with an epitaph attributed to the pen of Alexander Pope.^[12] Several pretty memorials of the dead occur likewise among the tombstones outside. On one fragment there is seemingly written with green moss, the gravings in the stone being entirely filled up with the plant—

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On another are the following pretty lines:—

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The cup of life just with her lips she pressed,
Found the taste bitter, and declined the rest;
Averse then turning from the face of day,
She softly sighed her little soul away.

From Northen to Manchester the ways are many. One is to walk two miles and a half along the lanes to Sale Moor station; a second, to follow the southern bank of the river to Jackson's boat; a third, is to cross the fields into the Cheadle road, and catch the townwards omnibus, a distance of less than a mile; and the last, to our own mind much the pleasantest—first along the northern bank for about a mile, and then across the fields towards Platt and Rusholme. The commencement of the last-named is exceedingly delightful, the water flowing on the left, woods and pastures upon the right, in the evening sweetly enlivened by the cuckoo. Nothing in the year's round of pleasure is more heart-soothing than an hour in these quiet fields immediately after sunset, while it is too light for the stars, but the planets peer forth in their beautiful lustre, and the darkness quickens our ears to the slightest sound. The nightingale alone is wanting to complete the effect, but we have no nightingales near Manchester. There is nothing for them to eat, and they stay away. The bird sometimes mistaken for the nightingale, from its singing at the same hours, and running through a variety of notes, is the sedge-warbler.

Enjoying this sweet neighbourhood in early summer, and while it is yet broad day, one can hardly fail to notice the tribe of *grasses*, at least up to the time of haymaking. No fewer than sixty-three different kinds may be collected about Manchester, and fully a third of these in the meadows. The remainder are inhabitants of the woods and ponds, while a few grow exclusively upon the moors. Attaining their perfection in May and June, easily collected, and not withering on the way home, the grasses are the very best plants to begin with in forming a collection of dried flowers. We have spoken before of the pleasure that attends this pursuit: the utility, to any one who takes the slightest interest in nature, is quite upon a par. How pleasant at Christmas to turn over the pages of one's *Hortus Siccus*, freshening our remembrance alike of the beautiful and diversified shapes of the plants, and of the days and scenes where they were gathered! A more interesting or instructive pursuit for a young person, of either sex, than to set about collecting specimens of the grasses, ferns, and wild-flowers in general, that they meet with in their country walks, is in truth scarcely to be found. The attraction it gives to the country is prodigious, and surely it is more sensible when out in the fields thus to employ one's self than to wander along listlessly for want of an object, and perhaps get into mischief. The method to pursue is exceedingly simple. First get together a quantity of old newspapers, and fold them to about eighteen inches square. Then buy a few quires of Bentall's botanical drying paper, and procure also three or four pieces of stout millboard. Such is the apparatus; nothing more is wanted; and next we must gather our specimens, selecting, to begin with, such as are of slender make and comparatively juiceless texture. Pieces of about a foot long are large enough, but if the plant be less than ten or twelve inches in height, it should be taken root and all. Having the boards and papers in readiness, lay one of the former as a foundation, and to serve as a tray; upon this place a folded newspaper, and upon this a sheet of Bentall, and then the specimen intended to be dried. Over the specimen should come a second sheet of Bentall, then another newspaper, and so on till the whole collecting is deposited. All being in order, it remains only to place a heavy weight upon the top of the pile, so as to press the plants flat, and prevent the air entering to shrivel them. The easiest weights to use are common red bricks, but, as bricks look untidy in a parlour, and are unpleasant to handle in their naked state, they should be tied up neatly and separately in smooth brown paper, and then not the most fastidious or weak-fingered can object to them. In this condition the pile should be left till the next day, when it should be turned over, layer by layer, and the specimens transferred into dry Bentall. The newspapers need not be changed unless the plants are succulent ones, and their moisture has penetrated. The weight should then be replaced, and the pile again be left to itself for three or four days, when the specimens will be found perfectly dry, their forms scarcely altered, and their colours, except in special cases, almost as bright as when growing. For very delicate plants, instead of Bentall, it is best to use sheets of clean white cotton-wadding, with tissue paper, to prevent the specimens clinging to the cotton when of adhesive nature. When quite deprived of their juices, the specimens should be transferred into sheets of white paper, and neatly fastened down, not with gum arabic, which is apt to smear and look untidy, but with a solution of caoutchouc in naphtha, sold in the shops under the name of "indiarubber cement." The great advantage of this is that if any should exude from below the specimen, it may, when dry, be rubbed off like a pencil mark. The name of the plant, and the date and place where gathered, should be written underneath. Giving a summer to the work, it is surprising how soon a large and beautiful collection of plants will accumulate, and how rapidly we feel ourselves progressing in botanical knowledge. Taking ordinary care, there is no reason why plants should not look nearly as green and pretty when dried as when living. If an herbarium be only a heap of Latin hay, as sometimes happens, it is not that the art of preserving plants is deceptive, but that the collector has been clumsy or neglectful. Nor are dried plants, as some esteem them, mere vegetable mummies, wretched corpses devoid of all instructiveness or value, for they are far more lively than drawings, and answer all our questions with readiness. Many good botanists, it is true, have done without such collections, showing that they are by no means indispensable to the study of botany. But none who have taken the trouble to form them ever regret it, while all confess their inestimable service. Even if the herbarium served no

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scientific purpose whatever, there is always the pleasure of finding in it a garden all the year round.

Here spring perpetual leads the laughing hours,
And winter wears a wreath of summer flowers.

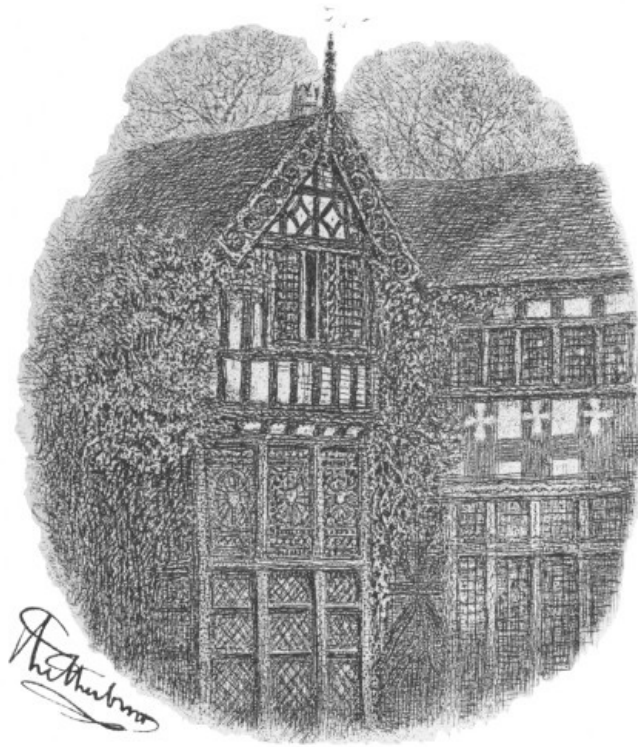
Viâ Northen is the pleasantest route to the beautiful district of which the centre is Wythenshawe Hall, a remarkably fine building of the time of James the First, and at present the seat of Mr. Thomas Wm. Tatton. It is approached through a piece of ground called the "Saxfield," upon which tradition says there was once a terrible fight between Saxons and Danes; old maps mark the place with crossed swords. We have not much of historical interest pertaining to the neighbourhood of Manchester, but what there is seems to concentrate about Northen. The Pretender, Prince Charles Edward, crossed the river in 1745, at a place not very far below Cheadle Bridge, and it is curious that the Prince Consort's visit, in 1857, when he came to open the Art-Treasures Exhibition at Old Trafford, should have been made by way of the very bridge alluded to. In 1644 Wythenshawe was besieged by a party of Cromwell's soldiers, who planted a battery on the side overlooking Northen, and threw many cannon-shots against the house. During some alterations in the garden a few years since, and the conversion of a pond-bottom into flower-beds, several of the balls were found; and another, which entered by the drawing-room window, and smashed the wood-carving on the opposite wall, is shown to visitors privileged to view this beautiful hall. The carving was not replaced, so that the blank space preserves a distinct memorial of the attack. The siege was conducted by the celebrated Colonel Robert Dukenfield, the most conspicuous soldier, after Sir William Brereton, in the Cheshire history of the Civil War. It occupied some time, and was only brought to a close by getting two pieces of ordnance from Manchester, the same probably from which the balls above alluded to were discharged. During its progress, one of the maid-servants inside, for her amusement, took aim with a musket at an officer of the Parliamentary forces, who was carelessly lounging about, and managed to kill him. He is supposed to have been the "Captayne Adams," stated in the Stockport register of burials to have been "slayne at Withenshawe, on Sunday, the 25th." In the course of alterations in the grounds during the last century, six skeletons were discovered. They were lying close together, and are reasonably supposed to have been those of soldiers who perished during the siege. Cromwell afterwards stayed at the hall, and slept in a room still called, from his occupation of it, "Oliver Cromwell's room." The bed, which is dated 1619, is of elegantly carved wood, the furniture and mirrors matching it, and of the same age. The wood-carving at Lyme Hall is usually considered to show the best local work of the period, but that at Wythenshawe, in the opinion of many, is still finer. The gardens surrounding the hall are full of curious trees, many of them remarkably good and shapely specimens, especially an *Arbor vitæ*, consisting of a tall green pyramid, surrounded by minarets, like a spire with pinnacles round the base, and exquisitely beautiful when swayed slopingly by the wind. In 1858 there sprang up in a piece of newly-turned land at the back of the hall, many hundreds of the *Rumex sanguineus*, its large oval light-green leaves traced and pencilled in every direction with the richest crimson. The ordinary green-juiced form of the plant is common enough, but the crimson-juiced is one of the rarities of our Flora.

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Further again, for those who care for rural pleasures and the legacies of the past, there is the interesting district of Baguley and its old hall. Only one large apartment of the latter remains, the greater portion of the structure having, at some remote period, been destroyed by fire; the buildings which surround and prop up the ancient piece are comparatively new. Baguley Old Hall is well worth a visit, and may be reached, if more convenient to excursionists, by way of Sale Moor station, and a walk of two or three miles along the lanes. In the interior, it will be observed that the doorways are formed of oaken boughs that were curved at one extremity, so that when sliced and reared on end, with the curved portions directed one towards the other, they would form arches. These arches are exceedingly curious, and, along with the numerous armorial bearings, form quite a noticeable feature of the place. A walk across a few fields leads to Baguley Mill. The lanes are full of fragrant roses; the high hedges shelter innumerable veronicas; and by the sides of the little water-courses, close to the mill, grows abundance of the hart's-tongue fern. To attempt the whole in the space of a single afternoon, of course is not practicable, especially if one is verging towards that inexorable period of life when gravitation begins to get the better of a man sooner than he has been accustomed to; nor is it intended to recommend so much. Gatley Carrs suffice for one walk; the immediate neighbourhood of Northen and the river-banks provide another; and Baguley *viâ* Sale will pleasantly supply objects for a third. There is a fourth, moreover, well commenced at Didsbury, but keeping in the direction of Chorlton-cum-Hardy, so as eventually to reach Barlow Hall, the local residence of Mr. William Cunliffe Brooks. The archæological interest of Barlow Hall we have not room here to enlarge upon. It must suffice to invite attention to Mr. Letherbrow's beautiful etching of the best fragment in preservation, the period of which is believed to be that of the reign of Henry VIII., when the hall was occupied by the very ancient and historical family of de Barlow, allied by marriage to the still more celebrated Stanleys, as shown by the heraldry of the window.

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Tho. Letherbrow.
Barlow Hall.

[Larger image](#) (185 kB)

No chapter of the original little volume of 1858 calls for so many obituary notices, now in 1882, as this one descriptive of Gatley Carrs. The magnificent, not to say unique, Didsbury sycamore was cut down a year or two after the publication. The great horse-chestnut, near Singleton has disappeared.^[13] Mr. Callender died in 1872. Mr. Stone, sen., is also "with the majority," and the Carrs themselves no longer deserve the ancient appellation, having been crossed by a railway embankment. A good deal remains no doubt that is pretty and pleasing, but the picture drawn above exists no longer. That a locality once so beautiful should have been thus rudely dealt with is unfortunate, few will deny. But nothing that contributes to the prosperity of a great nation, or to the public welfare, is at any time to be deplored. Such changes simply illustrate anew the primæval law that great purposes shall always demand some kind of sacrifice.

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CHAPTER VI. BY THE NORTH-WESTERN LINE THROUGH STOCKPORT.

Oh, my lord, lie not idle:
The chiefest action for a man of great spirit
Is never to be out of action. We should think

The soul was never put into the body,
Which has so many rare and curious pieces
Of mathematical motion, to stand still.

WEBSTER.



BEFORE the opening of the "Manchester and Birmingham"—a title now forgotten, the line having been absorbed into the London and North-Western—the road through Rusholme, Didsbury, and Cheadle was the accustomed highway to Congleton, *viâ* Wilmslow, to which latter place the hand still points at certain corners within a mile or two of All Saints' Church. The Cheadle people occasionally made use of it for pic-nic carriage parties to a fir-crowned steep just beyond Chorley, a wilderness scarcely inhabited, and, save for its checking the speed of travellers from Knutsford to Macclesfield, scarcely recognized in the local geography. How vast the revolution promoted in 1842! The wilderness soon became decked with mansions and gardens; it blossomed as the rose; and "Alderley Edge" is now little less than a suburb of Manchester.

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The old carriage-way being superseded by the rail, and much that is delightful being reached by train long before getting to Alderley, we will now accordingly make new departure for fair Cheshire by way of Stockport. Arrived at Wilmslow the old-fashioned, the Bollin reappears, this particular point being in truth the head of the valley through which the stream, as before-mentioned, pursues its sinuous and rapid course to Ashley. The country upon the right is full of quiet lanes and pretty meadows, none of which are more pleasing than those containing the path to the margin of Norcliffe. If permission can be obtained to visit the glen *ipsissima*, they are like the vestibule of a temple. Norcliffe was laid out in 1830 by the late Mr. R. H. Greg. Selecting everything that he planted with consummate taste and judgment, the slopes are rich with trees which in point of value and variety have no equal in this part of England. Beautiful from the first, the scene at the present moment is more charming than ever before; for tree-planting is one of those essentially noble and generous works the glory of which a man can rarely expect to see unfolded in his own life-time:—like a great poem, it reaches afar, and covers the generations that succeed. The very striking feature of Norcliffe, the main and characteristic one, consists in the profusion of the Conifers. The pine, the fir, the cedar, in their many and always princely forms, are represented in this delicious spot by upwards of forty species and varieties, many of them having very numerous examples, all presenting, in the best manner, the symmetrical outlines so remarkable in coniferous trees, and holding positions with regard to their immediate neighbours such as awaken the most agreeable ideas of harmony. There is no taller Deodara in the neighbourhood than one of the specimens near the lawn, nor is there anywhere in this neighbourhood a more comely Norway spruce, the top already seventy feet above the turf, and covered annually with cones, which the squirrels are glad of, the spring never finding one that the little creatures have overlooked.

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Norcliffe is equally remarkable in respect of its rhododendrons, the purple splendour, early in June, tossed up like a floral surf. These last, being like the conifers, evergreens, Norcliffe, if nothing else, is a place of perennial verdure. Almost, as on the banks of old Clitumnus—

Hic ver assiduum, atque alienis mensibus æstas!

The walk through the sylvan part of the glen, tortuous, and rarely on level ground, brings many beautiful wild-flowers into view. Here, in the month of May, is the wood-millet—lightest and daintiest, after the Briza, of our native grasses—and yet more plentifully the sweet woodruff, holding up in every corner its little handfuls of snow-white crosses. Access to Norcliffe,—the grounds being strictly and in every portion private,—is, of course, only by favour. But the honoured name of Greg has always been a synonym for liberality, and leave to enter when properly sought is not likely to be refused. The same may be said of the picturesque and delightful grounds, a mile further down the valley, which appertain to Oversley Lodge, the residence of Mr. Arthur Greg. The treat here is the wilderness-walk, a portion of which was cut only in 1881, along the side of the principal cliff. During the progress of the clearing a new locality was found for the true-love.^[14] So certain is the reward, not only in important shape, but in little and unexpected ways, of every man who first makes a path through the forest, whether with the axe or with the more subtle tools that are not wrought upon human forges. Spring is the time, above all others, if it can be managed, for these beautiful Oversley woods; for then we have the opening green leaves in a thousand artistic forms, and in endless shades; the violets also, and the satin-flower; and, full of promise, the so-comfortably-wrapped-up ferns that in September will show how nature revels in transformations. The Oversley woods abut very closely upon Cotterill, approaching which place there is scenery not inferior in its modest and singular sweetness to that of the vicinity of Castle Mill. The public approach is from Wilmslow, treading first the western margin of Lindow Common, then going through various lanes, and in front of "Dooley's farm." The greensward portion of the country now soon entered is generally distinguished by the name of the Morley Meadows, and the sylvan part by the somewhat odd title of "Hanging-banks Wood." The phrase is designed, it would seem, to convey an idea analogous to that involved in the name of the famous "Hanging-gardens" of ancient Babylon, signifying terraces of wood and blossom disposed in parallel order upon some gentle slope. This is the part of the Bollin valley referred to in an early chapter (p. 27) as the asylum, it is to be hoped indefinitely, of the primrose. Here, too, Ophelia's "long-purples" live again, while under the shadow of the trees we descry her "nettles," those beautiful golden yellow ones that do not sting, and which blend so perfectly with the orchis and the crow-flower. One fears almost to descend to the edge of the stream, for willows are there that grow "aslant," and that have "envious slivers" as of old. Once in these lovely meadows it is easy to find the way into the lower Bollin valley, and

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thence to Ashley and Bowdon. But the double walk is rather long, and prudence says return to Wilmslow. Norcliffe and Oversley, it should be added, are reached as regards carriage-way, by a nearly straight road from Handforth.

Lindow Common, famed from time immemorial for its bracing air, extends from Wilmslow to Brook Lane. There is nothing particular to be seen upon it, except by the naturalist, who, in one part or another, finds abundance to give him pleasure. The locality is remarkable alike for its sundews and the profusion of wild bees; it is one of the best known to entomologists for the class Andrenidæ.

Women, it has been remarked, need no eulogy, since they speak for themselves. Something similar, descriptively, might be said of Alderley Edge. Whatever smoke-engendered thoughts may occupy the mind for twenty minutes after contemplating Stockport, they are effectually dispelled by the sight of the piny hill, a medley of nature and art, that shows so proudly in front as soon as the train crosses the Bollin. A grand undulating mass of sandstone, rising boldly out of the plain, of considerable elevation,—the highest point being six hundred and fifty feet above the sea,—and, reckoning to the out-of-sight portion which overlooks Bollington, quite two miles in length, must needs be impressive. Alderley gathers charm also from its great smooth slants of green, rough and projecting rocks, and trees innumerable, three or four aged and wind-beaten firs upon the tip-top, giving admirable accentuation. Every portion in view from the railway is accessible by paths, usually easy, these introducing us to many a deep and sequestered glade that in autumn is crowded with ferns, or leading to the crest of the hill, the views from which compensate all possible fatigue of climbing. The simplest route to follow is that by the old road running to Macclesfield. From the lower part of this we may take one of the bye-roads that lie to the left, and thus get eventually to the somewhat rough and scrambling, but still quite practicable and pleasant, track which leads along the face of the great westward incline. This huge slope, called the "Hough," may be ascended also from beneath, keeping along the foot for about a mile, then turning up through a field. Green shades and leafy labyrinths here tempt to a never-slackening onward movement, especially in that part where a great curve in the mountain-mass gives rise to a kind of bay, grassy always, and that in spring teems with anemones. The prospect from the Hough is everywhere magnificent, extending to Delamere Forest and the Overton hills, which, like Coniston "alt maen," have a profile never doubtful. The intermediate broad, flat space is the now familiar North Cheshire plain. Should a canopy of smoke be distinguishable, it will indicate Manchester. To enjoy this wonderful prospect perfectly, it is best to adventure to the edge of "Stormy Point," or the Holywell Rock—that noted crag which, in case of need, would serve well for a new Tarpeian. Another quite different way to the top of the Edge is to proceed a short distance along the Congleton road, or that which leads, in the first instance, towards old Alderley village; then to turn up a lane upon the left, which, passing through a grove of fir-trees, terminates in the Macclesfield road, near the "Wizard." It is behind this noted hostelry, commemorative in its name of the local legend, that the sylvan loveliness of Alderley Edge is felt most exquisitely, nature seeming here to have been left more to her own sweet wantonness; while the views, extending now over a totally different country, hills instead of a plain, add to our previous enjoyments the always welcome one of surprise. Curling round this glorious promontory, we gradually progress towards the "Beacon," the highest point, and in a few minutes, descending thence, are once again in the public thoroughfare. [89] [90] [91]

Alderley Park, the seat of Lord Stanley, lies near the village, upon the left of the turnpike road. Strangers very rarely enter the gates. The wonder to those who do is that so little should have been made of natural advantages scarcely excelled anywhere in Cheshire. The best features are the magnificent beech-trees and the sheet of ornamental water, called Radnor Mere, upon the margins of which grow two of the most interesting of the British sedges, the *Carex ampullacea* and the *Carex vesicaria*. The gardens have long been noted for their mulberry trees.

Beyond this again is Birtles, the neighbourhood of which supplies a very pleasant walk. Mounting the hill on the southern side, or where the latter gently melts away into the level, the road in question leads eventually to the "Wizard," at which point, if more convenient, the walk may be commenced. If begun at the base, we turn up by the four-armed guide-post, a little beyond Alderley church. The walk is somewhat long, therefore better deferred till winter, selecting a day when the frost is keen and the atmosphere bracing. A winter forenoon, when the atmosphere is motionless, and icicles hang from the little arches that bridge the water-courses, is every bit as enjoyable as the most brilliant of summer evenings, let only the heart be alive and the eyes trained to seeing. Over and above the rich healthfulness of this Birtles walk, all the way up to the crown of the Edge, and round about amid the trees in winter, for the artist of pre-Raphael vision, there is bijouterie;—the chaste and tender arabesque given to rock and aged bough by green moss and grey and golden lichen, gems of nature that when the trees are leafy are apt to be skipped, but when all else is cold and bare, like faithful affection, "make glad the solitary place." [92]

Between Alderley and Chelford, pushing still further along the Congleton road, we find yet another of the Cheshire meres, this one, in itself in the time of water-lilies, worth all the travel. Reeds Mere, famous in local fairy tale, is to the painter and the poet, when the lilies are out, a floral Venice. Virtually, it is in Capesthorpe Park, the seat of one of the younger branches of the very ancient Davenport family. To get to the water's edge, if time be short, the nearest point to start from is Chelford, but the road above indicated is so charmingly wooded, that not to go that way is distinctly a loss. Chelford village may be reached by a field walk, commenced first below Alderley church, crossing the meadow slantwise and leftwards, and so past Heywood Hall, going presently through a plantation of Scotch firs. Hard by there is another charming seat, with

spacious park, rare trees, and ornamental water—Astle Hall, the residence of Captain Dixon. In the grounds we are reminded of Norcliffe, for here, too, is shown the love of Conifers which always indicates good taste.



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CHAPTER VII. BEESTON CASTLE.

This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

 This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, doth approve
By his lov'd mansionry, that the heavens' breath
Smells woongly here.

SHAKSPEARE.



WHEN for our country pleasure an entire day can be commanded, Crewe, ten or twelve miles from Chelford, and thirty-one from Manchester, marks the way to Combermere Abbey and Beeston Castle—places alike of singular interest, though of totally different character. To reach Combermere, it is needful to continue a little distance along the line which diverges from Crewe for Shrewsbury, booking to and alighting at Wrenbury. Two or three different routes may be taken thence, in any case by pleasant fields and lanes not difficult to discover. The shortest way is to go first across Mr. Wilson's broad acres of model farm-land, cereals right and left; then along a lane with a mill-pond upon the left; then through a corridor of trees upon the right, the floor, green as their boughs, bordered like a missal, shortly after issuing from which we arrive at the beautiful water referred to in the Abbey name. More than a mile in length, covering one hundred and thirty-two acres, and much too irregular in outline to be seen at once in its full extent, Combermere, with its adjacent woods, yields as a picture only to Rostherne. The paths in every direction are full of landscape. Though the country is flat, we do not perceive it to be so, and what may be wanting in grandeur, is found in tranquillity and repose. The mansion, of which there is an admirable view across the mere, occupies the site of the ancient monastery—a Benedictine, founded in 1133. Strictly modern, plain and substantial, there is nothing about the exterior to preserve the memory of monastic times; inside, however, old and new are let shake hands, the library being an adaptation of the ancient refectory. The walls, the galleries, and the principal apartments contain great store of Indian trophies and curiosities, brought home by the renowned Sir Stapleton-Cotton, whose bravery in the Peninsular War, and afterwards at the siege and capture of Bhurtpore, gained for him the title first of Baron, and then of Viscount, now held by the Lord Combermere, his son.

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A similar short ride from Crewe, now by the line which continues to Chester, conveys us to Beeston, the walk from which station to the castle, occupying less than half an hour, is again by lanes and fields. Lancaster Castle, excepting its incomparable gateway-tower, and a small portion inside, has been so much altered in order to adapt it for modern uses, that the past is lost in the present. Clitheroe Castle is all gone, excepting the keep. Beeston, happily, though itself only a relic, has suffered nothing at the hands of the modern architect. Even time seems to look on it leniently. As a memorial of the feudal ages, it is in our own part of England supreme and uncontested, and in any case one of the most charming resorts within the distance for all in Manchester who care for the majestic, the antique, and the picturesque. This famous and far-seen ruin is seated upon the brow of a mighty rock, which, rising out of the meadows on the eastern side by a regular and at first easy, but afterwards somewhat steep incline, terminates, on the western side, in an abrupt and absolutely vertical precipice, the brink of which is three hundred and sixty-six feet above the level of the base, or of almost precisely the elevation of the High Tor at Matlock, and of the loftier parts of St. Vincent's. Hence, in the distance, viewed sideways, as for example, from Alderley Edge, the outline is exactly that of a cone-shaped mountain toppled over and lying prostrate. The broad green slope, dry and velvety, furnishes an unsurpassed natural lawn for rest and pic-nic. Mounting it to the summit, the ruins, which now consist chiefly of ivied bastions, tower above our heads with an inexpressible and mournful grandeur that recalls the story of Caractacus in the streets of ancient Rome. The mind runs back to the time when the walls were alive with armed men, and shouts rose from the turrets, now discrowned. Not that the castle was ever actually assaulted, for a glance at the entrance is

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enough to convince any one that as a military post in the feudal times it was impregnable. Of military incidents connected with Beeston, there is indeed no record whatever. All that history has to tell is of one or two changes in the holding, brought about by treachery or want of vigilance. But from the time of the building, in 1220, by Randolph de Blondville, sixth Earl of Chester, on his return from Palestine, there can be no doubt that for four centuries the old castle was the scene of much that was imposing.

Everything has vanished now, and for ever. Up on that wonderful crag to-day, where the scene is so still, and the "heavens' breath smells woingly," we feel far more profoundly than in streets and cities, how grateful is the dominion of peace compared with the turbulence of war. For, looking over the westward parapet, at our feet is Vale Royal, a warm and smiling plain that stretches, literally, to the rim of the landscape. Randolph looked upon those far away Welsh mountains, the Frodsham hills, the estuaries of the Dee and the Mersey, all so beautiful as ingredients in the magnificent prospect. To-day we have that which he did *not* see, and probably never imagined. Scattered over this glorious map are villages, homesteads, orchards, gardens innumerable; the vast breadth of bright emerald and sunny pasture laced with hedgerows that in spring are blossom-dappled, and streams, of which, although so distant, we get twinkling glimpses among the leafage. If it be autumn, the scene is chequered with the hues of harvest, every field plainly distinguishable, for one of the peculiar charms of the view from Beeston Castle rock, granting a favourable day, with lucid atmosphere, is that while the country is brimful, every element is well-defined. Later still, we may watch October winding its tinted way through the green summer of the reluctant trees;—this, no doubt, it did just in the same sweet old amber-sandalled fashion five centuries ago, but the trees did not then, as now, cast their shadows upon liberty and civilisation. Two periods there are when Beeston calls upon us to remember, with a sigh, that there are forms of beauty in the world in which we may not hope to revel many times, perhaps, in their perfection, not more than once or twice. One is mid-winter, when in the great hush of the virgin snow the landscape becomes a world carved in spotless marble; the other, when the corn is waiting the sickle, and the vast plain is steeped in sunset such as August only witnesses. Watched from this tall rock, the wind-sculptured clouds that an hour before were glistening pearl slowly change to purple mountains, while the molten gold boils up above their brows; these go, and by and by there are left only bars of delicate rose, and veils of fading asphodel, and at last we are with old Homer and the camp before Troy, "when the stars are seen round the bright moon, and the air is breathless, and all beacons, and lofty summits, and forests appear, and the shepherd is delighted in his mind."^[15] So that, adding all together, the value of the grand old stronghold has in no wise died out, but only taken another shape. Instead of inspiring awe and terror, it supplies the heart with noble enjoyments, and with new and animating incentives to seek the rewards that attend love of the pure and beautiful.

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When at Beeston, on descending from the castle, we visit, as a matter of course, Peckforton, a mile beyond, the residence of Lord Tollemache.

This splendid edifice restores, in the finest possible manner, the irregular Norman style of architecture prevalent in the reign of Edward I. Occupying a space of not less than nine thousand square yards, and not more remarkable for the superb proportions than for the perfect finish of every part, in Cheshire it has no equal. Peckforton has peculiar interest also in the circumstance of the walls being entirely devoid of paint and paper, thus presenting a contrast to the dressed surfaces favoured in modern times that for the moment is overwhelming. The hill upon which it stands is covered with natural wood, and in the remote parts gives way to heathery wilderness. To pursue this for any considerable distance, when half the day has already been given to Beeston, of course is not possible. Begun early enough, we find it almost continuous with the heights reached by way of Broxton.

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After the bastions and the gateway of Beeston Castle, the curiosity of the place is the ancient well, sunk through the rock to Beeston Brook, a depth of three hundred and seventy feet, but now quite dry. A trayful of lighted candles is let down by a windlass for the entertainment of visitors who care to see the light diminish to a speck. On the way to Peckforton, it must not be overlooked, either, that in a pretty garden upon the right will be found Horsley Bath, limpid water perpetually running out of the rock, and in restorative powers, if the legends be true, a genuine "fountain of rejuvenescence."



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CHAPTER VIII.

THE REDDISH VALLEY AND ARDEN (OR HARDEN) HALL.

What exhibitions various hath the world
Witness'd of mutability in all
That we account most durable below!
Change is the diet on which all subsist,
Created changeable, and change at last
Destroys them.

COWPER.



T speaks not a little for the vigorous and buoyant life of the immediate neighbourhood of our town that so few examples are to be met with of decay and ruin. Turn whichever way we will, we find new houses, new factories, new enterprises, but scarcely an instance of wasting away and dilapidation. The nearest important relic of the feudal times is Beeston Castle, just described; and the nearest memorial and sepulchre of those brave, good men who, while the rulers of our country were fighting and oppressing, conserved within the convent walls learning, religion, charity, and a hundred other things that kept the national civilisation moving until the aurora of the Reformation, is Whalley Abbey, also more than thirty miles away. Excepting a few old houses of little significance, everything about us is intact, occupied usefully, and a fine testimony to the intelligence and the energy of the province. Let a stranger visit any part of the country within the radius indicated, and he will feel that he is in a place where life is concentrated: everything bespeaks nerve; whatever has died seems to have been succeeded on the instant by a more powerful thing. Like a laurel-tree, we are dressed in this district in the foliage of perennial and vehement vitality; while there is plenty of solid stem to mark honourable antiquity, the leaves that have gone have but made way for new and larger ones. [101]

These reflections have been suggested by a visit to Arden Hall, the solitary exception to the strong, unyielding life of the vicinity. Upon this account alone it is a place of interest. The situation, also, is one of the most delightful ever selected for a country residence. The locality may be described, in general terms, as on the Cheshire bank of the river Tame, about half-way between Stockport and Hyde. The Tame separates Lancashire from that odd bit of Cheshire which, running up in a kind of peninsula at its north-east corner, terminates with Mossley and Tintwistle, the Etherowe forming its boundary on the opposite side, and dividing it from Derbyshire. Few would suppose it possible, but the county of Cheshire is at this point scarcely more than two miles across! The ruin itself is easily found, the way to it being by Levenshulme and Reddish,^[16] inquiring there for the Reddish paper-mills, which lie in the valley on the Lancashire side of the river, and are approached by a steep descent, with beautiful views of the surrounding country in front and upon the left. Crossing the river by the mills, mounting the hill, going through a few fields and a grove of trees, right before us, sooner than expected, stands the hall, a large, tall square building of grey stone. At first sight, it appears to be in tolerable preservation. The remains of the old sun-dial are still visible, the diamonded casements of some of the windows are perfect, and the exterior generally is undefaced. But the illusion soon passes away. Penetrating to the inside, the great hall—a noble apartment, some eleven yards by eight—is found heaped with rubbish and fallen beams; the ceiling, once ornamented with pendent points, is all gone, except a small portion in one corner; it seems a wonder that the roof still cares to stay. A slender turret, rising above the rest of the fabric, includes a circular staircase, leading to the gallery of the upper floor. Here the diamonded casements reappear, looking full into the western sky, and over the trees and river winding at the foot of the steep; and here we discover the loveliness of the site. Abundantly wooded, strewn with fertile meads, and opening out in every direction pretty views of distant hills, with yet more distant ones peeping over their shoulders, there is not a more picturesque valley east of Manchester, that is to say, not until we are fairly into Derbyshire, than is spread before the windows of forsaken Arden. There is not a spot upon its slopes where we may not pause and admire, and wish for our friends. As at Beeston, the mind quickly travels back to the lang syne. Out of those windows, through the open casements, how often have the eyes of fair girls gazed, in sweet summer evenings, long and peacefully, upon the woods and winding water, and painted sunset, one generation after another, all gone now, their ancient home crumbling to dust—but the woods and winding water and sunset the same. The poets talk of nature's sympathy with man; there is nothing so marked as her lofty indifference to him. [102]

Archæologically, Arden is interesting as a fine specimen of the domestic architecture of the sixteenth century, and is remarkable for its unusually large bay windows. The waterspouts are inscribed 1597. The history of the estate and its proprietors dates, however, as far back as the time of King John, and though no direct evidence is within reach, there is reason to believe that an earlier building once stood near, and that the present ruin is the second hall. John o' Gaunt is said to have been an inmate of the original. The family history may be seen at length in Ormerod's "Cheshire," in the third volume of which work, p. 399, is a drawing of the hall as it appeared before relinquished to decay. Visitors to the Art-Treasures Exhibition of 1857 will recollect Mr. C. H. Mitchell's pretty water-colour view of the same place, and there are few, perhaps, of our local artists who have not sketched it. It would appear from the date of Ormerod's work (1819), where the hall is described as containing furniture and paintings, that it has been deserted only since the death of George III. Until recently one of its curiosities was a stone pulpit, in which it is said Oliver Cromwell once preached. The rustic legend of the place is [104]

that, once upon a time, long before powder and shot were invented, there lived hereabouts a doughty baron. On the opposite side of the valley was a similar castle, held by a rival baron, who returned his neighbour's jealousy with interest. These two worthies used to spend their time in shooting at one another with bows and arrows, till at last, tired of long range, and such desultory warfare, the Baron of Arden collected his dependents, dived down into the valley, scaled the opposite heights, slaughtered his enemy, and so utterly demolished his castle, that now not a vestige of it is discoverable.

