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Title: From the North Foreland to Penzance

Author: Clive Holland

Illustrator: Maurice Randall

Release date: January 21, 2015 [EBook #48039]

Language: English

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# FROM THE NORTH FORELAND TO PENZANCE



**PORTSMOUTH. H.M.S. ST. VINCENT**

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FROM THE NORTH  
**FORELAND**  
TO PENZANCE

BY CLIVE HOLLAND · ILLUSTRATED BY  
MAURICE RANDALL



LONDON  
**CHATTO & WINDUS**  
NEW YORK: DUFFIELD & COMPANY  
MCMVIII

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*To the Most Noble*  
*THE MARQUESS OF ORMONDE*  
*K.P., P.C., Commodore of the Royal Yacht*  
*Squadron, with his Permission, this Book of*  
*the South Coast is inscribed*

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# PREFACE

In the following pages, dealing with the most important or most picturesque of the harbours and seaports of the South Coast from the North Foreland to Penzance, no attempt has been made either to give "guide book information" which can be easily obtained elsewhere; or to afford technical sailing directions, soundings, or nautical information of the type to be found in such books as Cowper's admirable "Sailing Tours," "The Pilot's Guide," or in the Admiralty Charts. Rather has it been the object of the author to deal with the picturesque side of the various places described, and to give something of their story and romance, both past and present.

That the coastline covered by the present volume has much of interest few will deny. It is, indeed, the one which has played the most strenuous and historic part in the history of our Island Kingdom.

In times of war it has experienced all the terror and excitement which comes in the train of outgoing battle fleets and incoming victorious galleons, men-of-war, and privateers. In times of peace it has known not a little of the romance of wrecking, smuggling, and the pure joy of life which is borne inland by soft, salt breezes and cleansing winds. Of its beauty those can tell who like ourselves have coasted along its varying shores of high chalk cliffs, shingle, sand, and fretted granite. Indeed, where salt water meets land there must ever be something worth seeing, recording, and depicting. x

A special element of interest attaches to the work of the artist whose sympathetic pictures adorn the book, in that for many years he has been associated with the sea and the Southern Coast, and has voyaged many thousands of miles upon the great waters. His work will speak for itself, but it seems singularly appropriate that a practical yachtsman should illustrate a work of this character.

Of necessity the writing of a volume like the present one, covering in a comparatively brief space a large field, has entailed much research as well as knowledge gained by visits, in some cases on many different occasions, to the places dealt with and described. And it is equally impossible to avoid mentioning and saying a great many things which have been said before, and in a sense using material already contained in existing books dating from Domesday, Leland, Hakluyt, and Hals to the most recent of modern times, and also county histories.

The author's thanks are more especially due to Messrs. A. & C. Black for kind permission to make use of material, the inclusion of which was unavoidable, relating to the history of Dorset ports and havens in particular, previously appearing in somewhat different form in his book "Wessex," of which they hold the copyright; to W. K. Gill, Esq., for permission to make use of material, collected by him from various ancient sources, contained in his interesting booklet "Sketches of the Past of Poole"; to the proprietors of the Homeland Association Ltd., for a like permission to make use of the substance of matter contained in several of their excellent "literary" guides, more especially relating to Sussex, Devon, and Cornish ports; to Commander the Hon. Henry N. Shore, R.N., the author of that interesting and exhaustive volume "Smuggling Days and Smuggling Ways" for valuable help and information; and to a number of friends and others for information willingly afforded on the occasion of our visiting the various places described. xi

Amongst other books which have been consulted for details regarding ancient historical events of a local character and customs may be mentioned those of the Rev. John Prince, of Berry Pomeroy, Devon; Jonathan Couch's "History of Polperro"; Mr Arthur H. Norway's "History of the Post Office Packet Service between 1793 and 1815"; Mudie's "History of Hampshire"; "The Illustrated History of Portsmouth"; "The History of the Civil War in Hampshire"; J. D. Parry's "Coasts of Sussex" (1833); Mr Montagu Burrows's "Cinque Ports"; "The Complete History of Cornwall"; and many smaller pamphlets published from 1700 to 1845. Use has also been made of the old files of "The Hampshire Independent," "The Dorset County Chronicle" and other local newspapers, and the Records of various towns.

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# From the Foreland to Penzance

## Chapter I

### The North Foreland—Ramsgate—Deal—Dover—Hythe, and some other Cinque Ports

The great headland, famous as the North Foreland, dazzling white on a bright summer's day, and grey when the weather is cloudy; capped with green turf which is by turns, according to the season, the greenest and the least green in England, is familiar to all who have gone down Channel from the Thames estuary, and to many who have only crossed it. On the summit of this historic and impressive cliff, at whose foot, by turns, lap the waves of a quiet sea and rage the surges of winter's gale, stands the lighthouse which has an interest to all seafarers beyond its saving power and guidance, in that it is in fact the oldest along the coast. Though much altered and enlarged, its present tower is substantially the same as the one commenced in the reign of the Merry Monarch in 1663. So that for nearly two and a half centuries the light has shone forth over the waste of waters as one old writer says "for the guidance of mariners, as a token of human kindness, and incidentally to the glory of God."

Many historic events have taken place off the North Foreland, but none perhaps of greater moment than the fierce naval battle between the English and Dutch fleets on June 2, 1653, each numbering close upon 100 vessels, though the latter had some numerical superiority. Then in sight of "all who thronged the headland the great fight went on between the big shippis until the Dutchmen were beaten."

The English had already gained a victory over the Dutch off Portsmouth a few months before, and now the fleet under the command of Blake, Monk, and Deane, whose name as a naval commander, is, we imagine, almost unknown to the majority of his countrymen of the present day, inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Dutch, six of whose best ships were taken, eleven sunk, and the remainder driven to take shelter in Calais Roads. This engagement was one of a series which took place in the home waters during the years 1652-1675.

On one's way round to Ramsgate one passes Broadstairs—now a favourite summer resort—which in the middle of the sixteenth century was a place of some importance, having ninety-eight houses, eight boats and other vessels from two to eighteen tons, with forty men employed in the seafaring industries; and its famous church of Our Lady, on passing which in ancient times we are told vessels "lowered their topsails and wafted their 'ancients' in salute."

Ramsgate Harbour, however, is not an ideal place in which to make any prolonged stay. It is not commodious; nor is it distinguished by what is termed "every modern convenience." The outer basin is little more than mud at low water, and the inner—well, most people avoid docks if there is a chance of having fresh and sufficient water under a yacht's keel. But Ramsgate itself is an interesting and historic town, and is situated on the Isle of Thanet, which literally teems with romantic memories of the past. Those of the sea rovers of the Cinque Ports, the sturdy seamen of the Elizabethan age, the bold and daring smugglers of the Georgian and early Victorian eras.

Ramsgate is undoubtedly of very ancient origin. Even in pre-Roman times it was probably a place of some importance and consequence. Indeed, the numerous remains which have from time to time been found in the neighbourhood, more especially on the East Cliff, go far to prove the contention that in the days of the Roman occupation it served as a kind of outer port or station to Rutupiae. Its position was such as to enable it to defy the silting up, as well as those other changes which were destined as the ages went by to stultify and destroy some of its immediate neighbours and sometime rivals. Though the haven afforded was too small and not well protected enough to attract to it any great measure of the trade that flowed up Channel to London from even early times, Ramsgate has for many centuries been a fishing port, and a place of some considerable moment to the Isle of Thanet itself. Even in the early years of the fourteenth century it was a town of some size, and it had one great possession in the fine old church of St Lawrence which dates from the reign of King John.

There are indeed so many romantic and historical memories connected with Ramsgate that the story of them is difficult to condense within reasonable limits. Just across the bay, in the meadows of a farm, more than thirteen centuries ago, landed St Augustine, a peaceful conqueror. Near this spot, six and a half centuries before, the world-conqueror Julius Cæsar had grounded his galleys, and his soldiers—fired by the example of a standard bearer—had leaped into the water, forcing a landing in the face of the menacing and oncoming Britons.

There in the year 597 amid the water meadows stood the Saint, with the River Stour flowing between him and the Saxon King who had come down to see what manner of man Augustine might be, but had "entreated the Saint to approach no closer lest he should be a magician and work the King ill" until he had satisfied himself that he (Augustine) was no wizard. The running water between in those times was held to be a sure bar to the exercise of magical arts. When the King had satisfied himself that the Saint and his followers were not to be feared he crossed over the river, and sat and listened to what they had to say. Every one knows the story. How St Augustine "came to stay." How in the end the King who had received him with friendliness and hospitality was driven out of his own. And then, to come further down the ages, the ease-loving descendants of St Augustine and his monks were themselves told to depart by another King, less mild mannered and hospitably

inclined than the Saxon Monarch of a thousand years before. "Bluff King Hal" would have none of them, though, perhaps, it was neither their morals (or want of them) nor their pride that chiefly induced him to make the clean sweep of them that he did.

Westward from the harbour and in the valley lies Minster, concerning the founding of which there is a monkish legend of some interest. After King Egbert had murdered his cousins and "buried them under his throne" he, doubtless fearing they might prove troublesome, was seized with remorse. As so often happened in those remote days his remorse, and desire that his lady cousin, whose brothers he had thus foully murdered, should forgive him, was turned to good account by Mother Church, who from history appears to have made a pretty constant practice of profiting by rich sinners and bleeding those who others bled. The lady in question agreed to consider the matter settled if the King would but give her (this was the Archbishop of Canterbury's solution) as much land as a hind could run over, so that she might found a monastery to her murdered brothers' memory. Egbert, who, tradition asserts, had been much disturbed meanwhile by ghostly visitants, agreed; and the religious house was duly founded.

The daughter of the foundress, named Mildred, ruled over the community, and afterwards was canonized. But the monastery was not destined to remain long undisturbed. A band of Danish pirates landed, attacked, and burned the institution to the ground, and carried off to a more secular life the prettiest of the virgin nuns they found incarcerated. Possibly some of them found their new circumstances less dull than their old life of seclusion. A little later Canute gave the land on which the monastery had stood to the Priory of St Augustine at Canterbury. Then arose a difficulty. St Mildred being long dead had been left by the Danish marauders where she lay buried. They had, indeed, no use for the bones of saints or dead womenfolk. And now the Abbot of Canterbury wished to remove the body to his church. The people of Thanet naturally opposed the idea. St Mildred was their most valued and cherished possession. Pilgrims came to visit her grave, and when pilgrims came there were material advantages accruing. The Saint herself appears to have refused this "translation" to Canterbury. But in the end she was not proof against the gentle and logical wooing of the Abbot of St Augustine's, and she went away with him or he carried her off, whichever way one may read a story that is not quite clear in this regard. The men of Thanet followed to Canterbury with a view to recovering their property; but were unsuccessful, and St Mildred "did many wonderful workes and miracles at that place."

Richborough Castle hard by is a fine ruin, and has great interest for those to whom the dim and obscure ages of national history appeal. The remains of this old fortress of the time when Romans held sway in Britain are amongst the most interesting in the South of England. It has been frequently referred to by writers of that period, under its Roman designation of Rutupiae, and was the castle of an important town or settlement until the recession of the sea did away with its usefulness as a place of habitation for seafaring people.

One can well imagine the effect of its massive towering and threatening walls upon the Saxon pirates of the days when Rutupiae was in its prime, and formed, with the castle of Regulbium or Reculver, the defences and wards to the entrance of the then wide and navigable Wantsum. But like so many of the outposts of civilization of those latter days of Imperial Rome's world-wide sway, it was destined to be abandoned. And when the last legion marched in A.D. 436 to the coast to depart over seas never to return, it was not long ere the invading Anglo-Saxon pirates took and sacked the great stronghold of Rutupiae, and practically destroyed its very fabric.

Ramsgate of late years has in a measure come to the front as a holiday resort, but to most seafarers along the coast it will always be the past of the town rather than the present that will possess abiding interest. Until comparatively recent years it continued to bear its share of the burdens attaching to the Cinque Ports; and even nowadays is in a measure under the control of Sandwich, its ancient head, and as a "vill" of the latter submits to the jurisdiction of its recorder. It is one of the ancient non-corporate members of the Cinque Ports.

In coming down Channel to Dover one passes several historic towns connected with the ancient Confederacy, consisting originally of Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, Romney, and Hastings, to which were afterwards added Rye and Winchelsea (making seven, notwithstanding which the old French and original name has always been retained), but none of these can nowadays be looked upon in the light of harbours. We may, perhaps, as well here as anywhere else whilst passing the old-time port of Sandwich, with its "limbs" Deal, Walmer, Kingsdown and Ringwold, spare a little space for a brief sketch of the Cinque Ports as a whole. The Confederacy, which came to be known under that designation, cannot fail to be of interest to all Britons as being the undoubted germ of the Royal Navy, in those far-off times when the Channel was a frequent battleground, and these ancient ports loomed large in history. Originally brought into existence by Saxon monarchs, they were afterwards constituted by William I and succeeding kings, who required them to supply ships for the defence of the coasts. The Charter dated 1278 of Edward I is the real basis upon which their liberties are founded. This charter, the earliest which has now actual existence, settled many outstanding grievances, and conferred several important new privileges in addition to confirming the old ones. The essential part runs "And it is by this deed made clear that they shall possess their liberties and acquittances henceforth in the fullest and most honourable manner that they and their forerunners have ever had in the times of the Kings Edward the Confessor, William I, William II, King Henry our great-grandfather, and the Lord King Henry our father, by reason of the Charters of these aforementioned kings, as those said Charters, in possession of the Barons." Then follows a statement that these same ancient grants and Charters had been seen by the King.

There is, unfortunately, no space at our command to mention in detail the many interesting customs in connexion with the Cinque Ports. One of those most prized in the Middle Ages was the carrying of a pall or canopy of silk over the head of the King at the coronations, extended tent-wise by four long lances attached to the four corners held by four barons of the Ports. They were, we are told by Roger de Hoveden, on the occasion of the coronation of Richard I, "followed into Westminster Abbey by a whole crowd of earls, barons, knights and others, cleric and lay."

As will have been gathered from the Charter to Edward I, the Confederacy is of very ancient origin, and in fact had an existence prior even to the reign of Edward the Confessor. At any rate, it is clear from existing records, traditionary beliefs, and historical data, that William of Normandy was well alive to the usefulness and importance of the Cinque Ports as a means of keeping open the communicating link of Channel seaway with his

Duchy; as well as for the general defence of the Kingdom of England, over which he had come to reign, against the periodical incursions of Danish and other pirates. Henry III by an ordinance dated about 1229 stated in clear terms what he required of the Confederacy. It was ordered that the latter should supply—what for those times must be considered the large number of—57 ships; each having for crew 21 men and a boy. And these were to serve the King for not less than 15 days in every year at their own costs and charges, and so long after the said period of fifteen days as contingencies might require. But in the event of an extended term of service payment was to be made. One gathers what is probably not a very inaccurate idea of the relative size and importance of the different towns at that period from the number of ships each supplied. We find Dover sent 21, Winchelsea 10, Hastings 6, and Hythe, Sandwich, Rye, and Romney 5 each.

But to supply ships for the defence of the realm against the King's enemies was not a burden without compensations. Many special privileges were granted to the towns from time to time, amongst them were those of self-government, the privilege for the freemen to carry the title of "barons," and the freedom to trade without paying any toll with every corporated town in the kingdom. The inhabitants, too, were exempt from military duties or service. The honour of bearing a canopy over the King and Queen (mentioned by Shakespeare, and re-asserted so recently as at the time of King Edward VII's coronation) we have already referred to.

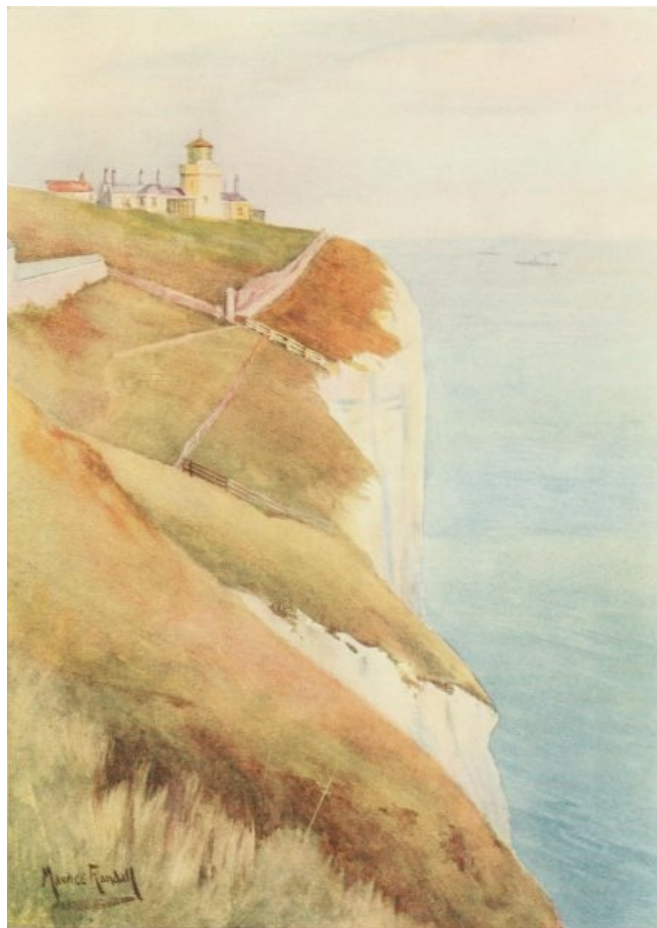
Although much of the history of these seven ancient towns, which ultimately formed the Cinque Ports, is unhappily lost to us, the existing records or customals give the student a very good idea of the life of the various periods to which they have reference. One, not the least interesting, was that of giving notice of the need to elect a mayor by a trumpeter at midnight. And woe betide him who refused to take the necessary oath of allegiance to the Ports and the Sovereign. Any who did was promptly ejected from his house, which was forthwith sealed up. At Dover the punishment was even more severe, as the house was generally pulled down. 9

Another custom, which obtained at both Romney and Hythe, was the presentation by the corporations of those towns of "porpuses" (porpoises) to the lord's table at Saltwood. We have never, so far as we know, tasted porpoise. It may be good; but, as the American said of another dish, "it sounds strong."