There is generally some good foundation for such legends. Upon the eastern side of the hall, some distance from the moat, traces of ancient earthworks are discoverable, extending towards the present "Castle-hill," and which probably protected some simple fortification. Flint arrow-heads and other relics of primitive weapons found in the soil of the adjacent fields sustain the conjecture, and in truth a better seat for a manorial stronghold it would not be easy to select. The appellation of the ancient fortress when superseded by a building of more peaceful character, would naturally be transferred to the latter, and after the lapse of a little time, nothing more than the name would survive to tell the story. Originally it was Arderne, as in the reference by Webb, in 1622, to another seat of the family, "A fine house belonging to Henry Arderne, Esq." In any case, the prefix of an *H* appears to be erroneous, if nothing worse. The last of this name was the Richard Pepper Arderne, born at the old hall, and educated at the Manchester Grammar School, who in 1801, three years before his death, was raised to the peerage, with the title of Baron Alvanley. Arden Hall is not only remarkable in being built wholly of stone, when so many other mansions of the period were timber, but in the high-pitched roof of the tower—a feature rarely observable in such edifices.

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Leaving the hall, the road descends rapidly towards the river, here crossed by a stone bridge, shortly before reaching which there are some cottages upon the left. At one of these, with the name "Thomas Ingham" over the door, a nice tea may be obtained. It is not a very attractive place to look at, but the parlour (at the back) is as comfortable as any lady could desire; the provision is excellent, the attendance prompt and respectful, and the charge so moderate that it seems wonderful how it can pay. Forget not that in visiting such places the obligation is mutual. Excursionists have no sort of claim upon private houses, and should be glad to recompense with liberality the kindly willingness to accommodate, save for which they might have to plod for miles hungry and tired. Tea disposed of, we have a walk homewards even more pleasing than the first, by taking, that is, the contrary or Lancashire side of the river, and thus passing through the very woods admired an hour previously from the hall and the crest of the hill. The way is first over the stone bridge, then for a little distance up the hill, descending thence into the field-path, found by means of a large circular brick structure in one of the meadows, seemingly the ventilation mouth of a coal-mine. There is a path quite close to the river, if preferred, entered almost immediately after crossing the bridge, but the water after wet weather is apt to be disagreeable, and in autumn there is a thick and laborious jungle of butter-bur leaves. The hill-side at this point is decidedly the best place for viewing the hall, which crowns the tall cliff immediately in front of it. It is hard to think, as we contemplate its lovely adjuncts, how so romantic a site could have been deserted. The woods hanging the hill-sides with their beautiful tapestry, the river creeping quietly in the bottom, but seen only in shining lakelets where the branches of the trees disentangle themselves, and make a green lacework of light twig and leaf, just dense enough to serve as a thin veil, and just open enough to let the eye pierce it and be delighted; the perfect calm of the whole scene, and the sweet allurements of the path with every additional step, how came they to be ignored? Approaching Reddish the woods are unfenced, and the path lies almost beneath the trees. At the end of May these woods are suffused with the brightest blue in every direction,—the bloom of the innumerable wild hyacinth, which clusters here in great banks and masses, so close that the green of the foliage is concealed. The ground being a slope, and viewed from below, the effect is most singular and striking. Shakspeare speaks of "making the green one red;" here we have literally the green made blue. In the same woods grows the forget-me-not, in abundance only exceeded in the Morley meadows. One might almost fancy that the nymphs of ancient poetry had been transmigrated into these sweet turquoise-coloured flowers. Among the specialities of the Reddish valley, mentioned before as eminently rich in plants of interest, are the bird-cherry, *Prunus Padus*, and that curious fern the *Lunaria*. The first is quite a different thing from the ordinary wild cherry of Mobberley, Peover, Lymm, and the Bollin valley, having long, pendulous clusters of white flowers, like those of the laburnum, and with a smell of honey. It is seen not only as a tree, but sometimes forms part of the hedges. The lunaria grows in the meadows, and is in perfection about the end of May. In August and September the river-banks here are gay also with the fine crimson of the willow-herb, the young shoots of which, along with the flowers, drawn through the half-closed hand, leave behind them a grateful smell of baked apples and cream.

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The upper portion of the valley, nearer Hyde, was very diligently and successfully explored in 1840-42 by Mr. Joseph Sidebotham, then resident at Apethorne,—a townsman whom we have not more reason to be proud of as a naturalist of the most varied and accurate information, and as one of the most scientific and successful prosecutors of microscopical research, than as a singularly skilful artist in photography, and this without letting the colours grow dry upon the palette from which he has been accustomed to transfer them to coveted drawings. It was Mr. Sidebotham who first drew the attention of Manchester naturalists to the fresh-water algæ of our district, and who principally determined their forms and numbers. He also it was who collected the principal portion known up to 1858 of the local *Diatomaceæ*. During the five or six years he devoted to the botany of Bredbury, Reddish, and the banks of the Tame generally, he added no fewer than twenty-five species to the Manchester Flora, many of them belonging to the difficult

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genera *Rubus* and *Carex*. His walks were not often solitary. What a broiling day was that on which we first gathered in the Reddish valley the great white cardamine!—what a sweet forenoon that vernal one when we stood contemplating the thousand anemones! Nature seems to delight again in *upsetting* everything human! One cannot even bestow a name, but she tries to undermine it. No epithet is more appropriate, as a rule, to this most modest of the anemone race, the wild English one, than its specific name, *nemorosa*, “inhabiting the groves;”—every reader of classical verse recalls, as the eye glides over the word, the *nemus* which grew greener wherever Phyllis set her foot in it. Giving her the least chance, see, nevertheless, how the wayward lady to whom we owe everything, laughs alike at ourselves and our nomenclature. We call the flower *nemorosa*, conclude that all is settled, and straightway, as in that sweet and still forenoon in the Reddish valley (1840), she flings it by handfuls over the sward, and leaves the grove as she then left the Arden woods, without a blossom and without a leaf. Similar curious departure from the accustomed habitat of the wood-anemone has since been observed at Cheadle and at Alderley. [109]

No slight pleasure is it in connection with botany that plants and events thus link themselves together, recalling whole days of tranquil happiness spent with valued friends in the green fields. Associations with trees and flowers seem almost inevitably pleasant and graceful ones; at all events, we never hear of the reverse. When orators and poets want objects for elegant simile and comparison, they find trees and flowers supply them most readily; and, on the other hand, how rarely are these beautiful productions of nature used for the illustration of what is vicious and degrading, or in any way mixed up with what is vile and disgraceful. Trees and flowers lead us, by virtue of their kindly influences on the heart and the imagination, to a disrelish and forgetfulness of the uncomely, and to think better of everything around us; so that a walk in the fields, over and above its invigorating and refreshing value, acts as a kindly little preacher, and shows us that we may at all events read, if not

Honi soit qui mal y pense, write,
In emerald tufts, flowers purple, blue, and white.

The lapse of twenty-four years has not tended to improve the aspect of the Reddish valley. The main features are the same, but the brightness is sadly dimmed. Everything now, in 1882, illustrates the operation of town smoke and hurtful vapours, not to mention the devastating influences which come of human travel. The wild-flowers have shared the fate of those in other suburban localities; the old hall has sunk further towards decay; the Inghams, happily, are extant. Mr. Sidebotham, for his own part, practices, amid the refinements of his Bowdon home, all that he cultivated originally upon the banks of the little river, and with the added success that arises upon unbroken assiduity. He tells me now of his researches into the entomology of Dunham Park, where not long ago, for one or two successive seasons, in July, a curious beetle occurred in plenty, a fact immensely remarkable, since only one other of its kind has ever been noticed elsewhere in England, this upon an oak in Windsor Forest as far back as 1829! The insect was first detected by Mr. Joseph Chappell, a working mechanic at Sir Joseph Whitworth’s, and one of the most careful observers of nature now in our midst. [110]

The first photographs ever shown in Manchester were laid before a meeting of the Literary and Philosophical Society by the late Mr. J. E. Bowman, in November, 1838. I remember the occasion well, and the interest taken in them by Dr. Dalton.



CHAPTER IX. ALONG THE MACCLESFIELD LINE.

It is fine
To stand upon some lofty mountain-thought,
And feel the spirit stretch into a view:
To joy in what might be if will and power
For good would work together but one hour.
Yet millions never think a noble thought,
But with brute hate of brightness bay a mind
Which drives the darkness out of them, like hounds.

J. P. BAILEY.



TOCKPORT, the uninviting, in whatever direction we look to escape from it, is a point of rare value for departure for scenes of interest—this mainly because of its standing on the threshold of the hills which a little further on become members of the English Apennine,—the grand range stretching from Derbyshire to the Cheviots. Soon after passing Edgley, while the original line pursues its course to Wilmslow and Alderley, great branches strike out upon the left, one primarily for Macclesfield, the other for Disley and Buxton. Each in its turn leads to scenes of delightful beauty, and that before the time of railways were scarcely known. Alighting at Bramhall, we secure the added pleasure of a visit to the very celebrated old hall of that name—the most admirable example in our district of the “magpie” style of architecture, and not more charming in

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its external features than rich in interest within. The oldest portions date from soon after the middle of the fourteenth century, and are thus as nearly as possible contemporaneous as to period of building with the choir of York Minster. These very aged portions are found chiefly in connection with the entrance to the chapel. Massive beams and supports, hard as iron, refusing the least dint of the knife, and presenting the peculiar surface characteristic of the work of their time, attest very plainly the profound significance of “heart of oak.” Everything, moreover, in this grand old place is so solidly laid together, so compactly and impregnably knit, that it seems as if it would serve pretty nearly for the base of another Eddystone or Cleopatra’s needle. In the most tempestuous of winter nights, Bramhall has never been known to flinch a hair’s breadth—so, at least, the late Colonel Davenport used to assure his friends, the writer of these lines included. No portions of the building appear to be of later date than the time of Elizabeth, the domestic architecture of whose reign is nowhere in England better interpreted. The situation of Bramhall is on a par with its artistic qualities. No dull soul was it who more than five hundred years ago selected for his abode the crest of that gentle declivity, trees far and near, a stream gliding below, and views from the upper windows that reach for many miles across the undulating and sweetly variegated greensward. The romantic bit at present is the ravine hard by, saturated in spring with tender wild-flowers, the wood-sorrel in myriads.

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Prestbury, a few miles beyond, also has great attractions for the antiquary, the chancel and south aisle of the church being of about A.D. 1130, while the school-house in the graveyard is entered by a doorway with apparently Norman mouldings. The tower is about A.D. 1460. If in search more particularly of rural pastime, we take the contrary side of the line, and so through the lanes and fields to the delicious Kerridge hills. Remarkable for their very sudden rise out of the plain, these green and airy hills command views, like those obtained at Alderley, of truly charming extent and variety. Tegsnose, at the southern extremity, is thirteen hundred feet above the sea-level—the little building just above Bollington, called “White Nancy,” plainly visible from the line near Wilmslow when the sunlight falls on it, is nine hundred and thirty feet;—no wonder that from this last, since there is nothing to intercept, the prospect in favourable weather reaches to Liverpool, and even to the sweet wavy lavender upon the horizon that indicates North Wales.

Bollington is now reached also by a line (part of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire system,) which diverges for Macclesfield at Woodley Junction. This perhaps gives nearer approach to the Kerridge hills; in any case, it is the best to take for the extremely beautiful adjacent neighbourhood, which for its little metropolis has the village of Pott Shrigley. Before the opening of the line in question, the station for this part was Adlington, on the London and North-Western. Grand as the prospects have already been, above Pott Shrigley, excepting only the “castled crag” at Beeston, all are surpassed. No lover of the illimitable need go to Cumberland or Carnarvonshire for a sight more glorious. Alderley Edge, rising out of the plain below, seems only a mound. The plain itself stretches away far more remotely than the eye can cover, no eminence of magnitude occurring nearer than the Overton hills. The towers and spires of Bowdon and Dunham are plainly distinguishable; and close by, in comparison, is the fine western extremity of the Kerridge range, with “White Nancy,”—the hill itself on which we stand, or rather seat ourselves, remembering the picture in Milton,

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See how the bee,
Sitting assiduous on the honeyed bloom,
Sucks liquid sweet,

just such a one as suggested that other immortal portrait,

Green, and of mild declivity, the last,
As ’twere the cape of a long ridge of such,
Save that there is no sea to lave its base,
But a most living landscape.

The time to go to this glad pinnacle is at the end of May or the beginning of June, mounting the hill in the first instance, by the immediate route from the station. When the time arrives to descend, dip westwards, curve round by the water, and through the fields which lead into the Disley road, thence into Pott Shrigley village. No description can convey a perfect idea of the loveliness of this part of the walk at the season indicated. The long-extended survey of hill and dale, the innumerable trees, clothing the slopes at agreeable distances with the most picturesque of little woodlands, bright and cheerful in their unsullied raiment of leaves that are only yet learning the sweetness of sunshine; the rise and fall of the ground; the incessant turns and sinuosities of the pathway, every separate item is a treat, and yet the ravishing spectacle of all, at the season referred to, has still to be named. This consists in the inexpressible, the infinite multitude of the bluebells, which far surpasses that of the old Reddish valley. They saturate every slope and recess that is in any degree shady, and diffuse themselves even upon the otherwise bare hill-sides, not in a thin and niggardly way, but with the semblance of an azure mist. In many

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parts, at the edges of the little groves, where the ground is steep, they seem to be flowing in streams into the meadows beneath, and where there are breaks among the nearer trees they actually illuminate the opening. When the spectacle of the bluebells comes to an end, the walk continues along a beautiful green arcade, straight, level, and uninterrupted into the village.

By whichever of the two routes we prefer to go to Macclesfield, that ancient and celebrated town becomes in itself a new and excellent starting point. If desiring to go beyond, the London and North-Western should be chosen. The massive heights on the way to Buxton, including the well-known and far-conspicuous mamelon called Shutlings Low, are accessible only by carriage or on foot. North Rode, on the other hand, is but a few minutes' continued railway journey, and for this, if we come at all, the longest day is all too short. Just in front rises Cloud-end, the mighty promontory seen from the fields near Butts Clough (p. 23), covered with trees, the *Vitis Idæa* filling the open spaces, and plenty of nuts in the neighbouring hedgerows. Keeping the mountain to the left, descending the green lane, and passing, "on sufferance," through North Rode Park, agreeable scenery on each side all the way, the end is that *beau-ideal* of a rural retreat, pretty Gawsworth. The ancient trees, the venerable church, the dignified old residences, all speak at once of a long-standing and undisturbed respectability such as few villages can now assert. In the graveyard stand patriarchal yews, one of them, reduced to a torso, encased in ivy, and protected on the weaker side by a little wall of steps, intended seemingly to make it useful as a tree-pulpit. Six great walnut-trees form part of the riches of the Hall, another pleasing old "magpie;" water also is near at hand, thronged with fishes that sport near the surface, and gliding through the sunbeams gleam like silver. To return to Macclesfield there is no need to retrace one's steps to North Rode, the walk being short and pleasant, and rendered peculiarly interesting by its beech-trees, a long and noble avenue, if contemplated through an opera-glass never to be forgotten, for then the half-mile of leafy colonnade is brought close to the eye, a green and moving stereoscopic picture. [116] [117]

When at Gawsworth it is a pity to let slip the opportunity of visiting Marton, for the sake alike of its fine old hall, ancient church, and renowned oak. The hall, like so many others in this part of the country, is a black and white of the time of Elizabeth, supplying, in the material, yet another illustration of the ancient plenty in Cheshire of magnificent trees; Lancashire, though it contains many old halls and manor-houses of the same character, presenting a far more considerable proportion of stone ones. In the old "magpies," very generally, so vast is the quantity of wood that one is disposed to exclaim—Surely when this house was raised a forest must have been felled. Inside there are many very interesting relics, as one would expect in a primitive seat of the old owners of Bramhall. The church, built in 1343, is in the style of Peover and the oldest portion of Warburton, the aisles being separated from the nave by oaken pillars. As for the "Marton oak," it needs only to say that in dimensions it is an acknowledged rival of the Cowthorpe, the circumference at a yard from the ground being fifty feet, and at the height of a man more than forty feet. It can hardly be called a "trunk," if by that word we are to understand a solid mass of timber, the inner portion having long since decayed, leaving only a shell, though the branches above are still vigorous and clothed every season with unabating foliage. [118]

Three or four miles beyond North Rode ancient Congleton comes in view, opening the way, if we care to enter Staffordshire, to Biddulph Grange, renowned for its gardens. Mow Cop, just on the frontiers, awaits those who love mountain air. Trentham Park, fifteen miles further, or about forty-three from Manchester, is the seat, as well-known, of the Duke of Sutherland; and not far, again, from this is the Earl of Shrewsbury's—Alton Towers. To reach the latter, we diverge from North Rode along the Churnet Valley line, the same which leads, in the first instance, to the beautiful neighbourhood of Rushton, famed for its ancient church, the untouched beams of the same date as Beeston Castle; then past Rudyard Lake and the delicious woods appertaining to Cliffe Hall. The view from Rushton churchyard is one for painters. The valley, receding southwards, encloses the smooth expanse of Rudyard, which, though no more than a reservoir, has all the winning ways of a Coniston or a Windermere, seeking to elude one's view by reliance on friendly trees. In the north and east the hills rise terrace-wise, range beyond range, each remoter one of different hue, Shutlings Low, that beautiful mamelon, towering above all, and more effectively than as contemplated from any other point we know of. After this comes the lovely walk through the woods themselves, the water visible, intermittently, all the way, with at last pause for rest, in Rudyard village. It is not a little singular that Rudyard, like the reservoir at Lymm, should have for its parent a river Dane, though here the stream does not vanish, the Rudyard Dane being the boundary of the two counties, Cheshire and Staffordshire. [119]

Alton Towers, a trifle further, illustrate in the finest manner what can be achieved by the skill of the landscape gardener. At the time of Waterloo the grounds were simple rabbit-warren, and the site of the present mansion was occupied by only a cottage. Worthily is it inscribed, just within the garden gate, "He made the desert smile," the *he* being Charles, the sixteenth earl, under whose directions the work was executed. The framework consists of two deep and winding valleys, which lose themselves in a third of similar character. Over their slopes have been diffused terraces, arbours, ivied grottoes, trees and shrubs innumerable, green cypresses that rise like spires among the round sycamores, and rhododendrons that in May, looked at across the chasm, seem changed to purple sea-foam. Wherever practicable, there have been added waterfalls and aspiring fountains, and threading in every direction there are moss-grown and apparently interminable sylvan paths. From many points of view, the scene is one no doubt that would have captivated Claude or Salvator Rosa. Still, it must be confessed that the impression, after survey, which lingers longest in the mind is of something not simply lavish, but inordinate. Very beautiful, without question, as an essay in constructive art, therefore invaluable educationally, one falls back, nevertheless, when departing, on the thought of tranquil Norcliffe, [120]

that never tires. The earl, it may be interesting to add, to whom the Alton grounds owe their existence, represented by lineal descent the famous Talbot of the Maid of Orleans' story. When we part with him, we may run on, if we please, to Rocester Junction, and thence to Ashbourne, the threshold of Dovedale, there to chat with immortal Izaak Walton.

Shutlings Low, the old familiar and far-seen mamelon above-mentioned, the only one we know of in Cheshire, is considered also to be the highest ground in the county, the summit reaching an elevation of over seventeen hundred feet. The view which rewards the rather stiff climb is like that from the crest of Mow Cop, not only vast in compass, but very agreeably new, from commanding as much as the eye can embrace of Staffordshire. The ascent is best made from Wild Boar Clough, itself the most picturesque of the many wild ravines which betoken the near neighbourhood of Derbyshire. For pedestrians the walk from Macclesfield to Buxton is also a glorious one, Axe Edge intervening, with at about a hundred feet below its topmost point the celebrated hostelry, reputed to exceed in elevation even the "Travellers' Rest" in Kirkstone Pass, and which in name commemorates faithful Caton, *Caton fidèle*.



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CHAPTER X. DISLEY AND MARPLE WAY.

So shalt thou keep thy memory green,
And redolent as balmy noon
With happiness, for love makes glad;
Child-natures never lose their June.

S. E. TONKIN.



WHEN the L. and N. W. opened its branch from Stockport to Buxton, June 15th, 1863, every one loving the country had visions of immense delight among the sweet and then scarcely known hills of Disley and Marple. Previously, they were no more than an element of the scenery observed from the Buxton coach. Since then we have better understood the meaning of those grateful lines,

You gave me such sweet breath as made
The things more rich.

For if the fronts of these beautiful hills be sometimes rugged, there are none that the western breezes better love to caress, nor are there any that welcome the sunshine with a more strenuous hospitality. Disley and Marple count not with the places which the sunshine only flatters; they are always cheerful and pretty, whether it be the hottest day of July, or winter, or spring. Even after a storm, be it ever so vehement, they recover themselves as rapidly as a child's cheek after the tears. How great and affable, too, their landscapes!—how bright their lawn-like pastures, where tricolour daisies bloom all the year round: there are woods moreover, in the recesses, where we may bathe our eyes in the sweet calm that comes only of green shade, and that like the airy summits up above, give at the same moment both animation and repose.

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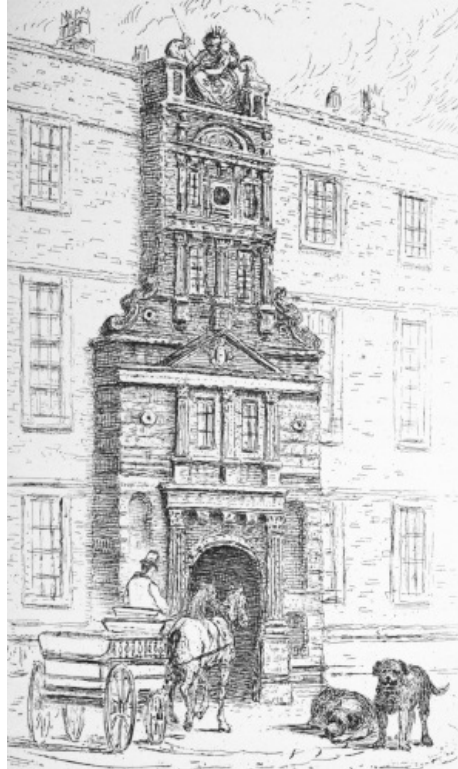
Disley is known to most of us as the first station after Hazel-grove, and the point from which departure is taken for Lyme Park. Intermediately there is a delightful walk, reaching the greater part of the distance, upon the right-hand side of the line, through the sylvan covert called Middlewood. The wood is not "preserved." It is semi-private, nevertheless, so that permission to pass through ought to be asked; it is rare, even then, to hear any voices except our own and those of the birds. Either to ascend, or to proceed by train direct to Disley, and enter the wood at the head, is, in its way advantageous. The latter is, perhaps, the better course, since we then accompany the stream,—one of the very few so near Manchester still unpolluted. The water is the same as that which flows past Bramhall, running thence to Cheadle, where its bubbles swim into the Mersey. Middlewood, unfortunately for its primitive charm, has recently shared the fate of Gatley Carrs, so that the path is now very inconveniently obstructed, and the Bramhall part of this pretty brook, instead of being the inferior, is to-day, perhaps, after all, the most pleasing. Comparisons may be spared. The meadows it traverses were never wanting in any substantial element of pastoral charm, and if a thing be good absolutely, what need to ask for more? The way to them is *viâ* Cheadle Hulme, then to Lady Bridge, as far as Bramhall-green, there crossing the road, and stepping anew upon the grass, where the path returns to the water-side. Hence, we go on to Mill-bank farm, told at once by its three great yews, and for the return may take Hazel-grove.

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The broad green slopes and expanses of Lyme Park, though they partake of the loneliness of

the neighbouring moors, are, as indicated above, pleasant at every season of the year. Nature, in truth, is always good, no matter what the season is, if the people are so who seek it. As we traverse them, in the south-west the eye rests upon the great plain that stretches to Bowdon; upon the left, on a swelling height, is the far-seen square grey tower called Lyme Cage, clearly intended, when built, for a huntsman's refuge; and passing this it is not far to the hall, upon which, being in a hollow, one comes so suddenly as to be reminded of the adventures of the knights-errant in tales of chivalry. A very fine quadrangular gritstone building, partly Corinthian, partly Ionic, some portion is nevertheless of the time of Elizabeth. The interior is also very various, in many portions stately and richly ornamented, and literally crowded almost everywhere with works of art, including a rude picture of the original hall in the time of King John, with portraits, heraldry, tapestry, stained glass, and wood-carving enough to satisfy the most ravenous. The rare mosaic of fact and fiction currently accepted as the family history of the Leghs is well sustained by the armour and other antiquities, not the least interesting of which is the font in the chapel, in which for ages the youthful scions of the house have been baptized. There is very little timber in the park, though on the borders not wanting. The most remarkable feature, as regards trees, is an avenue of over seventy lindens.

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Tho. Letherbrow.
Lyme Hall.

[Larger image](#) (194 kB)

The supreme part of Disley is that which lies on the contrary side of the station, consisting in the green and lofty crest called Jackson Edge. This is reached by going a short distance along the Buxton road, then mounting a steep ascent upon the left, cottages on either side, and eventually through a lane upon the right. Due west from the summit, like a garden viewed from a balcony, the plain seen from Lyme Park is displayed even more variously. When satisfied, we may curl round by the stone-quarries, then through the fir-wood, and so back into Disley village,—a little tour just enough for those who not being very strong of limb, still go shares with the strongest in zest for mountain breath and extended prospects; or we may leave Disley again behind, and, crossing a few meadows, mount glorious Marple Ridge.[17] Here the prospect becomes wider and more varied still: filling one also with astonishment that so much can be commanded at the cost of so little labour. The fact is that the railway does half the climbing for us, the line from Hazel Grove to Disley being almost a slope. Standing with our backs to Disley village, on the right towers the great green pyramid called Cobden Edge; then come the hills that rise above Whaley Bridge and Taxal, Kinder Scout resting upon their shoulders. In front are hills again, Werneth Low, always identified by the sky-line of trees; Stirrup-benches and Charlesworth Coombs, and the three-hill-churches always remembered by their corresponding initial, Marple, Mellor, and Mottram, with Chadkirk and Compstall in the valley. Southwards, Lyme Cage and Lyme Hall, the latter half-hidden among its trees, are discoverable; and due west is the great plain now familiar,—that one which includes Vale Royal, and reaches to Chester. Let all who make a pilgrimage hither remember, as when they visit Gawsworth, to bring their opera-glasses, which however useful when there is curiosity as to a cantatrice, have nowhere a more excellent use than on the mountain-side. Cobden Edge, from its greatly superior altitude, overlooks even Marple Ridge! To reach it, after leaving Disley station, cross the wood a little beyond the hotel, and go down a steep lane, arriving presently at a slit in the wall upon the right, through which it is necessary to sidle as best one may. The canal has then to be crossed, and the river Goyt, after which there is a little glen leading the way to the path up the hill. On the top, all the grandeurs of Marple Ridge are renewed five-fold. Alderley has nearly subsided into the plain. Beeston Castle

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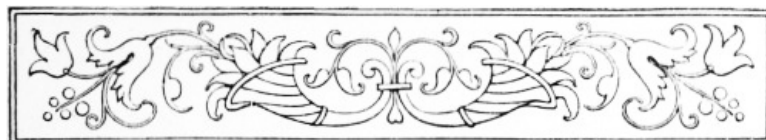
is conspicuous. Some say they can descry the great Ormes-head. Pursuing the road along the crest of the hill, we soon arrive at Marple village; or descending from it, upon the right, get almost as soon into the beautiful valley of the Goyt. Both, however, since 1867, have been rendered so much more easily accessible by means of the Midland railway, that they may be left for another chapter, the more particularly since a few miles' continued ride from Disley brings us to another charming neighbourhood—that one which comprises the above-mentioned Whaley Bridge and Taxal.

The most manageable of the many pleasant walks within reach of the latter, is that one which leads to Taxal church, following the high road till a white gate upon the right opens into meadows descending into a dell, where the swift and limpid waters, if they do not exactly make "shallow falls," at all events invite the birds to sing their madrigals. Quitting the dell, the path is once again upwards, soon reaching the church, and after leaving this, through the grove of trees and along the foot of the reservoir, the overflow from which often seems a rushing snowdrift. This fine sheet of water is one of several similar storages prepared for the Peak Forest Canal, and supplies an admirable illustration of the service rendered to scenery by business enterprise, which if it sometimes destroys or mutilates, as in the case of Gatley Carrs, compensates in the gift of broad and shining lakes. An excellent characteristic of the great Lancashire and Cheshire reservoirs is that ordinarily, when in the country, like this one at Taxal, they resemble, as nearly as possible, natural meres. Established, as at Lymm, by damming up the narrow outlet of some little valley through which a stream descends, the water, as it accumulates, is allowed, as far as practicable, to determine its own boundaries; hence, excepting the one inevitable straight line required for the dam, though this can sometimes be dispensed with, the margin winds, the banks become shore-like, and the landscape is exquisitely enriched. No landscape is perfectly beautiful without water, and nowhere has so much been done undesignedly for scenic beauty than in our two adjacent counties. The same is true of the addition given by noble railway-arches to hollows filled with trees. Scenery impregnated with the outcome of human intelligence and human skill must needs, in the long run, always take deepest hold of our admiration, for the simple reason that human nature is there; just as the most precious and delightful part of home is that which is superadded by human affection. From the high grounds above the water the outlook is wonderfully romantic; when upon the crest of the hill there is an inviting walk also under the trees. For the vigorous, the best part of Taxal is after all upon the Derbyshire instead of the Cheshire side of the river, mounting continuously for two or three miles, and so eventually reaching Eccles Pike—a grand, green, round hill in the middle of a huge green basin. Beyond Whaley Bridge come in turn Doveholes and Buxton.

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At Buxton, once the *El Dorado* of local naturalists, the visitor finds picturesque beauty and historical associations, even if he be not in search of the recruited health which this celebrated old town is supposed to be always so willing to supply. Plenty of exhilarating rambles may be found within the compass of an afternoon, the hills being lofty, while for those who cannot climb there is the romantic valley of the Wye, called Ashwood Dale.



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CHAPTER XI. BY THE MIDLAND LINE.

But the dell,
Bathed in the mist, is fresh and delicate
As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
When through its half-transparent stalks at eve
The level sunshine glimmers with green light.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

HE opening of the Midland line through Marple, like that of the L. & N. W. through Disley, was



hailed with immense delight by all lovers of country rambles. Access thereto previously was possible only on foot, or by canal, and in either case the journey was rather long. Chadkirk, soon reached, is a celebrated old village thought by some to preserve the name of the once greatly-honoured patron-saint commemorated also in Chadderton, Chaddock, Chatburn, and Chat Moss; by others, to refer to one "Earl Cedda." Be that as it may, the tradition of the old missionary's once abiding here still clings to Chadkirk, and a clear spring by the roadside, upon the left, going up the hill near the church, and now lined with mosses, is to this day "St. Chad's well." The earliest ecclesiastical notice of the place does not occur till temp. Henry VIII. The hill itself, Werneth Low, is one of the highest in Cheshire, and the first of several such in that odd piece of the county which runs away to the north-east, stretched forth, as an old topographer says, "like the wing of an eagle." Like all the other eminences hereabouts, it commands very noble and extensive views. So complete, in truth, is the look-out in all directions from the summit, that to walk from end to end, is like pacing a watch-tower. The plains of Cheshire and South Lancashire lie to the west; Lyme, Marple, and Disley are seen to the south; and eastwards there are inviting bits of Derbyshire, here separated from Cheshire by the Etherowe, the opposite side charmingly clothed by the Ernocroft woods, while in the distance rise the vast moorlands of Charlesworth and Glossop. If bound for Werneth Low it is best, perhaps, after all, to quit the train at Woodley, or to make our way to that place from Parkwood. In any case, until Werneth Low has been ascended, knowledge of our local scenery is decidedly immature. [130]

The long and beautifully wooded glen extending from Romiley to Marple is Chadkirk Vale, and the stream, not as some suppose, the Mersey, but the above-named Goyt. That it is marked as the Mersey in Speed, and again in the Ordnance map, no doubt is true. White also calls it the Mersey, —all who do this considering that the Mersey begins with the confluence of the Etherowe with the Goyt, about half-a-mile below Compstall bridge. But the real point of commencing is where the Goyt is joined by the Tame, that is to say, a little below Portwood bridge, in the north-western suburb of Stockport. The ramble up the vale is in every portion delightful, closing in a deep ravine or clough called Marple Dell, the upper extremity spanned by the three great arches of "Marple Aqueduct." The height of this celebrated work from the bed of the river is nearly a hundred feet; yet, to-day it is overtopped by the Midland viaduct, from which, as we glide past, the dell is seen half as much again below. Aqueducts are common enough, and so are viaducts, but it is seldom that we have the opportunity of contemplating at the same moment a twofold series of arches of equal grandeur, the viaduct consisting of no fewer than thirteen. Everywhere right and left of the Goyt, hereabouts, there are unforbidden and usually quiet and shady paths, some of them possibly entered more readily by the ancient foot-roads from near Bredbury and Hazel-grove, but all converging towards Marple village. Three or four of the most interesting little cloughs or dells within the same distance of Manchester are here associated, the prettiest, perhaps, being those called Dan-bank wood and Marple wood. Lovely strolls are at command also by aiming for Otterspool Bridge, these chiefly through meadows and by the rapid river, which, when not perplexed by shifting islands and peninsulas, decked with willow-herb and butter-bur, glides with a stilly smoothness quite remarkable for one so shallow. At Otterspool the rush of water is sometimes very strong. In the olden times it was similar at Stockport, though now subdued by the constant casting in of dirt, if there be truth, that is, in the record that in 1745, when the Stockport bridge was blown up in order to check the retreat of the Pretender, it ran beneath the arches "with great fury." Upon the western banks of the Goyt, not very far from Chadkirk, perched upon a romantic natural terrace, there is another very interesting and celebrated Elizabethan mansion, Marple Old Hall, the more pleasing since, though subjected in 1659 to rather considerable alterations, it appears to retain all the best of the original characteristics. It is now draped also, in part, with luxuriant ivy. The historical incidents connected with Marple Hall are well known,—those, at least, which gather round the name of Cromwell. To our own mind there is something better yet,—the spectacle in the earliest months of spring of the innumerable snowdrops, these dressing the woods and slopes with their immaculate purity, almost to the water's edge. [131]

Proceeding direct to Marple by the Midland, the choicest of the many walks now at command begins with descent of the hill upon the left, then, as soon as the river is reached,—keeping as near it as may be practicable,—through the lanes and meadows as far as "Arkwright's Mill." No Ancoats mill is this one. Originally called "Bottoms Mill," it was erected in 1790 by the celebrated Mr. Samuel Oldknow, of whom so many memorials exist in the neighbourhood, including a lettered tablet in Marple church, and who would seem to have been associated with Arkwright in many of his most important undertakings. The mill in question was built, as Mr. Joel Wainwright correctly states, [18] upon the lines of the famous one at Cromford. Embosomed in a romantic valley, and surrounded by fine trees, among which are walnuts—for in tree-planting, as in other things, Mr. Oldknow displayed exceptional good taste—it gives the idea less of a cotton-mill than of some great institute or retreat, and proves that in the country, at least, scenes of manufacturing need not by any means be, as usual, depôts of ugliness. Soon after passing the mill, the path continues by the river-side, through pleasant meads and under the shadow of the trees to the point where the stream is crossed by Windybottom Bridge, where the hill has now to be ascended, either leftwards for Marple Ridge and Disley, or turning to the right for Marple village. Either way, the walk is delightful, and always at an end too soon. Another charming way from Arkwright's mill to the bridge is along the slope on the Derbyshire side of the water, called Strawberry Hill, but this is only for the privileged. Down in this sequestered valley, if we love the sight of wild-flowers, there is always great store; in May the fragrant wild-anise, and in autumn the campanula. [132]

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A third excellent Marple walk is to go up the hill from the station, turn instantly to the right just above the line, and alongside of it, and at the distance of a hundred yards or so find our way to the bank of the canal, crossing this and entering the fields through a stile. The path then goes past Lea Hey farm, and after awhile past Nab Top farm, beautiful prospects all the way. On the right, far below, we now soon have the river, eventually treading the meadows called Marple Dale, through which it meanders, and at the end of which the path mounts through the wood and enters Marple Park, the way back to the village now self-declared. [134]