Amongst the purely medieval institutions in connexion with the Cinque Ports, the Romney Play in those far off times had a great reputation, "drawing crowdes of folk from the other townes, and from afar off in Kent and Sussex," to witness its representation. There are frequent references to it in the Lydd records; and in the Port papers one finds the accounts and costs relating to these old-time pageants, even the prices paid for "wigges," false beards, erection of the stage, "floats," the scenery, costumes, and the labour of the scribe, who appears to have in a measure united the office of author with that of stage manager. The Play was a municipal undertaking, like those of other famous towns. The subjects of the Plays varied somewhat, but the majority appear to have been at least founded upon a religious or sacred basis, or to have been a monkish interpretation of some legend, and were in fact Old Mysteries.

It is difficult to look upon the Romney of to-day and believe that Leland, who visited it in the reign of Henry VIII, was correct in stating that it had been a good haven "yn so much that withyn remembrance of men shyppes have cum hard up to the towne, and cast ancrs yn one of the churchyardes." He goes on to say, too, that at the period of his visit the sea was "two myles from the towne, so sore thereby decayed that wher ther wher 11 great paroches and chirches sumtyme, is now scarece one...." 10

Most of the Cinque Ports were destined ultimately to decay from the same reason—recession of the sea, caused by what is known as the "Eastward Drift." And the last great part that they played in the naval history of England was their gallant conduct when the Spanish Armada threatened our shores. Then we find that the ancient spirit, which had animated them in Norman times, flamed up once more—the final flicker of expiring consequence—as of old "to its full height of medieval patriotism"; and, we are told by the same authority, "though their own vessels were poor little craft, the Ports contrived to raise among themselves the sum of £43,000, and to 'set out' with that money a handy little squadron of thirteen sail, which did its duty under the orders of Lord Henry Seymour." Thirteen sail would to some seem ominous; but evidently the Cinque Ports folk were not superstitious. Tradition asserts that these men, who amongst other things, and in addition to sending the thirteen ships to Drake's Armada Fleet, watched the coast in their poor little craft and "crayers," also prepared the material for the fire-ships which were destined to bring about, though not actually to accomplish, the final disintegration of the Spanish Fleet. That they contributed their fair share of powder and shot, and energy in manning and manœuvring the ships they had supplied there is ample evidence. They in due course received the special thanks of Queen Elizabeth for their services, and also for the part they played in the lodgement, victualling, and transporting over seas of the troops for her French and Portuguese expeditions, which had so much to do with the final checking of Spain's power for harm against England.



### SOUTH FORELAND

Various legislative measures of modern times have taken away from the Cinque Ports many of their ancient privileges, but they still retain the one of being quite independent of county jurisdiction in many important particulars. The office of Lord Warden is an honorary one and has been at various times held by many of the most distinguished statesmen of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Amongst those who have held the post may be mentioned William Pitt, Lord Palmerston, the Duke of Wellington, Earl Granville, the Marquis of Salisbury, and Lord Curzon. 11

On our way to Dover, however, to return to our course, we must pass Sandwich, "the settlement on the sand," which during the fifteenth century had been gradually declining until towards the end of Henry VIII's reign it was but a ghost of its former self. Considering Henry's quarrel with the Holy Father at Rome it was somewhat an irony that the final blow to Sandwich's prosperity as a port was dealt it by the sinking in the fairway of a large ship owned by the Pope. Over this the sand and mud collected rapidly, practically blocking the channel, and causing the downfall of what was at one time one of the chief ports in the south.

Off Deal one truly sails over the graves of men. Many and many a gallant ship (some of historic note) has brought up in the Downs, and alas! failed to find substantial holding ground when the critical moment arrived. This was the case on November 26, 1703, when the English fleet took shelter there, and during one night of a great gale lasting fourteen days a large number of ships, mostly with all hands, were lost by driving on the Goodwins, including the *Stirling Castle*, *Mary*, and *Northumberland*, each of 70 guns.

Of these fatal and historic sands, nowadays happily well-provided with lights, a poetess has written:

What wealth untold  
Far down, shining through their stillness lies!  
Thou hast the starry gems, the burning gold,  
Won from ten thousand royal argosies.

Yet more, the billows and the depths have more!  
High hearts and brave are gathered to thy breast!  
They hear not now the booming waters roar,  
The battle thunders will not break their rest.  
Keep thy red gold and gems, thou stormy grave—  
Give back the true and brave.

Deal, indeed, has continued to exist as a place of some importance almost entirely because of its propinquity to the Downs, and the consequent presence of numbers of ships. In the old days, too, the town was the scene of many smuggling exploits and affrays between the pressgang which used to periodically raid the place, and carry off "most of the sturdy seamen manning vessels weather bound in the Downs, much to their own and their captain's chagrin." It was, indeed, one of the most profitable of all Kentish towns for such operations.

Walmer with its historic and ivy-clad Castle, the official residence of the Warden of the Cinque Ports and 12

Constable of Dover Castle, stands above the low-lying shore line, one of the three castles which anciently kept the Downs. Both Deal and Walmer, the former with its long pier, have latterly become holiday resorts of the usual type. A shingly beach in both cases stretches in front of rows of modern lodging and apartment houses which face the sea. It is generally supposed that it was on the beach between Deal and Walmer that in July, 1495, the impostor Perkin Warbeck, with a handful of followers numbering about 600 in all, attempted to land. Nearly a third of the "invaders" were taken prisoners by the trained bands of Sandwich, and were afterwards executed chained together two and two, and their bodies disposed of for hanging in chains all along the coasts of Kent and Sussex. "Where they rotted to the terrifying of all for many yeares."

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It is an incident not entirely without humour that Perkin Warbeck should have chosen to disembark some of his "force" within a mile or two of the spot traditionally identified as the landing place of Cæsar, where also the great Napoleon intended to land.

The coast now increases in height until one reaches charming St Margaret's Bay, with a few houses almost standing on the beach itself, and others blinking at one from the cliff above. A favourite resort for picnics, but affording unsatisfactory shelter. On the summit of the cliff and a short distance inland stands a fine Norman church worth visiting, if time permits, from Dover. From the top of the cliff there is one of those unrivalled panoramas to which the higher portions of the Kent and Sussex coasts so admirably lend themselves. It extends over the far stretching expanse of Channel, south, east, and west; with the sea traffic of an Empire passing almost at one's feet.

There is a curious story with an Eugene Aram flavour about it concerning a murder of long ago which was committed by a soldier on the road into Dover from St Margaret's. He appears to have been of a hardy as well as a murderous nature, for after committing the crime he stuck the walking stick, with which he had killed his comrade, in the earth in a field, boasting that he was sure to escape detection until the stick took root. The latter was of sycamore wood. The soldier went on foreign service, and did not return (so the story goes) for some years. He came along the road which had for him such a tragic memory, and was astounded to find that the stick had grown into a tree. This discovery so horrified and unnerved him that he promptly went back to Dover and gave himself up to the authorities.

The South Foreland is now close on our starboard bow—that magnificent headland which the veteran nautical novelist Mr Clark Russell says is "surely the most incomparable of all vantage grounds for the marine dreamer. It is not only that every fathom of the gleaming water that the eye wanders over is vital with historic tradition, and rich with the most romantic of the hues which give to our own national story the shining complexion it wears; it is still the busiest of old maritime highways; fifty oceanic contrasts fill every hour..." There are, indeed, many types of craft still to be met with and seen in the Downs, from "the dainty clipper model in iron, lifting an almost fairy-like fabric of wire rigging and soaring yards, and swelling snow-white canvas to the skies" to "the huge ocean passenger steamer, noiselessly thrusting her nose through it faster than a gale of wind could have thundered an old line-of-battle ship along." Then, sometimes, too, there are the white-winged yachts bound for Dover Harbour after a run out into the Channel, or from the Thames estuary bound much farther westward to Cowes, or even Dartmouth or Penzance. Or the Thames barge hugging the coast; a tramp rust-red, and high out of the water in ballast, till she looks like nothing so much as a long, deep cigar box, rounded at both ends, and with a funnel stuck far astern or in the middle, as the builders may have thought best; or sometimes a smart *chasse marée*, the like of which in the old days did service as privateers out of Calais, or as smugglers out of Boulogne, Dunkirk, or Gravelines.

14

We are inclined to agree that there is no strip of open water like the Channel off Deal and Dover for interest and variety.

On rounding the towering and magnificent South Foreland one gets one's first glimpse of Dover when coming from the eastward. It is not very satisfying until one has actually entered the Bay, which is one of the finest artificial havens in the world. It has been the custom in the past of those who simply pass through Dover on their way to or from the Continent to decry it. We could produce more uncomplimentary remarks concerning the "ugliness," "poverty," "dullness," etc., of Dover (perhaps written by those to whom a Channel swell had been less than kind) than of almost any other place of which we have personal knowledge. But to those who approach "the ancient town of Dover with its many memories, its commanding castle, its impressive pharos" leisurely from the sea on a fine day, we can conceive of no feelings being aroused than those of interest and admiration. There is something eternal in the appearance of this sole true survivor of the famous Cinque Ports, which makes it possible for one to realize that much of what one sees, at all events at a first glance, is what has been looked upon by countless generations from the time when Cæsar's eagle eye rested upon Shakespeare's Cliff, and travelled up the valley which lies snug in the shelter of and runs inland between the two o'er-topping cliffs. But whilst we may linger amid historic memories Cæsar passed on to an easier landing a little way further up the coast.

15

When one is snugly inside the breakwater, things begin to assume greater distinctness. There is the Castle and pharos still, but in the serried rows of houses, the Marine Parade along the front, the pier on which are numerous trains made or in the process of making up, and the air of bustle, one begins to realize that Dover's greatness has not entirely departed, and that one has come to a prosperous and not a decaying port, a lively garrison town, a naval depôt of consequence, a commercial centre for miles round, and a popular holiday resort. And when one contemplates the vast harbour works, which have cost upwards of three and a half million pounds sterling and enclose a water space measuring upwards of 610 acres, one can easily see that Dover's future may be as useful, as brilliant and as prosperous as has been her past. In this huge haven, which is entirely free from rocks or sandbanks, the largest battleships afloat can anchor in safety under the protection of the countless heavy guns of the forts. Already there is a flotilla of submarines stationed here, and the roadstead is full of life and movement from sunrise to sunset. The harbour has two excellent and adequate approaches, one between the Admiralty Pier and Southern Breakwater, 800 feet in width; the other between the Southern Breakwater and the Eastern Arm 600 feet in width.

16

Dover is nowadays a capital port for yachtsmen. The town is historic, picturesque, and quaint. It has just the

narrow streets on a somewhat larger scale that one meets with in the smaller ports in Cornwall down west. Streets which seem as though squeezed in "where never such were meant to be," with the two hillsides overtopping them as though thrust aside in high dudgeon. Then inland there is the newer and perhaps smarter town, with villa residences scattered on the sides of the Dour valley, and delightfully situated.

Up above the harbour stands the Castle, a grey, grim survival of an heroic age. It has been fortified from time out of mind. And there are yet existing, notwithstanding all that has been done to add to it and restore it, traces of both Roman and Saxon defences. It was this important fortress, with the not less essential "well of water in it," that weak Harold undertook to deliver up to William of Normandy as soon as the breath should pass out of Edward the Confessor's body. But a few days after the Battle of Hastings, which took place on October 14, 1066, and resulted in the defeat of Harold and the slaying of upwards of 30,000 men, William captured the Castle, and appointed as Constable his half-brother, Odo of Bayeux. Most of the walls and towers are of Norman date, and are probably the work of John de Fiennes, the second Constable. The massive and well-preserved keep dates from the reign of Henry II, and other portions of the Castle are of various subsequent periods. 17

One of the most shameful events in connexion with the story of the Castle is that of King John's submission there to Pandulph, the Pope's legate. Three years after this event, in the spring of 1216, Louis VIII of France, who had come over convoyed and supported by a powerful fleet under the command of Eustace the Monk, was before Dover Castle to besiege it after having landed at Stonor and captured Hastings and Rye. He also burnt Sandwich, which refused to yield to him. Some of his force joined with that of the revolting barons, and not only overran Kent, but even penetrated to London, of which they took possession. The garrison of Dover we are told was to the last degree inefficient, feeble, and ill-provisioned. But the commander poor, harried King John had placed in it, with jurisdiction over the Cinque Ports generally, was one of the most able and strongest men of his age, Hubert de Burgh by name. To his courage, resource, and endurance must be placed the credit of the successful defence of the last hope of England against the establishment of a French sovereignty. At length Louis, finding himself unable to reduce the Castle or persuade De Burgh to yield, raised the siege. He had failed; and his father's remark was justified, "By the arm of St James, my son then has not obtained one foot of land in England."

Whilst Louis was being driven from his quarry the fleet under Eustace was dispersed and almost destroyed; partly through the gallant efforts of the ships and seamen of the Cinque Ports, and partly by a tempest. Next year, however, Blanche de Castile, Louis' wife, and a bold and enterprising princess, got together a fleet of "over-powering strength, full of knights and soldiers," which was as before put under the command of Eustace, the renegade Cinque Port Monk, who had learned what he knew of seamanship and daring from those he was about to attack. But Hubert de Burgh and the men of the Ports in the forty ships lying in Dover Bay were not to be frightened by Eustace, that "pirata nequissimus" (most vile pirate) as the chroniclers of the time not too harshly label him. They decided that it was essential that he should be beaten at sea. If he were to effect a landing the troops he brought might turn the tide of battle and a foreign yoke yet be borne by England. 18

There are, fortunately, several fairly full and good accounts of this ancient sea battle, in which the courage and seamanship, destined ever to distinguish the men of the Cinque Ports, was splendidly exemplified. The French fleet (we are condensing and modernizing one of the best of the accounts which have come down to us) consisted of upwards of one hundred vessels, and the command of the troops with which they were crowded had been given to one Robert de Courtenay, a distinguished knight, connected (so 'tis said) with the Royal house of France itself.



### THE OUTWARD MAIL, DOVER

They trimmed their sails from Calais towards the mouth of the Thames, but the ever-watchful De Burgh and his bold men had descried their coming from the heights above Dover, and at once weighed anchors, and hastened (though the wind was light) to meet them. They did not, however, because of their much inferior size and numbers, deliver a direct attack, but kept their "luff"—a sea term used at that period even as nowadays—till

they were nearer France than England. The French commander, unable to comprehend this manoeuvre, called out tauntingly that the English thieves were bound for Calais in anticipation of finding it undefended, and in preference to fighting and being defeated. But he was destined soon to discover his error. When well to windward the English ships suddenly put their helms hard up, and bore right down on the French. The latter, quite unprepared for this startling development in the attack, were thrown into confusion. They were apparently too heavily laden to be easily manoeuvred; and although, to do him justice, Eustace fought his ships well, they had no chance from the outset of coping successfully with the splendidly handled and lightly burdened English vessels. One can imagine something of the fight from these old chronicles, which say that some of the French vessels were run down (though on more than one instance the English boat suffered severely in "ramming" her opponent) and sunk; others were grappled with and boarded much to the discomfiture of the enemy, as De Burgh's men had been told to jump aboard and cut the halliards so that the sails fell upon the Frenchmen and incommoded and entangled them. It might be thought that these tactics were good enough to ensure a victory, but the men of the Cinque Ports left nothing to chance, and in addition to the usual methods of offence had laid in a stock of quicklime, which as they sheered alongside (of course to windward) was thrown with blinding effect in the faces of the Frenchmen, who lined the sides of their vessels to repel the boarders.

19

The combined result of these ingenious methods of attack supported by courage and address was a complete victory. It is said that only fifteen ships escaped—probably the leading vessels with which the English did not come up. The general was taken a prisoner; and, unfortunately for him, Eustace himself was found hidden on the ship of Robert de Courtenay, and was dragged from his place of concealment in the hold by a bastard son of King John. In those days justice did not tarry long on the way. There was a sharp sword ready. And there on the deck the renegade was summarily beheaded, "and ys blood ran yn ye scuppers, and thence ynto ye sea."

Many gallant French knights, we learn, sooner than suffer capture, which was otherwise inevitable, leaped into the sea in their armour and speedily sank.

It is satisfactory to know that the spoil taken and the ransoms obtained for the French nobles who were captured were such as to "greatly enrich the seamen, so that for the rest of their days they could dwell in comfort."

20

A picturesque and impressive touch was lent to the homecoming of the victors, who were met by a great procession of bishops and clergy, who had anxiously watched the issue of the fight from the summit of Dover cliffs. Seldom we may readily believe was a victory more welcome, for with this crushing naval defeat and the destruction of his force for invasion Louis was compelled to relinquish all hope of ascending the throne of England. And to ensure his escape to France he made a treaty which finally disposed of any claim he thought he possessed.

The Cinque Ports folk of that age learned in a rough school, and it is perhaps little to be wondered at that occasionally, when truces of a temporary character had been entered into between this country and France or Spain, they failed to observe them with any degree of promptness or completeness, but went on "plundering and harrying their natural enemies the French," until the King had on several occasions to interfere, and call them to book.

It is, doubtless, to these acts, and others brought about by general orders issued by different Sovereigns in succeeding reigns, that the charges of piracy which have been levelled in the past and by some present-day writers against the men of the Cinque Ports are traceable. Matthew Paris, amongst other historians, charges them distinctly not only with piracy on the French, but with robbing and murdering their own fellow countrymen. A careful examination of the circumstances and facts leading up to this charge leads one to think that they were possibly guilty. But it must be remembered in extenuation that the age in which Paris lived was a lawless and disturbed one. The orders received by the men of the Cinque Ports were frequently of a general character to carry fire and sword along the enemy's coasts, and it is little to be wondered at if the hardy seamen who frequently fought at long odds were not the most scrupulous of victors, and sometimes failed to discriminate to a nicety between legal and illegal predatory warfare. The very freedom of the privileges they enjoyed as citizens of the Ports made them less accountable than they doubtless otherwise would have been to the King's properly constituted authority. Certain it is that on several occasions in the Middle Ages the men of the Ports were not backward in entering into a little war of their own, to their immediate and great advantage. They were pirates in just the same way as were the men and adventurers of the Devon and Cornish ports, and the French hailing from Morlaix, St Malo, and other Norman and Breton ports in those times.