After Strines, from near which place there is another way to Cobden Edge, next, if travelling by train, we get to New Mills, and before long to Chapel-en-le-Frith, once again a point for new beginning, since it is here that we start for Castleton. This is a jaunt purely for pedestrians, and for vehicles not unwilling to linger on the way, being one long climb, from which even steam, that, like Lord Chatham, "tramples upon impossibilities," for the present seems to shrink. England furnishes few such walks as this one from Chapel to Castleton, the concluding part in particular, by the ancient bridle-path, through the Windgates, or "Winnats,"—craggs rising upon each side to a height so vast that at times we seem absolutely shut in. The hugeness and the loneliness of this wonderful chasm, the bare grey slopes and bluffs of projecting rock relieved only by the presence of a few sheep, powerfully recall the great passes amid the mountains of the distant north. Once, however, it must have been comparatively well trodden, the Winnats, up to about eighty years ago, having been the sole thoroughfare from Chapel into Hope Dale. The high-road now curls round by the foot of Mam Tor, or the "Shivering Mountain," so called because of the continual dribbling away upon one side of the loose material of which this singular pile chiefly consists. The apex of Mam Tor is one thousand three hundred and fifty feet above the sea, yet so great is the elevation of all the surrounding country that it seems quite inconsiderable. Everywhere hereabouts, in fact throughout the journey, after leaving Chapel, a remarkable negative feature of the scenery is the absence of water. Plenty of the little recesses are here that remind us of those afar where moisture drips and sparkles on green moss. But we look in vain for the slightest trickling movement. There are none of the little springs which ordinarily upon the mountain-side seem longing for the time when they shall become cascades. In Lancashire a pass like the Winnats would have had a splashing and plentiful stream, or at all events would remind us of a Palestine wady. It is further remarkable that upon these hills there is no heather, nor is there a single plant of either whortleberry or bracken. The great attraction at Castleton consists in the caverns. The Blue-john mine should be visited in order to learn what stalactite drapery means; but the best part of the "Peak-cavern" is the vestibule, open to the daylight. Pushing into the interior, the vast altitude of one small portion, revealed for a moment by means of fireworks, no doubt has a kind of sublimity. Still there is nothing to please, unless it be pleasure to stand in a dark inferno that seems no part of our own world, and which can scarcely be entered without a feeling of dismay. The ruins of Peveril Castle, and the fine old Norman arch in Castleton church are both very interesting to the archæologist. The position of the former is most curious, the castle seeming from the foot of the hill to stand upon a simple slope of turf, whereas in reality just behind it there is an impassable abyss. [135]

This inestimable line, the Midland, carries us also to "Miller's Dale," from which station there is a branch at an acute returning angle to Buxton; thence onwards to "Monsal Dale," Hassop, Bakewell, Rowsley, Darley, and Matlock. Monsal Dale, *ipsissima*, has been called the "Arcadia of the Peak." It may be so. Remembering the ancient and golden canon that it is the eye of the lover that makes the beauty, the judgment may be let stand as one that was true and just to the man who pronounced it. The poet asks, "Who can paint like nature?" Surely he forgot the sweet facility of the human heart; in any case, there are no festoons like those woven by the spirit of man. Hassop, the next in order, is the nearest point of departure, on foot, for Chatsworth, though Bakewell has somewhat the advantage as regards scenery upon the way. Bakewell is the centre also for Haddon Hall, reached thence, on foot, in half an hour. Rowsley supplies the carriage-way to Chatsworth, and a shady and retired walk thereto along the western side of the stream. From this point also access is easy to Lathkill Dale, and many another of the gems of Derbyshire. Darley Dale, with its majestic yew, one of the oldest and grandest trees in England, and Matlock, with its mighty Tor, are places for the longest of summer days—we can do with no less—when the sunshine is oriental and sunset is a kaleidoscope. [136]

For a simple afternoon, there is nothing within easy reach more delicious than Miller's Dale itself, the significance of which name is really the lucid and babbling Wye, in its sweetest portion, and the unique recess which holds Chee Tor, not to mention the pretty Wormhill springs. The entrance to the vale is close to the station, the path lying first through a long-extended grove of trees, then changing to the green turf of a most beautiful seclusion, the ground rising in pleasant slopes, smooth except where broken by uncovered rock, while by our side, all the way, the stream runs peacefully, circling at times in quiet pools, or quickening in ripples that seem to speak, the shallower parts decked with pebbles that are covered, when the sun shines, with lacework of leaf-shadows. The springs are at the foot of the slope where a steep and rugged path leads to Wormhill. The water wells out of the ground just as in the streets of a city when some great conduit underneath has given way, being derived, there can be no doubt, from some far-distant original source, whence it has travelled by secret subterranean channels. The phenomenon is in Derbyshire by no means an uncommon one. Streams in several places suddenly lose themselves in the ground, bursting out again, it may be miles away, after the manner of the Guadalquivir;—here, at Wormhill, it appears, nevertheless, to have its most pleasing illustration. The Tor is found in the magnificent gorge in front, a stupendous mass of limestone, rising vertically from the water's edge, with a grand curvilinear outline of nearly a quarter of a mile in extent, the surface uniformly grey and bare, except for scattered ivy and a few iron-like yews that are anchored in [137]

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the crevices. Upon the opposite side there is a corresponding cliff, but less precipitous, and clothed in every part with half-pendulous shrubs and trees. This wonderful scene may be reached also from Ashwood Dale, starting from Buxton, and when about half-way to Bakewell creeping down on the left to the margin of the stream. The path is romantic, but cannot be recommended, being in many parts difficult and here and there decidedly perilous.



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CHAPTER XII. THE NORTH-EASTERN HIGHLANDS.

My heart leaps up when I behold
The rainbow in the sky—
So was it when I was a boy;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!

WORDSWORTH.



OR our present purpose it is convenient to include, under the general title of the North-eastern Highlands, the vast mountain district, occupying portions of three counties, which extends from the Peak to the neighbourhood of Greenfield. Reached in part by the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire system, in part by the L. & N. W. Huddersfield line, it is tolerably well-known to travellers by those railways. They are cognizant of it as a region of lofty moorland, bleak and uninviting except at grouse-time. To people in general, however, it is as strange as Norway; and no wonder, since a visit to any one of the better portions implies a love of adventure which, if not exceptional, is infrequent. Glorious, nevertheless, are those untouched and silent wastes. Thousands of their acres have never felt the ploughshare, nay, not even the spade, and probably never will. In parts they seem to belong less to the existing order of nature than to obsolete ages, suggesting, like the Sahara, the idea of a former and exhausted world. Seal Bark might be the relics of some ancient mountain, torn to fragments when the wind whistled among the Calamites and the Sigillarias, now nothing but bones, nameless and immemorial.

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The southernmost portion of this huge tract of wilderness is occupied by Kinder Scout, the highest factor of the Peak, the elevation being nearly two thousand feet above the sea; and which, presenting a "broad bare back" or plateau of fully four miles in length from east to west, with a width of more than half as much, is distinguishable at a glance, though often cloud-capped, from all its neighbours. Unfortunately for the rightful claims of massive Kinder, this great length detracts from its majesty, since the majestic, to be appreciated, always demands a certain amount of concentration. In substance, like most other parts of our "north-eastern highlands," Kinder Scout is millstone-grit, thickly overlaid with mountain-peat, the foothold of wiry scrub, though, here and there presenting bold escarpments. The surface is deeply fissured by rills of drainage-water, and hillocks and depressions are universal. Paths cross it in various directions, but these of course are only for the brave.

The best route, when it is desired to ascend this noble eminence, is *viâ* Hayfield, beginning at Bowden Bridge, and going up the valley past Farlands. It is indispensable, however, either to be provided with a map, or to be accompanied by a guide, as well as to take precautions in regard to possible trespass.^[19] Once upon the summit, the reward is ample, alike in the magnificent scenery, rich with distant purple shadows, and in the inspiring atmosphere. If in the landscape there is nothing gay and festal, no slight thing is it to stand in the presence-chamber of these antique solitudes, reading the silent history of centuries of winter ravage, so terrible that no wonder the very rocks have thrust up their grey heads to ask the meaning of it. No slight thing is it either at any time to find ourselves beside the very urn of a bounding and musical stream, such as trots along the valley, this one having its birth in "Kinder Downfall"—a far-seen shoot of water from the western cliff, a single silver line of pretty cataract that might have heard of Terni and the Bridal Veil, and so much the more precious because the only one of its kind within the distance, which is from Manchester, say precisely twenty miles. Rain of course is needed, as at Lodore, for the full development.

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The writer of the "Guide" says that another very beautiful and not infrequent spectacle to be

witnessed here is when in wet weather, or after a storm, the wind blows strongly from the W.S.W. "Coming from the direction of Hayfield, it sweeps over the Upper Moor and the bare backs of the bleak Blackshaws, and beating against the high flanking walls of rock is concentrated with prodigious power into the angle of the mountain, forcing back the whole volume of the cascade, and carrying it up in most fantastic and beautiful lambent forms, which are driven back again as heavy rain and mist for half a mile across the bog, then perhaps to return to be shivered into spray once more, unless in some momentary lull the torrent rushes down in huge volume." "Sometimes," he adds, "in winter, the fall, with the huge walls of rock flanking its sides, becomes one mass of icy stalactites, which as the sun declines present a magnificent spectacle." According to Mr. H. B. Biden, in *Notes and Queries*, Feb. 16th, 1878, though other writers think differently, and, as it seems to us, less reasonably, it is to the downfall that Kinder Scout owes its name. Kin-(cin)-dwr-scowd, he tells us, in Cymraeg signifies "High water cataract." [142]

Keeping to the main line, the original "Sheffield and Manchester," half an hour carries us to Broadbottom and Mottram-in-Longdendale, where we stop in order to make acquaintance with the lively Etherowe, which here divides Cheshire from Derbyshire, running on to Compstall, where, as above stated, it enters the Goyt. The scenery all the way to the point of confluence is alluring. On the Cheshire side of the stream the slope is occupied in part by Bottoms-hall Wood, through which there is a footway to Werneth Low, and then to Hyde or Woodley, a very pleasant sufficiency for an afternoon. On the Derbyshire side, after crossing a few fields, Stirrup Wood forms a beautiful counterpoise to Bottoms-hall; and when through this we are upon Stirrup-benches, famous for profusion of the Oreads' fern—that fragrant one so fittingly dedicated to the nymphs who once upon a time danced on green slopes around Diana, [143]

Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades.

Botanists call it the *Lastrea Oreopteris*. It is well to be reminded by them that scientific nomenclature is something more than Greek and Latin, and a burden for the memory, and that all the best and oldest portion of it lies bosomed in poësy. The mythical Oreads themselves are not required, for we have better ones in our live companions; but of the memory of them it would be an irreparable loss to be spoiled.

Above Stirrup-benches comes Ludworth Moor. Then far away, again up above, the grand mountain-terrace called Charlesworth Coombs, the semi-circular and denuded face of which is in some parts very nearly perpendicular, the ridge affording, yet once again, supreme views. On every side there is a tumultuous sea of mountain-crests, with intermixture of sweet green knolls, often wooded, in the relish of which, as upon Kinder, one thinks of the immortals in art and literature,

Who never can be wholly known,
But still their beauty grows.

On the contrary side are the Glossop moors; within the valley, the thriving town after which they are named; and the remarkably beautiful cone, covered with trees, called Shire Hill, an isolated mound that looks as if it might have been tossed there in pastime by the Titans. Glossop, as every one knows, has a station of its own, which should be remembered not only for the sake of Shire Hill, but for Lees-hall Dingle, Ramsley Clough, Chunal Clough, Melandra Castle, and Whiteley Nab, the climb to the brows of which last is no doubt somewhat arduous, but well repaid. On summer Sunday mornings, very early, when the smoke has had time to dissolve, the Glossop people say they can distinguish even Chester and the sea. Ramsley Clough, a romantic defile, apparently under the special protection of the deities of the fountains, and the stream down which would be more fitly designated a thousand little waterfalls, is remarkably prolific in mosses and other green cryptogamous plants. "Melandra Castle"—an old rampart, with a vast quantity of stones dug out or still embedded, is supposed, on the showing of some fragments of Roman tiles, to date from not later than A.D. 500. [144]

Mottram-in-Longdendale, like Charlesworth, abounds in bold and romantic scenery, though the elevation is much less, the height of Mottram church above the sea being only about four hundred and fifty feet. Tintwistle and the neighbourhood also furnish endless recreation, as, indeed, does the whole country as far as Woodhead. The railway runs up the valley of the Etherowe, which river rises in the moors above, and has at this part been converted, by barricading, into five successive *quasi*-lakes,—not so picturesque, perhaps, as some of the other great reservoirs we have made acquaintance with, but still furnishing an agreeable spectacle, alike from the train and from the hills. They contribute the chief portion of the Manchester waterworks storage; the collecting-grounds, which are estimated to have an extent of nearly nineteen thousand acres, consisting chiefly of moorland, covered, as at Kinder, with immense sponges of mountain-peat. Retaining the rain, these serve a purpose corresponding to that of the snows and glaciers upon the Alps, so various are the ways in which the munificence of nature is expressed. Mounting on to the moors at the entrance to the Woodhead tunnel (by the brookside) we presently find a clough, a waterfall, and the beginnings of the river Derwent. Crossing the river, as the alternative, there is a fine walk to Tintwistle, and thence, over other seemingly boundless moors, to Staley Brushes. [145]

But now we get to a district better sought by travel on the L. & N. W. line, the long and picturesque portion of it, that is, which runs through the Saddleworth valley *en route* for Leeds. With the mind absorbed in thought of the place one is bound to, or of the duties or occupations there awaiting our arrival, the scenery right and left of a railway often receives a very indifferent amount of attention. The line from Ashton to Huddersfield, excepting only the great tunnel, is one

of those, however, which should never be used heedlessly. The prospects are never wide-extended, for the track is entirely through deep valleys: it is the slopes ascending from these which are in many parts picturesque; if we think ever so slightly of what they lead up to, they possess the still better quality of significance.

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In the by-gones the "Brushes," briefly so designated, were almost as noted with the old Lancashire naturalists as Cotterill. The ravine so called, grey crags guarding the entrance, and a stream, with innumerable little mossy waterfalls descending from some undiscovered fount above, was renowned not more for its wild grandeur than for its botany and ornithology. Now it is only historical, the adaptation of the best part to the purposes of a waterworks company having effaced all the leading characteristics. The wheel-path remains much as it was, at least above the dam, and by pursuing this, a somewhat long ascent, we find ourselves once again upon the moors, here called "North Britain." Two courses present themselves now. One is to bend to the right, returning by way of Hollingworth; the other to strike off sharply to the left, and after a while, descend to the railway. The first-named supplies views of extraordinary breadth and changefulness, extending up and across the Tintwistle valley, and covering the hills above Dinting and Glossop; the Hollingworth reservoirs (supplementary to those of Woodhead, and well set-off with trees,) contributing in the best manner to the power of the landscape as a whole. The Holyngworthe family (for such is the ancient and proper spelling of the name) up to the time of the death of the last representative, had been seated here from times anterior to the Conquest, thus reminding one of the Traffords of Trafford Park. The hall, a quaint relic of the past, now tenanted by Mr. Broderick, is to a considerable extent, of temp. Henry VI. By taking the leftward path, over the heather, opportunity is acquired for mounting the lofty crest, said to have been once occupied by "Bucton Castle;" a fortress, to say the least of it, semi-fabulous, though there is no reason to doubt that in the Armada times, Bucton, like Alderley Edge, was used as a signalling station. In case of need, flames shooting up from the topmost peak, would be visible, on clear nights, at a distance of at least twenty miles.

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Reference was made, a page or two back, to Seal Bark. For this we quit the line at Greenfield, first ascending past "Bin Green" to the "Moorcock," vulgarly "Bill's-o'-Jack's," from the heights around which the outlook over the adjacent country is once again marvellous. Very curious, too, and in itself well worth the climb, is the far-seen rock "Pots and Pans," well, if not elegantly, so named, for on drawing near it is discovered to be an immense mass of millstone-grit, left there since the glacial period, with about a dozen roundish cavities upon the top, the largest of them more than a yard across by about fifteen inches in depth, and nine of the group usually holding water. Local superstition, as would be expected, attributes these singular basins to the Druids, who are supposed to have excavated them for ritual purposes; but, as in other places—for such cavities are by no means confined to Greenfield—there can be no hesitation in regarding them as pure works of nature. Millstone-grit is, in parts, peculiarly inadhesive. Exposed as this rock has been for untold ages to the beating of tempests, its softer portions, where the cavities are, have been slowly fretted away, and we are asked to recall nothing more than the ancient proverb. Keeping to the road, by degrees the elevation becomes so great that the topmost part is playfully termed the "Isle of Skye." It is hereabouts that the cloudberry, that most artistic of northern fruits, never seen and unable to exist upon lower levels, is for our own neighbourhood, so plentiful. When ripe, so thick is the spread of rosy amber that the spectacle is most bright and pretty, the ground seeming strewn with white-heart cherries. Singular to say, although very nice to human palates, the grouse leave it untouched, turning to the whortleberry and the cranberry.

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As the "Druidical" origin has been popular, and lest there may still be a lingering doubt with some as to the natural origin of the "Pots and Pans," it may be added that upon the high grounds within a few miles of Todmorden there have been reckoned up nearly eight hundred similar cavities, the diameter varying from a few inches to four or five feet. They may be observed indeed in every stage of formation, thus altogether neutralizing the idea of their having been produced by artificial means. They occur, moreover, only in this particular series of the millstone-grit, other descriptions of grit in the neighbourhood—those not so amenable to the action of the weather—being entirely without. Very often, too, the basins are in positions such as neither Druids or any one else would ever select for ritual or ceremonials. The number of basins is itself an argument against the Druidical origin, since so many would never possibly be required, to say nothing of the fairly determined fact that the Druidical altar was usually a *cromlech*, formed by placing a great slab of stone horizontally upon the edges of two other slabs fixed in the ground vertically.

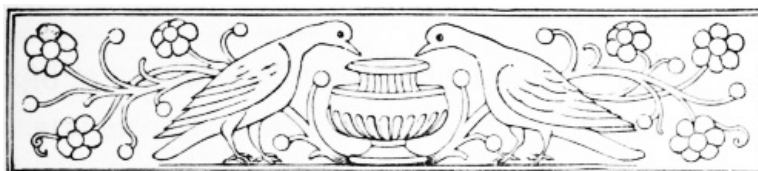
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But we are bound for Seal Bark. To get hither, the road must be quitted near the "Moorcock," and a way found through the fir-wood to the bottom of the valley, then re-ascending by the borders of the stream. A water so wild and beautiful it would be difficult to find nearer than Scotland or Carnarvonshire. Sliding, gliding, tumbling, in every conceivable mode, now it hurries along a smooth and limpid current; now it plays with the boulders, and changes to little cascades; now it fills little bays and recesses with reposing foam as white as snow, or that are alive with circular processions of untiring bubbles that swim awhile delicately, round and round, then, like the dancers in Sir Roger de Coverley, when they bend beneath the arch of lifted arms, rejoin their first partners and away down the middle, away and away, as swift as thought. Great defiles open on the right and left, Rimmon Clough and Birchen Clough, at the foot of which stands the one solitary tree of this grand wilderness—a mountain-ash, the tree of all others accustomed to loneliness. Above, at a vast height, is Ravenstone Brow, so named from the number of birds that once nested thereabouts, and where cuckoos still come. When at length we arrive at Seal Bark, who shall mistake it? All the waste and broken rock of a kingdom seems to have been pitched

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over the brow, and let fall and roll or stop just where it liked. The probability is that at some remote period the torrent undermined one side of the gorge, the ruins toppling over much in the same way as those of the ancient Clevedon shore, where it is plain that the fragments owe their present position to the remorseless beating of the sea.

For those who care to run on through the great Standedge tunnel, three miles and sixty-four yards long, thus getting to Marsden, there is an extremely fine mountain-pass called Wessenden Clough, the heights on either hand not less than a thousand feet, and once again a rushing torrent. There is a path back to Greenfield over the moors, but the way is rather long, except for the practised. The great tunnel at Woodhead, upon the Sheffield line, often thought to exceed the Standedge, is, we may here remark, twenty yards shorter.



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CHAPTER XIII. BAMFORD WOOD.

So rich a shade, so green a sod,
Our English fairies never trod;
Yet who in Indian bower has stood,
But thought on England's "good green wood?"
And bless'd, beneath the palmy shade,
Her hazel and her hawthorn glade,
And breath'd a prayer (how oft in vain!)
To gaze upon her oaks again?

HEBER.



FORTY years ago no part of our neighbourhood more abounded in natural attractions than the district which comprises Moston, Blackley, Boggart-hole Clough, Middleton, Bamford Wood, and the upper portions generally of the valleys of the Medlock and the Irk, the latter including that pretty little cup amid the grassy and tree-clad slopes still known as "Daisy Nook." How charmingly many of these places have been introduced into our local literature needs no telling. Samuel Bamford was not the man to misapprehend the beauty of nature. Throstle Glen was one of his favourite resorts. Edwin Waugh, happily, is still with us, not alone in perfect story, but ready with the always welcome living voice. The spread of building and of manufacturing has induced heavy changes in almost every portion of the district mentioned, changes partaking, only too often, of the nature of havoc, especially in the immediate vicinity of the streams. So long, however, as it holds centres of social and intellectual culture and refinement—Mr. George Milner lives at Moston—the mind does not care to contrast the present with the past, accepting the record, and in that quite willing to rest. The district in question is peculiarly interesting also from the fact of its having been one of the principal scenes of the work done by the old Lancashire "naturalists in humble life" during the time that they earned their reputation. A noted locality for hand-loom silk weaving, it was long distinguished in particular for its resident entomologists, the delicacy of touch demanded by that elegant art being just that which is needed when one's play-hours are spent with Psyche; upon the same occupation would seem indeed to have arisen yet another of the old characteristic local tastes—that for the cultivation of dainty flowers, such as the auricula and the polyanthus. Floriculture is still pursued with fair success, though on a smaller scale; entomology, we fear, is like the hand-loom, almost forgotten. We should remember, also, that Alkrington Hall, near Middleton, was the residence of the celebrated Sir Ashton Lever, gentleman, scholar, and naturalist, and that it was by him that the innumerable objects of the famous Leverian Museum were brought together. While a resident at Alkrington Hall (the ancient family seat) he had the best aviary in the kingdom. In 1775 the museum was removed to London, and ten years afterwards it was sold by auction piecemeal. Sir Ashton's Manchester town house was that one in "Lever's Row," now called Piccadilly, which has for many years been the "White Bear" hotel. When he died, in 1788, this house was advertised as eligible for a ladies' school, being so far away from the centre of business, and fields within a few yards!

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"White Moss," as before-mentioned (p. 60), has long since been converted into farm-land, but in the days referred to was still in its glory, dull to look at, no doubt, but to the interrogator a local garden of Eden. Never shall we forget the genial smile that rippled old George Crozier's broad, round, rosy, white-fringed face as one sunny afternoon in Whitsun-week, 1839, we stepped with twenty or more under his guidance for the first time upon the elastic peat, and

beheld the andromeda and the pink stars of the cranberry, these also for the first time. To Crozier the pretty flowers were familiar as the hills; his joy was to watch the delight they gave the juveniles. Presently a man came up and asked if we were "looking for *brids*." A little puzzled at first by the strange inquiry, the mystery was soon solved by his taking off his hat and showing it stuck full of butterflies, the "birds," or in his homely Anglo-Saxon, the "brids" caught during his ramble. Among the more remarkable insects then to be captured on White Moss were the showy beetle called *Carabus nitens*, the glittering green stripes of its wing-cases edged with a band of brilliant copper-colour; the fox-moth, *Lasiocampa rubi*, so called from its peculiar foxy colour; and the emperor-moth, *Saturnia pavonia*, for which the moss had been from time immemorial a noted locality. Great has been the sport of many an entomologist, as, sitting on White Moss on a fine day in early summer, with a captured virgin female of this beautiful creature, the *antennæ* of which are like ostrich plumes, the males have flocked to him, or rather to *her*, by the hundred, for the virgin female of the emperor-moth, though she can fly, prefers to sit still until she has been visited by an individual of the other sex. Up to this period she exudes a delicate odour which attracts the latter from long distances, those which have far to come, and arrive late, or not till after the advent of the first, turning back, unless captured by the entomologist's net, as soon as they perceive by their wonderful instinct that she is virgin no longer. The wings of the males, as with most other kinds of butterfly, are rarely found perfect, except when first fledged. Flying about in ardent search of the female, they tear and chip them against the heath and other plants with which they come in contact through their impatience. The plant that chiefly attracted attention on that memorable day was the cotton-sedge, the most beautiful production of the moorlands, and conspicuous from afar as its silvery-white tassels bend and recover before the breeze. Carrying off a great handful, "Look!" said the rural children in the lanes, amazed that any one could care for such rubbish, "there's a man been getting moss-crops!" All the mosses about Manchester produce the cotton-sedge, but never have we seen such luxuriant specimens as in the ditches that were then being cut for the draining of White Moss. Three species occur, the broad-leaved, the narrow-leaved, and the single-flowered, the tufts of the latter being upright instead of pendulous. Their beauty, unhappily, is their only recommendation, for the herbage is rough and coarse, and altogether unfit for pasture, and the cotton, so called, is cotton only in name. It cannot be manufactured; the hairs are too straight and too brittle. Instead of twining and entangling, like the filaments of true cotton, they lie rigidly side by side, resembling true cotton merely in their whiteness, and could no more be spun into yarn than slate-pencils could be twisted into a cable.

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Boggart-hole Clough, a little nearer Manchester, was reached most readily at the time spoken of, and of course is so still, by way of Oldham Road, going by omnibus or tram-car as far as the end of the first lane carried over the railway. There are plenty of roads *under* arches formed by the railway, but these will not do; it must be the first that goes *over* the embankment. Crossing the line at the point in question, a descending path presently brings us to Jack's Bridge, a sweet little dell, consecrated by one of nature's own poets, then a resident at Newton Heath:

Jack's Bridge! thy road is rough,
But thy wild-flowers are sweet!

Other fields gradually lead on towards Moston, several of them containing large "pits," or ponds, where, in July the white water-lily may be seen in its lustrous bloom, and the Comarum, covered with its deep-red blossoms and ripening fruit; and from there the way is easily found into the clough, which is entered about the middle. On the left, from this point, there is an enticing field-path by the side of the stream to the Blackley road; on the right we mount into the sylvan part, and see for ourselves how well merited is the reputation of this once-affrighting haunt of the boggart. All the charms of a leafy and flowery solitude are there assembled. Not those of the old, old forest, perfect in forest-ways, these we must not look for; but of the gentle ravine, wherein we cannot be lost, and which often pleases so much the more because less grand, since in all things while it is the great and sublime that we *admire*, that which we *love* is the little and measurable. Beautiful trees are here, that among their boughs give ever-pleasing glimpses of soft scenery, and in its season, white patches of bridal May,

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The milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale,

and that never hinder the sight of the azure overhead; and if while pushing our way through the brown remains of last year's ferns, brambles with their long arms and claws always seeking to clutch at the traveller, insist on plucking off one's cap just to show that the way is "on sufferance;" well, never mind, a lively little rill running in parts through beds of wild mint makes a pleasant noise, and wherever a sparkle is wanted to relieve the still and motionless, a silver eye or a glittering rapid is not wanting. Of course we must take with us a disposition to enjoy. "A song," says some author, "is thrown away that is not in the same key as the listener."

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The clough is not distinguished by anything special in the way of plants, though we have gathered there fine sprigs of the sweet woodruff. As a retreat, however, from the noise and bustle of the town, and the only place of the kind in that direction, it must always be precious to the lover of nature. Unfortunately, the path has of late years become very much disturbed through the falling away of the bank, the steepness of which, and the weight of the trees, unprovided with sufficient anchorage by reason of the lightness of the soil, causes continual landslips, so that now there are in many places rather dangerous declivities. Many of the trees that once stood erect upon the brows, now lie ingloriously with their heads in the brook beneath, and their roots in the air. The increase of buildings about Newton and Failsworth, and the consequent incessant raids of destroying boys, have also tended of late years to mar the place considerably; and now, in 1882, it has to be said with deep regret, that the regular Sunday resort to Boggart-hole of the

lowest roughs of the neighbouring villages, leaves it for the week-day visitor tattered and torn and soiled beyond recovery. The signal, with every new season, for renewed mischief, is the opening of the golden willow-bloom, now not a tenth in quantity of what it was even in 1850. These roughs are the thousand times more affrighting bogbarts of to-day, masters, permittedly by the authorities, of a place once another Kelvin Grove, [158]

Where the wild rose in its pride
Paints the hollow dingle side,
And the midnight fairies glide,
Bonnie lassie, O!

We have spoken of Boggart-hole Clough in conformity with the generally current idea, namely, that in the olden time it was a haunt or habitation of "boggarts." Boggart-hole is thought by some to be a mistaken and enlarged spelling of Boggart Hall, the appellation of a house near the head of the clough, once and for a long while of evil repute as the home of an unclean spirit. Samuel Bamford seems to favour the popular conception, probably because unwilling to disturb it, though he himself never hints at the existence in this clough of any particular uncanny inmate. The boggart of the hall was no other, it is further contended, than the "brownie" found in some shape or other all the world over, superstitions of this character being co-extensive with human nature, sometimes vulgarized, sometimes exquisitely etherealised, and taking as many forms as there are powers of fancy in the human mind. The pixies of Devonshire and Titania's "Sweet Puck" belong to the poetical line of thought; the ugly and mischievous "boggarts" to the rustic one. The entire subject has been dealt with by Harland and Wilkinson in the *Lancashire Folklore*. The legend is also given in the *Traditions of Lancashire*, the compiler of which would seem to have adopted an earlier version in the *Literary Gazette* for 1825. There is yet another surmise, that "boggart" in this particular instance is a mistake for "Bowker," a family of which name is said to have once occupied the hall. Possibly. Admitting either explanation to be the true one and finally established, the received idea still goes abreast of that beautiful old tendency of the universal human heart to assign spiritual beings to every part of physical nature, the basis of all the primitive religions, and which will endure when etymology is dead. Mrs. Banks supplies yet another version, referring us to the time of Prince Charles Edward, the Pretender, one of whose unfortunate followers was constrained to hide himself in the clough, friends who were in the secret giving out, in order to hinder search by the enemy, that the place of refuge was the abode of demons. [159]

The path through the fields referred to as the best for approaching the clough from Manchester, turns up when near Blackley through a little wood, and thence into meadows, which very agreeably abridge the distance homeward, especially if we go at that best season of all for visiting Boggart-hole, when the newly-cut hay is scenting the air, and tiny hands are trying to help the great rakes and forks of the farmer's troop, and the beautiful crescent of the young moon hangs golden in the sky, and the bright reluctant twilight almost lasts to another day, lingering like a lover at the hand of his betrothed. The stream, it may be added, that winds its way along the bottom of the clough is a tributary of the Irk,—that unfortunate little river which, rising in or near tree-crested Tandle Hill, north-east of Middleton, seems to grow ashamed of its blackened waters as it creeps into the town by Collyhurst, and which, as it hastens to its oblivious refuge in the Irwell, is known to every one in its last leap,—the hideous fall underneath the Victoria Station, on the side next Millgate. "Manchester Rivers, their Sources and Courses," would form a capital subject for a book. The Mersey, the Irwell, the Irk, the Tame, the Etherowe, the Bollin, the Goyt, and several others, are full of interesting associations; and if they be not of the clearest water in their lower portions, remember the work they do. A limpid stream among the hills is lovely and poetical; but the most pleasing of all rivers are those of which the banks are occupied by an industrious and intelligent population; and we must not cry out too vehemently about the soiling and spoiling, unless it be easily avoidable and a piece of downright and wilful damage, when their first and highest value is that of facilitating industrial efforts, and helping on the prosperity of a town and nation. The truly poetical man is never a sentimentalist; and though he may pity the destruction of beautiful objects, he is content to see them converted into sources of general welfare, and to look elsewhere for new materials of enjoyment. [160]

Bamford Wood is a cluster of leafy dells or dingles, reached, in the first instance, by going to Heywood, the rather tedious and uninteresting streets of which have to be pursued till we come to "Simpson Clough." The dells are disposed in the form of a V, the upper extremities again forked, and feathering away until at last they merge into fields. Down every dell comes a stream, rushing over large stones, the various waters all meeting eventually in the angle of the V, and soon afterwards swelling the river Roche, which in turn flows into the Irwell not far from Radcliffe. The various portions have all their distinctive names, "Dobb-wood," upon the left, holds "Cheeseden-brook." Beyond this we have Windy-cliff-wood, Carr-wood and Jowkin-wood; while upon the right are Ashworth-wood and Bamford-wood, emphatically so called. The stream descending the latter is Norden-water. Exact routes through these pretty glades it is impossible to prescribe, so much must depend upon personal taste and leisure. The extent, the beauty, and the wildness, require in truth many visits to be appreciated. There is more than one round natural lawn in the curves of the stream, where the silence has often been broken by pic-nics and music. Most parts may be trodden dry-shod, but it is well always to reckon upon four or five miles and a few adventures. All ladies who go the entire circuit deserve to be commended as Bamford heroines. [161]

Not to leave the way altogether undescribed, the best mode of procedure upon arrival at Simpson Clough is perhaps, soon after entering, to ascend the path among the trees upon the left, then into some fields and to the edge of a precipice, from which a view is obtained of a

considerable portion of the wood, where an idea may be formed of the route it may be pleasantest now to follow. No part is uninteresting; the question is simply where to begin. Compared with the warm glades of Cheshire, Bamford Wood is upon the average quite a fortnight later in escaping from winter. Spring's "curled darlings" have already stepped into the green parlours of the Bollin valley, while up here a leaf is scarcely open; even the palm-willow, elsewhere always ready for the earliest April bee, is cautious and dilatory. The most interesting plant of the wood is the *Rubus saxatilis*, which, though found nowhere else in the neighbourhood of Manchester, is abundant near Coal-bank Bridge, but very seldom flowers. On some of the cliffs, at a tantalizing height, just out of reach of the longest arm, grows that beautiful sylvan shrub the Tutsan, *Hypericum Androsæmum*. The sides of the glen are in most parts lofty and steep, clothed with trees, and often decorated with little waterfalls, while the bed of the stream itself is so rugged that the wood after much rain is filled with the sound of its hindered efforts to escape. On emerging from the wood, at the upper extremity, or furthest from Simpson Clough, there is a fine walk over Ashworth Moor to Bury, from which place also it may be approached. [162]

In 1839 there was no "Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway." Now by its help we reach the beautiful sheet of water called, popularly, "Hollingworth Lake," but which, like the water at Lymm, Rudyard, and Taxal, is really no more than a reservoir, constructed about seventy years ago to supply, in part, the Rochdale and Manchester Canal. The circumference, which is very irregular, exceeds two miles. Rising high upon every side, the encircling hills have a wild and rugged grandeur that contrasts most agreeably with the smooth and tender beauty of the environments of the meres of Cheshire,—from their summits, upon a sunny afternoon, the effects are quite as pleasing as the average of those gathered above Ullswater. An obelisk upon the highest point marks Whiteley Dean, the view from which is wonderfully fine, reaching southwards to Manchester; while beyond Littleborough, amid great piles of hills, stands Brown Wardle, famous, like Bucton Castle, as an ancient signal station. Amid them is a mamelon quite equal in graceful outline to Shutlings Low, and decidedly taking precedence of the more familiar one called Rivington Pike, since the latter, when looked for at particular angles, disappears; whereas the Brown Wardle mound keeps fairly true to its outline from whatever point observed, at all events upon the southern side. The best view of it, so far as we know, is obtained from near "Middleton Junction." As the word "mamelon" does not occur in English dictionaries, it may be well to say that it denotes a smooth, round, evenly-swelling eminence, thrown up from amid hills already high, a feature in mountain scenery greatly admired by the ancient Greeks, who gave it a name of precisely similar signification, as in the case of that classic one at Samos which Callimachus connects so elegantly with the name of the lady Parthenia. [163]

Moving along the western borders of the lake, it is impossible for the eye not to catch sight of some curious projecting crags upon the topmost crest of the highest ground in front. These are the noted "Robin Hood Rocks" of the legend, the lofty hill upon which they are perched being Blackstone Edge itself, with, just below them, the remains of the still more famous Roman road. That Littleborough stands on the site of an ancient Roman station is well known. The road mounted the steep slope, crossed it, and then descended into Yorkshire, running as far as the city where Severus died. By reason, it would seem, of the extreme steepness, the construction is different from that of any other Roman road in the country, there being a deep groove along the middle of the accustomed pavement, designed apparently with the help of proper wheels to steady the movement of heavily laden trucks. In any case, there is not a more interesting scene near Manchester than is supplied upon the slopes of this grand range—Blackstone Edge—which if unpossessed of the drear wildness of mighty Kinder, is solaced by the placid bosom of distant Hollingworth. Two ways give access. We may ascend either from the margin of the water, proceeding through fields and the little glen called Clegg's Wood; or from Littleborough by the turnpike-road, turning off when about half-way up to the right, and then mounting again. At the height of about a quarter of a mile the road will be discovered—a belt of massive pavement, about forty feet in width, quite smooth, and overgrown with whortle and crowberry, except in parts where these have been cleared away with a view to minute examination of the stone-work. So bright is the colour of this heathy covering, compared with that of the general vegetation of the hill, that when the atmosphere is clear, and the sunshine favourably subdued, the road may be plainly discerned from the opposite side of the valley, a regular and well-defined streak of green. Arrived at the summit, a few yards over the level brow, we find the boundary-stone between the two counties, and from this point may trace the road for some distance onwards. [164]

Running on, past Rochdale and through the tunnel, again there is a quite new sphere of enjoyment in the country which lies on the northern side of the Todmorden valley, everywhere picturesque, and constantly branching into subordinate valleys with never-silent streams. The finest of them are the Burnley valley and the vast and romantic defile called, as a whole, Hardcastle Crag, though this name applies strictly to no more than the singular insulated masses of rock at the upper extremity or beyond the bridge. A more charming resort for two-thirds of a day the West Riding scarcely offers. The path is first through the so called "streets," at an angle of forty-five degrees, that lead towards Heptonstall, then along the crest of the hill until the point is reached for descending through the wood, at the foot of which, if the water be low enough, the stream may be crossed by stepping-stones. Clinging to them will be found in plenty that curious aquatic moss the *Fontinalis antipyretica*, so named by Linnæus in reference to the use which he says it was put to by the peasantry in Sweden. Possessed of properties so much the more singular from their occurrence in a water-plant, the country people, he tells us, were accustomed to use it to fill up the spaces between the chimneys and the walls of their houses, so as to exclude the air and serve as a protection against fire. The wood is in many parts quite a little natural fernery. We have on various occasions seen no fewer than five different species all [165]

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growing so near together that they could be touched without moving a single step—the common shield-fern, the broad-leaved sylvan shield-fern, the hard-fern, the oak-fern, and the beech-fern. Oak-fern, *Polypodium Dryopteris*, is a frequent inhabitant of the dells hereabouts where moist, growing in patches more than a foot across.