21

It is, however, impossible to inquire further into this fascinating period of our naval history. In the records of the Cinque Ports which still exist there is enough material for a score of romances. Suffice it to say that the same adventurous spirit which made these seamen in medieval times such stout and successful defenders of the narrow seas caused them in a later age to rank amongst the most daring and resourceful as well as the most successful of smugglers.

But to return to Dover Castle, in whose history, indeed, is enshrined that of the town itself. At the outbreak of the Civil War between Charles and his Parliament it was garrisoned by Royalists. The story of its capture reads more like a piece of pure romance than actual fact. But here is the tale. It occurred to an enterprising handful of Roundheads, led by a citizen of Dover named Dawkes or Drake, to attempt the taking of the fortress. Their plan, simple in the extreme, was to climb up the steep cliff on the sea side, which it was not thought necessary to guard, and thus surprise the garrison. Accompanied by a score or so of fellow Roundheads, Dawkes succeeded in scaling the cliff face and surprising the Royalists, who hastened to surrender under the impression that the attack was supported by a strong force. Never, perhaps, fell so strong a place so easily, save when treachery had something to do with the matter, and in this case it was lack of courage and information, not the work of traitors, which led to the garrison's undoing. Thus fell Dover Castle to a handful of enterprising Puritans; and although the King made repeated attempts to recover possession of so commanding a fortress, he did not succeed, "the strongest Royalist force being easily repulsed by those that were within."

22

At the Restoration, however, Charles II found Dover citizens among the most loyal and enthusiastic to bid

him welcome back to his own again. It was the effusiveness of the greeting given him which caused the King to remark to one of his courtiers, "Oddsfish, man, these good folk appear so happy to see us that surely it was our own fault we did not come before."

Peyps tells us that the Mayor solemnly presented the King with a handsomely bound copy of the Bible! A present regarding the appropriateness of which many members of the Court must have had grave doubts. One can imagine with what inward amusement the pleasure-loving, gallant Charles declared to the cheering, banner-waving throng surrounding him that the Bible was "the thing of all others he loved most in the world."

Just forty-eight years later Dover cliffs were thronged to see a fleet pass on its way, whither the people who strained their eyes to catch a glimpse of it did not then know. It was that of William of Orange come to free them from the weak tyranny of James II, and as it passed in line with the Castle the nearest ships saluted the English flag which floated in the breeze on the Keep, and far away across the grey waters of the Channel could be seen the smoke of the Calais guns returning the salute of the French flag by the Dutch ships on that side. Thus sailed over practically the same water the argosies of peace just as had sailed a century before those of Spain and of war. The eyes which gazed out at them were not those of aforetime; but the same spirit of anxiety doubtless animated most of the watchers on the headland.

A century later, when Napoleon was gathering his legions and his transports at Boulogne for the invasion of England, Dover was still a busy place. "There was a constant stir in the town," we are told, "made chiefly by the coming and going of couriers between it and the metropolis, and the activity of those engaged upon the works of defence, and the presence in our midst of many thousands of volunteers." Not that all was business, for with the military and the additional civilian element came the ladies, all, however, prepared to take instant flight on the rumoured, let alone actual, approach of that great bugabo, Napoleon, and where they came there was sure to be junketing and gaiety, even in the midst of the stern preparations for *la guerre à l'outrance*. Post shays, mail coaches and private carriages, as well as transport wagons and carriers' carts, made the road from Dover to London busy night and day; and along the sea-front, as well as in the narrow streets of the town itself, were to be seen fashionable ladies and their beaux "gossiping, and often shivering in simulated horror at the mention of the terrible name which just then filled all minds," so that Dover was almost at times like Hyde Park.

It is unnecessary to add that the fortifications of the Castle underwent a thorough overhauling, thereby being immensely strengthened, and ever since that time, almost from year to year, additions and modern improvements have been made until it is not too much to say that they are now amongst the most efficient and powerful in the world.

And up above one, as one lies at anchor, amongst the most modern and destructive of weapons, with its muzzle directed seaward, stands that beautiful piece of ordnance known as Queen Elizabeth's Pocket Pistol. It is no less than twenty-four feet in length and was cast at Utrecht in 1544, and presented by the Dutch to the Queen. The inscription which it bears in Low Dutch finds a popular but inaccurate translation in the well-known couplet:

Load me well and keep me clean,  
I'll carry my ball to Calais Green

A rough literal translation, however, reads somewhat as follows:

Men call me breaker of rampart and wall;  
'Tis true over hill and dale I can hurl my big ball.

In the Castle and town of Dover there are several interesting old buildings and churches. The Castle Church of St Mary is of the greatest interest, more especially to architects and antiquarians, as it is undoubtedly one of the oldest ecclesiastical buildings in the country. It is thought to stand on the site of the Roman *Prætorium*, and by some authorities is stated to incorporate within its walls some portions of that ancient structure, which was converted to the uses of a Christian church in the third century. Previous to its restoration (one might also add rescue) in 1860 by Sir Gilbert Scott it was used as a coal cellar! The ancient Roman pharos (which had its fellow on the western heights and served to guide the Roman galleys to port from Gaul across the Channel) stands close to the church. Nowadays it is roofless and ivy-clad, and much of the ancient work is obscured by later masonry, but it forms an interesting and romantic object for all seafarers. It was for a considerable period used as a belfry, but its bells were (so the story goes) filched by Sir George Rooke, the capturer of Gibraltar, who carried them off to Portsmouth and had them melted down!

In the town itself both St Mary's and St James's Churches are worth attention, the latter more particularly as it was anciently the place at which the old Cinque Ports Court of Admiralty used to meet. The *Maison Dieu* in the same street, now forming a portion of the municipal buildings, was founded by the famous and gallant Constable of Dover, Hubert de Burgh, in the reign of King John, for the use and entertainment of pilgrims, soldiers, and seamen returning from abroad or foreign service. The foundation had a resident master and several brethren and sisters attached to it, and was in the Middle Ages extremely wealthy. After its suppression by Henry VIII the hall, the only remaining portion of the ancient buildings, was set apart for use as a brew house, and at a later period was used as a naval victualling store. It was acquired in 1834 by the Corporation, and restored in 1860. The stained glass windows and portraits of the kings of England, Lord Wardens, and others in the building are worth examination.

Of modern Dover not much need be said. It differs in its main characteristics little from the usual garrison town, and possesses most, if not all, of the advantages and disadvantages of such places. If the harbour were not so fine, and the historic interest so enduring, we fancy few pleasure seekers on blue water would make it a port of call.

From Dover to Rye (passing Folkestone, Hythe, and New Romney) is a matter of twenty-seven miles. Once outside the harbour a straight course can be laid for Dungeness, eighteen miles distant. Folkestone Harbour is a pleasant one, and the town is lively and bustling. The proximity of Shorncliffe Camp (used by Sir John Moore of



Corunna fame) adds materially to the life of the place. The approach from the sea, after passing along miles of shore, gradually decreasing in height and mostly pebbly, is pleasant and picturesque. And in the famous Leas, which may be said to be “the Hoe” of Folkestone, the town possesses one of the most pleasant and healthful promenades on the south coast. 26

Although Folkestone is mentioned in the Domesday Book as a fishing port called Folchestan, it has even more ancient history attaching to it. Nowadays its harbour is a busy one, for it is one of the cross Channel traffic ports, and although many who merely pass through may remember the town chiefly for its passenger traffic it has a great goods traffic also. In the warehouses along the quay, where the cargoes which have been unloaded are examined and the duties levied by the Custom House officials, we have seen merchandise from almost every quarter of the globe, both manufactured and raw material. Silks and velvets from Lyons; gloves, boots, hats from Parisian houses, artificial flowers and feathers from the same; ostrich feathers from South Africa in their queer-looking cardboard tubes; bales of woollen and cotton goods; watches from Switzerland; pottery and metal work from Austria; wines from France and Italy; and perfumes from Paris, from Italy, and from the famous manufactories at Grasse in the south of France—in a word, everything which goes to meet the demands of modern life and modern luxury. Then there is the daily trade of the Continent—the flowers, fruit, eggs, and vegetables which arrive nightly in huge consignments and make the quays such scenes of life and bustle. Yes, Folkestone is a busy and interesting seaport as well as a pleasant harbour and holiday place.

But everything is not quite modern in Folkestone. There lies to the north of the Outer Harbour an old town, of whose existence comparatively few of the thousands of visitors who come to it or pass through it annually know anything. Those who love the old rather than the new; narrow alleys and quaint architecture, rather than wide streets, broad promenades, up-to-date shops and prim villas, will find here a mine of interest, like the famous author of *The Ingoldsby Legends*, who writes: “Its streets, lanes and alleys—fanciful distinctions without much real difference—are agreeable enough to persons who don’t mind running up and down stairs; and the only inconvenience at all felt by such of its inhabitants as are not asthmatic is when some heedless urchin tumbles down a chimney, or an impertinent pedestrian peeps in at a garret window.” 27

Folkestone is still a fishing port, though the industry is not what it used to be. In recent years there has been a revival of those ancient medieval ceremonies of blessing the sea and thanksgiving for the harvest of the sea which were anciently so common.