W. Hull.
Tho. Letherbrow.
Halewood Church.

[Larger image](#) (191 kB)

Like the rocks of Whaley Bridge, Kinder Scout, Greenfield, and Seal Bark, those of the Hebden valley consist of millstone-grit, alternating with shale, the latter cropping out chiefly along the course of the river. It was among these shales, though perhaps more particularly in portions laid bare during the construction of the line along the main or Todmorden valley, that Samuel Gibson, the once celebrated blacksmith-naturalist of Hebden Bridge, pursued his researches in connection with fossil shells, as described in the first volume of the *Transactions of the Manchester Geological Society* (1841). His work is said, in the volume in question, to have been carried on in "High Green Wood," and as regards the common use of this name, correctly so, as it is applied very generally to the entire valley, or from the village up to the insulated rocks. Properly, however, it denotes only a small portion near the latter. Gibson, a man wholly self-taught, and who kept to his anvil till nearly the time of his death, in the spring of 1849, possessed a vast amount of knowledge of almost every department of natural history. A considerable portion of his collection, comprising a cabinet of seeds of British plants, ferns, lichens, Marchantias, shells, and insects, was purchased, after his decease, for the Peel Park Museum. Another portion went to the museum once existing in Peter-street. The herbarium of flowering plants, valued at £75, went into the hands of Mr. Mark Philips. Most men suffer from some kind of constitutional malady. Poor Gibson laboured under an infirmity of temper which constantly brought him into collision with his fellow-students. He always meant well, as proved in his last famous battle over the *Carex paradoxa*; and probably had his life been a less lonely one the roughness would have got smoothed, and he would have been as friendly with all other men as with the writer of this little notice, which is intended rather to preserve the memory of a singularly acute and industrious observer of nature, working single-handed, in the face of enormous difficulties, than to imply the least reflection on his tendency to warfare. The distance of Gibson's home, twenty-four miles of coach-road, prevented his often coming to Manchester; but no man was ever more welcome. How different some of those he came among! As for old Crozier, whose name we have already mentioned two or three times, and whose work was so largely identified with White Moss, Boggart-hole Clough, and Bamford-wood, in temper and disposition he was Gibson's completest antithesis. No man has ever done more, in his own circle, to foster and diffuse the love of nature and of natural science—accomplishing this, as Crozier did, not so much through the variety and exactitude of his knowledge, as through the urbanity of his manner. Few are now living who remember Crozier; it may be allowed, therefore, to repeat what we said of him in 1858, wishing only that space would allow of an ample biography, since, although not a life of stirring incident, it was one of generous and unsophisticated good example. When first acquainted with him, the year after the accession of Her Majesty, he was curator of the Museum of Natural History then possessed by the Mechanics' Institution, and distinguished for his skill as a bird-stuffer, though his occupation by day, and up to six p.m., was that of a master saddler. The chief portion of that excellent collection, long since unhappily sold off, had been accumulated by the earliest of the Manchester Field Natural History Societies—a band of

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zealous, practical men who had associated themselves, in 1829, for the furtherance of botany, entomology, ornithology, and the allied sciences. The register of names includes those of the celebrated Edward Hobson, whose volumes of moss-books are contained in our Free Libraries, of Rowland Detrosier, of all, indeed, of the earnest scientific men of the time, Crozier of course in the front. They called themselves the "Banksians," and had regular indoor meetings up to 1836, when, owing to the loss of many members, Edward Hobson, the president, in particular, who died that year, there came a lull, and eventually a break-up. But Crozier was alive: that was enough; no world is ever so drowned but some little Ark floats on the surface of the waters; younger men arrived on the scene, the Directors of the Institution gave them every encouragement in their power, and in less than eighteen months the celebrated old Cooper-street "Natural History Class" came into existence. At intervals there were delightful evening meetings of the character, though less pretentious, that now-a-days are called *soirées*,—more than once under the presidency of the late Mr. James Aspinall Turner, always a warm and liberal patron of natural history; honoured also by the presence of visitors from Preston, Halifax, Warrington, and other towns from which the journey was then possible only by whip. After coffee had been served short essays were read, and from nine o'clock until half-past ten or so the company promenaded, examining the curiosities in the glass cases that covered the wall or those laid out upon the tables, and enjoying the social pleasure which grows so largely out of consociation based upon a definite and intelligent idea, and where there is plenty to feast the eye. No man entered more thoroughly into the spirit of these gatherings than George Crozier. They were his festivals and harvest-homes, prepared for long beforehand, and looked back upon as isles of light and verdure in his wake. His love of social gatherings, his skill as a practical naturalist, were equalled by his sagacity and shrewdness. "There," said he once, on the conclusion of the reading of a paper, "that is what we want; that wasn't learnt out of a book." His courtesy and generosity rose to the same level. Every Tuesday evening, when the members of the class assembled to compare their notes and discoveries of the past week, there was old Crozier, busy as usual with his birds, and only too glad to chat with his young disciples, withholding nothing he could tell that would interest and amuse, and, what was far more valuable, inspiring them with his own enthusiasm. This kind, warm-hearted, cheerful old man it was who, taking the young naturalists by the hand, first showed many of them the way to Baguley and to Carrington, to Greenfield and to Rostherne, pointing out the rarities which his large experience knew so cleverly how to find, and communicating his various knowledge with the unselfishness of one in a thousand. Nothing seemed to come strange to him. Great as was his botanical information, he excelled in a still higher degree as an entomologist and ornithologist; he was acquainted with the shape and habits of every bird and every butterfly, every branch of his knowledge helping him to enlarged success in the prosecution of the others, botany aiding entomology, and entomology facilitating botany. It was his extensive and accurate knowledge of plants that rendered him so expert in finding rare insects, being aware what species the latter feed upon, and familiar with their forms. He showed, in the highest degree, how happy a man can make himself by the study of natural history, however humble his station in life, and however confining his employment. For Crozier, like all the rest of the old Lancashire naturalists, got his living, as already indicated, by manual labour, exercised in a shop on Shudehill, the last place in the world one would look to for the abode of a naturalist, yet made by his intelligent pastimes one of the most contented in Manchester. Here we have looked over his dried plants, his choice exotics given him by friendly gardeners, examined his birds and shells, and listened while he told his adventures "by flood and field." Of such he was always ready with large store, being, as an old Banksian associate reminds me, in a letter of pleasant anecdote and reminiscence, "one of those plain, plodding, practical naturalists, whose knowledge the field and forest, the uplands and the watery cloughs, had far more contributed to give than the lore of books." * * * "The quiet, unromantic study of books," he continues, "would never have made either him or them what they were. Active adventure, real life within the whole domain of nature, was their condition of enjoyment; and, consequently, the secluded footpaths, the fine old green and lonely lanes, the umbrageous bosky dell, with its clear babbling brook, and rich with plants, insects, and minerals, were their haunts." In all his excursions he was joined by from three to a dozen of his companions in the love of science and nature; it should rather be said, perhaps, that he was generally one of every party made up by the naturalists of the day for the purpose of visiting the country, as there was but a single purpose among the whole. One of his warmest friends was Thomas Townley, originally of Blackburn, where the two men became acquainted, subsequently of Liverpool, and eventually of our own city. The circumstance is worth mentioning on two accounts. Next to a man's acts and principles, it is interesting to know who were his closest and oldest associates, since there is always a reciprocal though unconscious influence passing from one to the other, which explains a good deal of character; and in the second place, in addition to being an excellent botanist, Townley was a neat painter in water-colours, and claimed, with a justice that is most willingly acknowledged, the credit of drawing forth the youthful genius of his friend's son, the Robert Crozier of to-day. It is pleasant to think that the beautiful pictures which now decorate so many walls had their impulse in the little palette of the old botanist. Townley and Crozier were the first to design a "Manchester Flora," and but for Crozier's infirm health during the latter years of his life, the crude catalogue of 1840 would have been followed by a complete work, in which his own long observations and those of the other leading botanists of the district would have been consolidated. Crozier died before he could do the part intended. Townley, however, never let go the idea, and two years after Crozier's death his zeal and willingness as wielder of the "pen of the ready writer," and his wonderful memory for poetry, which here had congenial exercise, appeared in the work commonly known as "Buxton's Guide." So much poetry had Townley ready for introduction into it, that the useful and accurate little volume in question might easily have been swelled to double the size.[20] Townley could recite passages from any part of Pope's

Homer, and such was his admiration of that poem, that he repeatedly declared if he had his younger days before him he would learn Greek in order to peruse it in the original.

It may be added, in reference to Crozier, who was a well-built, portly man, quiet but merry, fond of a joke and a good story, mild and gentle, yet thoroughly independent, that his long and upright life, rejoiced by hearty and abiding love of nature, and the respect of every one who truly knew him, closed in 1847. He died in Peel-street, Hulme, on Friday, the 16th of April, and was interred at the Harpurhey Cemetery on the following Tuesday. Never was there a better example of the scientific man in humble life, or of the practical kind-heartedness and generosity that spring from simple, God-fearing virtue. His old friend, Townley, survived him ten years, coming to his own end September 9th, 1857. [174]

The old Banksian minute-books and other records and illustrations of the work of fifty years ago have, very fortunately, been preserved, and are now in the safe keeping of their proper inheritor. No written memorials of the Natural History class are extant, but four or five of the original members still venerate the name of their ancient leader.



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CHAPTER XIV. MERE CLOUGH.

O 'tis a quiet spirit-healing nook
Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he
The humble man, who in his early years
Knew just so much of folly as had made
His riper manhood more securely wise.

COLERIDGE.



ERE Clough! Where is that? Such will probably be the reception of our present title, at least in thought, by not a few of those whom we hope to be the means of introducing to this romantic little glen. For it is positively surprising how much of the rural beauty of our neighbourhood is unknown, even to those who delight in country scenes and the fresh air of the fields; and how often the very existence of it is unsuspected till some fortunate accident brings home the welcome truth. Nowhere within the same very short distance of Manchester is so much woodland beauty to be found as in Mere Clough and its immediate neighbourhood; nor is any place within four miles of the Cathedral the avenue to so many pleasant auxiliary walks. In botanical riches Mere Clough is second nearly to Bowdon, over which place it has the advantage of its earliest plants being among the rare ones of the Manchester flora, while its latest are some of the most beautiful and attractive. The name of "clough," though so familiar in Lancashire, is not known in the southern counties. Hence it may [176]

be useful to observe that "cloughs," beyond the Mersey, are those fissures or "clefts" in the ground which give the first and simplest idea of a valley. Formed by the rise, in opposite directions, of two gentle acclivities, which run for a short distance in a more or less irregular and winding parallel, and at last widely diverge, or else undulate away into the plain, these "cloughs" have in every case a little stream along the bottom, while the slopes on either side are clothed with trees and natural shrubbery. Along the borders of the stream there is a slender rustic path, which often quits the water-side to mount high upon the slope, and thus give pretty little peeps of the shining current down below and of the distant leafy intricacies of the wood. Rarely is there so much water as to form a deep and steady brook; in summer-time we may be sure it will be shallow enough to "make music to the enamelled stones," and beguile us onward with that beautiful magic which always accompanies the artless voices and tones of nature.[21] In the neighbourhood of Prestwich there are several such cloughs, the "Dells" below the church being the nearest and best known, and Mere Clough the longest and most romantic. The others are Hurst Clough, to the west of Stand, and Agecroft Clough, near the bridge of that name. All these cloughs bear more or less directly towards the Irwell, into which river their little streamlets convey themselves. The beauty of Prestwich Dells has long rendered the latter place a favourite resort. Easy, moreover, of access, and with the capital recommendation of a harbour of refuge close at hand, in the shape of the commodious and well provided Church Inn, no wonder that few except naturalists have cared to push on farther. It needs something more than invites people to a place like Prestwich Dells to take us to one still prettier, but where, as far as concerns supplies for the inner man, we are like sailors on the open sea—commanding only what we carry thither.

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The conveyance to go by, should the walk be thought too long, is the Whitefield omnibus. About three-quarters of a mile beyond Prestwich, through which village the omnibus passes, there is an old-fashioned "magpie" upon the left. Leave the omnibus here, and, going through the farmyard, follow the path through the field, keeping to the right of the new asylum, and in a few minutes the entrance to the clough will come in view. At first, the path is near the summit of the slope; afterwards it crosses the stream, and continues the rest of the way at the bottom. If we please, when half-way through, we may re-ascend (this time to the top of the northern slope), by going through the field upon the right, to where the great arches support the roadway, and so find our way by the carriage-track which leads to "The Park," the residence of Mr. R. N. Philips, and eventually through the private lodge-gate at the extremity, there emerging on to the public path by the reservoir, at nearly the same point that is reached by the lower one. The latter course has the advantage of preserving the feet dry, should the path by the stream be deceitful, as often happens after wet weather, and also of providing views of the surrounding country, but the lower path is considerably more romantic. The private grounds are exceedingly pretty and sylvan, and up to about half a century ago were used as pheasant-preserves. Like those at Norcliffe, they are not forbidden to legitimate and respectful request made a few days previously, with the understanding that there shall be no trowels carried.

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As stated in our second chapter, Mere Clough is fertile in curious plants. In every part there is abundance in particular of that beautiful reminder of pre-adamite vegetation, the sylvan horsetail, in scientific language *Equisetum sylvaticum*, in form resembling a tiny larch tree, the leaves, which are no longer or stouter than a violet stalk, curving outwards and downwards in the most graceful way imaginable, and forming a succession of little cupolas up the stem which they encircle. Varying from a few inches to nearly two feet in height when mature, and of a singularly delicate green, sometimes it tapers off to a point, sometimes is crowned with a kind of miniature fir-cone, which serves at once for flower and seed-pod, and will well repay minute examination. When ripe, an impalpable green powder dusts out of this little cone-like body, every particle a distinct and living seed, and originating a new plant, if not destroyed before it can germinate. Under the microscope, these particles perform most amusing evolutions. It is merely necessary that some one breathe upon them while we observe, to make every little atom twist and entangle its long arms as if it were an animated creature. A magnifying power of sixty is quite sufficient to show these curious movements, and the seeds, if preserved in a pill-box, will keep good for many years. All the neighbouring dells and groves likewise contain this charming plant, and growing, as it often does, in large patches, we seem to have woods within woods. Hurst Clough, best reached from Molyneux Brow, noted also for the *Rosa villosa*, is one of the richest. Not that it is confined to them, being more or less diffused in most directions out of Manchester, but it is here that it grows most plentifully and luxuriantly. Contemporaneous with the sylvan horsetail, there comes a second kind of golden saxifrage. The common sort was mentioned when describing Ashley meadows. This one, scientifically called the *alternifolium*, is larger and handsomer, as well as rare, and is to be gathered on the left hand borders of the stream, just after passing the white cottage in the middle of the clough. Another plant of special interest, and blooming at the same time, is the mountain-currant, *Ribes alpinum*, which grows on the bank of the half-lane, half-watercourse, running from the lower side of the reservoir towards the river. It is a large, green, leafy bush, with glossy foliage, and appears to be the only one in the Prestwich neighbourhood. How it got there is a botanical problem, yet only one out of many of the same kind. Nature is for ever putting some droll spectacle before our eyes, and playing pantomimes for our amusement and curiosity, if we would but care for them as they deserve. As Pott Shrigley is the place above all others for bluebells, so is Mere Clough the place above all others for its colleague the wood-anemone. Tens of thousands of this lovely flower, the fairest companion of the opening buds, grow in the open spaces among the trees at the lower part, sheeting them with the purest white, tinged here and there with a faint blush, like sunbeams falling on snow. On a fine day at the end of April or beginning of May, there is not a more charming picture to be found. In the moister parts of the clough, especially near the reservoir, may also now be seen in perfection the deep yellow marsh-marigold. Like the anemone, it is a common plant, but none the less to be admired.

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The same as to that dainty little flower, the wood-sorrel, which begins to open freely about the time that the anemones depart. Easily discovered by means of its curious leaves, which are formed of three triangular pieces, placed on the summit of a little stalk, and rise about three inches above the ground, no one can fail to be charmed with its fairy form and the delicacy of the lilac pencillings on the inner surface of the petals, which are white as those of the anemone itself. Anemone, translated, signifies "wind-flower," a name intended to denote fugacity of the petals, or fall at the first touch. But such is not the fate of the anemone-petals of to-day. The original application of the name would appear to have been to the cistus. It was into this last that the frail goddess transformed her love, her tears represented in the disappearance in a moment.

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Emerging from the clough, the difficulty is not which way to get home again, but which pleasant way to give the preference to. We may go past the dyeworks, and through the park to Agecroft Bridge; or turn up the lane that curls back towards Prestwich; or, best of all, make our way under the magnificent viaduct of the East Lancashire Railway, and then across the river to Clifton Aqueduct. Arrived here, there is another ample choice; either to ride home from the adjacent station (Clifton Junction); to descend to the Irwell bank, and walk through the meadows bordering the river to Agecroft Bridge; or to take the fields and canal bank, the latter in some parts very pretty, and so to Pendleton, where Mr. Greenwood will be glad to see us, and the feeling probably be reciprocal. To invigorate ourselves, if purposing to walk, it is prudent, and not difficult, to procure tea at one of the cottages near the station. At one in particular, standing back a little from the road, upon the left, with—at the bottom of the garden—a nice, cool, face-refreshing well, that we have seen give challenge on fair cheeks to the morning dew upon the rose, there is a free, plentiful, whole-hearted hospitality, that adds quite a charm to the associations already so pleasant, of summer afternoon in the sweet stillness of Mere Clough. The hostess is as large as her welcome; the bread and butter is incomparable. [22] Every one who has gone by train to Bolton or Bury, will remember this beautiful valley, sometimes called the Agecroft, sometimes after its river, the Irwell. On the left, as soon as Pendleton is passed, the high grounds of Pendlebury come into view, their brows covered with trees. On the right, first we have broad, sweet lawns of meadow and pasture, and in autumn yellow corn-fields; and, beyond these, rising in terraced slopes, with deep bays and rounded promontories, according as the hill recedes or swells, the woods overlooking Agecroft Park, presently succeeded by those of Prestwich. For fully two miles the eye rests upon rich masses of leaf, interrupted only by mounds of tender green, the crests of the Rainsall and Agecroft hills, and towards the close, the picturesque tower of Prestwich Church. The course of the river may be traced by the winding line of continuous foliage, but the water is too low down to be discerned until we catch sight of the white cottage at the foot of Mere Clough, immediately after passing which, if upon the Bury line, we continue along the viaduct and therefrom get a full view, as well as of banks lined to the water's edge with vegetation. Here the scenery changes entirely, though retained for a short distance on the Bolton line, and we quit the Agecroft valley. Not one of the other railway approaches to our town—ten minutes completing the journey—bears any comparison with this for beauty; indeed, it is quite a surprise to people entering Manchester for the first time by way of Bolton or Bury, to find so picturesque a country at the very edge.

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The best way to the valley on foot is to go over Kersal Moor, descending on the further side, and so onward, past the print-works, to Agecroft Bridge, which we must cross, and turn to the right. If more convenient, there is a way by Pendleton and Charlestown, crossing the Bolton railway, then along the path by the river-side. But this, as to its earlier part, is a disagreeable means of access, and very little is really gained. Going by Kersal, on the other hand, we come at once into a green, sequestered walk, which accompanying the river for about a mile, then changes to the bank of the canal, and will take us, if we please, to the aqueduct, and thence round by the cottages to the station. The road straight away from the bridge leads to Pendlebury, to which village there is also a pleasant path across the fields, after ascending the river-side some little distance. Keeping to the Kersal side of the river there is a delightful walk through Agecroft Park, beneath the woods, to the foot of the dells; another, by diverging a little to the left when out of the park, through a farmyard, to the river and viaduct; and if, instead of going through the park, we turn up on the right among the cottages, it is not difficult to penetrate the woods themselves, and to find one or two paths over the hills, all tending to Prestwich as a common point. So numerous and varied are the paths which converge hitherwards and in the direction of Clifton Aqueduct, that it is impossible to go wrong. Were we to give a preference, it would be to the walk first described, or that along the river-side, commencing at Agecroft Bridge, and having the river upon the right. The meadows abound with floral treasures, the rosy bistort, the blue geranium, and the fragrant ciceley, in their several seasons, and on the banks, at the further part, near the canal, may be seen the broad-leaved wood-stitchwort, *Stellaria memorum*, and the yellow dead-nettle. Early in June is the pleasantest time to go. The grass is then uncut, the sycamores are hung with their honeyed bloom, the clover glows like rubies, the white pagodas of the butter-bur, now gone to seed, stand up like the banners of an army, and we find "the *first* rose of summer, sweet blooming alone," amid thousands of juvenile green buds.

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But the yellow dead-nettle is the most interesting; it gives so useful a lesson in practical botany. The stem is perfectly square; the leaves grow two together; the large golden-coloured blossoms are set in verandahs round the stalk, each particular flower shaped like the jaws of some terrible wild beast, wide-open and ready to bite, while the stamens are invariably four in number—a pair of long ones and a pair of short ones. The seeds, also, are exactly four. Whenever these peculiarities co-exist in a plant, we may be sure that there is nothing deleterious about it. More than fifty different plants formed on this plan grow wild in England, and considerably over two thousand in foreign countries, and not one of them is in the least degree noxious, either to

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quadruped or to man. Many are aromatic, and used with food, as thyme, sage, mint, basil, and penny-royal; while others are useful for medicinal tea, as balm and ground-ivy. Rosemary, lavender, and bergamot belong to the same fragrant family. The great object of botanical science is to determine such facts as these, *i.e.*, to make out the relation between the form of a plant and its properties;—can a science of such useful, practical aim be justly deemed, as by some, mere “learned trifling?” Surely not. No slight advantage has that man over his fellows who, when he is walking through the meadows, or when he emigrates to a distant land, can discriminate between the poisonous plant and the wholesome, simply by examining the leaves and flowers. We do not mean to say that every individual plant in the world has its exact quality unmistakably configured upon it. The concurrence is between certain general properties and certain great types or plans of organisation, taking note of which latter we gain a good general idea of the former. The *particular* nature must be learned by special inquiry. Though the yellow dead-nettle, for example, is shown by its general structure to be devoid of anything bad, it cannot be told whether it is fit to eat until tasted and tried. To persons who have an idea of emigrating, or whose children are likely to go abroad, botany is of the very highest service, for in foreign countries men are thrown upon their own resources, and to be compelled by ignorance to look upon every leaf as a possible poison is helplessness of the most wretched kind.

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The railway up the Agecroft valley is interesting as the first that was constructed after the Liverpool and Manchester, and perhaps the “Grand Junction.” People used to go to the Prestwich hills to watch the trains scudding along. The scenery here is certainly not spoiled by it. For our own part, we consider that scenery is scarcely ever spoiled by the presence of railways, and would contend rather that they are a capital addition; for those spectacles are always most salutary to the mind, and therefore most truly pleasing, where along with rural beauties are combined the grand circumstances of human life and human enterprise. Railways count with bridges, ships, gardens, the castles and abbeys of the past, and the mansions of the present. Nature is beautiful, even in its most retired and lonely solitudes, just in the proportion that we connect with it, though unconsciously, the interests, the feelings, the aspirations of humanity; the more of what is noble and comely in human life we are able to assimilate with the outer world, the more does that world minister to our happiness and our intelligence. In the case of the railways, we are recipients of an immense amount of good. There is not only the interest of what is witnessed on the instant, but the pleasant flow of remembrance of the various localities they lead to. As, looking at the sea, we are led in thought all round the world, so, looking at the winged train and its pearly clouds, we visit over again a thousand delicious spots, photographed on the mind, and endeared by association. Here, for instance, in the valley of the Irwell, we go on to the lakes of Cumberland, and its ancient and purple mountains, and anon to the flowered and roofless aisles of sacred Furness. Should these be places yet unknown, there are nearer ones where we *have* been,—Rivington, Summerseat, Hoghton Tower, with its precipitous beechen-wood and lovely walk by the river underneath; or Southshore, where grow the blue eryngo and the grass of Parnassus, and where, on calm September evenings, the round, red setting sun pours a stream of crimson light across the sea, that reaches to the last ripple of the retiring water, like a path of velvet unrolled for the feet of a queen; or, if the wind blow high and fresh, the grand old deep-voiced waves, with their gray locks hanging dishevelled over their broad bosoms, roll gloriously over the rattling pebbles, change for a moment into arcades as white as snow, then dissolve into a wilderness of foam. Thus to make the common things of life so many centres of thought, from which we can travel away to whole worlds of pleasant remembrance, lying calm perhaps in the golden light of lang syne, is one of the profoundest secrets of happiness, and one of the most useful habits we can cultivate. Every one may acquire the art, and it strengthens every day and year that we live. Happiness is not a wonderful diamond, to be sought afar off, but, rightly understood, a thing to be reaped every day out of the ordinary facts of life, even out of the sight of a railway train steaming across the fields.

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The plants of the woods and hills bordering the Agecroft valley are mostly the same that are found in Mere Clough. In addition to those above enumerated, may be mentioned the pretty round-leaved marsh-violet, the whortleberry, and the wild cherry, one of the gayest ornaments of the month of May. The whortleberry seldom ripens its fruit at Prestwich, or anywhere so near the town: it seems to require the bracing air of the moors and mountains. It is one of the shrubs which rival the trees in brilliancy of tint, assumed as in the sky, when the hour of departure is at hand. Along with the Canadian medlar, the bramble, and some kinds of azalea, the leaves change not infrequently to vivid crimson. People are apt to call these changes the “fading” of the leaf; it would be better to say the *painting*. Primroses are exceedingly scarce, both on the Agecroft hills and in the Irwell valley, and their place is unoccupied by any other vernal flower as fair and popular. The wild pansy is there, on the higher and drier ground, and often with remarkably large and handsome flowers, but it makes no show; and though there are daffodils in a few places, they are not prominent to view. A field at the head of Prestwich Dells is for a little time plentifully strewn with their lively yellow. When September comes the want of the primrose is almost compensated by the cheerful autumn crocus, which lifts its purple abundantly among the grass, in the low meadows on the further side of Kersal Moor, near the rivulet; also in the fields below Prestwich Church, the same that in spring are dressed with the daffodil, and again in those between the asylum and the dells. The autumnal crocus, like the colchicum, is curious in seeming to produce its seeds before the flowers, the former being ripe in May and June, whereas the latter do not open till three months after. When the great Swedish botanist, Linnæus, was engaged in promulgating the great doctrine of the sexuality of plants, now about a century and a half ago, the circumstance in question was pointed to as upsetting it. But the young seed-pod lies low down in the bosom of the leaves, where it is fertilised, as in all other flowers, by the pollen from the stamens, and there it abides during the winter, elevating itself above the ground with

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the warmth of the ensuing summer, when it ripens and scatters its contents. The true time of the vital energy of the autumn crocus is thus, not from May to September, but from September until May. The history has always seemed to us a memorable instance of the quiet dignity with which truth and genuine science pursue their way, triumphing and silencing all the little cavillers in the end, however plausible they may make their case at starting.

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Before quitting this beautiful valley it will be salutary to pause for a moment upon its geological history, since, with the single exception of that part of the Mersey valley which lies between Didsbury and Cheadle, it is the newest part of our neighbourhood. The date, that is to say, is the nearest preceding that of the first occupation of the British Islands by mankind. The great ridges of Kinder Scout, Glossop, and Greenfield are immensely more ancient than any of the exposed or superficial parts of the country threaded by the Mersey at Cheadle, and by the Irwell below Prestwich. With the remainder of the chain of hills to which the Greenfield summits belong, those great ridges form the eastern margin of an enormous and very irregular stone basin, tilted up in such a way that the opposite or western edge is concealed far below the surface of the ground, nobody can tell exactly where, but in the direction of the Irish Sea, perhaps under it, far away beyond Southport and the sandhills. It is within or upon the inner surface of this great basin that all the other South Lancashire rocks and strata have their seat. In different portions of its huge lap are deposited the Coal strata (themselves often much elevated above the level on which the deposit took place, and this at various periods); then, in ascending order, there are deposits called "Permian";^[23] above these, in turn, come the Triassic rocks; and over all (except on the higher hill-ranges) there is sand or clay, or gravel, both stratified and unstratified. This last, in the aggregate, is technically termed "Drift." The whole of this great surface was unquestionably once covered by salt water. At the latest period of that marvellous marine dominion, blocks of ice containing boulders floated in it; and wherever great heaps of sand now occur, we have the remains of ancient beaches or sand-banks, many of which were cut through by the water, while others are charged with pebbles that had been rounded by rolling over and over upon some primeval shore, rattling while on their journeys, just as at Walney Island we may hear the pebbles of to-day. The lofty eastern edges of this great stone basin are, as would be anticipated, quite free from deposits of drift. But everywhere else, westwards, drift covers up all the underlying rock, the latter showing itself only where rivers in cutting their channels have slowly worn it away.

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The Agecroft valley participates with all the rest of the district in the possession of drift. Here, however, is well shown, in addition, how the first settlements of gravel and sand often themselves became covered at a later period with yet another new deposit—material brought down and diffused by shallow and tranquil streams, then of considerable breadth, but which in course of time shrank into relatively narrow ones, and continue as such to the present moment. That the lower Irwell, as we have it in the Agecroft valley, was once a broad flood of this description is declared by the "river-terraces" discoverable at intervals all the way up, and which correspond with those that betoken the ancient presence of the waters of the Mersey at a much greater elevation than at present. Abney Hall is built upon one of these river-terraces. Cheadle village stands upon a yet higher and older one.

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Peculiarly associated with the valley of the Irwell, and the adjacent cloughs and woods of Stand and Prestwich, is the memory of John Horsefield, one of the most celebrated of the old Lancashire operative botanists. It was Horsefield who first showed us the way through Mere Clough, and pointed out the spots occupied by its rare plants. For thirty-two years he was president and chief stay of the Prestwich Botanical Society, and from 1830, up to the time of his death, president also of the united societies of the whole district. He earned his livelihood as a hand-loom weaver, following that occupation in a cottage at Besses-o'-th'-Barn. Though the small wages his employment yielded him, and the trifling amount of leisure it permitted him to enjoy, naturally hindered pursuit of his darling science so fully as he desired, it is marvellous to see how much he accomplished. In the *Manchester Guardian* of March 2nd, 1850, in the course of a long and very interesting autobiography, he gives some slight idea of his labours. "Since I first held office as president," he tells us, "I have attended upwards of four hundred of these general meetings; thousands of specimens have passed through my hands, and all my reward or fee is the privilege of being scot-free." With that autobiography easily accessible, it is unnecessary to do more here than to point to it, and to a continuation of the narrative in the papers of the April following, which include several pieces of original poetry. Perhaps nothing has ever appeared which shows more strikingly how an indomitable will and ardent thirst for knowledge, and a deep and faithful love of nature, will triumph over the obstacles of poor means and humble station in life, and lift a man into the high places of true science, and give him at once the power of usefulness to his fellow-creatures, and of realising the true rewards of existence. Horsefield was a member of the Banksian Society, but rarely came to the meetings of the Mechanics' Institution class, reserving himself for those country musters where his knowledge and good nature had the full wide scope which they at once merited and deserved. In person he was thin and spare, presenting a great contrast to the tall and patriarchal figure of Crozier, partaking, however, so far as we had opportunities of judging, of all his amiable, unsophisticated qualities.

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CHAPTER XV.

HORSEFIELD'S PREDECESSORS AND COMPANIONS. [24]

Though I be hoar, I fare as doth a tree
 That blometh ere the fruit y-woxen be;
 The blosmy tree is neither drie ne ded;
 I feel me nowhere hoar but on my hed;
 Mine harte and all my limmès ben as green
 As laurel through the year is for to seen.

CHAUCER.



CHAPTER may here be legitimately devoted to the men in whose wake Horsefield and Crozier followed and to their own principal companions. The history of these men is peculiar. It is not simply that of individuals, but inseparably identified with that of the botanical societies of South East Lancashire and the neighbourhood, without question the most remarkable in England. Every man of course has had his own private and personal history, but the energies and activities of each have been so closely intermingled with those of his companions that the history is essentially like that of a tree or a corporate body,—not so much of many things as of an organic whole. Many persons have never so much as heard of these societies, though assembling almost at their very doors. While the learned and wealthy have been holding brilliant *soirées* and *conversazioni* in lecture halls and royal institutions, meetings have been going on among the weavers and other craftsmen, quietly and unostentatiously, with aims exactly similar, and success not inferior, and probably with tenfold more enjoyment to the bulk of those attending them, because of its simplicity and earnestness. Should the history of science in Lancashire ever come to be written at length, it would be wanting in one of its most interesting and important chapters were the proceedings of these societies to be omitted, whether the members who composed them were thought worthy of mention or not. The sketch we propose to give must necessarily be brief, but it will serve to indicate what a large amount of real, practical scientific knowledge exists among the workpeople of our district, and how superior these men are to the mere herb-gatherers or “yarb-doctors” with whom they have often been confounded, and who, though useful in their way, constitute an entirely different class. [195]

The study of botany by the operatives about Manchester, at least in a precise and methodical manner, appears to date from the establishment of the Linnæan system, which was one hundred years ago. Doubtless the neighbourhood was already remarkable for its *love* of plants, since men do not jump at things like the Linnæan system unless they have taste for them beforehand; but prior to the time of Linnæus, the difficulties attendant on botany as a science were too great for it to be anywhere a popular pastime. It was in Lancashire, without question, in life and power, though not in determined fact. There is reason to believe that botany, in some sort, was cultivated in Lancashire as far back as the time of Ray, who described, in his “Synopsis,” nearly four-fifths of the British plants, and frequently refers to north-country botanists in connection with the localities of rare species. They were probably the originals of those keen observers and ardent cultivators whose succession has never yet intermitted. Ray’s work made its first appearance in 1670. What is meant by the “Linnæan System” must be learnt from books devoted to its elucidation. It will suffice to say of it here that it established a method of classifying plants which gave it vantage, not only for successfully clearing the ground of difficulties which were fast becoming insuperable to smaller schemes and threatening the very existence of botany, but rendered everything intelligible and delightful. No really practical system had been devised previously to the time of Linnæus, and though his classes and orders are now superseded by the grander and profounder “Natural System,” which it was Linnæus’ own desire to arrive at—acknowledging his sexual or “Artificial System” to be but temporary and provisional,—when it appeared it may fairly be said to have made that live which before was dead or dying, and to have been the true inauguration of the science of botany. [196]

The period referred to was, in round numbers then, fully one hundred years ago. No records are extant as to what was actually done here at that time, but the general fact that botany was ardently engaged in is well established. Old Crowther, who was born in 1768, was accustomed, when only nine years of age, to attend the meetings of a botanical society at Eccles, numbering, on the average, forty members,—the first society, in all likelihood, that was formed by the young Linnæans, and the same, it may be concluded, as that which in 1790, or thereabouts, had spread to Ashton, Oldham, Middleton, and many other places, holding fixed monthly meetings at the several towns and villages in rotation, and with which the proper “historical era” of botany in Manchester may be said to commence. The business of the meetings was to compare the floras of the several neighbourhoods, and to exchange plants and information in general on subjects connected with botanical science. A library of practical service was formed at a very early period. The members subscribed, and bought among other books the “Systema Naturæ,” and “Species [197]

Plantarum," of Linnæus; Withering's "British Plants," and Lee's "Introduction to Botany," exchanging the volumes with one another on the days of meeting, and for several years everything went on pleasantly and usefully. With the close of the century, however, owing to infractions of the rules, the meetings were discontinued, and the society was abruptly dissolved. [198]

But death is everywhere the spring and herald of life. Though for a time there was no regular society, meetings continued to be held in a more private way, and, as generally happens after an interregnum, new and better principles of management were introduced, resulting in the formation of those numerous and excellent local societies which started botany afresh, and several of the best of which are still at work. The late venerable John Mellor, of Royton, near Oldham, is generally considered to have laid the foundation of the new school. Associated with him were the celebrated John Dewhurst, first president of the collective meetings, and George Caley, well known to the scientific as the botanist who accompanied Sir Joseph Banks to the South Seas. The society which lays claim to primogeniture is that at Middleton, or, at all events the Middleton *District Society*. Its former president, the late Mr. John Turner, possessed a letter written from Australia in 1800, in which Caley warmly acknowledges his obligations to the members, as having first given him a love for plants. The Mottram Society is also of long date, having celebrated forty-four anniversaries.[25] To make this matter of relative age more intelligible, it may be observed that the local societies group themselves into "districts," and that the name of a local society is sometimes the same as that of a district society. For instance, the Ashton-under-Lyne district takes in Ashton, Stalybridge, Mottram, Glossop, Tintwistle, &c., and has both monthly meetings and "bye-meetings;" the Rochdale district comprises Rochdale, Middleton, Milnrow, Todmorden, Harpurhey, &c.; the Bredbury district includes Stockport, Disley, Hatherlow, &c.; and so with the others. The Prestwich local society, the nearest, and in many respects the most interesting to Manchester, has been in existence thirty-eight years, having been established September 11th, 1820. (Now, of course, extended to sixty-two.) [199]

Gradually, after this fresh start, the whole of the country lying north-west, north, and north-east of Manchester became animated with the love of botany; as far even as from Disley and Todmorden came the echo of the new music; and under the successive presidentships (after John Dewhurst's) of Edward Hobson, the great bryologist, then of John Horsefield, and subsequently of James Percival, a man of extraordinary information, both in accuracy and amount, the meetings have gone on uninterruptedly and happily, and never were they more satisfactory than at the present moment. The list for 1858, printed along with the rules, announces twenty-six of the grand general gatherings, or a meeting every fortnight, and fifteen different places of assembly. The most successful meetings have been at Prestwich, Ashton-under-Lyne, Blackley, Bury, Rochdale, Middleton, Oldham, Whitefield, Eccles, Ringley, Radcliffe, and Harpurhey; and the best attended, the last year or two, those held at Prestwich, Whitefield, and Bury. The meetings, as at the beginning, are held upon the Sunday afternoon, at some respectable tavern, such being the only place where working men can assemble inexpensively; and though this may seem to some persons detrimental to good order and sobriety, no religious service was ever more decorously conducted. Working men can assemble at a tavern, and not abuse it, quite as well as gentlemen; in either case, all depends on the ideas they carry in with them. It is the peculiar characteristic of intelligent delight in the objects of nature, that, with very rare exceptions, it brings with it a moral and harmonising influence on the heart, so that men who gather together as our Lancashire botanists do, albeit in a public-house and on a Sunday, are the most likely of all in their station of life, to conduct themselves in a manner becoming intelligent beings. When the churchwardens or other peace-officers think proper to walk in, as sometimes happens, they always express themselves satisfied. Twice only, during upwards of seventy years, have the meetings been interfered with by the authorities, and in neither case has it been from disapproval of them, or because of misconduct on the part of the members. The second occasion, which alone had notoriety, fell in November, 1850, when the men had assembled, as often before, at the "Ostrich," in Rooden Lane. The landlord of the house had made himself obnoxious to the law, but in such a way, whatever it was, that he could only be reached by the unfortunate botanists being made the scape-goat.[26] The ale is not *forgotten*, nor would it be wisely forgotten if it were. Water is good, but so, in their season, are good wine and good ale. "My specimens," once said old Crowther, in his quaint, quiet way, when nearly eighty years had silvered his hair, his eyes twinkling as he spoke, "my specimens always look best through a glass!" Capital botanical libraries are possessed by the societies at Todmorden, Ashton, Oldham, Miles Platting, Prestwich, and Boothstown. Several of the societies also possess herbariums. The Prestwich collection, which fills nearly one hundred and sixty volumes, contains a beautiful series of specimens prepared by the celebrated Mr. Shepherd, once curator of the Liverpool Botanic Garden. Many of the members further amuse themselves by cultivating curious plants, the roots of which have been chiefly obtained by making excursions, for the special purpose, into North Wales, the Lake district, and the more romantic parts of Derbyshire and Yorkshire. [200]

Once a year, on a Sunday fixed as near the height of the flower season as possible, there is an extra grand meeting, when deputations from all the societies in the neighbourhood make a point of attending. That of 1858 was held on the 11th of August at the "Golden Lion," Harpurhey, twenty or thirty different societies being represented. The proceedings were reported by the writer of these pages in the *Manchester Weekly Times* of the ensuing Saturday, the account, after some preliminary observations, continuing as follows:—"The botanists began to assemble soon after two o'clock, and at three, when the proceedings commenced, there were present no fewer than two hundred and twelve, all, with the exception of four or five, working men, and not more than the odd dozen or so unconnected with one or other of the societies. It is a striking and most pleasing fact, for the consideration of intelligent people, that there should be in and about [201]

Manchester a body of naturalists able to send two hundred zealous and well-informed representatives to an annual meeting where the object of assembly was purely social. Whatever else the cotton manufacturing districts may be in the eyes of people at a distance, here, at least, is a characteristic that cannot be disputed, and such as no other system or trade in the country has tended either to develop or encourage. The meeting took place on the large bowling-green behind the inn. At the lower extremity was placed a table, some twenty yards long, and covered throughout its whole length with specimens of flowers, mostly curious and uncommon, and about half of which were British, with the addition of a few stove and greenhouse plants, contributed by gentlemen's gardeners. After a little time spent in conversation, the president, James Percival, was called to the chair, from which he gave the names of about one hundred and fifty of the most remarkable exhibits, first the Latin, and then the English, often with some little remark upon their nature or place of growth. The accuracy of his naming was not more remarkable than the correctness of the pronunciation, showing how mistaken is the popular notion that the Latin or scientific names of plants are harder to learn than the English ones. Percival having concluded, his place was taken by John Nowell, of Todmorden, who similarly named a quantity of mosses, and when these were finished a box of beautiful ferns was opened by Mr. Tom Stansfield, of the same town, and the contents disposed of in the same manner. If any difference of opinion arose as to the correctness of a name, the specimen was handed about for criticism, but it rarely happened that either of the three spokesmen had made even so much as a slip of the tongue. The plants having all been named and distributed, some routine business was transacted, and the meeting, as to its formal part, broke up, having lasted very nearly three hours. The remainder of the evening was spent, like the commencement, in friendly chat. This was in many respects quite as interesting as the regular business, the opportunity being afforded for intimate converse with one after another of two hundred as thoroughly good-hearted and intelligent men as ever met together, full of anecdote of themselves and their companions, never vainly putting forth their knowledge without call for it, but never allowing the slightest error to pass unchallenged. No discussions of learned doctors were ever more vigorous and entertaining than those of our botanists on the green of the "Golden Lion." Among the chief botanists present, in addition to those already mentioned, were George Hulme, Prestwich; Edwin Clough and Henry Newton, Ashton-under-Lyne; Tom Bleackley, Whitefield; John Shaw, Eccles; Isaac Ollerenshaw, Glossop; John Darbyshire, Newton; William Bentley, Royton; James Devonport, Droylsden; John Turner, Middleton; Richard Buxton, John Crowe, and John Warburton, Manchester; William and James Horsefield, sons of John; Mr. Isaac Williamson, of Stockport; and Mr. Lund, president of the Rochdale Society. Mr. Edwin Waugh, Mr. Henry Robson, and several other visitors from Manchester also attended."

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Not the least pleasing feature of the meeting in question consisted in the number of men in advanced years who were enjoying its incidents,—fine specimens of youth carried along into mature life,—that most admirable and noble condition of human nature, and looking as if they were never going to be old. They showed how true it is that spirit is youth, and that the want of spirit is age,—that life measures not by birthdays, but by capacity for noble enjoyments, and that he who would be a Man, must never forget to be a Boy. It avails nothing for a man to live sixty or seventy years, unless he carry along with him the freshness and cheerfulness of his youth, and nothing so powerfully contributes to keeping the heart green, as simple and true love of country pleasures and country productions. This is the true old age, and that which we should set ourselves to attain. Our first duty is to live as long as we can; and our chief wisdom, after the fear of God, is to cultivate those tastes which make youth of spirit last till birthdays come no more. The actual longevity both of naturalists in general, and of many of the Lancashire men in particular, is a fact of no mean significance. Crowther was seventy-nine when he died; John Mellor, eighty-two; Elias Hall, the geologist, eighty-nine. Timothy Harrop, of Middleton, with whose work, as a bird and animal stuffer, the British Association were so well pleased when they visited Manchester in 1842; and Josiah Nuttall, of Heywood, were also very old men. Whether this longevity is to be attributed to the quiet and temperate habits which the study of natural history almost invariably induces, or to the continual out-door exercise inseparable from genuine pursuit of it; or to the quickening of the intelligence and affections, and the invigoration of the bodily health, which, by a beautiful law of nature, always so gratefully ensues;—there is evidently a something about natural history—other circumstances being equal—wonderfully promotive of length of days. Men never step into the presence of nature with affection and reverence, but they come back blessed and strengthened with a reward.

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Let us now look a little more closely at the individuals. The lives of some of them are before the world,—told in those interesting, though "short and simple annals," which have appeared in the local press from time to time, such as the autobiography of John Horsefield, who died March 6th, 1854, and the obituary notice of Crowther, which filled a column and a half of the *Manchester Guardian*, of January 13th, 1847, a week after his decease. Crowther was a Banksian, and one of the most simple-hearted men that ever lived; willing to travel any distance, and undergo any amount of fatigue, so that he secured his flower. As one of his old companions remarked to me some years ago, "he was not *learned*, but he was very *loving*." It is worthy also of record that Crowther never touched his wages for purposes of botanical pleasure, but took home every penny, and trusted to fortunate accidents for the means of supplying his scientific wants. Of the indefatigable and acute George Caley, who was born at Craven in 1770, and died May 23rd, 1829, there is a pleasing memoir in the "Magazine of Natural History," vol. ii., p. 310; and vol. iii., p. 226. A similar memoir of Edward Hobson, who died September 7th, 1830, may be seen in the "Transactions of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society," vol. vi., 1842. Buxton's is prefixed to the "Guide," and several other memoirs have since been given by Mr. Cash in his delightful little book, "When there's a Will there's a Way." These appear to be the whole of the

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memoirs of any length that have been printed, though there have frequently been short notices when death has carried off another of the band. It would be well were they reprinted in a collective form. Unmarked though they are by stirring incidents, the lives of these men are such as no person of feeling and intelligence, and sympathy with pure, hearty, honest endeavour after knowledge and self-improvement, can peruse without emotion. Science owes more to them than has ever been confessed, and it is anything but honourable to public taste and public morals, that while the lives of murderers and rascals of all descriptions are read with avidity, and the minutest incidents of their abominable careers demanded and fed upon, the lives of the modest, unassuming votaries of science, both the dead and those who are yet with us, are never so much as inquired for. They have their reward. If it be not in the notoriety of a great criminal, it is in the perennial enjoyment of the highest faculties of our nature, such as are brought out only by loving conversance with the works of God. [207]

Scarcely anything is recorded of the earlier Lancashire botanists. Of John Dewhurst, mentioned as the first president of the restored botanical society at the beginning of the present century, little more is known than that he was a fustian-cutter by trade, and lived at Red Bank. John Shaw, now of Eccles (since deceased), remembers seeing him in his "pride of place" at the "Lord Nelson," at Ringley, where the annual meeting was at that time accustomed to be held, the first Sunday in May, Mr. S. being then a child, and this the first botanical meeting he was present at. Dewhurst died in Salford, about 1820, at the age of about seventy. He was of a good and well-to-do family, but in the position of "poor relation." A kind friend of the Lancashire botanists in those days,—Mr. Mitchell, of Bradford Hall,—gave Dewhurst and Hobson a piece of ground adjoining his house for a botanic garden. In this they were accustomed to deposit the roots of plants procured in the course of their rambles, going up every Monday morning for the purpose. It happened at that time that there were great operatives' political meetings. One day, in 1812, it came to Mr. Mitchell's ears that the two botanists were engaged to attend one of them, and at the same moment he had private information that the magistrates intended to disperse it, and send the leaders to prison,—Hobson being one of the marked, and certain to be apprehended. Luckily for all parties, the meeting was appointed for the very day when the two botanists were accustomed to visit their garden. Up they went as usual, early in the morning, from which time till late in the afternoon their host contrived, probably without much difficulty, to keep them engaged with liquid refreshment, and thus saved Hobson at all events from imprisonment. As the two men journeyed homewards, they met the soldiers and their captives on the way to gaol. One of Dewhurst's intimate associates was old William Evans, of Tyldesley, now long deceased, a friend from boyhood of Dr. Hull, Dr. Tomlinson, and Dr. Withering, and companion also of George Caley. "He was always after botany," says a letter respecting him, "and travelled many thousands of miles in quest of plants." That excellent botanist and worthy old man, Joseph Evans, of Boothstown, to whom we have had occasion to express our acknowledgments in the "Manchester Flora," is son of the renowned William. Born in 1803, the lad, when only ten years of age, used to be taken to the meetings, walking, of course, every inch of the way, both there and back. He was also his father's constant companion in the fields. Ah, how much is imbibed under such kindly teaching, and how much more than we actually learn is excited and animated! It is not so much what a man, even one's own father, tells us, tutor-fashion, that does the good for one's entire life-time, as what he *inspires* us with. The man, or the woman either, upon whom we look back as having supplied the aurora of our mental day, when we think it out carefully, is he or she who taught us not so much how to write and cast accounts, as how to see and to feel—to see the wild-flowers, and the snow-crystals, and the darting dragon-flies in their beautiful blue corselets,—to listen to the hum of the busy bees and the songs of the birds, and to feel that "he prayeth best who loveth best all things both great and small." Evans was taught, when no more than ten years old, how to contemplate the immortal beauty of nature. Like his father before him, he had very little book-learning, but he fed abundantly on the best and truest source of all great and worthy ideas. A vigorous frame and an admirable constitution enabled him to undertake journeys on foot that to many would be positively affrighting. He knew the contents of every wood and pond within twenty miles of his home, the results of his long rambles plainly declared in the trim little garden adjoining his cottage. The number of plants we once counted in it, all curious, exceeded three hundred. Evans died June 23rd, 1874, and was followed to his grave in Worsley churchyard by more than a thousand people, including a hundred and seventy young children. For of the little folk, especially girls, he was always immensely fond;—they went to the churchyard more of their own accord than because led. His sympathy with them was the sweetest of all sympathies—the sympathy of tenderness and simplicity; no wonder that many of them carried little chaplets of midsummer field flowers. We often hear of magnificent funerals—chariots and plumes; they may not, after all, be such as we should so well care to be the pattern of our own. The cottage itself wherein he resided was clean and bright as a sea-shell just washed by the waves. If the love of the clear purity of wild-flowers kept alive in old Evans the love of one thing more than another, it would seem to have been that of a home absolutely spotless, still maintained, we believe, by one who always reminds us of a rose in the snow. In figure Joseph Evans was tall and thin, a lofty forehead conferring a dignity upon his appearance which invariably attracted strangers. Never was this more observable than at a natural history meeting once at the Manchester Athenæum. [208]

No botanist contemporary with the elder Evans attained greater celebrity than John Martin, of Tyldesley. He was especially well-informed respecting Carices, and first drew the attention of the botanists of Manchester to the richness of the neighbourhood, supplying, in regard to them, names and localities they knew not of, as well as many facts respecting the botany of Tyldesley in particular, with which he has never been properly accredited. This eminent veteran was among us till so late as August 13th, 1855. [209]

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The mantle of these old men has fallen well. Very few of the botanists mentioned above are still alive—I am glad to be able to add to the short list the name of Richard Hampson, of Tyldesley; but they have plenty of successors, and never more energetically than at the present moment was natural history pursued as a pastime in South East Lancashire.

The peculiarities of the original race are fast disappearing, a circumstance plainly attributable to the facilities of travel given by the railway system, to the multiplication of books, and to the more general diffusion of knowledge. At the period when the celebrity of the old Lancashire botanists was established, say during the first quarter of the present century, they lived in comparative isolation. Now the isolation alike of abode and opportunities has been cancelled, and as a consequence the class of men who as individuals, somewhat conspicuous in their way, gave it colour, have slowly disappeared. The ancient spirit, nevertheless, is as keen as ever, and the love of botany in particular is quite as honourably and intelligently represented as at any preceding time. If we can no longer single out men very particularly remarkable, it is because the estates of the patriarchs have been divided, as it were, among whole troops of worthy descendants.

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CHAPTER XVI. VIA CLIFTON JUNCTION.

As the stern grandeur of a Gothic tower
 Awes us less deeply in its morning hour,
 Than when the shades of time serenely fall
 On every broken arch and ivied wall,
 The tender images we love to trace,
 Steal from each year a melancholy grace.

ROGERS.



LIFTON Junction may be regarded as the railway entrance to east and central Lancashire, since at this point, while the original line runs on to Bolton, there is divergence to Bury, whence, in turn, we get to Accrington. After Molyneux Brow, the first station is Ringley Road; then comes Radcliffe, the village of the "red cliffs," renowned in legend and in local family history, and in a few minutes more we are near the birthplace of Sir Robert Peel. The cliffs referred to, though bold and conspicuous, have none of the picturesque beauty pertaining to Prestwich. Nor, indeed, is the latter renewed until, after passing Bury, we get to Summerseat, distant from Manchester thirteen miles. The river, soon lost sight of after passing Molyneux, here comes into view again, winding among trees, and with steep declivities right and left. The eastern side of the valley is abundantly wooded, and although broken by little ravines, offers a delightful walk of

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about two miles to the village of Ramsbottom. To begin it, cross the little aqueduct over the gorge, then keep straight on beneath the shadow of the wood. Beside this pleasant path wild raspberries grow in plenty, and ferns, and on the sunward edges of the steep brows above the stream, not yet much sullied by "works," in September it is sweet to sit down to rest and talk, noting as we chat the lilac blossoms of the heather. It does not, as in the wilderness, monopolise the ground, but springs delicately from the turf, here a little and there a little, in quantity just enough to remind us that it is one of the friendly plants, those of the same spirit as the anemone and the celandine, which never care to live alone, but "love their own kind and to dwell among their kindred." For the curious in other matters, up above again, on the highest point, there is the celebrated tower which commemorates the "Cheeryble Brothers," William and Daniel Grant. Looking across the river, the opposite bank is remarkably different, the slopes being almost treeless. Gradually swelling, at last they expand into a vast tract of moorland called Holcombe Hill, well chosen for the erection of the far-seen landmark called the Peel monument.

Ramsbottom is succeeded by Stubbins, and after this we get to Newchurch, the best place to ascend from when bound for the other great moorland called Fo'edge, where the parsley-fern grows, and the alpine club-moss, and many another plant that disdains the lowlands, and from which, if we please, we may pursue a glorious walk to Rochdale, making acquaintance as we go with the bright and wilful Spodden. Running down Healey Dene, a narrow and romantic valley, the bordering cliffs seem to have been torn asunder at various times by the impetuosity of the rushing torrent. So picturesque is the dingle called specially the Thrutch,—the river here, in Lancashire phrase, thrutching its way past all impediment,—that one seems to be far away beyond the Tweed. From the elevated ground above there is once again a wonderful prospect, covering Lyme, Cloud-end, the Derbyshire hills, Frodsham, and the mountains of North Wales,—a prospect enjoyed, moreover, like that one from Jackson Edge, at an incredibly slight expenditure of climbing power. This fine neighbourhood may of course be reached direct from Rochdale, going by the Todmorden line; but geographically it belongs to Rossendale, in which both the Spodden and the Roch have their simple beginnings, wherein also, near the foot of Derpley Hill, we find the cradle of the Irwell. "Rossendale Forest," so called, the name having a sense similar to that of Delamere Forest (p. 41) is approached by way of Bacup. Lying upon the northern edge of the line, the forest presents, with almost the whole of the ground that stretches away to Cliviger, an endless variety of beautiful change in mountain scenery. Up here are found the grand summits called Hades Hill and Thieveley Pike, the view from the top of the last-named comprehending not only the southward country, but to the north, almost the whole of Craven, with Ingleborough and the wilds of Trawden Forest. The nearer portions of the Lake District mountains, those which rise above Cartmel, and that bathe their ancient feet in Coniston are also distinguishable; and on sunny evenings, when the atmosphere is clear, and if the tide be in, the estuary of the Ribble. Cliviger is remarkable not alone for the rocks and precipices the name denotes, but for the number of beautiful curves, green with much grass, which are interwoven with them, these latter constantly adding the very sweet unusual feature in scenery, of vast hemispherical green bowls, the whole country at the same time, if we push far enough into the solitude, so tranquil.

O'er stiller place
No singing skylark ever poised himself.

In some parts the rocks are clothed lavishly with ivy, the knotted and rugged stems very plainly the growth of centuries, while the massive upper branches throw themselves elegantly into the aerial sea, imitating the glorious *abandon* of the strong swimmer when he dives. The whole of the Lancashire border, at this part, including the neighbourhood of Burnley, Trawden Forest, and the Colne district, with the contiguous parts of Yorkshire, is immensely rich in scenery. Up here, too, it is that one catches aboriginal Lancashire at its best, the dialect in its prettiest modifications, and among the rural population the primitive manners and customs. Towneley Park, near Burnley, one of the most beautiful of the old county family seats, is distinguished not more for its associations than for the abundance of its venerable trees.

Taking a great bend towards the west, after passing Stubbins, the line runs through Haslingden, Accrington, and Blackburn, to a spot of immemorial celebrity. Five or six miles from the last-named the Darwen flows through a secluded vale called Hoghton Bottoms. At times it is bordered by green and level meads; in certain parts great lateral walls of rock make it uproarious. The name refers to the very ancient and distinguished family seated here ever since the time of Henry II., the residence up to the middle of the sixteenth century having been not far from the edge of the water. Doubtless this would be constructed chiefly or wholly of wood, for the park, "in former tyme," says the old chronicler, was "so full of tymbre that a man passing through it could scarcely have seen the sun shine at mid-day." Soon after the accession of Elizabeth the existing hall, upon the top of the hill, was erected, the builder being the celebrated Thomas Hoghton, who on account of his creed was constrained to forsake his ancestral home almost immediately after the completion, and thenceforwards live in exile upon the Continent. The story of the departure of the unfortunate man is told in the beautiful and pathetic ballad, "The Blessed Conscience," preserved in the late Mr. T. T. Wilkinson's well-known volume. It would seem to have been one of the earliest buildings of the kind constructed entirely of stone. Perfect in design, and in excellent preservation, Hoghton Tower presents to this day, an admirable example of the architecture of the period, as regards both adaptedness to domestic use and to defensive purposes. The great quadrangular lower court is spacious enough for the movement of five or six hundred men. The upper one gives access to noble staircases and long galleries, including one for the minstrels. All that is wanting is the very lofty tower which in the beginning rose above the central gateway, and from which the mansion was named. This tower was accidentally destroyed

during the Civil Wars by an explosion of gunpowder, and there seems never to have been any disposition to reconstruct it.

A site more charming than that selected by Thomas Hoghton for the glorious old hall which preserves so many interesting and old familiar traditions pertaining to Lancashire, it would be difficult to find. It stands upon the crest of a gentle slope, from which, as well as from the windows, we look right away over the plain and the bright-faced stream that waters Preston, to the mountains of the Lake District, these looming grandly from their curtains of mist; the sea, glorious in the sheen of sunset, upon the left, and upon the right, gigantic Pendle. The immediate surroundings are no less delightful than the prospects; the dell beneath is one of the kind in which the thin-tissued flowers of early spring love to shelter, and which summer fills with a score of sprightly forms. The eastern side of the hill is rugged and steep, the Darwen at its foot struggling with boulders brought down probably by its own vehemence in remote ages. [219]

The original "Manchester and Bolton," opened as far back as May 24th, 1838, is now only the first link in the splendid chain of railway lines which, going nearly three hundred miles due north, connects our town with the very heart of Scotland, and by means of the westward branches, with every part of the shore from the Mersey to the Clyde. How little was such adventure dreamed of when the old calmness of the Agecroft valley was first invaded! Eight years afterwards (April 29th, 1846) it had become the highway to Blackpool, and on April 7th, 1855, people began to start by it for Southport. Diverging also to Blackburn, and thence running on to Clitheroe, a country of wonderful beauty was added to our already ample choice. Cheshire was discovered to be by no means the all in all, and in mid-Lancashire to-day we learn anew that in scenery, as in all other things good for the soul, the secret of beauty comes of nice balance of complementaries. There is endless enjoyment also for the archæologist in the old halls up that way, many of which are scarcely rivalled—Turton Tower, for instance, Hall-i'th'-Wood, and Smithills Hall. Turton Tower, upon the right of the Clitheroe line, the square form of which gives it an appearance of great solidity, is almost sacred, having once been the residence of Humphrey Chetham. Part of it is stone, part black and white, the latter with gables, and the storeys successively overhanging, the former with an embattled parapet. Inside there are old carved ceilings, with doors of massive oak, and much besides that talks pleasantly of the fashions of three hundred years ago. Of late years a good deal of "restoration" has been carried on, happily with so much judgment that the original features are in no degree obscured. [220]

Hall-i'th'-Wood is in its associations one of the most interesting spots in England, since it was in the large upper chamber, the one with a window of no fewer than twenty-four compartments, that Samuel Crompton constructed the exquisitely skilful machine upon which the cotton industry of Lancashire arose to its present magnitude and importance. The way to it is from the little wayside station called the "Oaks," crossing the fields, a pleasant walk of about a mile. The hall stands upon the edge of a cliff, at the foot of which flows a little river called the Eagley, one of the early collectors for the Irwell, the scenery on every side just such as would recommend the site to that fine old race of country gentlemen, neither barons nor vassals, under whose authority marks so enduring as these old Lancashire halls were impressed upon the land. When Crompton lived at Hall-i'th'-Wood, it was embosomed in trees, many of them so mighty that when cut down it was like attacking granite columns. As at Turton, the material is twofold, a portion being magpie, believed to have been put together in 1483, while the remainder is grey stone, erected in 1648; the former, to appearance, wholly untouched, and the latter altered only by the introduction, at a little later period than that of the building of the walls, of some mouldings and other exterior ornaments. Altogether, the hall is unquestionably to be regarded as a first-rate specimen of the style it illustrates. This is proved by its having often been taken as a model for modern Elizabethan houses—we do not mean by copyists, but by the men of higher platform—those with whom knowledge and learning are never the limit of thought, but only the basis. [28] [221]

Smithills Hall, now the residence of Mr. R. H. Ainsworth, claims to occupy the site of an ancient Norman abode, which itself, if all be true in the legends, succeeded a Saxon palatial one. There can be no doubt that the spot is one of genuine historical interest. A chapel, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, was consecrated at Smithills in 793, nearly a hundred years before the time of King Alfred; and the locality, like that of Hall-i'th'-Wood, is precisely of the kind that would be selected for their stronghold by the lords then having authority over the district, being at the head of two or three beautiful little glens, at once charming in complexion, and facilitating defence in case of assault. Much of the original hall has been renewed from time to time, but it is still a glorious type of the best work of the sixteenth century, and in the interior, as to antique carving and other treasures, is rich beyond description. The gardens also are delightful, and awaken reflections in the most interesting manner, on the way in which good planting now-a-days links past and present. The ancient Britons, the oak, the birch, and the hawthorn are there just as a thousand years ago;—alongside of them are the shapely evergreens which modern enterprise has brought from the Himalayas and Japan. A pleasant though somewhat round about way to Smithills, when permission can be obtained to enter,—a privilege not to be thought lightly of—is to go first to Hall-i'th'-Wood, then after crossing the Eagley, past Sweetloves, to Horrocks Fold, and along the edge of the moor, locally called the Scout, to the top of Deane Road, when the hall is just below. The distance from Bolton is about three miles. [222]

Entwistle, the station next beyond Turton, gives access to a bit of water-scenery that would scarcely be expected. Lymm and Hollingworth have prepared us for magnificent reservoirs; "Entwistle Lodge," the embankment for which was constructed about fifty years ago, is little inferior in beauty. As at Lymm, it has given existence also to a dell beneath, into which, after heavy rain, causing the water to overflow, there descends a cataract of at least a hundred and [223]

fifty feet fall. The dell is the only place near Manchester where the lily-of-the-valley appears to grow truly wild. In autumn it abounds with golden-rod, ferns, hawkweeds, and the blue jasionne, and upon the slopes, as in Hurst Clough, there are many bushes of the deepest-coloured of the wild English roses, the *Rosa villosa*. A romantic natural dell called "The Jumbles," near Edgworth, is also rich in wild-flowers, but a factory having taken possession, it invites one no longer.

The valley through which the railway pursues its course, running on to Darwen, and thence to Blackburn, is one of those which perfectly illustrates the rich character of the Lancashire uplands. An excellent idea of its various wealth is gathered from near the Scout, when on the way to Smithills, and even while travelling it is impossible not to perceive how fruitful is every part in the picturesque, particularly in amphitheatres receding among the hills, which if somewhat naked, still always have a cheerful look. All the way, moreover, there is the noble spectacle of human activity. Langho station, a quarter of an hour beyond Blackburn, opens the way once more to pleasing novelty of scene, not to mention its ancient and beautiful little chapel, the oldest place of Christian worship in Lancashire still used as one, and from which it is no more than a pleasant walk of two or three miles to Whalley itself, the locality of the earliest Christian preaching in our county. Here it was that Paulinus, in 627, made his first efforts to convert the Northumbrians—crosses in the ancient graveyard commemorate the event, memorials of pious labour which belong, in truth, not more to this once lonesome valley than to the nation. The church, immensely venerable, portions of it being Norman, is crowded with interesting antiquities, and would itself well repay the journey, even were there no Whalley Abbey alongside; say rather the few portions of the grand old pile that have been spared by Time, and by that still heavier despoiler, man bent on destruction. The abbey, founded in 1296, belonged to the Cistercians, and, as usual with that fraternity, was dedicated to the Virgin, whence the sacred monogram M still discoverable upon some of the relics. Like all other abbeys, it was for more than two hundred and forty years a place of refuge for every one who needed succour or counsel. Within its consecrated precincts there was always wisdom to guide the inexperienced, and charity to relieve the famishing and distressed. The dissolution of the monasteries in the calamitous year 1539 by a monarch who thirsted less for reformation than for spoil, brought everything to an end; and though the building itself was not demolished till some time afterwards, the delay was less designed than accidental. Eventually the very stones were scattered far and wide; hence there is no identifying the various portions as we do at Furness, and Fountains, and Tintern, and Glastonbury, and Rievaulx. The archæologist conversant with monastic ruins is able to trace them, but for the ordinary visitor, after the abbot's house, long since modernised, and the two grand old gateways, there are only a few grey and shattered walls, some fragments of arches, and broken corridors. The extent of the abbey grounds, enclosed partly by the river, partly by an artificial trench or moat, exceeds thirty-six acres. The building itself appears to have consisted of three quadrangles, the westernmost holding the cloisters, and being edged upon the north by the wall of the church. There were, in addition, as usual, stables and outer offices. In the presence of so vast an extinction, it is pleasant to mark the abundance of trees now growing within the ancient boundaries; and more particularly to note the taste with which in ancient nooks of aisle and corridor, clumps of green fern have been planted by the owner or resident, Mr. Appleby. At one time these most interesting ruins were opened to the public as freely as the church. Now they are virtually closed, owing to the misconduct of a party of excursionists—not from Manchester—the innocent, as in so many other places that have been abused, suffering for the guilty. When will people privileged to enter a gentleman's private grounds learn to conduct themselves with the same decorum they would expect others to observe in regard to their own; or if unpossessed of grounds or gardens, with regard to any other private property? That the ignorant and selfish will continue to abuse their privileges to the end of time, is perhaps only too lamentably certain. Contrariwise, what a happy day it will be when curiosity in regard to such places will be synonymous with good manners. When at Whalley, of course we ascend the Nab, that beautiful tree-clad hill which overlooks the abbey, and gives the first taste of the landscape grandeurs to be enjoyed later on from the crest of Pendle.