In the latter years of the eighteenth and the first four decades of the nineteenth centuries, however, smuggling was with many of the fisherfolk a much more popular means of obtaining a livelihood than fishing. The whole of the outer portion of the town was honeycombed with cellars, secret passages, and “tub holes,” in which the contraband goods were stored until they could be finally and profitably disposed of. The nearness of Folkestone to the French coast made frequent trips across possible, and the smugglers were doubtless favoured by the laxity which was said to prevail amongst the coastguards on the Kentish and Sussex coast at the period when smuggling was at its height. For some years previous to 1831 a blockade of the coast had been instituted, and for a time smuggling was “under a cloud”; but on the removal of the blockade in 1830 there was a great revival, in the Deal, Walmer, and Folkestone districts especially. Many flagrant cases of connivance occurred in the two years immediately following the removal of the blockade, and numbers of men were dismissed from the preventive service. That the bribes given by the smugglers and their agents were substantial was, of course, natural, seeing that the rewards for seizures were so high. We are told in several records<sup>A</sup> that as much as a thousand pounds was not infrequently shared amongst the officers and men of a coastguard station after the capture of a big cargo, the lowest share, that of the boatmen, being some £85 to £90. Little wonder need be experienced then when it is stated that “many a sentry on night duty could reckon on seeing £40 by keeping his eyes shut.” A way of expressing the case of a truly Hibernian character. Women confederates of the smugglers were frequently employed to corrupt the men of the preventive service, and so common a practice had this become that a special order was issued along the Sussex and Kent coasts which is substantially as follows: “Having reason to believe and fear that an attempt will be made to corrupt our men through the medium of females, it is ordered that patrols hold no communication when on duty with any person, either male or female.” 28

<sup>A</sup> *Smuggling Days and Smuggling Ways*, by the Hon. H. N. Shore, R.N.

But the Kentish and Sussex smugglers did not stop at bribery or corruption. If it was felt that either an informer had been at work, or that the coast was too well guarded to make a successful run possible, it was the practice of the smugglers to make their arrangements to assemble in force sufficiently strong to overpower the patrol and then the cargo was run under the “preventives” very noses. As a rule, the “runs” made upon the Kentish and Sussex coasts were what was known as “direct.” That is to say, the boats which brought over the goods were sufficiently small or of sufficiently light draught to permit of their being beached or brought close inshore without the necessity (as was the case further west) of transhipment of the bales and tubs into smaller boats to be rowed ashore. The type of craft most in favour in the Deal and Folkestone districts were galleys, rowing ten or twelve oars and very fast, which could easily make the cross Channel passage in three or four hours in favourable weather. Or what were known as “tub-boats,” mere shells, which would not ride out a gale, knocked together out of the flimsiest and cheapest materials, and consequently of so little value (compared with the cargoes they conveyed) that they were frequently abandoned after the run, and were never troubled about in the case of a surprise, but left to their fate and to capture with little distress on the part of their owners. As a rule, these “tub-boats” were towed across Channel by French luggers, which left them when they had been brought within a mile or two of the coast, when sweeps were got out and the flimsy but heavily laden craft were brought inshore or beached. 29

Amongst the most famous of the larger smuggling craft of the district may be mentioned the *Black Rover*, of Sandwich, which had a most ingenious method of concealing goods in tin cases; the *Isis*, of Rye, which was fitted with a false bow; and the *Mary Ann*, of the same place, fitted with a false keel. A Folkestone boat taken in 1828 was found to have a most ingenious concealment “running from the stern to the transom, and from keel up to the underpart of the thwarts.”

How profitable smuggling was few people nowadays, we fancy, realize. There is, of course, the vague knowledge surviving that great fortunes were made by the most successful smugglers, but the amount of profit upon a single successful run is not generally known.

A very common practice was for a number of people to "club" together to provide the funds for a "run," which generally ruled at £1 per "tub." Some would, say, take fifty shares (i.e., "tubs"); others more or less as the case might be. The captain of a likely vessel was engaged to make the trip for a lump sum varying in amount according to the size of the cargo, seldom, however, falling much below £100. Then the men of the crew would have to be paid from £25 down to £10 a piece, according to the amount involved and the demand for men at the time. In France the "tubs" would cost from 17s. to 18s., and each English sovereign was worth in purchasing value about twenty-one shillings; but, taking it all round, to the persons engaged in financing the run the cost would amount to £1 per "tub," the difference being taken by the captain for incidental expenses, such as sinkers, rope, food for crew on trip, etc. Then there would be an additional £1 to pay for each "tub" successfully "run" and delivered to the adventurers. The total cost was thus about £2 per tub; the value of each on this side of the Channel *had the duty been paid* £6 to £6 5s. Then it should not be forgotten that the spirit was so greatly above proof (generally 70%, and sometimes as high as 180%) that it could be diluted to twice, three, or even four times its bulk, so that each "tub" would ultimately produce from £12 to £20. Or in profit—less, of course, the amount paid to the captain and men of the boat—£10 to £18 per tub according to the amount of dilution which the strength of the original spirit allowed. On a cargo of 200 "tubs" or more it will be easily seen that the profit to be divided was enormous, and if the venture was that of a single individual half-a-dozen successful runs would almost make his fortune.

In the event of a cargo being seized the loss was in a very much less proportion. It consisted merely of the £100 paid the captain, the amount paid the men in the boat, and £1 per tub. It is little wonder then that, in the days to which we refer, smuggling was rife all along the coast from the North Foreland to Penzance.

How prosperous the smuggling trade of Folkestone was in the early years of the last century may be gathered from the following statement made by an old smuggler of Lydd. This old man used frequently to run across Channel in one of the smuggling galleys, taking with him a quantity of English guineas (which could easily be disposed of at Gravelines, Calais, or Boulogne for twenty-five to thirty shillings apiece), the proceeds of which he would invest in a cargo of tobacco, silk, lace, and spirits. In this way he made, if the "run" were successful, a double profit. On occasion, too, he would obtain valuable information regarding the movements of the French fleet, and then on his way back across the Channel he would run alongside any English man-o'-war he came across, and let them know all he had been able to learn. This same smuggler used to say that in those times guineas were so common amongst the smuggling fraternity that they used to play pitch and toss with them.

A not uninteresting light upon the way in which Napoleon financed his wars is to be gathered from the following statement, which is taken from O'Meara's *Napoleon at St Helena*: "I got bills on Vera Cruz, which certain agents sent by circuitous routes ... to London, as I had no direct communication. The bills were discounted by merchants in London, to whom ten per cent, and sometimes a premium, was paid as their reward.... Even for the equipping of my last expedition after my return from Elba a great part of the money was raised in London." Napoleon also added that the gold was brought over to France by the smugglers.

There also would appear but little doubt that the smugglers were few of them above selling information to the French of the movements of the English fleet, the mobilization of troops, and the progress of works for the defence of the country from invasion. At all events, Napoleon abundantly testified that he was kept informed by them of "every important occurrence and movement of the enemy (English) by these men."

Their treachery was suspected by the authorities, but we believe comparatively seldom discovered and brought home to the traitors.

No wonder then that Folkestone old town is, or certainly was but a few years ago, a nest of ingenious hiding-places, relics of the smuggling days, which were often so cleverly constructed that their discovery was only made when a beam had been removed, or alterations had to be made, and sometimes not until the house in which they were was entirely pulled down.

There are, of course, many smuggling stories connected with Folkestone houses. One of the best is as follows: On a certain night in November in the year 1826 a cargo had been successfully run between Hythe and Folkestone by a noted smuggler, and a portion of it had been brought into the latter town and safely secreted. However, one of the Folkestone coastguards got wind of the fact, and in the very early morning appeared with a strong band of "preventives" in the street in which the smuggler's house stood. Their summons did not at once meet with an answer, but at length, after repeated hammerings on the door and shutters of the windows of the ground floor, which noise aroused the whole street, Nancy Morris, the daughter of the smuggler, thrust her head from the upper window and, rubbing her eyes as though aroused out of sleep, inquired what was wanted.

"Open in the King's name!" exclaimed the officer in command. "And look sharp about it, my lass, or 'twill be the worse for you, and your old fox of a father."

Nancy did not hurry downstairs, but after a few moments the door was opened, the "preventives" streamed into the kitchen, and then, seeing no one save the girl and a child, a boy of about twelve asleep in a nook by the fire, several of the men went upstairs. No one was to be discovered, however. But the officer was not satisfied. He decided to remain on guard himself, and, after whispering to two or three of his men (for smugglers were at times rough customers to manage single-handed) to be handy if required, he sat down to pass the time as best he might. Nancy was pretty; the coastguard lieutenant was a sailor man. Nancy was also resourceful, and a gentle flatterer to boot. And so it is little wonder that the lieutenant succumbed to her charms, drank her health, fell incontinently into a doze, which, by reason of Miss Nancy's having drugged the cognac, became a deep sleep. And then down the chimney, at a signal from his clever daughter, crept sturdy William Morris, choking a bit with the smoke, but otherwise no worse. A few moments later a trap was lifted in the floor of the back-kitchen and the smuggler disappeared. Nancy let down the flap, re-sanded the floor carefully, and

returned to attempt to arouse the unwelcome guest.