For those who love to feel their feet pressing the turf, Whalley is the best point of departure also for Stonyhurst, and for the pretty villages of Great and Little Mitton, the former upon the opposite bank of the Ribble, which here separates Lancashire from Yorkshire. The announcement, when half-way over the bridge, comes with most curious unexpectedness. All of a sudden, while delighting in the sweet spectacle of the stream, silver-edded like the immortal ones in the greatest of epics, an inscription upon the wall says we are in the county of the white rose! How can this be? Our faces are turned westwards! Yorkshire is not in front of us, but behind! Look at the map, and you will discover that Mitton stands upon an odd bit which darts away from all the rest, after traversing which we are in Lancashire again. Little Mitton Hall is accounted one of the finest specimens in England of the style of domestic architecture which prevailed at the commencement of the sixteenth century, or that of the building of Henry the Seventh's Chapel at Westminster. The basement is stone, the upper portion timber, including the roof of the great hall, which is ceiled with oak in wrought compartments of singular beauty. Great Mitton Church (in Yorkshire) is no less interesting in respect of its antiquities and to the admirer of sculpture in the private chapel, near the altar, once belonging to the Shireburns, the very ancient and honourable family, long since extinct, by which Stonyhurst was founded and originally occupied. The marble monuments bear epitaphs of rare tenderness, though antiquated in phraseology, foremost among them being that which commemorates the last of the race, Richard Francis Shireburn, who died, poor boy, in 1702, at the age of only nine—poisoned, tradition says, by eating yew-berries, though as the time of his death is stated on the monument to have been June, and it is impossible for yew-berries to exist except in October and November, there is something in need of explanation. It is not, by the way, the yew-*berry* that is poisonous,

for that is perfectly innocuous, but the *seed*.

Stonyhurst needs at least half-a-day purely and entirely to itself. At present, as well known, it is the principal college maintained in this country by the Jesuits, a party of whom obtained possession of it in 1794, when driven from Liege by the terrors of the French Revolution. The site was occupied by a hall in exceedingly remote times, a Shireburn going hence in 1347 to attend Queen Philippa at Calais. The existing edifice was raised in the time of Elizabeth, by whom the head of the family was so highly esteemed, that although a Catholic, she allowed him to retain his private oratory and domestic priest. The lofty and battlemented centre and the noble cupolas give it a character among our Lancashire mansions quite unique. The interior is in perfect harmony with the external design. It is richly stored, moreover, with works of art, and with archæological and historical curiosities, the latter including various treasures brought from the continent at the time of the establishment of the college. The present refectory was the old state reception hall, left unfinished through the death of the builder of this splendid place, magnificent nevertheless in its incompleteness, especially in regard to the ceiling and the friezes. Of late years very considerable additions have been made to the building, so as to adapt it more thoroughly to educational use of the highest character, and these, happily, are all consistent with the original scheme of decoration as well of architectural plan. Visitors are allowed to go through on making previous and proper application.

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A more delightful neighbourhood for a great residence it would be difficult to find. Everywhere in the vicinity alike of Stonyhurst and of the two Mittons, the country constantly reminds one of the south. Upon foot it is impossible to go astray, for if in rambling we do not reach the particular point that was contemplated at the outset, meadows, running water, woodlands, and the sweet spectacle of hills, both near and distant, and of all chaste hues, are everywhere our own, and the last hour is no less animating than the first. A very lovely walk in particular is that one from Mitton to Clitheroe, keeping the Lancashire side of the stream. The babble of the broad and shining water, the patient expectancy of many anglers, majestic Pendle upon the right, a thousand green trees, and by turning the head a little, after the manner of

... travellers oft, at evening's close,
When eastwards slowly moving,

the glimpse still obtainable of lofty Stonyhurst, which ever and anon recalls the inimitable ode, "Ye distant spires, ye antique towers." Each and every element in turn invites a pause, and linger as one may, Clitheroe is still too near, and reached too soon.

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Arrived, there is new pleasure in inspection of the remains of the ancient castle, one of the most interesting feudal relics in the county,—built towards the close of the twelfth century by one of the De Lacy family, whose landed possessions extended from this neighbourhood uninterruptedly to Pontefract. It never was a castle in the thorough sense of the word, merely a stronghold to which the lords of the house came at intervals, to receive tribute and to dispense justice. There never was room for much more than a donjon, the rock upon which the little fortalice was erected, rising out of the flat like an islet, a sort of Beeston rock in miniature. There were buildings no doubt upon the slope, predecessors of the present, the former including a chapel, but these were quite external to the castle *ipsissima*. The view from the summit is delightfully picturesque, and when this has been enjoyed, there is, as at Smithills, that curious blending of past and present, old and new, which always awakens gratitude to the gardener, for here, in this ancient keep, leaning against stones laid in their places nearly eight centuries ago, is one of the glossy little cotoneasters of northern India, unknown in England before 1825.

From Clitheroe we do well to proceed to Chatburn, by rail, if preferred, but far preferably on foot. Going about half-a-mile along the highway, presently, upon the left, there is a gate into a downward-sloping field, the path through which is continued under a flat railway bridge, then past the first of the celebrated Chatburn quarries, and into the fields again. Or we may go along the foot of mighty Pendle itself, and along a series of narrow and winding green lanes to Downham. The Chatburn quarries are capital hunting-grounds for the student of fossil shells, encrinites, and other remains found in limestone. We are enjoined to "consider the lilies of the field"—not foreign to the Divine behest is it to consider the Crinoidea, the wonderful stone-lilies of the limestone rock, the petrified flower-like heads of which here occur in inexpressible abundance. The great stones set up edgeways in place of stiles between the fields near the quarries, are crowded with fragments, and show the rough condition of a favourite material for chimneypieces. For the sake of ladies who may think of going this way, it may be well to add that the vertical stone barriers in question were plainly erected in defiance of the art of dress.

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Chatburn is the point to start from when the top of Pendle is the object, a rather heavy climb of two miles and a half, but if the atmosphere be clear, well rewarded. The view from Whalley Nab was magnificent. Pendle is to the latter just what Cobden Edge is to Marple—a brow upon which the former grandeurs seem diminished to a fifth. The glistening waters of the Irish Sea beyond the broad green plain in front; in the north, dim vistas and dark peaks, or mild blue masses, that declare the mountains of the Lake District,—old Coniston tossing the clouds from his hoary brows; proximately the smiling valley of the Ribble, the whole of the upper portion of which is overlooked; of the Hodder also, in temperament so wild and dashing, and the wandering Calder; and, turning to the east, the land towards the German Ocean as far as the powers of the eye can reach. The highest point of this huge mountain—the most prominent feature in the physical geography of mid-Lancashire—is stated by the Ordnance Survey to be one thousand eight hundred and fifty feet, thus falling very little short of the loftiest part of Kinder Scout, which nowhere claims a full two thousand. Keeping to the level, there is endless recreation, whether we penetrate Ribblesdale, or cross the river at the ferry, a mile below, for the fragments of Sawley,

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or content ourselves with the peaceful borders. Not what the Ribble is at "proud Preston," some seven leagues lower down, a broad and majestic river, do we find it here, but rural, chaste, and tranquil, the water shallow and clear, the *beau-ideal* of a Peneus, the laurels only wanting.



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CHAPTER XVII. PRESTON AND SOUTHPORT WAY.

The Bridegroom Sea

Is toying with his wedded spouse, the shore.
He decorates her tawny brow with shells,
Retires a space, to see how fair she looks,
Then, proud, runs up to kiss her.

ALEXANDER SMITH.



AMDEN, in his famous seventeenth century tour, says that he approached Lancashire from Yorkshire, "that part of the country lying beyond the mountains towards the western ocean," with "a kind of dread," but trusted to Divine Providence, which, he said, "had gone with him hitherto," to help him in the attempt. His apprehensions arose, no doubt, partly upon the immense difficulties which in those days attended travelling; but Lancashire west of the Rivington range was, in its rural portions, at the same period almost as rude and cheerless as Connemara. Towards the sea there were vast expanses of moor and marsh, and even the inland parts were cold and inhospitable. How changed by the wand of that greatest of magicians, Commerce!

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Though there is still abundant need of polish, Camden himself, could he come back, would surrender his fears, let him only be one of a party up to the Pike. Conspicuous from a hundred spots on the western margin of our city, Rivington Pike is little less worthy of a visit than Pendle, and has the advantage over the latter in being comparatively near. Proceeding first to Horwich, six miles beyond Bolton, on the main northern line, the ascent is quite easy, and may be undertaken by two or three different routes—one by the side of the little river Douglas; another by the quarry and Tiger Wood, a deep ravine containing all the accustomed pretty features of Lancashire mountain defiles, rushing water, many cascades, and abundance of trees. Ferns, mosses, and sylvan wild-flowers grow in plenty, and in one part, where the water collects in a large natural pool, there is quite a remarkable display of aquatic plants. The summit gained, over fifteen hundred feet above the sea, the prospect is magnificent, especially if we delay till the green country glows with a summer evening's sunset. The great plain that stretches to the Ribble, and renews itself as the "Fylde," lies at our feet. Chorley and Preston seem quite close; in the distance the church-towers and other aspiring portions of Southport are plainly visible, and beyond all there is a shining streak that is unmistakably the play-ground of the sea-gulls. North Cheshire, North Wales, and the nearer Derbyshire hills, are also seen. A very particularly fine view is obtained from the Anglezark end of the hill, a rough and broken eminence reached by a zigzag path from the base, which leads eventually to a soft and turfy brow. Upon the opposite side of the field, a trifle higher, there is a wall with a narrow iron gate in it, and here we take our stand. Now and then, on fine and perfectly tranquil evenings towards sunset, Lancaster Castle may be distinguished; if the tide be in, Morecambe Bay, and even Coniston.

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Quite as interesting, every way, as the Pike, and more so in some respects, are the great reservoirs belonging to the Liverpool Waterworks, altogether out of sight from the railway, but as a spectacle from the hill-side undeniably one of the most charming in the county. The area of the entire water-surface is five hundred acres; the supply comes from ten thousand acres of moorland above, brought down chiefly by the little rivers called the Douglas, the Yarrow, and the Roddlesworth. The Act of Parliament authorising the construction of these great reservoirs was obtained in 1847. Water was first delivered from them in Liverpool January 2nd, 1857. Rivington Pike, after all, is not the highest point of the range. Winter Hill, well named, so wild and cold and dreary is the complexion, and so often is it beaten by storms, claims a considerably greater altitude.

By this same line we go also to Chorley for Whittle-le-Woods, distant only four miles from Hoghton Tower, a romantic and secluded spot, noted for its historical associations, its "Springs," and, if we care to pursue a quiet and pretty walk by the edge of the canal, for wild-flowers found nowhere else near Manchester. Excepting in the canal at Disley, there is not another within the distance where there are in particular so many pond-weeds, that beautiful plant the *lucens* leading the way. Of these submerged things the question has been asked perhaps more

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frequently than of any others, What use are they? Rest upon them, then, for a moment. Use is a triple idea. Taking the entire mass of the vegetation of our planet, first there is economic use, as for food, which last being rendered to brute creatures as well as to mankind, is at the best but at a low and menial one. Secondly, comes the admirable use subserved by beauty, which brutes are incapable of appreciating, and blindness to which, like the use of foul and profane language, may be taken perhaps as the infallible sign of an imbecile. Plants can never be truly learned, nor is their highest use realised so long as we rest in the contemplation, albeit so salutary, even of their loveliness. Their last and crowning use comes of their *interpreting* power. There is not a species that does not cast some welcome side-light, that does not open our understanding to something previously unperceived. The pond-weeds do this, if nothing below, so that meeting with them we may rejoice.

The fine old halls scattered so freely about Bolton have counterparts in the neighbourhood of Wigan, all this part of the county having been in the hands of wealthy men during the time of the Stuarts and of the Commonwealth. Ince Hall, black and white, with its five gables, though of late much disfigured; Lostock Old Hall, Standish, Pemberton, Birchley, and Winstanley, are all very interesting; and if Haigh Hall, the Lancashire seat of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, be less curious, archæologically, there is not one that will compare with it in respect of gardens or romantic approach. The walk through the wood, beginning at a mile from the Wigan market-place, is in its way, for so near a coal and factory centre, without a rival.

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For a charming bit of wild nature thereabouts, commend us, however, to Dean Wood. Nothing, as regards landscape and prospects of sylvan solitude, can be more unpromising than the approach thereto through Hindley and Wigan. Two or three miles beyond the latter, where the ground begins to rise, and trees and streams of water make their appearance, it seems possible, after all, that something picturesque may lie concealed; and leaving the line at Gathurst, sure enough, we are by no means disappointed. Turning up on the left, after a few minutes along field-paths, the way changes into a beautiful clough, in many respects not unlike Bamford Wood, and which goes on improving to the end. Of course it is not to be confounded with the Dean Wood upon the slopes of Rivington; nor is the river below to be confounded with the Rivington "Douglas." This one, in truth, is the Lancashire Douglas pre-eminently: a stream of fifteen miles' flow before entering the Ribble, and the same with which tradition connects bloody conflicts in the time of the Danes. A tributary comes down the wood, after rain often so much swollen as to drown the path beside, when we may take an upper one, every bit as enjoyable, especially in autumn, since it gives a charming view of the trees below, among which there is unusual plenty of the kinds that bear red berries. Ferns and mosses grow in equal abundance; wild-flowers also, and flowering shrubs. The Gueldres-rose is especially abundant, and upon one occasion—October 10th, 1868—the ground was strewed in certain spots with the fallen fruit of the wild apple. In the upper part of the wood there are some curious varieties of the common oak, the leaves so small that they might be thought to belong to a different species. Emerging near the green lane, the homeward path lies first through Up-Holland, then either by the lanes to Wigan—four miles distant—or more speedily to Orrel station on the Bolton and Liverpool line.

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Appley Bridge, the station succeeding Gathurst, is the nearest for that glorious eminence, Ashurst Hill, the prospect from which is once again all that heart can desire, let only the day be fair. Now, too, we have something quite different, the great flat, looking southwards, being that which reaches to the estuary of the Mersey, the eye resting upon the distant trees of Knowsley Park, and detecting even Liverpool; while to the west, almost underneath, is Lathom, Ormskirk beyond, and exquisitely upon the horizon, the lucid sea, and the mountains that talk quietly of the Vale of Llangollen. A similar view is obtainable from the summit of Billinge, half-way between Wigan and St. Helens, but access thereto is not so easy, nor is there the same sweet sense of remote and airy solitude, green as the early spring, which, unless the visit happens to be most unfortunately timed, always awaits the pilgrim to Ashurst. The beacon upon the summit, a stone tower with pyramidal spire, was erected in the time of the French Revolutionary wars, taking the place of one established on the identical spot in the memorable August of 1588,—the year, as Charles Kingsley says, of Britain's Salamis.

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From Appley Bridge there is also a grand walk to the summits upon the *right-hand* side of the rails, the chief of them, Horrocks Hill, lying about two miles away to the north, and at a spot called Higher Barn, attaining an elevation superior even to Ashurst. But it is not so well adapted for a signalling station, and hence, instead of a beacon, is marked only by a tree. The view from the top is singularly fine, embracing the whole country up to the Lune, with the towers of Lancaster city, Blackpool, Rufford (where there is a very interesting old hall, black and white), the Ribble, and the entire course of the Douglas, embouchure included. For variety, the return walk may be made *viâ* Standish.

Lathom Park implies, upon the Newborough side, a delicious walk through the intricacies of what in this part would be better called Lathom Wood. The trees are lofty; the shade is dense; the path, gently undulated, crosses about the middle a swiftly-running stream called the Sawd. This, like the water in Dean Wood, is a tributary of the Douglas. Just outside the park there is another, now called the Slate Brook, and of special historical interest, being that one which in the records of the memorable siege of Lathom House is called the Golforden.

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Shortly after emerging from the wood, and crossing the smooth greensward of the park where open to the sunshine, the house itself comes in view, a noble mansion, worthy alike of the domain and of the owner. That it is not the original Lathom House—the Lathom which belongs not more to the history of Lancashire than to the annals of English courage and to the biography of great-souled women, scarcely needs saying. The original,—the magnificent building honoured by the

visit of Henry VII. and his queen, when the "singing women" walked in front,—which had no fewer than eighteen towers, in addition to the lofty "eagle," and a fosse of eight yards in width, received so much injury at the time of the siege that on the removal of the family, shortly afterwards, to Knowsley, it soon fell into a state of utter dilapidation. Passing into the hands of the Bootle family, restoration was found impracticable, and during the ten years following 1724 the present building superseded the historic one. Nothing in its style can be finer than the north front, one hundred and fifty-six feet long, rising from a massive rustic basement, with double flight of steps to the first story, the lateral portions supported by Ionic columns. The interior corresponds; the great hall being forty feet square, with a height of thirty feet; the saloon, of almost similar dimensions, and the library fifty feet by twenty. When given over to decay, the original hall was literally carried off stone by stone, the country people in the vicinity being permitted to take whatever they liked for private use, so that now, as has happened with many an ancient abbey and castle, the building may be said to be diffused over the whole district. In farmyard and cottage walls it is not difficult to identify now and then, on a very fair basis of conjecture, a fragment or two of the ancestral home of the Stanleys, every atom suggestive, as we contemplate it, of ancient dignity and heroism almost unique.

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To recite, once again, the majestic old story of the siege is not needful. Suffice it to say that in 1642, when James, the seventh Earl of Derby, whose steadfast loyalty so well fulfilled the family motto, *Sans changer*, was in the Isle of Man, approach was made to Lathom House with a view to capture by the Parliamentarians under Fairfax. The countess, originally Charlotte de Tremouille, a high-born lady whose kindred were connected with the blood-royal of France, replied to the summons to surrender that she had a double trust to sustain—faith to her lord the Earl, who had entrusted her with the safe keeping, and allegiance to her king—and that she was resolved not to swerve from either honour or obedience. The nature of the long defence, the discomfiture of the assailants, and what happened subsequently, constitutes, as well known, a chapter in the family history at once consummately noble and profoundly sorrowful. It reads more touchingly than any romance or tale of fancy, and would supply subjects for many a great picture. Plenty of memorials of the siege have been preserved. A little while ago, upon removal of a tree near the site of the original hall, numbers of bullets were found in the earth about the roots. Tradition also has plenty to say, and apparently with more truth than is sometimes the case. In the history of the siege, written shortly after its time, seven of the defenders are said to have lost their lives, and one of these, called on account of his great stature, Long Jan, is said to have owed his death-wound to his head rising above the wall or parapet. Very interesting was it, therefore, a few years since, when during some alterations in the level of the ground, there were discovered seven skeletons, one of them indicating a frame little less than gigantic. The bones, when uncovered, were seemingly perfect, but all soon crumbled away, and not a trace remained. Another circumstance mentioned in the old history of the siege is that supplies of coal were obtained by excavating in the courtyard. The Earl of Lathom was so fortunate, a year or two ago, as to personally prove the truthfulness of this statement by the discovery of an outcrop below the turf, just in front of the drawing-room windows of the modern mansion.

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The Lathom pleasure-grounds and gardens are not less beautiful than the wood. In the former, among many other rare and admirable trees, there is a plane, in Lancashire quite a stranger; this one the very emblem of health and nobleness, a sight, as Dame Quickly says, "to thank God on:" the latter teem with interesting hardy herbaceous plants, quite refreshing to behold after the inlay of chromatic geometry which at the present day is so often substituted for a garden. The flowers, in great abundance and variety, are chiefly of the kinds that the poets and artists always loved, those that have been sung of in a thousand simple verses, which the poets still love best of all, and which, when neatly and nicely marshalled and tended, keep up an unrelaxing flow of tinted loveliness from the time of Christmas-roses and yellow aconites until that of the last lingering asters of November. Access to this charming place is for the favoured few not beyond the range of the possibilities. Never yet, when properly asked, has the Earl of Lathom refused to give proof of generous courtesy such as distinguishes the Lancashire gentleman and the English nobleman.

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Not far from Lathom Park there is another very interesting old family seat, Blythe Hall, the residence of the Hon. Mrs. Bootle-Wilbraham. This is approached most pleasantly from Burscough, through lanes, meadows, and corn-fields, and in its garden, like Lathom, and, we may add, like Cheshire Tatton, gives delightful guarantee that, despite the enmity of modern planters, genuine floriculture will, with the tasteful, outlive them all. There are fit and proper places, no doubt, for every style and system of flower-planting. Any mode that pleases a considerable number of rational people is proved, by the simple fact of its doing so, to be right under certain conditions, local ones, and limited. The misfortune is that "bedding-out" very generally implies, if it does not necessitate, the abolition of a thousand things that are individually and supremely meritorious, the piece of land which it embosses becoming only by a euphemism, "a garden," and this at infinitely greater pains than if cultivated.

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When at Blythe, it would be a pity to forget that at a few fields' distance remains exist to this day of the once celebrated and stately Burscough Priory. The fragments, for they really are no more, consist of portions of one of the principal interior arches, deeply sunk in the mass of earth and rubbish accumulated after the overthrow of the building, the arched head of a piscina alone declaring the ancient level. The ruins seem to have stood untouched and grey, as at this moment, for at least a couple of centuries. The grass comes up to their feet, and looks as if it had been there always. Very interesting, however, is it to note, close by, orchards comparatively young, in their season full of honey-plums and damsons; corn also, within a few yards, the fruit and the grain renewing to-day what no doubt was the exact spectacle five hundred years ago. The priory

was founded by Robert Fitz-Henry, lord of Lathom, temp. Richard I. It was richly endowed, and at the time of the suppression required as many as forty servants. Some of the Stanley monuments, and eight of the bells, were then removed to Ormskirk church, where a new tower was built for the reception of the latter, the remainder going to Croston. The mutilated alabaster effigies of knights and ladies from the old Derby burial-place, form one of the most interesting of the many attractions of remarkable Ormskirk. Excepting a few portraits, these effigies, strange to say, are the only extant art memorials of that ancient line! A tablet, an epitaph, even a gravestone in honour of a Derby of the lang syne, is sought in vain. Knowsley, the present seat of the family, seven miles from Liverpool and two from Prescot, is celebrated for the magnitude, rather than the symmetry, of its splendid hall. Built at very various times, it presents as many different styles. The park, nine or ten miles in circumference, abounds with pretty bits of the picturesque given by trees. Many of these, however, have the curious look presented by such as growing near the shore, are constantly wind-beaten.

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From various points near Lathom and Ormskirk there is seen, in the Southport direction, to all appearance a village spire. This indicates, in reality, Scarisbrick Hall, one of the most striking and successful efforts in architecture the county possesses. The ancestors of the Scarisbrick family having owned the estates for at least seven centuries, we learn without surprise that, as in other cases, where the present building now stands there was once a black and white; further, that the family being Catholic, it was well provided with outer defences, and had its "secret chamber" for refuge in times of persecution. The original was in 1799 the residence of the philanthropic Mr. Eccleston at whose cost and under whose guidance Martin Mere was reclaimed. In 1814 all was changed. The old timbered building was cased in stone so completely that now not a trace remains in view; and the general form, a centre with projecting wings, is all that exists in the shape of memorial. But how magnificently effected! The work was entrusted to the elder Pugin, and continued by his son, without stint as to cost, the result being an edifice in the Tudor style, treated with power and opulence so astonishing that all ordinary domestic buildings of similar character seem by comparison insignificant. Sculptures and every kind of decorative stone-work contribute to the wonderful beauty of the vast exterior. Along the base of the enriched cornices or parapets scripture texts have been introduced—"I have raised up the ruins, and I have builded it as in the days of old;" "Every house is builded by some man, but He that buildeth all is God;"—the ample windows, in their turn, are freely traced with lines and patterns of shining gold. The superb tower, which in the distance seems a village spire, erected about a dozen years ago, is over one hundred and sixty feet in height, and is understood to be an exact copy of the Victoria Tower of the Houses of Parliament. The cost of this portion alone approached the sum of £25,000. Gardens and conservatories add to the interest of this splendid place; the former containing a holly, the stem of which, at twenty inches above the ground, is six feet in circumference; while the latter are renowned for their tropical ferns. The very low situation, and the flatness of all the surrounding country, unfortunately prevent this noble building being seen to advantage. It is a marvel, nevertheless, to all who approach. The Scarisbrick family has of late years experienced changes. The present owner of the hall, by marriage to the daughter of the Lady Scarisbrick who died in 1872, is the Marquis de Blandos de Castèja.

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Southport should be visited for the sake of its unusually good Aquarium, with Winter Gardens above, a flower-show all the year round; for the beautiful Churchtown Botanical Gardens, the fernery belonging to which has no rival, as regards our own neighbourhood, except at Tatton; and for the Birkdale sandhills, no dreary place except to the dreary-hearted, but in their way so remarkable and picturesque, so richly stored with curious plants, and breathing an air so soft and salubrious that in the north of England they stand alone. In their wild and ever-changing complexion they supply enjoyments quite distinct from the uniformity of a corn and pastoral country. Standing upon their spear-clad ridges, we seem to be surveying a miniature Cordillera. In winter the northward and eastward slopes are flecked with snow, while the southern and western ones bask in the sunshine; mosses of all shades of green and coppery-gold strew the former parts with little islands of sweet brightness; and in July the open plateaux are crowded with the white cups of the parnassia. Up to about twenty years ago, no place in the entire county, excepting Grange, was so rich for the botanist as Southport in general. Building, drainage, and the changes incident to town-extension, have obliterated many of the best localities; still, so long as the Birkdale sandhills remain intact, it will preserve no trifling part of the reputation. The want at Southport is more sea. The tide not only goes out to an incredible distance, but always seems reluctant to return. It is in respect of this that superiority is so justly claimed by Blackpool, the sea at the latter place, save on exceptional days, being always within view, always grand and inspiring.

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South Lancashire, *viâ* the original Liverpool and Manchester line, or that which runs through Barton, offers few attractions to the excursionist, being flat and very seldom relieved by wood and water. The best part of the country traversed by the line in question is that which holds Worsley Hall, the seat of the Earl of Ellesmere, the ground here rising into a terrace which commands a view over the whole of the great plain bounded upon the opposite side by Dunham Park. The summit of the lofty tower at Wren's Wood, a little to the west of the hall, overlooks or allows of glimpses of no fewer than six counties. Hence it is itself seen from great distances. The grounds pertaining to the hall, access to which is granted at certain times, supply an excellent example of high-class professional laying-out, without exciting the sense of surfeit such as at Alton is scarcely avoidable. The woodland paths are pretty, and in autumn the floricultural part emulates even Vale Royal. The hall, just beyond the village, upon the left hand, is the third of the name. The original, or "Old" hall, a most interesting, quaintly-timbered structure, still exists, and

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is at present occupied by the Hon. Algernon Egerton. The second was pulled down about twenty years ago. The present magnificent structure, so conspicuous from the railway, was commenced in or about 1839 by the first Earl of Ellesmere, then Lord Francis Egerton, under the superintendence of Mr. Blore, the architect of the new façade of Buckingham Palace. Upon the right-hand side of the road, after emerging from the village, there is a very pretty sylvan adjunct to the park called the Hen Pen, the paths meandering through which often recall the scenery of Mere Clough. The village itself is exceptionally picturesque, the late Earl having encouraged the erection of private houses and other buildings in the style of the old hall, the ancient black and white or "magpie" fashion, these gaining in turn from the happily chosen position of the church, which last is considered to be one of the most successful productions of Mr. Gilbert Scott, and is in any case a most beautiful example of Geometrical Decorated. Worsley may be reached by three different routes. First, there is the station of its own name, upon the Tyldesley line, going thence across the fields. Secondly, there is the old way *viâ* Patricroft, proceeding thence on foot by the side of the canal, a walk of about two miles. Thirdly, when permission can be obtained, there is the delightful path through Botany Bay Wood, one of the most sequestered to be found anywhere near Manchester. Being strictly preserved, it is of course only at certain seasons, and then only by special favour, that people are allowed to pass through, or can reasonably ask for leave. The entrance to it is from Barton Moss, beginning with the station, then crossing the waste at right angles, so as to step on to a broad causeway which borders the moss in a line parallel with the rails, and after becoming greener and softer, at last enters the wood. Filling the whole of the space between the grounds of Worsley Hall and the edge of the moss, and of purely artificial origin, this charming leafy covert received its somewhat singular name from the workmen by whose labour it was formed. So arduous was the toil demanded by the draining and subsequent planting, that they compared it to the penalty of transportation to the eighty years ago famous "Botany Bay" of the antipodes, the terror of evil doers, and precursor of the Dartmoor of to-day. Barton Moss is essentially a portion or adjunct of Chat Moss, an element of the landscape as surveyed from the higher parts of Worsley, which can hardly be considered cheerful, though rich in interesting associations, foremost among which is the history of the means adopted to overcome the difficulties it presented to the constructors of the original Liverpool and Manchester Railway. The naturalist still finds upon it abundance of welcome objects, including the bog-myrtle, *Myrica Galë*, one of the very few really indigenous British plants which can be rightfully called aromatic. A surface like Chat Moss, saturated with wet, seems in little danger of ignition, yet no further back than in June, 1868, a very considerable portion was on fire. The conflagration commenced in a plantation near Astley. Within an hour most of the trees were levelled with the ground. A strong wind was blowing at the time, the fire spread rapidly, and the flames and clouds of smoke were seen for miles. Continuing for between four and five days, at last it approached Barton, and only then did it die away. The moss is traversed hereabouts by many ditches cut for draining purposes. They are from five to eight feet wide, and twelve to fifteen feet in depth, and are generally full of water. So powerful, however, was the action of the fire, that when it expired in many of them there was scarcely an inch, and others were entirely dry. A conflagration of similar character occurred in 1790 upon Lindow Common, resulting in the destruction of an enormous quantity of the game then so plentiful there.

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Newton-le-Willows, a place of more names than any other in the county, being also called Newton Bridge, and Newton-in-Makerfield, and by sporting men simply Newton, all these superseding the ancient "Rokeden," gives access to interesting places both right and left. The town itself has its attractions, consisting of little more than the one old original broad street, with plenty of archæological curiosities, which preserves the primitive idea of a rural English village. Some very pleasant walks, partly sylvan, invite us to the northern side, where also will be found a large and picturesque sheet of water. Like Taxal and Rudyard it is artificial, having been formed by barricading the outlets of two small streams—the Dene and the Sankey—which previously occupied little independent valleys of their own, so that the outline of the "lake" so called, is most agreeably irregular. In parts it is abundantly flowered with water-lilies, so easy is it for good taste to confer a pure and lasting ornament. On the southern side of the line the specialty consists in the very ancient and interesting village of Winwick, with its celebrated church and innumerable antiquities, including a runic cross in the graveyard. Thence, by permission, there is a charming walk towards Warrington, first along the old lane in front of the church, then through the grounds and shrubberies attached to Winwick Hall, after leaving which the path becomes public. The rhododendrons at Winwick Hall are probably the oldest, as they are certainly the largest and finest in the district. They give one a perfect idea of the stalwart vitality of this inestimable flowering shrub, and place it before us, in all likelihood, just as developed in its native valleys upon the borders of the Euxine, all these very large and venerable rhododendrons, wherever seen, being the original *Ponticum*. While the original "anemone" was the flower we now call the cistus, the original "rhododendron" was after all, not our universal garden favourite so named, but a totally different thing—the shrub, originally from Palestine, cherished in greenhouses as the "oleander." Such, at least, was the application of the name in the times immediately preceding those when Pliny wrote.

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On the extreme south-western margin of the county, where the simple rustic streams we found near Marple, the Goyt and the Etherowe, after uniting their strength, and receiving the waters of the Tame, the Irwell, and the Bollin, at length become glorious as the estuary of the Mersey, there remain for us, in conclusion, two of the most interesting places in Lancashire. These are Speke Hall, near Garston, and the village of Hale; the latter possessed of some fine archæological fragments, with, close by, the park and gardens appertaining to the residence of Colonel Blackburne.

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Speke Hall is a most charming example of genuine Elizabethan work, affording, both inside and out, some of the best and most characteristic features of the better kind of domestic architecture which came into general use soon after the middle of the sixteenth century. To compare small things with great, it may be described as a miniature Bramhall. It stands only a few minutes' walk from the edge of the estuary, and in the olden time would often, no doubt, be approached from the water, to which an avenue or arcade of lofty trees at present shows the way. In front the ground is level, consisting of green fields which reach to the garden fence. The want of elevation, as at Scarisbrick, rather hinders full appreciation of the singular beauty of the building, at all events until we draw near enough to perceive that, like nearly all other mansions of the kind, it was originally protected by a moat. This has long since been superseded by turf, the bridge alone remaining to show the depth and width, and the grand old structure now rising up in all its nobleness of design. It is not the original Speke Hall. At the period of the Domesday survey the estate was held by a Saxon thane. After the Conquest, it fell to the share of that famous Norman, Roger de Poicou, who as a reward for his conduct at the battle of Hastings, received so large a portion of Lancashire. Roger, as we all remember, took part in sundry small acts of disloyalty, for which, in turn, he was punished by forfeiture. Subsequently changing hands yet again, at last—perhaps about 1350—the property came to be owned by a branch of the celebrated old family of Norreys (one of the descendants of which fought under Lord Stanley at Flodden, A.D. 1513), and by these the first hall of the name was erected, in what style is not known. Remaining in their possession, Speke, as we see it to-day, was the work of one Edward Norreys, who commemorates himself in an inscription in antique letters over the principal entrance:—"This worke 25 yards long was wolly built by Edw. N., Esq. Anno 1598." The ground-plan, as in similar halls, consisted of a spacious quadrangular courtyard, buildings occupying all four of the sides, so that by means of the corridors and galleries, any portion can be reached by an inmate without stepping into the open air. The richness of these corridors, the beauty of the wood-carving, and the general ornamentation, it is impossible to describe briefly; some of the carved oak was brought from Holyrood by the Sir Wm. Norreys of Flodden fame. There is a fine collection also of ancient weapons, miscellaneous curiosities, and paintings. A wonderful and probably unique spectacle, as regards our own country, is presented upon entering the quadrangle. A very considerable portion of its large area is occupied by a pair of yew trees, much older than the building itself, and to accommodate which the builder seems to have given his first thought while measuring, not forgetting that while his walls would remain unchanged, the trees would grow. They are not of the same age. The yew being one of the trees which are distinctly unisexual, it is plain that the object in introducing the second individual was to secure red berries, such as are still produced abundantly every year. In 1736 the Speke estate passed, through a marriage, into the hands of one of the Beauclerk family, concerning whom the historians seem to care to say no more than is needful; and in 1780 it was purchased by Mr. Richard Watt, an opulent Liverpool merchant. Continuing in his family, it is now held by the lady—Miss Ada Watt—whose kindly permission to enter the gates is indispensable.

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Tho. Letherbrow.
Hale Hut.

[Larger image](#) (170 kB)

Hale, renowned for its cottage-gardens, with lilies and roses beyond the counting, is a quiet, peaceful, salubrious little place, claiming celebrity as regards historical mention long anterior to that of Liverpool. When the site of that wealthy city was known to few but fishermen, Hale, so its people assert, already possessed a royal charter. To-day the archæologist turns with interest to the remains of a mansion which in its way must have been a fitting companion even for Speke—the ancient baronial residence called the Hutte, about two miles upon the Liverpool side of the village, and lying back a little distance from the turnpike road. The great hall was a hundred feet long by thirty feet wide; scarcely anything is to be seen now beyond some of the grand old windows, an ancient chimneypiece, and the moat, with its drawbridge. Hale Church, like the Hutte, tells of a time when the maps did not insert Liverpool.[29] The body dates from about the middle of the last century, but the tower is of immemorial age, contemporaneous perhaps with

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the vast pile at the western extremity of Ormskirk old church, thus with the very earliest ecclesiastical remains extant in Lancashire. Here, too, we have a beautiful example of the ancient lych-gate.

Soon after the Restoration the Hutte would seem to have been relinquished as a place of residence by the local family. A new one at all events was built in 1674—the Hale Hall of the present day—mentioned above as the seat of Colonel Blackburne. Like many another first-class country-house, in style it is substantially domestic, extremely comfortable to look at, and no doubt well appointed within; but still neither in outline or physiognomy can it be said to preserve the traditions of any particular school of art. The park is spacious, full of fine trees, including many lindens, so valuable wherever men are sagacious enough to set up beehives. It supplies, also, many a delightful prospect, especially when the eye crosses the water and rests upon the opposite distant hills of North-West Cheshire, which are said to resemble very strikingly the rising grounds about Bethany and Bethphage. The gardens have great historic interest, since it was to Hale that the famous collection of plants once existing at Orford Mount was transferred, these including vines now two or three centuries old, but still prolific of grapes. Vines in this healthful village seem comfortable anywhere, mounting, as in the south, to the cottage eaves, and outstripping in their beautiful green ambition even the honeysuckles.

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CHAPTER XVIII. THE LOCAL ORNITHOLOGY.

'Twas then we heard the cuckoo's note
Sound sweetly through the air,
And everything around us looked
Most beautiful and fair.

OLD SONG.



ALL lovers of the woods and fields are interested in our native birds. Many of their sincerest pleasures are associated with birds; they listen for the song of the thrush in early spring; for the note of the cuckoo, inestimable herald of the summer, voiceful when all else is voiceless, magnet of the heart in quiet evenings as we tread the rising grass or scent the new-cut hay;—and when the corn is awaiting the sickle, for the *creec creec* of the land-rail. So with the sweet spectacle of the little nests, hidden away in the hawthorn or ancient ivy-bush. So again with the graceful movements of very many,

The thin-winged swallow skating on the air;

the lengthened undulations of the yellow wagtail; the flutter of the goldfinch about the thistle-stems; the rich and massive sailing of the rooks when homeward bound, so grand, in particular, as they descend to their night covert in the trees. "Who was it," asks Mr. Bright, who so happily applied to rooks the lines in the sixth *Æneid*, where Virgil, speaking of the descent of *Æneas* and his guide upon the Elysian plains, says,

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Devenere locos lætos, et amœna vireta
Fortunatorum nemorum, sedesque beatas?

And down they came upon the happy haunts,
The pleasant greenery of the favoured groves,
Their blissful resting-place.^[30]

We propose, accordingly, now to add a brief account of the ornithology of the district these Rambles cover, so far, at all events, as regards the immediate neighbourhood of Manchester. The

detailed observations upon the habits of the various species as originally given in the "Walks and Wild flowers" were, as stated in that work, supplied to a considerable extent by two old friends, both long since deceased, Samuel Carter and Edward Jacques. Many others will now be found, and for these we have chiefly to thank Mr. Charles E. Reade.

When Dr. Latham published his famous history of birds, exactly a hundred years ago, the number of ascertained species, in all countries, was about four thousand. It is now beyond question that the number is not less than eleven thousand, and many others no doubt exist in remote corners of which little or nothing has yet been learned. Europe contains a fair proportion of the great total. So does old England individually. The Rev. F. O. Morris, in his six well-known volumes, the first of which is dated 1863, describes and figures no fewer than three hundred and fifty-eight, or about a thirtieth of the whole number, which, very curiously, is just about the same proportion as that of the inhabitants of the British Islands to the aggregate of the world in general. In this list are included the genuine Ancient Britons, the aborigines, the birds that never go away, hence called "Permanent Residents;" the migratory birds, or such as come for awhile in summer or winter, hence called "Periodical Visitors;" and, thirdly, the vagrants, the lost, and the adventurous, collectively called "Casuals." The introduction of the last-named, though legitimate, gives, it must be confessed, a certain deceptiveness to the figures. In the whole range of natural history there is no fact more interesting than that birds, in their airy voyages, often wander inconceivably far from home, so that in all countries solitary examples of different kinds are met with in turn, not one of them perhaps ever revisiting that particular spot. Well may the poets, that is to say, the philosophers, find in birds the representatives and emblems of human thought, which, as we all know, travels illimitably. To give these casuals, however, a place in the catalogue commensurate with that of the aborigines, the birds residing in the country all the year round, or even with that of the established visitors, which, like the cuckoo, never forget their appointed season, is manifestly to introduce confusion. At least fifty out of Mr. Morris's three hundred and fifty-eight have not occurred more than once or twice in any part of Great Britain; and another hundred are particularised as "extremely rare." To say that there are about two hundred British species is thus nearer the truth as regards the established denizens of our island—the birds we are familiar with, or with which we may become so by steady watching; and of these, proper to our own neighbourhood, there would seem to occur within a few miles of Manchester about ninety. The number of permanent residents mentioned in the "Walks" is fifty-nine, and of regular summer and winter visitors between twenty-five and thirty; if there is any difference at the present moment, the changes of twenty-four years will certainly not indicate increase. Why we have no more than about one-half of the proper ornithology of the country is that Lancashire is too far to the north, and its climate too damp and chilly, for many of the summer immigrants from beyond the channel, though some of these have no objection to visit the adjacent county of York; while in respect of the winter visitors from the colder parts of the Continent and the Baltic regions, we are rather too far to the west. If few in comparison with the possessions of more favoured districts, the ninety or a hundred are still enough to be proud of and to rejoice in. It is with birds as with wild-flowers: we do not want lengthy catalogues, but that which shall gladden the heart. A single life-history, followed up in every little particular, supplies, exactly as in botany, more real and lasting enjoyment than acquaintance, however sounding, with a score of mere shapes and measurements, and resting therein. [259] [260] [261]

The parts most abounding in birds are naturally those which supply food in the greatest abundance. The peat-mosses, the cold and treeless hills have their inhabitants. Still, it is where fruit abounds, and where the insects depending on vegetation are most numerous, that birds must always be expected to gather in largest numbers. Trees and substantial hedgerows are also inviting, so that, all things considered, the southern and south-western parts of the neighbourhood are probably the richest both in number of species and of individuals.

The simple fact of so many as ninety of the prettiest and most interesting of the birds accounted British being denizens of our own district should operate as a strong inducement, especially with young people, to commence earnest study of ornithology. If the gathering and examination of ferns and wild-flowers be a perennial pastime, quite as hearty is the enjoyment that comes of observing the forms of birds, always so elegant, the diversities of their vestures, their odd and entertaining manners and customs, their ingenuity, characters, and tempers, their almost human instincts, and their incessant prefiguration of human character. This last is, in truth, not simply one of the most curious and amusing parts of ornithology, but literally the inexhaustible part. The best and most precious lessons in natural history, whatever may be the department, are those which enable us to trace the harmonies between the lower forms of life and our own, seeing that man is not so much contained in nature, as the continent of it, the summary, compend, and epitome of all that is outside of him, and of all that has gone before. It is not necessary, as some seem to suppose, that we should *shoot* every unlucky bird we may desire to be acquainted with. The museums are now so amply stocked with good stuffed specimens, that there is no need for further slaughter, unless under peculiar circumstances; all that we may want to know about form and colour is procurable indoors, and the best part of the subject is always that which is followed up with our eyes and ears in the fields. There is no harm in killing birds, any more than in the insecticide of the entomologist, so long as necessary for the genuine purposes of science; but to make a point of bringing down every poor wayfarer that may come within range is wanton cruelty. Instead of glorying in the destruction of a rare bird, or of a brilliant butterfly that an instant before had been waving its painted fans like an animated flower, it should rather be matter of regret that it has now been prevented from any longer brightening the earth and air, and that the beauty of the world has been thus much defaced. If a bird in the hand be worth two in the bush, a bird in the woods, rejoicing in the freedom of nature, is worth [262]

twenty in a museum or a glass case.

Assuredly, too, it is a great mistake to shoot down birds because of the damage they do in orchards and corn-fields. Caterpillars, grubs, and flies of various kinds multiply in precisely the degree that pains are taken to protect the fruit by destroying the birds disposed to attack it. The prudent man, instead of killing all he can, knows that his best policy is so to alarm the invaders that they shall go away of their own accord. Birds of a feather not only flock together, but, as every ornithologist knows full well, can confabulate. Warned by the discharge of small shot such as will do them no harm, they soon discern that mischief is brewing, and though, like boys, they will "try it on" again, by and by they take their departure, and conscience is not smitten with the reflection that, after all, the poor creature was more of a friend than an adversary. By killing off birds systematically, not to say malevolently and vindictively, those who do so strive their best to exterminate a leading section of the sanitary police of nature. No policy is more short-sighted; it is the opprobrium of the present day, and if persisted in will induce results that, when too late, will be deplored.

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While speaking thus of the wanton destruction of birds, let it be added that the words apply with equal force to the wanton destruction of flowers and ferns. Gather what can be applied to good and useful purposes, but *no more*; and as regards roots, never dig up anything that cannot be relied upon as quite sure to take kindly to the garden or the rockery it is destined for. All true naturalists love to contemplate Life, and living things, and no one deserves the name who wilfully and wantonly or even heedlessly puts things to death, or who treats them in such a way that they will presently be sure to die.

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Let us proceed, however, with our list, adding only that the original localities of 1858 have all been allowed to stand, so that it may be seen what Manchester possessed then, if not to-day. The scientific appellations are those which lead off the lists of synonyms given by Morris. To facilitate reference to his useful work, the volume and the number of the plate are cited after every name, the plates being counted as No. 1 and thence onwards up to 358.

I. PERMANENT RESIDENTS.

THE KESTREL, OR WINDHOVER (*Falco Tinnunculus*), Morris, vol. i., pl. 17.

Common, building in woods, especially where little disturbed by visitors. One of the most beautiful and harmless of its race, and remarkable for hovering over its prey, which is often a field-mouse. It may be seen suspended in the air by quick, short flapping of the wings, sometimes for five minutes, then dropping down upon its victim with wonderful speed and force.

THE SPARROW-HAWK (*Accipiter Fringillarius*), i., 19.

Common, a bird of great daring, and a very general and successful destroyer of smaller ones, pouncing at once upon its prey. Usually builds in a tree which commands a good view in every direction.

THE SHORT-EARED OWL (*Strix brachyotus*), i., 23.

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Frequently found on the mosses. Two upon Trafford Moss in the winter of 1858-9.

THE WHITE OR BARN OWL (*Strix flammea*), i., 29.

Common. The most frequent, familiar, and useful of the British owls, being a great destroyer of mice and young rats, therefore especially valuable to farmers who have granaries. Often laughed at because of its "stupid" look, the owl is a bird of consummate interest. The great size of the eyes is adapted to the small amount of light in which they are usually to be employed. In the broad light of day the poor creature is dazzled, and may well look irrational. Mark also the beautiful fringe around the eyes. This prevents the interference of lateral light, and the bird can concentrate the whole of its power upon what lies immediately before it, just as we ourselves shade the eye with the hand, and curve the fingers, when we want to examine some distant object more particularly.

THE SONG THRUSH (*Turdus musicus*), iii., 127.

Everywhere in the district, and its sweet voice known to every one. In congenial seasons it begins to sing in February. The nests, with the eggs, are brought every year to the market for sale. In the work of no creatures more than of birds, as in higher circles of life, is there more of "love's labour lost." But to balance extreme lack of wisdom, so great in the present instance is the perseverance, that if in endeavouring to raise a brood it is foiled by one of its many enemies, the thrush almost invariably follows that good old rule, "try again."

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THE MISSEL THRUSH (*Turdus viscivorus*), iii., 124.

Common, breeding freely and very early, and building a nest similar to that of the song-thrush, but in rather slovenly fashion, and usually very conspicuous, being placed in the forks of the branches of trees. Any odd stuff is used for it, as pieces of torn-up newspaper, bits of old flannel, stray cotton-wool, old ribbon, &c.

THE BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*), iii., 131.

Common everywhere, restless and vigilant, breeding freely, known to every one, and a great plague to gardeners. Blackbirds, however, consume so many snails, that in the matter of spoiled fruit we can quite afford to be lenient.

THE HEDGE SPARROW, OR DUNNOCK (*Accentor modularis*), iii., 135.

Common, and especially attached to gardens. Begins to sing towards dusk, never any sooner; then mounts to the highest twig it can find near its nest, and is tuneful to the highest degree, saying, as well as a bird can, "Home, home, sweet, sweet home, my day's work is done, like yours; good night, all's well." A more exquisitely beautiful and immaculate shade of blue than that of the eggs it is scarcely possible to discover. [267]

THE ROBIN, OR REDBREAST (*Sylvia rubecula*), iii., 136.

Universally known and beloved; very fond of visiting timber-yards in the town during the winter, where it sings freely; and in the country an excellent prophet of the weather, for if the next day is to be fine, the robin mounts to the top of the tallest tree; if the contrary, it warbles softly underneath. The young birds are nearly the colour of throstles, the distinctive hue not appearing till after the first moult. At this period the bird seems patched with red, presenting a most comical appearance.

THE STONECHAT (*Sylvia rubicola*), iii., 140.

Seen every winter in the neighbourhood of Withington, haunting the Swedish turnip fields. In the summer it lodges elsewhere.

THE GOLDEN-CRESTED WREN (*Regulus cristatus*), iii., 162.

This bird builds annually in the yews in the grounds at Dunham Hall, and is common on the outskirts of the town generally. The note resembles that of a weak cricket, and is often repeated, as if the little creatures, like children, were afraid of losing one another. The male and female are never seen apart, and usually there are three or four couples together.

THE GREAT TITMOUSE (*Parus major*), i., 36. [268]

Common, haunting woods and gardens, and busy most of its time in looking for insects and spiders. Imitating other birds, and making all sorts of queer noises, the reward it often gets is to be shot for its pains, the wonder being what droll creature can it be.

THE BLUE TITMOUSE (*Parus cœruleus*), i., 39.

Very beautiful in plumage, usually a sweet light blue or dark blue and yellow, common in woods and gardens, and building its nest in holes of trees, in letter-boxes, old pumps, and anything else that has a cavity in it and it takes a fancy to. In late autumn and winter there is no prettier sight than to watch one of these elegant little creatures pecking away at one of the two or three apples that a kind-hearted man always leaves for it.

THE COLE TITMOUSE (*Parus ater*), i., 37.

Common, but chiefly found in winter, usually going northwards to breed.

THE MARSH TITMOUSE. (*Parus palustris*), i., 40.

Similar to the last both in habits and note, but building more frequently.

THE LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE (*Parus caudatus*), i., 41.

The nest, which is usually suspended from the ends of branches in the thick of the hedge, is most beautifully formed, and resembles a little bee-hive. It is constructed of moss, lichens, and spiders' webs, and lined with feathers, as many, when pulled out and scattered abroad, as would fill a couple of hats. In autumn, parties of about half-a-dozen usually go about together, scampering through the orchards, generally from east to west, examining every tree with remarkable rapidity, always moving, never resting; after which they are not seen again perhaps for months. [269]

THE PIED WAG-TAIL, OR DISH-WASHER (*Motacilla Yarrellii*), ii., 80.

A common and very elegant bird, building under bridges, and near the water, but always in some rough or stony place, such as a hole where a brick has fallen out. Haunting stream and pond-sides in quest of food, it is quite as particular as a lady is over her dress, flirting its little tail so as to preserve it from getting soiled.

THE GRAY WAG-TAIL, (*Motacilla sulphurea*), ii., 82.

Similar to the last in habits, and very beautiful in its breeding plumage, showing yellow, blue, black, white, green, and many other tints. Near Manchester rather rare.

THE MEADOW PIPIT, OR TITLING (*Anthus pratensis*), ii., 86.

Common in meadows and upon the mosses, as Chat Moss and White Moss, on which it breeds abundantly. This bird has most young cuckoos to rear of any of the feathered tribe that build on the ground, and a good deal of work to do, for the young cuckoos are both big and hungry. It is one also of many which, if they think their young are in danger, feign to be wounded, so as to draw attention away from the nest. [270]

THE SKYLARK, OR LAVROCK (*Alauda arvensis*), ii., 93.

Common everywhere, building on the ground. The male bird seems to collect the materials, while the female employs herself in arranging them. Seldom alighting upon either tree or bush, the lark, rather singular to say, is, except when soaring, in its habits almost wholly terrestrial.

THE COMMON BUNTING (*Emberiza miliaria*), ii., 97.

Not infrequent, singing, in a shrill note, in March, on the tops of trees near cultivated fields.
The nest is built on the ground, near the sides of ditches.

THE BLACK-HEADED BUNTING, OR BLACK-CAP (*Emberiza schœniculus*), ii., 98.

Common about pit-sides and wide ditches.

THE YELLOW-AMMER (*Emberiza citrinella*), ii., 90.

Common. The song, in March and April, is very peculiar, and sounds like the words, "A little bit of bread and no ch-e-e-se," the first part of the sentence uttered rapidly, and the latter long drawn out. (This name, often mis-written yellow-hammer, represents the German *goldammer*, literally "yellow-bunting.")

THE CHAFFINCH (*Fringilla cœlebs*), ii., 102.

Common. A very early harbinger of spring, in woods, fields, and gardens, and very fond of orchards, building a beautiful nest of all sorts of materials within reach. One has been found constructed entirely of raw cotton. The eggs are sometimes blue, sometimes white with pale spots, or pinky, or red, as if pencil-marked. Named *cœlebs* by Linnæus, because in winter, especially when the season is severe, in many parts the sexes say good-bye to one another, and live asunder till spring, when they re-unite. One of the neatest in habits of all English birds. Even in the depth of winter the chaffinch seeks a lavatory every day. [271]

THE TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*), ii., 104.

A sharp little bird, not uncommon, and usually building in hollow oak-trees. If the tree be approached during incubation it flies off like a shot.

THE HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*), ii., 105.

The bold, pert, quarrelsome bird, indifferent alike to our kindness and our enmity, which nevertheless one is glad to see feeding on the crumbs considerably thrown to it from the parlour breakfast-table.

THE GREENFINCH (*Coccothraustes chloris*), ii., 106.

Common in cultivated fields and gardens. Song sweet but monotonous.

THE COMMON LINNET (*Linaria cannabina*), ii., 110.

Abundant everywhere on heaths and in hedgerows. Many are kept in cages for the beauty of the song. Not only among mankind, it would seem, does a fine voice sometimes prove the road to ruin.

THE LESS RED-POLE (*Linaria minor*), ii., 111. [272]

This bird breeds in Marple Wood, Cotterill Clough, and similar places. The nest, rather hard to discover, is round, the size of a racket-ball, and composed of fibrous roots and the hemp-like bark of the dead nettle-stalks of the previous year, with which the little architect ties them together, the inside being lined with the pappus or down of the coltsfoot seed. It is generally placed in high hedges or in the boughs of fir-trees.

THE BULLFINCH (*Loxia Pyrrhula*), ii., 114.

Rare. Remarkable for the beauty of its nest, which is constructed of the withered ends of the slenderest woodbine twigs the bird can find, laid crosswise like a woven fabric. Generally found in a bush, and about a yard from the ground.

THE STARLING, OR SHEPSTER (*Sturnus vulgaris*), iii., 121.

A bird well-known as stopping up waterspouts with its nest, and never going to bed till after a prolonged chatter. Common everywhere.

THE CARRION CROW (*Corvus corone*), i., 52.

Formerly common in Hough-end Clough, but now extinct, and fast disappearing from the neighbourhood in general.

THE ROOK (*Corvus frugilegus*), i., 54.

Common everywhere. Their clamour one of the most familiar of rural sounds, and their great feathers, of the only shade of black that is lively, constantly seen lying upon the ground. [273]

THE JACKDAW (*Corvus monedula*), i., 55.

Formerly an inhabitant of the steeples of St. John's, St. Anne's, St. Matthew's, and St. Mary's churches. Plentiful wherever there is an old ruin.

THE MAGPIE (*Pica caudata*), i., 56.

Formerly very abundant about Urmston, but has become scarce with the disappearance of the tall trees, especially poplars, once so plentiful there. It suffers sadly, also, from sportsmen and gamekeepers.

THE JAY (*Garrulus glandarius*), i., 58.

Frequent about Withington, Didsbury, Northen, and in that part of the neighbourhood.

THE GREEN WOODPECKER (*Picus viridis*), ii., 64.

This bird used to breed in Dunham Park. One was seen there in January, 1859.

THE GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Picus major*), ii., 65.

Rare. Dunham Park; Barlow Moor.

THE COMMON CREEPER (*Certhia familiaris*), ii., 62.

Abundant, but, in consequence of its retired habits, little known. At a short distance it looks like a mouse, running up the tree from the very bottom, and clearing it all round of every insect that may happen to be in the way. Plentiful at Gatley Carrs.

THE COMMON WREN (*Sylvia Troglodytes*), iii., 160.

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Well-known, and common everywhere in gardens, woods, and hedgerows. Often found with a few scattered white feathers, and sometimes with white wings. The large and pretty nest reminds one of what women do for the world. The hen commences one and completes it. Meantime the male bird begins two or three in succession, a short distance from his mate's, but never completes one of them. The materials are moss, feathers, hair, dead leaves, and dead fern.

THE PEEWIT, OR LAPWING (*Vanellus cristatus*), iv., 192.

Common everywhere in marshy grounds, and known to most people by the peculiar cry represented in the name. The young ones are particularly fond of being in the bottom of deep ditches and drains, squatting down close to the ground.

THE KING-FISHER (*Alcedo ispida*), i., 46.

Cheadle, Urmston, Flixton, and elsewhere in those directions, by all the tributaries of the Mersey. A beautiful but very timid bird, darting with great speed, its glossy green back glancing quick as thought.—(See, in reference to the Lancashire localities, the *Manchester Guardian* of Feb. 4th, 1882.)

THE MOOR-HEN, OR WATER-HEN (*Gallinula chloropus*), v., 247.

Common by old pits. Many breed on the ponds in Dunham Park, where we cannot go in the summer without seeing them in companies of four or five, their little white tails cocked up, and looking as if they were swimming on their necks.

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THE GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Colymbus cristatus*), v., 294.

On all the Cheshire meres, Tatton, Tabley, Rostherne, &c.

THE LITTLE GREBE, OR DAB-CHICK (*Colymbus Hebridicus*), v., 298.

Common on the Cheshire meres.

THE NUTHATCH (*Sitta Europæa*), i., 60.

Dunham Park, but only a few.

THE RINGDOVE, CUSHAT, OR WOOD-PIGEON (*Columba palumbus*), iii., 164.

Breeds in the woods in Trafford Park and about Chat Moss; plentiful about Urmston, though rather rare in the district generally.

THE STOCKDOVE (*Columba ænas*), iii., 165.

Very scarce. Marple Wood.—(On the Lancashire localities, see *Manchester Guardian*, Jan. 21, 1882.)

THE RED GROUSE (*Lagopus Scoticus*), iii., 172.

On the moors.

THE COMMON PARTRIDGE (*Perdrix cinerea*), iii., 174.

Upon farm-land, common.

THE WILD DUCK (*Anas Boschas*), v., 270.

This bird breeds on Carrington Moss, Chat Moss, and in many other places.

THE COMMON HERON (*Ardea cinerea*), iv., 197.

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In the *Manchester Guardian* of December 28, 1881, it is stated that there is a heronry "within about fourteen miles of the Exchange," and that within forty miles of Manchester there are a dozen other stations for this beautiful and celebrated bird. The former is probably that one which it is further stated has existed since 1871 in Tabley Park, though the older stations, Dunham Park, Oulton Park, and the trees near the water at Arley Hall, have long since been deserted.—(Vide also the *Guardian* of March 18th, 1882.)

II. PERIODICAL VISITORS.

I. COMING IN SPRING AND SUMMER.

THE WHEAT-EAR (*Sylvia Œnanthe*), iii., 142.

The earliest of our summer visitants, coming by the end of March, but staying in the fields not longer than two or three weeks, when it moves off to the mountainous districts to breed. Very fond of placing its nest in deserted rabbit-holes, and in cavities in old stone walls.

THE GRASSHOPPER WARBLER (*Sylvia locustella*), iii., 143.

- No one who has heard this bird can ever forget it, the note resembling the voice of the grasshopper, but prolonged into a whirr, like the noise of a spinning-wheel. Towards midnight, when all other birds are still, if approached, it will begin. Found haunting thickets and hedge-bottoms, but rather uncommon, and rarely seen, though often heard, on account of its habit of running among the low brushwood. [277]
- THE SEDGE WARBLER (*Sylvia salicaria*), iii., 145.
- Common by the sides of pitsteads. This is the bird so often mistaken in our neighbourhood for the nightingale. No bird takes more care to let us know of its presence; the moment it is disturbed, it begins to sing.
- THE BLACK-CAP WARBLER (*Sylvia atricapilla*), iii., 150.
- A most beautiful song-bird, and common in woods. When it arrives, it is fond of mounting high into the trees; the males, like most of the warblers, coming a week or two before the females, and selecting a station, where they sing until their mates arrive.
- THE GARDEN WARBLER (*Sylvia hortensis*), iii., 152.
- Unlike the preceding, this bird never gets up high into the trees to sing, nor does it care to warble until the female arrives, when its lovely trill is heard plentifully in the low bushes. It will build in gardens among peas. Common in Hough-end Clough and about Urmston.
- THE COMMON WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia cinerea*), iii., 153.
- Common everywhere, and apt to warble when on the wing, springing up out of the hedge, with its jar-jar-jar, jee-jee-jee, and in a minute or two diving down into it again.
- THE LESS WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia sylvicella*), iii., 154. [278]
- Rare about Manchester, building in hedges a large and clumsy nest, similar to that of a greenfinch. The song is given only from the very heart of thick-foliaged trees.
- THE WOOD WARBLER, OR WOOD WREN (*Sylvia sylvicola*), iii., 155.
- A very lovely little bird; its song, or trill, a repetition of two notes, and its nest very hard to find. While singing, it sits on the bough and seems to tremble, the wings being quivered elegantly.
- THE WHINCHAT (*Sylvia rubetra*), iii., 141.
- A common little bird, breeding everywhere, usually selecting uncultivated lands, and sometimes hay-fields, but always having its nest upon the ground. About Urmston it is known as the "utic," from its peculiar cry, "tic, tic, utic." In habits sprightly and cheerful, popping about for ever from one spray to another.
- THE WILLOW WARBLER, OR WILLOW WREN (*Sylvia Trochilus*), iii., 156.
- This little fellow is common in most places,—woods, gardens, hedgerows,—choosing the top of the trees to sing in. It ceases to sing after pairing, devoting itself to the construction of its large nest, which is usually protected with a lid, and built of grass, moss, and feathers. In the summer of 1858, Edward Jacques found a nest in Hough-end Clough, with a dead blackbird alongside, from which the feathers had all been plucked, and used in the construction. Nowhere is it more numerous or happy than about Urmston, arriving clean as a daisy, after its journey of a thousand miles or more. [279]
- THE CHIFF-CHAFF (*Sylvia rufa*), iii., 158.
- This little creature, which is one of the smallest of the warblers, arrives a trifle later, or about the middle of March, when it at once begins its cry in the very highest branches it can find of the tallest poplars and fir-trees, perching itself on the topmost pinnacle. Not common about Manchester generally, though plentiful in Marple Wood. First it cries "chiff," then "chaff," then "chaff" and "chiff" alternately.
- THE WHITE WAG-TAIL (*Motacilla alba*), ii., 81.
- Arrives at the end of March or the beginning of April, but does not appear to breed in our neighbourhood.
- THE YELLOW WAG-TAIL (*Motacilla flava*), ii., 84.
- Common in open fields, building its nest among young corn, and in hay-grass. Like all the other wag-tails, a bird of very poor song, but singularly gentle and affectionate. It arrives the last week in March, apparently all the better for its journey, the plumage being often more clean and beautiful the day of arrival than at any later period.
- THE REDSTART (*Sylvia phœnicurus*), iii., 138.
- Formerly very common in Hulme, Chorlton, and Withington, but now become scarce, being shy in temperament, and retiring before the advance of population. Plentiful in the rural parts of Cheshire. To get a full view of a redstart is also very difficult, as it is for ever dodging behind a branch, and, as the name implies, is never still. [280]
- THE TREE PIPIT (*Anthus arboreus*), ii., 88.
- A lively bird, arriving at the beginning of April, and commencing to sing immediately. Common, building its nest on the ground, and laying the most variously coloured eggs, some being blood-red and others deep black.

THE CUCKOO (*Cuculus canorus*), ii., 71.

Arrives abundantly about the 27th of April, remaining until about August, though young birds of the year have been found in October. However disregarding of its young, the cuckoo makes ample amends in its conjugal fidelity, for when one of either sex is seen, you may be quite sure that its mate is not far off.

THE WRYNECK, OR CUCKOO'S MATE (*Yunx Torquilla*), ii., 61.

Rare, coming mostly with the cuckoo, which it somewhat resembles.

THE SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*), ii., 76.

Common and familiar everywhere. Social, harmless, and useful, and perhaps as much beloved as the robin itself, if only because of its fondness for human habitations.

THE HOUSE MARTIN (*Hirundo riparia*), ii., 79.

Common and familiar, and, like the swallow, always welcome. This odd bird often takes for the foundation of its nest one constructed the previous year by the swallow. The swallow's nest is open at the top. The house-martin likes to have a roof or lid, so goes on with the one it adopts till finished to its own fancy, keeping only an aperture for ingress.

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THE SAND MARTIN (*Hirundo urbica*), ii., 78.

Comes in spring from North Africa and Malta, then common everywhere in sand-banks, in which it excavates horizontal galleries. It never alights on the ground, but gathers the blades of green grass used for the nest while on the wing, and in the same way collects the feathers for lining it.

THE DOTTEREL (*Charadrius morinellus*), iv., 187.

This bird visits us in the beginning of May, arriving in large flocks. It is very tame, silly, and easily approached. If a fowler once gets among them, he may shoot the whole before they take alarm. It remains only for three or four days or a week, and then moves on to its breeding stations among the mountains in the north.—(On the Lancashire localities, see *Manchester Guardian*, Feb. 25, 1882.)

THE SPOTTED FLY-CATCHER (*Muscicapa grisola*), i., 44.

Common, making its appearance in the middle of May, building in gardens and woods, and generally choosing very odd situations for the nest. Remarkable for the constancy of its return to the same old dead tree or rail, or old and ivied wall. After its long aerial sail it seems well content also to stop there till the time for departure in autumn. "From morn till dewy eve" it keeps in its chosen place, though incessantly darting out to secure a fly.

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THE PIED FLY-CATCHER (*Muscicapa luctuosa*), i., 43.

This bird has been seen frequently between Middleton and Oldham, where also it builds its nest, choosing old trees.

THE COMMON SAND-PIPER (*Tringa hypoleucos*), iv., 217.

Tolerably common on the banks of the Mersey at Northen, and thence down the river.

THE LAND-RAIL, OR CORN-CRAKE (*Crex pratensis*), v., 242.

Common everywhere in hay and corn-fields. The voice of the corn-crake has in it something so nearly akin to ventriloquism that the birds themselves are rarely where we seem to hear them, furnishing in summer much pleasant amusement.

THE SPOTTED CRAKE, OR GALLINEW (*Crex porzana*), v., 243.

These birds haunt the pit-bottoms, and cannot be got without a good dog; hence they appear to be less common than they really are.

THE COMMON QUAIL (*Perdix coturnix*), iii., 178.

Occasionally met with, and no doubt breeds, like the partridge, which it resembles, in open fields. It may be known by its peculiar cry in summer evenings, *But-me-but! But-me-but!*

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THE COMMON DIPPER (*Cinclus aquaticus*), iii., 123.

The only place in the neighbourhood known to be visited by this curious bird is Stalybridge Brushes, from which nests and eggs have several times been brought. At home only in and about brooks and streams in mountainous districts, it generally builds its nests under the ledge of a cascade on rocks perfectly wet, having to go through the curtain of water to reach it. When wishing to feed, it goes to the bottom of the water, there walking about like a diver.—(On the Lancashire localities, see the *Manchester Guardian*, Feb. 4, 1882.)

THE RING OUZEL (*Turdus torquatus*), iii., 132.

Builds every summer in Stalybridge Brushes; occasionally about Withington. Remarkable for its loud and beautiful song.

II. VISITORS COMING IN AUTUMN AND WINTER.

THE FIELD-FARE (*Turdus pilaris*), iii., 125.

A common winter visitor, breeding in Norway and Sweden, and one of the eminently social

birds, always travelling in large companies. Comes about the end of October, and leaves again not later than the beginning of April.

THE REDWING (*Turdus iliacus*), iii., 126.

The habits of this bird are the same as those of the field-fare, with which it comes and goes.

THE SISKIN (*Carduelis spinus*), ii., 109.

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The siskin visits us in November and December, but sometimes not for seven or eight years together, though coming plentifully when it chooses to make its appearance.

THE MEALY RED-POLE (*Linaria canescens*), ii., 112.

Comes and goes in flocks with the siskins, and at equally long and uncertain intervals.

THE COMMON SNIPE (*Scolopax Gallinago*), iv., 227.

Abundant, haunting old brick-pits and unfrozen brooks; plentiful about Gorton, Belle Vue, and Cheetham Hill.

THE JACK SNIPE (*Scolopax Gallinula*), iv., 228.

A smaller bird than the common snipe; not so plentiful, but often seen in company with it.

THE WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rusticola*), iv., 225.

Formerly very plentiful about Hough-end, but now rare, owing to the filling up of the pits and the clearing away of the brushwood.

III. CASUAL, STRAY, AND OCCASIONAL BIRDS.

Several of the birds named below are permanent residents in the British Islands, and others are regular visitors to this country. They are put in the present place because seen near Manchester only at uncertain intervals, or as casuals, the only one that can be looked for with any degree of probability, being the sea-gull. The visits, as will be seen from the dates, have in some cases occurred at periods so far back, that except for completeness' sake, they would scarcely be worth mention. I quote them from standard works upon ornithology, and from the late Mr. John Blackwall's paper upon the migrations of Manchester birds in the "Transactions of the Literary and Philosophical Society for 1822," the observations having been made during the eight years 1814-1821.

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THE LITTLE CRAKE (*Crex pusilla*), v., 244.

One at Ardwick in 1807.

THE GOLDEN ORIOLE (*Oriolus galbula*), iii., 133.

One near Manchester in 1811.

THE ORTOLAN (*Emberiza hortulana*), ii., 101.

One near Manchester in 1827.

THE CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*), ii., 116.

About the year 1840, in the month of August, a large flock of these birds, old and young in company, visited Hough-end Clough for a few hours. Mr. Blackwall gives as its Manchester period, August 5th to November 19th.

THE CHATTERER (*Ampelis garrulus*), i., 59.

In Mr. Blackwall's list.

THE HOOPOE (*Upupa epops*), i., 49.

In Mr. Blackwall's list.

THE RED-BACKED SHRIKE (*Lanius collurio*), i., 34.

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Sometimes seen in the summer.

THE GREAT SHRIKE (*Lanius excubitor*), i., 33.

In Mr. Blackwall's list, and was seen at Cheadle about 1850. (On the Lancashire localities of the three species of *Lanius*, see the *Manchester Guardian* for March 11th, 1882.)

THE MERLIN (*Falco æsalon*), i., 16.

In Mr. Blackwall's list. (On the Lancashire localities, see *Manchester Guardian*, January 14th, 1882.)

THE DUSKY GREBE (*Colymbus obscurus*), v., 296.

Once near Manchester.

BEWICK'S SWAN (*Cygnus Bewickii*), v., 262.

A flock of twenty-nine at Crumpsall on December 10th, 1829, and another of seventy-three at the same place, February 28th, 1830.

THE LITTLE BITTERN (*Ardea minuta*), iv., 205.

A very shy and sulky little bird, sitting all of a heap, and looking like a bit of brown stump.

THE COMMON BITTERN (*Botaurus stellaris*), iv., 204.

THE GREAT OR SOLITARY SNIPE (*Scolopax major*), iv., 226.

Has been seen at Urmston.

THE NIGHTINGALE (*Sylvia Luscinia*), iii., 147.

The visit of the nightingales to our neighbourhood will long be remembered by those who heard their song. It took place in 1863. The first came to Wilmslow early in May, establishing itself in the little grove near the end of Bollin Hall Park, on the Manchester side of the railway viaduct. For several weeks it sang nightly, and the crowds of people who were attracted by the fame of the bird from distances of many miles, at last became quite a trouble to that usually quiet neighbourhood. The second took up its lodging in a grove close to the Strines Printworks, where, says Mr. Joel Wainwright,^[31] no greater sensation was ever caused by a little thing. It began at ten every night, and continued almost uninterruptedly until three a.m. A third is said to have visited a plantation adjacent to the railway station at Sale, but over this one there may possibly have been an error. [287]

THE SNOW BUNTING (*Emberiza nivalis*), ii., 95.

Occasionally visits us in severe winters, breeding in Norway and Sweden.

THE MOUNTAIN FINCH, OR BRAMBLING (*Fringilla montifringilla*), ii., 103.

Visits us from the north in winter time, but rarely.