By the time he was brought to himself and to a knowledge that he had most probably been tricked, William Morris was sitting comfortably in the parlour of a house several hundred yards away, having reached that haven of refuge at first by an underground passage leading to a near-by house, and afterward by a back alley.

The lieutenant had nothing to boast of, and as there was not much to his credit at all in the adventure he kept his own counsel. Nancy was profuse in her expressions of delight at his "nice rest."

"Sir," said she, "you must indeed have needed it sadly."

And we can well imagine her laughter when the house door closed after her crestfallen guest.

It was not till comparatively recent years that this old house was pulled down, and the connecting passage, "tub hole," under the back kitchen floor, and the hiding-place in the chimney stack, about 7 ft. by 2 ft. by 3ft., were disclosed.

Many more like yarns were current years ago, but we must up anchor and set our faces once more westward.

The coastline from Folkestone onwards decreases in height, but Dungeness lies ahead, known as the most dangerous of all headlands between the North Foreland and Spithead. As we drop Folkestone astern and cruise along the pleasant shore, with the high range of the Downs behind it inland, one passes Hythe of historic memory, now a clean, modern town, though no longer a port; and behind it Saltwood, with the ancient tower breaking through the encompassing woods. Here it was that the murder of the great Archbishop Thomas A'Becket was planned, and hence the murderers, headed by one Ranulf de Broc, owner of the stronghold, set forth on their dastardly mission. It was to the castle also they afterwards returned to find (so tradition tells us) that the table set in the great hall for their entertainment and refreshment declined to bear the viands, whilst the torches kindled to give them light turned sickly and flickered out.

34

Soon Dungeness looms ahead with the wide stretching Romney Marsh, beloved in ancient times by outlaws, and in later ones the rendezvous of the most desperate and successful of the Kentish smugglers, on our starboard quarter. Reminiscent of Holland, and having its saving dyke in Dymchurch Wall three miles long, it was in the early years of the last century a wild desolate expanse so given over to the smugglers that they were powerful enough to make one parson at least give them the freedom of one of the aisles of his church as a store for contraband. But the parsons of those days were not above receiving a "tub" which had never paid duty for themselves, and a bale of silk or lace for their wives and daughters.

The Romney Marsh has been, from time immemorial, the refuge of malefactors in the broadest sense of the word. Here, in Saxon times, doubtless hid recalcitrant thanes and vassals; and in the Middle Ages those who had put themselves outside the protection of the Church, or had broken the law; later, some of the pirates of the Cinque Ports, whose predatory expeditions at times were on the point of embroiling not only the fisherfolk of the adjoining coast upon which they preyed, but even the two nations to which they belonged; afterwards hunted Royalists took refuge here until some opportune moment for escaping to France presented itself: then, later still, in the early Georgian era, those who adhered to the Stuarts met and plotted and drank "to the King over the water"; and, but a little later still, escaped prisoners of war were secreted in its midst till the smugglers, who were generally concerned in their escape, could arrange on some favourable night to convey them across Channel. What stirring romances could be written of the dark and secret doings of Romney Marsh?

35

Once round Dungeness, however, and Rye is before one. It is not nowadays much of a port, indeed, as such its greatness has departed, leaving it a quaint, old-world place, with an air of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries hanging about it. It is almost impossible to believe that once it was a flourishing and important place, one of the seven head ports—not merely a "limb" of the Confederacy—and capable as late as the reign of George II of affording a haven of refuge for large ships.

There is delightful country in the immediate vicinity, for Rye is at the confluence of the valley of the three streams, the Rother, Tillingham, and Brede. In the architecture of Rye, if one has ventured into its harbour, which is nowadays difficult of entrance and exit, one finds some delightful bits of almost medieval date: hoary roofs and towers and moss-grown walls. It is difficult to believe that once the "French walked the streets, slaying all they could meet with, afterwards burning the houses." Just as they did, we may remark, at Sandwich, Winchelsea, Yarmouth, Dartmouth, and many another town upon our south coast. No one who comes into Rye Haven should leave it without going up to Rye town and inspecting the ancient parish church, which shares with several others the distinction of being the largest in England. In it is the oldest clock in the country, and the North Chapel is an exquisite piece of thirteenth-century work.

Off Rye and Winchelsea took place on August 29, 1350, the great fight between the fleet of Edward III and the Spaniards (*L'Espagnols sur mer*), in which the latter, superior in size and numbers, were defeated with a loss of twenty-six out of their forty large ships. From Winchelsea Queen Philippa anxiously watched the varying fortunes of the day. She had more than an impersonal interest in the result, for in the thick of the manœuvring vessels, where the fight was fiercest, we are told was the ship on which were the King himself and his two sons.

36

The Winchelsea at which William the Conqueror landed in 1067, with its seven hundred houses and more than two score inns, was swept away by the sea, although the site on which it stood was destined once again in the course of the centuries to emerge as dry land. The commencement of the disasters which ultimately overwhelmed the town is thus described by an anonymous (?) author much quoted by Grose and others: "In the month of October, 1250, the moon, upon her change, appearing exceeding red and swelled, began to show tokens of the great tempest of wind that followed, which was so huge and mightie, both by land and sea, that the like had not been lightlie knowne, and seldome, or rather never, heard of by men then alive. The sea forced contrarie to his natural course, flowed twice without ebbing, yeelding such a rooring that the same was heard (not without great wonder) a farre distance in from the shore." We are further told that the sea was strangely phosphorescent, and that the mariners could not save their ships, "three tall ships perishing without recoverie, besides other smaller vessels." And, moreover, several of the churches and some three hundred of the houses

were "drowned." Though, doubtless, frightened, the inhabitants did not desert their stricken town. Perhaps they would have been wiser had they done so, for thirty-seven years later, on February 4, 1287, the remaining portion, to all intents and purposes, was (to use Holinshed's quaint word) "drowned."

The new Winchelsea, which has, in a measure at least, come down to us at the present time, was speedily commenced under the patronage of Edward I himself. Into this town, and through its then prosperous streets, marched 3,000 French three-quarters of a century later, in 1359, "to its great harme and terrible destruction." This was not by any means the last time that the hereditary enemies of the inhabitants of the Cinque Ports landed, for they were successful then, and again in 1378, after having been driven off two years before by the militant Abbot of Battle Abbey with great loss. These French attacks were, to a large extent, retaliatory measures for those of the men of Winchelsea; and at last, in consequence of the piratical doings of the latter, we are told by Pennant, Prince Edward attacked the town, took it by storm, and put to the sword all the chief offenders, saving the rest, to whom he granted much better terms than they had any right to expect.

Now Winchelsea is suffering from the gentle decay which seems to envelop rather than attack places which have once been ports and are so no longer by reason of Nature's want of kindliness. Amidst its pleasant houses and pretty gardens, in which all flowers that love the sun and the salt air of the coast flourish amazingly, one seems to breathe the atmosphere of somnolent repose, tintured with the salt which rests upon lip and cheek to tell of the not far distant sea which once lapped the foot of its now vanished castle.

Winchelsea's fine church, dating from Edward I's time, was unhappily destroyed by the French, who left only the chancel and side aisles standing. This fragment, isolated in the midst of a green God's acre, is, however, well worth visiting. The roof beams of the building are said to have been made from the timber of wrecked or dismantled ships, "stuff the like of which is seldom nowadays found," as a well-known antiquary puts it.

The chief glory of the church, however, lies in the marvellously carved canopied tombs of those merchant princes and admirals of the Cinque Ports of long ago, Gervaise and Stephen Alard, grandfather and grandson. There are few, if any, finer in Sussex.

The old Grey Friars Priory, or what was left of it, was the habitation in Georgian times of two brothers, George and Joseph Weston by name, who, whilst apparently pursuing the peaceful and respectable avocations of country gentlemen, were actually highwaymen, the terror of the Kentish and Sussex high roads and those of counties further afield, and, withal, were daring and successful robbers of coaches. They were eventually "taken" and ultimately hanged, amid much excited interest, at Tyburn. It is they and their adventures which form the basis of Thackeray's unfinished romance, *Denis Duval*, which he wrote on the spot in a house standing near the churchyard.

Thackeray, in a letter to the editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, in which he gives a good many interesting details of the incidents upon which his story is founded, whilst referring to other Winchelsea and Rye characters, says of the Westons: "They were rascals, too. They were tried for robbing the Bristol mail in 1780, and, being acquitted for want of evidence, were tried immediately afterward on another indictment for forgery; Joseph was acquitted, but George was capitally convicted." Joseph was not destined to escape, however, for, as the novelist goes on to say, "Before their trials they and some others broke out of Newgate, and Joseph fired at and wounded a porter who tried to stop him on Snow Hill. For this he was tried and found guilty on the Black Act, and hung along with his brother."

It was in the churchyard of Winchelsea that John Wesley, who was almost always travelling about the country, preached his last open-air sermon, in 1790, under the shelter of the great tree on the western side, "to many folk," we are told, "some few of which were converted so that tears ran a-down their cheeks."