THE PECTORAL SAND-PIPER (*Tringa pectoralis*), iv., 239.

Once by a pit near the White House, Stretford Road.

THE COMMON WILD GOOSE (*Anser palustris*), v., 251.

A flock of these birds was once seen feeding in a field at Withington. [288]

THE WILD SWAN (*Cygnus ferus*), v., 261.

One preserved in the Peel Park Museum was shot near Bolton. Occasionally seen at Lymm.

THE SCLAVONIAN GREBE (*Podiceps cornutus*), v., 296.

One shot near Oldham many years ago is now in the Peel Park Museum.

THE COMMON TERN (*Sterna Hirundo*), vi., 316.

Occasionally seen upon the Mersey and the lower Irwell.

THE BLACK TERN (*Sterna nigra*), vi., 323.

THE BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Larus ridibundus*), vi., 331.

THE COMMON GULL (*Larus canus*), vi., 334.

THE KITTIWAKE (*Larus tridactylus*), vi., 340.

Gulls are frequently seen in the winter on the mosses and in ploughed fields, feeding, but whether they are the kittiwake or common gull cannot always be ascertained with certainty, as they are very shy birds, and fly away before they can be approached.

THE WATER RAIL (*Rallus aquaticus*), v., 246.

THE CURLEW (*Numenius arquata*), iv., 211.

Occasionally breeds on Chat Moss.

THE TEAL (*Anas crecca*), v., 272.

Occasionally seen by pit-sides. [289]

THE BLACK-START (*Sylvia Tithys*), iii., 139.

Two were seen at Didsbury about 1855.

THE GOLDEN PLOVER (*Charadrius pluvialis*), iv., 186.

Occasionally seen in large flocks upon the flat fields near Stretford and thereabouts.—(On the Lancashire localities, see *Manchester Guardian*, January 28th, 1882.)

THE RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius hiaticula*), iv., 188.

Single birds are seen occasionally, both in summer and winter.

THE STORM PETREL (*Procellaria pelagica*), vi., 353.

One was picked up alive near Stockport in the winter of 1856, and another, dead, at Pendleton, shortly before. A third had fallen at Withington, these birds being blown inland by tempestuous weather, and dropping when exhausted.

THE HOBBY (*Falco subbuteo*), i., 14.

Once near Brooks' Bar, as a summer visitant. The hobby is the only British bird of prey that is migratory.

THE DUNLIN (*Tringa variabilis*), iv., 240.

This bird has been known to breed on Chat Moss, but very rarely.

THE COMMON SWIFT (*Hirundo apus*), ii., 73.

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Occasionally.

THE NIGHT-JAR (*Caprimulgus Europæus*), ii., 72.

Chat Moss, and other out of the way moors.

IV. INTRODUCED AND NATURALIZED.

THE COMMON PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*), iii., 169.

In "Preserves."



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CHAPTER XIX. NATURAL HISTORY IN THE LIBRARY.

As he who southward sails, beholds each night,
New constellations rise, all clear and fair;
So, o'er the waters of the world, as we
Reach the mid zone of life, or go beyond,
Beauty and bounty still beset our course;
New beauties wait upon us everywhere,
New lights enlighten, and new worlds attract.

J. P. BAILEY.



HE immense value of the Manchester libraries to the student of Natural History has already been mentioned. Treasure-houses at all times, it is impossible to over-estimate the privileges they confer on rainy days. "Some days," says the poet, must needs be "dark and dreary." We have all, at some time or other, had our plans and projects baffled by the wet, and very disappointing it certainly is, when a nice party has been made up for an afternoon's pleasure in the country, to see the sky grow black and the drops begin to fall, with not a chance of its clearing up until too late to go. But the streets lead the way to as much pleasure, after another manner, as the field-paths. It is nothing but a thoughtless mistake which lauds the country at the expense of the town, crying out that God made the one, but that the other is the work of man. Each is complementary to the other; each, as with the sexes, affords pleasures which itself only can give; each is best in turn, and full of compensation, and whatever may be thought of the adjacent country, no town is more enjoyable to the intelligent, by virtue simply and sufficiently of its Free Libraries, than Manchester. With these inexpressibly precious stores at perfect command, the private property, virtually, of every man who takes interest in their contents, let none, then, ever deplore rain, or piercing winds, mud, snow, sleet, or any species of atmospheric hindrance to rural pleasure. More lies within the walls of our three great Free Libraries than a life-time is sufficient to consume. To the student of wild nature they are peculiarly valuable, since they supply interpretation of everything that can possibly come before him in the fields.

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The books in our three great Free Libraries—the Chetham, the City, and the Peel Park—which deal with zoological subjects, and with palæontology, are easily discoverable, the number of important ones, especially such as have plates, being limited. The printed catalogues, and the courtesy of the respective librarians, give ready information as to these, and the titles of the various works generally indicate the contents with sufficient clearness. With works upon botanical matters it is different. The number of these is too vast for any librarian's easy reference, and to ascertain what ground they cover also very generally requires personal examination. In the aggregate, the three Free Libraries contain quite a thousand distinct and independent works of this latter class—books treating of floriculture as well as of botany—very many of them single volumes, but the average the same as that of the fashionable novel, the grand total being, in other words, over three thousand, a weight of literature pertaining to plants certainly without parallel in any other English city after London. Our remaining space we shall devote accordingly to a select list of the botanical works, old and new, enumerating them in chronological order. For in the eyes of the accomplished student fine old books always count with the great kings of history,

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The dead but sceptred sovereigns who still rule

Our spirits from their urns.

Chet. signifies the Chetham; *City*, the King-street; and *P. P.*, the Peel Park or Salford Library. [32]

A.D.

1532. Brunfels: *Herbarum Vivæ eicones*. Folio. 130 curious old woodcuts.—*Chet.*
1542. Fuchsius: *De Historia Stirpium*. About 450 full-page cuts, many of them admirable, others very droll.—*City, Chet.* [294]
1576. Lobel: *Stirpium Adversaria*. Woodcuts.—*City, Chet.*
1611. Renealm: *Specimen Historia Plantarum*. Many curious drawings, including one of the sun-flower, then a novelty.—*City.*
1613. Besler: *Hortus Eystettensis*. Full of wonderful old plates.—*City, Chet.*
1635. Cornutus: *Canadensium Plantarum*. Curious and very interesting old plates.—*City.*
1678. Breynius: *Exoticarum aliarumque minus, &c.* 100 fine old and very curious copperplates.—*Chet.*
1680. Morison: *Plantarum Historia*. A massive folio, with innumerable exquisite drawings.—*City, Chet.*
- 1691-1705. Plukenet: *Works*. Innumerable figures.—*City, Chet.*
1693. Charles Plumier: *Description des Plantes de l’Amerique*. Full of very fine old plates.—*City, Chet.*
1728. John Martyn: *Historia Plantarum Rariorum*. 100 fine old coloured plates.—*City, Chet.*
1748. Weinmann: *Duidelyke Vertoning*. Four thick folios, containing 1,025 coloured plates, with innumerable figures, old-fashioned, but bold, characteristic, and very curious.—*P. P.* [295]
1750. Rumphius: *Herbarium Amboinense*. Six vols., folio. Full of fine old plates.—*City, Chet.*
1755. C. Plumier: *Plantarum Americanarum Fasciculus*. Folio. Full of fine old copperplates.—*City.*
- 1757-1773. Elizabeth Blackwell: *Herbarium*. Six vols., folio. Containing 601 coloured plates of economic plants, every one of them drawn and engraved by herself, in order to raise money to liberate her husband from a debtor’s prison.—*Chet.*
- 1759-1775. Sir John Hill: *The Vegetable System*. Twenty-six folio volumes. With 1,600 copperplates, containing 6,560 figures.—*City, P. P.* (The latter bound in ten vols.)
1760. Philip Miller: *Figures of Plants*. Two vols., folio., and new edit., in four vols., 1807.—*Chet.* (An admirable work, with 300 plates.)
- 1766-1797. G. C. Ceder: *Flora Danica*. Eleven vols., folio, with 1,200 plates.—*City.*
1770. John Edwards: *Herbal*. A thin folio of 100 beautiful coloured plates.—*Chet., P. P.*
1772. N. J. Jacquin: *Hortus Botanicus Vindobonensis*. Two vols., folio. Full of the most beautiful coloured plates.—*Chet.*
1773. N. J. Jacquin: *Flora Austriaca*. Five vols., folio. Full of splendid coloured plates.—*City.* [296]
1775. Aublet: *Histoire des Plantes de la Guiane Française*. Four vols., 4to. Two of them made up of very beautiful and interesting plates.—*City, Chet.*
1777. John Miller: *The Sexual System of Linnæus*. A massive elephant folio, with 103 magnificent coloured plates.—*Chet., City.*
1777. Curtis: *Flora Londinensis*. Folio. Several vols. The finest coloured plates of British wild-flowers ever given to the world.—*Chet., City.* (See 1828 for continuation.)
- 1781-1786. N. J. Jacquin: *Icones Plantarum Rariorum*. Contains 200 splendid coloured plates. Three vols.—*Chet.*; vol. i., *City.*
1784. Pallas: *Flora Rossica*. Folio. Full of beautiful coloured plates.—*City.*
1784. L’Heritier: *Stirpes Novæ, &c.* Folio. Full of fine plates.—*City.*
1787. Curtis: The renowned “*Botanical Magazine*” was commenced this year. No Manchester library contains the whole. The following are the localities of all the town possesses, including a portion in the “*Royal Exchange*”:—1787-1842, vols. 1 to 68, *City*; 1843-1859, vols. 69 to 85, *Royal Exchange*; 1860-1869, vols. 86 to 95, nowhere; 1870-1882, vols. 96 onwards to present time, *City.*
- 1790-1814. Smith and Sowerby’s “*English Botany*.” Thirty-six vols., 8vo. 2,592 coloured plates.—*City, P. P.* [297]
1800. Desfontaines. *Flora Atlantica*. Four vols., 4to. Contains 261 fine old plates.—*City.*
1816. W. J. Hooker: *The British Jungermannias*. 4to. Full of exquisite coloured plates.—*City.*
- 1818-1833. Loddiges: *The Botanical Cabinet*. Contains 2,000 coloured plates.—*P. P.*
1823. Alex. Humboldt: *Melastomaceæ*. 64 very fine coloured plates.—*P. P.*
- 1823-1827. W. J. Hooker: *Exotic Flora*. Three vols., 8vo. 232 beautiful coloured plates.—*City.*
1827. W. J. Hooker and T. Taylor: *Muscologia Britannica*. Exquisitely illustrated.—*City.*

1828. Curtis's Flora Londinensis. Continued by W. J. Hooker. Two vols., folio. Most beautiful plates.—*City*.
1828. Wm. Roscoe: Monandrian Plants. Atlas folio. Contains 112 splendid coloured plates.—*Chet*.
1829. W. J. Hooker and Greville: Icones Filicum. Two vols., folio. Full of splendid plates.—*City*.
- 1830-1832. N. Wallich: Plantæ Asiaticæ Rariores. Three vols., huge folio, containing 295 superb coloured plates.—*City, Chet*. [298]
- 1834-1843.—Baxter: British Flowering-plants. Six vols., 8vo. Full of beautiful coloured plates.—*City*.
1837. Jas. Bateman: The Orchidaceæ of Mexico and Guatemala. Folio. 40 superb coloured plates.—*Chet*.
1838. Endlicher: Nova Genera (of South American plants). Folio. Full of fine plates.—*City*.
1838. J. C. Loudon: Arboretum Britannicum. Eight vols. Over 400 plates and 2,500 woodcuts.—*P. P.*
1838. John Lindley: Sertum Orchidaceum. A wreath of the most beautiful orchidaceous flowers. Splendid coloured plates.—*Chet*.
1839. J. F. Royle: Illustrations of the Botany of the Himalayan Mountains and of the Flora of Cashmere. Two vols., folio. 90 beautiful coloured plates.—*City*.
- 1840-1853. R. Wight: Icones Plantarum Indiæ Orientalis. Six vols., 4to.—*City*.
1843. John Torrey: The Flora of the State of New York. Two vols., 4to. Beautiful coloured plates.—*City, P. P.*
- 1846-1851. W. H. Harvey: Phycologia Britannica. (Sea-weeds.) Four vols., 8vo. 360 beautiful coloured plates.—*City*. [299]
1847. Mrs. Hussey: Illustrations of British Mycology. (Fungi.) 4to.—*City*.
1847. J. D. Hooker: Botany of the Antarctic Voyage of the Erebus and Terror. Two vols., 4to. 198 fine coloured plates.—*City*.
1847. C. D. Badham: The Esculent Funguses of England. 8vo. 20 coloured plates.—*P. P.*
- 1852-1857. B. Seeman: Botany of the Voyage of H.M.S. Herald.—*City*.
1854. Sir W. J. Hooker: Century of Ferns. 4to. 100 plates.—*P. P.*
1855. Wm. Wilson: Bryologia Britannica. 8vo.—*City*.
1857. Mudd: Photographs of trees destroyed by fumes from chemical works. Folio.—*P. P.*
1857. Henry Smith: Indian Flowering-plants and Ferns. A large folio of about 100 beautiful nature-prints.—*P. P.*
1858. E. J. Lowe: Natural History of British Grasses. 74 coloured plates.—*City*.
- 1859-1860. Johnstone and Croall: Nature-printed British Sea-weeds.—*City, P. P.*
1859. Thos. Moore: Nature-printed Ferns. Two vols., 8vo.—*City, P. P.*
1860. M. J. Berkeley: Outlines of British Fungology. 8vo. 24 coloured plates, with innumerable figures.—*City, P. P.* [300]
1861. E. J. Lowe: Beautiful-leaved Plants. 60 coloured plates.—*P. P.*
1861. E. J. Lowe: Ferns, British and Exotic. Eight vols., 8vo. 479 coloured plates.—*City, P. P.*
1862. E. J. Lowe: New and Rare Ferns. 8vo. 72 coloured plates.—*City, P. P.*
1863. C. P. Johnson: Useful Plants of Great Britain. 8vo. 25 plates, containing figures of 300 species.—*P. P.*
- 1863-1872. English Botany. Edited by J. T. Boswell Syme. Eleven vols., large 8vo. Over 2,000 coloured plates.—*City*.
1864. Blume: Remarkable Orchids of India and Japan. Folio. Fine coloured plates.—*City*.
1865. R. Warner and B. S. Williams: Select Orchidaceous Plants. Folio. Fine plates.—*City*.
1865. E. J. Lowe: Our Native Ferns. Two vols., 8vo. 79 coloured plates and 909 woodcuts.—*City*.
1868. L. E. Tripp: British Mosses. Two vols., 4to. Coloured figures of every known species.—*City, P. P.*
1872. Horatio C. Wood: North American Fresh-water Algæ. 4to. 21 plates filled with exquisite coloured figures.—*P. P.* [301]
1872. Flore Forestière, &c. Folio. 18 splendid coloured plates, representing about 120 of the most interesting trees and shrubs of central Europe.—*P. P.*
- 1872-1874. D. Wooster: Alpine Plants. Two vols., 8vo. 108 coloured plates.—*City*.
1873. Le Maout and Decaisne: General System of Botany. Translated by Mrs. Hooker. 5,500 woodcuts.—*City*.
1875. Sachs: Text-book of Botany. A massive 8vo., with innumerable woodcuts.—*City*.
1877. F. G. Heath: The Fern World. 12 coloured plates.—*City*.

1878. F. G. Heath: Our Woodland Trees. Contains excellent coloured drawings of their leaves.
—*City*.

In addition to the thousand botanical works contained in the three great Free Libraries, there are many of considerable value, which they do not possess, in the Portico, the Athenæum, the "Royal Exchange," the Owens College, and other collections not open to the general public. The following are the most important of the illustrated volumes. The aggregate of all kinds in the subscription libraries is about four hundred volumes.

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A.D.

1834. Stephenson and Churchill: Medical Botany. Three vols., 8vo.—*Owens*.

1834-1849. Paxton's Magazine of Botany and Gardening. Sixteen vols. Nearly 600 fine coloured plates.—*Royal Exchange*.

1838-1847. John Lindley: Botanical Register. New series. Ten vols., 8vo. 688 fine coloured plates.
—*Portico*.

1841. Mrs. Loudon: Ornamental Bulbous Plants. 4to.—*Royal Exchange*.

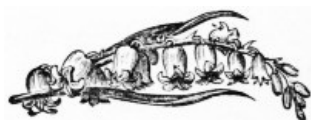
1843-1844. Mrs. Loudon: Ornamental Perennials. Two vols., 4to.—*Royal Exchange*.

1845. A. H. Hassall: British Fresh-water Algæ. Two vols., 8vo. 100 plates.—*Owens*.

1848. John Ralfs: The British Desmidiaceæ. 8vo.—*Owens*.

1850. Wm. Griffiths: Palms of British East India. Large folio. 133 plates.—*Owens*.

1851-1853. Lindley and Paxton: The Flower Garden. Three vols., 4to. 108 admirable plates and 314 woodcuts.—*Royal Exchange*.



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SUMMARY OF RAILWAY STATIONS AND DISTANCES.

The figures after the names of the respective places denote the number of miles they are distant from the Manchester Station of departure previously mentioned.

I. LONDON ROAD STATION.

(a)—*London and North-Western.*

(1) THROUGH STOCKPORT.

To Cheadle Hulme, 8¼.

„ Handforth, 10½, for Handforth Hall, Norcliffe, and Oversley.

„ Wilmslow, 12, for Norcliffe, Lindow Common, the Morley Meadows, and the Upper Bollin Valley.

„ Alderley, 13¾, for Lindow Common, Alderley Edge, Birtles, and Capesthorpe.

„ Chelford, 17, for Capesthorpe and Astle Park.

„ Crewe, 31, for Wrenbury, 39½, *en route* for Combermere.

„ Crewe, 31, for Beeston and Peckforton.

„ Crewe, 31, for Shrewsbury, 63¼, *en route* to Wroxeter (Uriconium).

(2) THROUGH STOCKPORT.

To Davenport, 7, for Bramhall.

„ Hazel Grove, 8, for the Bramhall Valley, Marple Wood, Dan-bank Wood, &c.

„ Disley, 12, for Middlewood, Lyme Park, Lyme Hall, Jackson Edge, Marple Ridge, the Strines Valley, and Cobden Edge.

„ New Mills, 13½.

„ Furness Vale, 15.

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- „ Whaley Bridge, 16, for Taxal, Eccles Pike, &c.
- „ Chapel-en-le-Frith, 19¾, for Castleton.
- „ Doveholes, 22, for Castleton.
- „ Buxton, 25, for Ashwood Dale, Miller's Dale, &c.

(3) THROUGH STOCKPORT.

To Cheadle Hulme, 8¼.

- „ Bramhall, 9¾, for Bramhall Hall and the Bramhall Valley.
- „ Poynton, 12¼.
- „ Adlington, 13¾, for Pott Shrigley and Harrop Wood.
- „ Prestbury, 15¼, for Mottram St. Andrew, Bollington, and the Kerridge Hills.
- „ Macclesfield, 17¼, for Wild-boar Clough, Shutlings Low, &c.

(4) THROUGH STOCKPORT AND MACCLESFIELD, continuing per

“North Staffordshire.”

To North Rode Junction, 22, for Cloud-end, Gawsorth, and Marton.

- „ Congleton, 26¼, for Biddulph Castle and Biddulph Grange.
- „ Mow Cop, 29¼.
- „ Trentham, 40¼.

(5) THROUGH STOCKPORT AND MACCLESFIELD, to North Rode Junction, 22, continuing per “Churnet Valley.” [305]

To Bosley, 24, for Cloud-end.

- „ Rushton, 26.
- „ Rudyard, 29.
- „ Leek, 31.
- „ Froghall, 38.
- „ Oakamoor, 40.
- „ Alton, 42, for Alton Towers.
- „ “Rocester Junction,” 45½, for Ashbourne, 52, *en route* Dovedale.

LONDON ROAD STATION.

(*b*)—*Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire.*

(1) THROUGH ASHBURYS AND GUIDE BRIDGE JUNCTION, 5, MAIN LINE.

To Mottram, 10, for Broadbottom, Stirrup-benches, Charlesworth Coombs, the lower valley of the Etherowe, &c.

- „ Dinting Junction, 12, for Glossop, 13, for Whiteley Nab, Melandra Castle, Chunal Clough, Ramsley Clough, &c.
- „ Woodhead, 19¼.
- „ Penistone (through the tunnel), 28, there changing to the Doncaster line, for Wentworth.
- „ Wortley, 32½, for Wharncliffe Craggs.
- „ Oughty Bridge, 36½.
- „ Sheffield, 41¼.
- „ Worksop, 57.

(2) THROUGH ASHBURYS, REDDISH, AND WOODLEY JUNCTION. [306]

To Reddish, 3¾.

- „ Bredbury, 6½.
- „ Woodley Junction, 7½, for Werneth Low.
- „ Romiley, 7½, for Chadkirk, Marple Hall, Dan-bank Wood, Offerton, &c.
- „ Marple (Rose Hill), 9½.
- „ High Lane, 11¾.
- „ Middlewood, 12¼.
- „ Poynton, 13.
- „ Bollington, 17, for Pott Shrigley.
- „ Macclesfield, 19½.

(3) As in No. 2, to Marple, 9½. Thence

To Strines, 11¼.

- „ New Mills, 12¾.
- „ Birch Vale, 14¾.
- „ Hayfield, 15½, for Kinder Scout.

II. VICTORIA STATION.

(a)—*London and North-Western.*

(1) THROUGH MILES PLATTING.

To Stalybridge, 7, for Staley-brushes, “North Britain,” and “Bucton Castle.”

- „ Mossley, 10½.
- „ Greenfield, 12¾, for Bill’s-o’-Jack’s, “Pots and Pans,” Seal Bark, and the “Isle of Skye.”
- „ Saddleworth, 13¾.
- „ Marsden (through the tunnel), 18¾, for Wessenden Clough.
- „ Huddersfield, 26.
- „ Leeds, 42½, *en route* for Harrogate, 60½, Ripon, 72, Fountains Abbey, &c.

(2) THROUGH ORDSALL LANE (Chat Moss line).

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To Eccles, 4.

- „ Patricroft, 5, for Worsley.
- „ Barton Moss, 7, for Botany Bay Wood.
- „ Huyton, 25, for Knowsley.
- „ Edge Hill, 30½.
- „ Liverpool, 31½.

(3) THROUGH ORDSALL LANE (Chat Moss line).

To Warrington, 21½, for Hill Cliff.

- „ Norton, 21, for Norton Park, Norton Priory, and Halton Castle.
- „ Halton, 23.
- „ Frodsham, 30, for the Overton Hills.
- „ Helsby, 27.
- „ Chester, 39¾, for Eaton Hall; and *viâ* Broxton, 36½, for the Broxton Hills; also, *viâ* Rhyl, 69¾, for Llandudno, 81½, Conway, 85, Bangor, 91½, Beaumaris, &c.; also, *viâ* Ruabon, for the Vale of Llangollen, Bala, Dolgelly, &c.

(4) THROUGH ORDSALL LANE (Tyldesley line).

To Worsley, 5¾.

- „ Tyldesley, 10¼.
- „ Wigan, 17. Thence to Preston, Lancaster, Grange, &c.

VICTORIA STATION.

(b)—*Lancashire and Yorkshire.*

(1) THROUGH MILES PLATTING, 1½ to Middleton Junction, 5¼;
thence to Heywood, 10¼, for Bamford Wood.

To Bury, 13¼.

(2) THROUGH MILES PLATTING, keeping on main line to Rochdale Junction, 10¾. Thence

[308]

To Shawclough and Healey, 13¾.

- „ Facit, 16½.
- „ Bacup, 19½.

(3) Same as No. 2, to Rochdale 10¾. Thence on

To Littleborough, 13¼, for Hollingworth Lake, Whiteley Dean, and Blackstone Edge.

(4) Same as No. 3, keeping on main line to Todmorden Junction, 19. Thence, by Burnley Valley,

To Portsmouth, 22¾, for Cliviger, &c.

- „ Burnley, 28.

(5) THROUGH PENDLETON to Clifton Junction, for the Agecroft Valley and Mere Clough.

(6) THROUGH PENDLETON AND CLIFTON JUNCTION, by the Bury line. [These trains pick up at Salford Station.]

To Molyneux Brow, 4¾, for Hurst Clough.

- „ Ringley Road, 7.

- „ Radcliffe Bridge, 7¼.
- „ Bury, 10.
- „ Summerseat, 12½.
- „ Ramsbottom, 14.
- „ Helmshore, 16½.
- „ Haslingden, 18½.
- „ Accrington, 22, and thence to Skipton for Bolton Abbey.

(7) THROUGH PENDLETON, MOLYNEUX BROW, AND BURY.

To Rawtenstall.

- „ Bacup, 19½.

(8) THROUGH PENDLETON AND CLIFTON JUNCTION, by the Bolton line. [309]

To Bolton, 10½.

Thence, on the original main line,

To Horwich, 17¼, for Rivington Pike.

- „ Adlington, 19¼, for the Liverpool Waterworks Reservoirs.
- „ Chorley, 22¼, for Whittle-le-Woods.
- „ Preston, 30¾,

Thence to Blackpool, 50.

- „ Fleetwood, 50½, for sail to Piel, for Furness Abbey, continuing thence by rail to Newby Bridge, Windermere, Coniston, &c.
- „ Lancaster, 51½, for the Lune Valley, Morecambe, Silverdale, Grange, &c.

(9) THROUGH PENDLETON AND CLIFTON to Bolton, 10½. Thence by the Wigan line,

To Wigan, 18.

- „ Gathurst, 21, for Dean Wood.
- „ Appley Bridge, 23, for Ashurst and Horrocks Hill.
- „ Parbold (Newbro'), 25.
- „ Southport, 37¼.

(10) THROUGH PENDLETON AND CLIFTON to Bolton, 10½. Thence by the Darwen line,

To The Oaks, 13, for Hall-i'th'-Wood.

- „ Turton, 15.
- „ Entwistle, 17.
- „ Over Darwen, 20.
- „ Lower Darwen, 22.
- „ Blackburn, 25.
- „ Wilpshire, for Ribchester, 27.
- „ Langho, 30.
- „ Whalley, 32, for Whalley Abbey, Whalley Nab, Stonyhurst, Mitton, and the Ribble. [310]
- „ Clitheroe, 35, for the Castle.
- „ Chatburn, 37, for Pendle.
- „ Gisburn, 43.
- „ Hellifield, 49.

(11) THROUGH CRUMPSALL, to Bury.

To Heaton Park, 4.

- „ Prestwich, 4.
- „ Radcliffe, 7.
- „ Bury, 9, thence to Summerseat, &c., as above.

III. CENTRAL STATION.

(a)—*Midland.*

The distances are differently stated. Those given below are from Bradshaw's 3d. Guide.

THROUGH DIDSBUY, 5¾.

To Heaton Mersey, 7.

- „ Romiley, 12¼.

- „ Marple, 14.
- „ Strines, 16.
- „ New Mills, 17½.
- „ Chinley, 21¼.
- „ Chapel-en-le-Frith, 23, for Castleton.
- „ Miller's Dale, 31¼.
- „ Monsal Dale, 34.
- „ Hassop, 36¾.
- „ Bakewell, 37¾.
- „ Rowsley, 41¼.
- „ Darley, 43½.
- „ Matlock Bath, 46¾.
- „ Derby, 62¾.

(b)—*Cheshire Lines.*

[311]

(1) LIVERPOOL LINE.

- To Urmston, 5.
- „ Flixton, 6¼.
- „ Irlam, 8¼.
- „ Glazebrook, 9½.
- „ Warrington, 15¾.
- „ Halewood, 25½.
- „ Garston, 28½.
- „ Liverpool, 34.

(2) CHESTER LINE.

- To Altrincham.
- „ Peel Causeway, 8½, for the Bollin Valley.
- „ Ashley, 10.
- „ Mobberley, 12.
- „ Knutsford, 14½.
- „ Plumbley, 17¼.
- „ Lostock Gralam, 19¼.
- „ Northwich, 20½.
- „ Hartford, 22¼.
- „ Cuddington, 25¼.
- „ Delamere, 28.
- „ Chester (Northgate), 38½.

IV. OXFORD ROAD STATION.

(1) BOWDON LINE.

- To Old Trafford, 2.
- „ Stretford, 3½.
- „ Sale, 5.
- „ Brooklands, 5¾.
- „ Timperley, 6¾.
- „ Altrincham and Bowdon, 8.

(2) LIVERPOOL LINE.

- To Broadheath, 7¾.
- „ Dunham Massey, 10.
- „ Heatley and Warburton, 11½.
- „ Lymm, 13.
- „ Thelwall, 14½.
- „ Latchford, 16½.

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- „ Warrington, 17¾.
- „ Hale Bank, 26¾.
- „ Speke, 29.
- „ Edge Hill, 35.
- „ Liverpool, 36¼.



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Palmer and Howe, Printers, Princess St., Manchester.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] *i.e.* since, in round numbers, about 1810.
- [2] Father of Mr. Robert Crozier, president, since 1878, of the Manchester Academy of Fine Art.
- [3] The two last-named now also deceased.
- [4] In the *Flora Mancuniensis*, dictated by the Natural History Class of the Mechanics’ Institution, then in Cooper-street.
- [5] The “City Library,” now in King-street.
- [6] *i.e.* in 1843.
- [7] Song the eleventh, p. 171, facing which is a map of Cheshire, showing the rivers, out of every one of which rises a sort of tutelary nymph, in design droll beyond imagination. — *Vide* the Chetham Library copy.
- [8] On her left breast,
 A mole, cinque-spotted, like the *crimson* drops
 I’ the bottom of a cowslip.
- [9] This noted Cheshire river rises upon Buckley Heath, near Malpas, going thence past Nantwich and Winsford. At Northwich it joins the Dane; soon afterwards there is confluence with the Peover, the united waters eventually entering the Mersey, not far from Frodsham.

- [10] In addition to the meres already mentioned, there are Pickmere, Rudworth Mere, Flaxmere, Doddington Mere, Combermere, and several others.
- [11] See a description of these coins in the *Ashton Reporter*, of March 14th, 1857.
- [12] The epitaph, Mr. Kelly kindly points out to me, is veritably Pope's, but was originally written for the Hon. Robt. Digby and his sister Mary. It was altered and abridged to suit the monument which now bears it,—one to the memory of the Hon. Penelope Ducie Tatton, who died Jan. 31, 1747.
- [13] It may be well to say that this grand old tree stood by the lodge gates of Polefield Hall, a few hundred yards through the village of Holyrood, or Rooden Lane, on the right towards Besses-o'-th'-Barn. Unlike the Didsbury sycamore, which was in the prime of its princely life, the Singleton horse-chestnut had become decrepid, and during the rigour of the winters beginning in 1878 received injuries from which it could not possibly recover.
- [14] See above, page [36](#).
- [15] *Iliad*, Book viii., at the end, thus gloriously rendered by the most spirited and poetical, if somewhat rugged, of his translators, Chapman, A.D. 1596:—
 And spent all night in the open field, fires round about them shined,
 As when about the silver moon, when air is free from wind,
 And stars shine clear, to whose sweet beams, high prospects, and the brows
 Of all steep hills and pinnacles, thrust themselves up for shows,
 And even the lowly valleys joy, to glitter in their sight,
 When the unmeasured firmament bursts to disclose her light,
 And all the signs in heaven are seen that glad the shepherd's heart.
- [16] At which last-named place there is now also (1882) a railway station.
- [17] It may be permitted here to note that when on Jackson Edge we are close to the home of the accomplished authoress of the well-known and always welcome letters "From the Lyme hills."
- [18] In his very interesting "Reminiscences of a Lifetime in Marple and the Neighbourhood," 1882, a contribution to our local literature which in the accuracy and variety of its entertaining details does the author genuine credit.
- [19] All needful particulars will be found in the little "Guide to Hayfield and Kinder Scout," purchasable at Hayfield and at Bowden Bridge.
- [20] In indicating the share, unacknowledged and unrewarded, which Townley had in the compilation of the "Guide," we merely wish to give honour where honour is due, neither on the one hand suppressing truth, nor on the other saying a word that shall look like unfair disparagement. It is but just to the memory of a worthy man, now no more, that the living should know what they owe to him.
- [21] While such is the original and proper sense of the word, the application, as in the case of Wessenden Clough ([p. 150](#)), naturally passed on to similar defiles destitute of trees. Not fewer probably than a third of the cloughs mentioned in the present volume are of the latter character.
- [22] Mrs. Taylor, we are very sorry to say, died, though apparently of supreme vigour, in the spring of 1877, and the cottage is now occupied by a totally different family. Mere Clough, too, is not what it was. Though spared the desecrations of Boggart-hole, the grove of fine trees that once filled the bottom has disappeared. The best of the wild-flowers have also disappeared, or nearly so; and the brook is less often limpid than impure. Similar changes have overtaken everything public in the neighbourhood.
- [23] On account of their correspondence with others, geologically the same, very extensively present in the portion of Central and Eastern Russia called Perm.
- [24] The following pages were originally printed in the *Manchester Weekly Times* of July 10th, 1858. It gave me great pleasure to see that the article was made the subject of comment and lengthy extract in *Chambers's Journal* of the following October 16th, a recognition of the general interest of the matter dealt with that seems to me quite to justify a reprint almost *verbatim*, with corrections that bring it up to the present date.
- [25] *i.e.* up to 1858.
- [26] See the account of the conviction in the *Manchester Guardian*, of November 30th, 1850.
- [27] For further particulars respecting old Joseph Evans, see the *Gardeners' Chronicle* for November 14th, 1874, from which we have transcribed, being our own words, a small portion of the above.
- [28] See an excellent description of Hall-i'th'-Wood, accompanied by a drawing, in the *Manchester Literary Club* volume for 1880, p. 254.
- [29] Liverpool was omitted even so late as 1635. *Vide* Selden's "Mare Clausum, seu de Dominio Maris," p. 239, Chetham Library, Manchester.
- [30] "A Year in a Lancashire Garden," p. 27.
- [31] In *loc. cit.*, p. 20.
- [32] A complete catalogue of the thousand botanical works in the Manchester Libraries, with notes upon their various contents, has been prepared by the author of this volume, and only waits publication. Meantime it can be consulted by any person who may wish to use it.

Words standardised for consistency by the addition of a hyphen:

Besses-o'th'-Barn standardised as Besses-o'-th'-Barn
firwood standardised as fir-wood
dryshod standardised as dry-shod
hillside(s) standardised as hill-side(s)
butterbur standardised as butter-bur
buttercup standardised as butter-cup
truelove standardised as true-love
playground standardised as play-ground
stonework standardised as stone-work
miswritten standardised as mis-written
lifetime standardised as life-time
half way standardised as half-way

Words standardised for consistency by the removal of a hyphen:

sand-stone standardised as sandstone
under-tone standardised as undertone
brook-side standardised as brookside
Brown-wardle standardised as Brown Wardle
sax-field standardised as saxfield
sun-shine standardised as sunshine
thorough-fare standardised as thoroughfare
Down-fall standardised as Downfall
delight-ful standardised as delightful
flori-culture standardised as floriculture
Church-town standardised as Churchtown
green-house standardised as greenhouse
Fringilla monti-fringilla
farm-yard standardised as farmyard
Wind-gates standardised as Windgates
re-appear(s) standardised as reappear(s)
in-doors standardised as indoors
salt-crystal standardised as salt crystal
Salt-Mines standardised as salt mines
PRINCESS-ST dehyphenated
Fo'-edge (in index) changed to Fo'edge as used in the main text

Accentuation:

aerial standardised as aërial, all other accentuation unchanged

Typographical errors

mistletoe changed to mistletoe,
turnpike-toad changed to turnpike-road,
develope (unusual spelling) has been retained,
There is one instance of Tintwisle for Tintwistle, this has been corrected.

The title for Chapter XVII in the Contents differs from the heading on p. 232 and has not been changed from the original.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK COUNTRY RAMBLES, AND MANCHESTER
WALKS AND WILD FLOWERS ***

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