And thus the greatness of Winchelsea, stranded as it is from the lapping of the channel surges, though the boom of them when angry can be heard, is of the past.

## Chapter II

### Newhaven—Shoreham—Littlehampton

The coast to Newhaven from Rye, if not exactly pretty, becomes once more attractive, and after Fairlight Point the Downs come seaward again, and the coast-line for a considerable distance is once more formed by bold chalk cliffs.

Though Hastings has no longer a harbour and is not, as formerly in the long ago, a port, one must devote to this historic town and ancient Cinque Port at least a passing notice.

Of all the chief towns of the Cinque Ports there are fewer records relating to Hastings than of any other, and this is, perhaps, not to be greatly wondered at when one remembers that at the commencement of the nineteenth century it had sunk from its old-time greatness to the position of a small fishing village. The town will, however, whatever the variation of its fortunes, always remain a "great name in history" because of its association with one of the crises of the world's evolutionary progress, the Battle of Hastings. Even in early British times there seems no reason for doubt that Hastings was a strongly fortified place, the "forts" being placed on the East Hill as well as on the Castle Hill. The castle was either Roman in its origin or was erected on foundations already existing and belonging to a much earlier period.

Hastings has also historic interest from figuring in the famous Bayeux tapestry under the name of Hastingaceastra. If further evidence were required of the very ancient existence of the place it is afforded by the very considerable discoveries of Roman pottery, coins, and other relics which have from time to time been made. The original name of the district was Rameslie, and at one time it evidently formed part of the property attached to the Abbey of Fécamp. At the time of the great Survey, the results of which are recorded in the Domesday Book, the place possessed no less than five churches and five score of salt pits or salterns. Under Saxon rule it undoubtedly rose to a position of great importance, and this notwithstanding the fact that it was repeatedly attacked and ravaged by hordes of Danish and other pirates, who did not, however, succeed in gaining any permanent footing. In the time of Athelstan it was of sufficient note to share with Gloucester and Lewes the distinction of being a "mint" town. The more modern name of Hastings is reputed to have been derived from the famous Danish pirate Haestinga, who for a time established a fort or stronghold near the spot.

41

But as one writes of Hastings, the scene which the white cliffs witnessed on that October morning, 1066, comes insensibly before one's eyes, when from across the Channel came a fleet of low, long galleys, some under sail and with curious high stems and sterns, most of them with two or three short straight masts like those of luggers, whilst others had strange devices upon their prows, or shields ornamented with crests and coats of arms hung out along their bulwarks.

Fortunately for the voyaging host the sea was calm and the wind blew from a favourable quarter, for the transports of those times were not easy to manage in a gale or contrary wind. At length they drew in close with the land, the prows of the smaller vessels grated upon the sand and shingle of the beach, and then the busy scene of landing both men and horses ensued. William the Norman had come to claim the throne of England, and, with Harold and the English fleet away in the north, had landed without opposition.

He pitched his tents, built himself a wooden castle, and then set about the ravaging of the country round about, till Harold should appear with the English to give him battle.

In hot haste, Harold, Godwin's son, marched back to London, calling upon his nobles and relatives, Edwin and Morcar amongst the number, to join him; but the two latter held back. Then Harold, having gathered the men of London and Kent and many of the country folk to his standard, marched to meet William, and, reaching Senlac, "lay there on the hillside by a hoar-apple tree." Gurt, his brother, prayed him to retire again on London, after wasting the country between William and that place, so that the latter could get neither fodder for his horses nor food for his men. Good advice, doubtless, as Harold himself admitted, adding, however, "I was made King to cherish this folk. How shall I lay waste this land of theirs? Nor does it befit an English King to turn from his foes."

42

Every one knows the story of the "feasting" English and the "praying" Normans, though whether it be true or not, who shall say? Just as every one knows how went the day on the "bloody heights of Senlac, where, after the attack had been made by a Norman minstrel, who rode up against the English singing a war song of Charlemagne, the last Saxon King, his two brothers, the flower of English fighting men and nobles to a great multitude fell."

William refused the body of slain Harold to his mother, who pleaded for it, even if she paid its weight in gold; but when Edith Swan's-neck, whom Harold had loved, found it beneath a heap of slain, the Norman conqueror, his chivalry and perhaps even his sentiment touched, gave it to her, telling them to bury it on the face of the cliff with the words, "He kept the shore well while he lived, let him keep it now he is dead."

Though this is the supreme historical event connected with Hastings, many times during the reigns of our Norman Kings was the place to witness the assemblage of huge bodies of fighting men. Here in 1094 were gathered at the command of William Rufus no less than 20,000 men for the avowed purpose of transhipment to Normandy. They were, however, disbanded, and the men were deprived by agents of the King of the pay of ten shillings given them, "which great sum in all was duly forwarded to the King, at whose behest it had been filched!" A truly Royal piece of chicanery.

43

In the fourteenth century the town, which had sprung up to some considerable importance, was raided by the French, sacked, and burned. But by the fifteenth it had grown up again to be a large place with a considerable military force attached to it. By the sixteenth it had received a charter and had a mayor and twelve jurats, a harbour of some size, and a considerable trade in shipbuilding. No traces of the inlet once existing now break the coast-line, and the closest search meets with no reward in discoveries of antiquity. The first Hastings lies fathoms deep under the sea, the second has passed away, and in the third one has the modern town with its

long lines of boarding-houses and hotels lining the sea-front. Not very picturesque save when seen at night brilliantly lit, with the numberless fishing boats carrying riding or other lights twinkling like huge glow worms in the foreground.

Hastings during the latter part of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth centuries was one of the most notorious places along the whole Sussex coast for smuggling, on account of its convenient landing-places. The lawless Hawkhurst gang, to which reference will later be made, had several of its members hailing from the town, and the bands of smugglers in the immediate district were bold to a degree, often (as we are told) daring to land their cargoes of contraband under the very noses of the preventive men whose duty it was to frustrate such attempts. Wrecking, too, was an occasional variation of occupation for the smugglers, and several vessels are known in the first decade of the last century to have been lured to destruction by false lights shown on the cliffs.

The smugglers extended their operations far inland, daring to take their cargoes as far as Brede and other places for storage. Brede Place, which was one of their resorts, once the home of the Attefords, but afterwards that of the Oxenbridges, has several weird legends connected with it. Not the least uncanny is the story of one Sir Goddard Oxenbridge, who died in 1557, we should imagine little lamented by his neighbours. This owner of the manor, besides being a reputed dealer in the "black arts," had so strong a liking for human flesh that children of the neighbourhood were constantly disappearing, to the grief of their parents and the "engorgement of this terrible ogre-like being." For babies this Sir Goddard, who, we are informed, was of great stature and "flourished amazingly on his diet of human flesh," had an especial partiality. Further, "neither bow, nor arrow, nor axe, nor sword, nor spear could slay this redoubtable giant, but some of the country people about here succeeded at length in making him drunk and in sawing him in half with a wooden saw!" A truly marvellous performance in good keeping with the rest of the tale!

But whether the legend of Sir Goddard Oxenbridge has any real foundation on fact or not, there is little doubt that soon after his death the place acquired so evil a reputation (owing to the appearance of his ghost, "with dripping jaws" and "an uncanny light from his eyes") that people of a nervous and even those usually of a bold disposition avoided it. The ingenious smugglers of Hastings and the neighbourhood in the eighteenth century were not slow to appreciate the advantages afforded by this gloomy and ruinous old manor house, and they not only sedulously cultivated the idea that Brede was haunted but "put up some other very pretty tales amongst the country folk to dissuade them from approaching the house," and in addition showed ghostly and mysterious lights. These tactics were so eminently successful that for some years the smugglers retained undisturbed possession of the place, using it as a storehouse for their goods.

There is reputed to be an underground passage leading from the house to the church—a distance of about a mile—but this has not of recent years, nor for all we know ever, been entered nor the existence of it proved. The disappearance of two revenue men was attributed to the Brede Place gang, and in the eighties of the eighteenth century the house was attacked and raided in the smugglers' absence by the "preventives" in search of their missing comrades. Nothing, not even a tub or bale, was, however, then discovered, only an old man, who was as deaf as the proverbial adder and, it is very likely, as wise as the serpent.

Close to the house is a bridge which bears the name of "Groaning Bridge." Tradition asserts that it was near here that Sir Goddard was sawn in half, and that the noises which are sometimes heard after dusk are his lamentable cries. Another tale is that it was in the hollow beneath the bridge that some of the smugglers used to hide at nights, and by making "most horrible and terrifying noises and groans so successfully prevented the further advance of any intending intruder towards the house."

Onward from Hastings to our next port, Newhaven, one passes several of the ancient "limbs" of the Cinque Ports, Pevensey, one of the eight corporate members, the most important. No longer a port, the little town lies nearly a mile inland from the sea, which once almost washed the walls of its fine and impressive castle, set on a mound and surrounded by a rush-grown moat, and visible from afar.

Pevensey is nowadays, too, divided by stretches of flat marshy fields from the Channel, and has little of interest remaining save the traditions of its historic past as a Cinque Port "limb," the jokes which are recorded against its municipal rulers, and the fact that it undoubtedly occupies the site of Anderida of the Romans. The remains of the Roman walls, which surround the Norman castle of Robert de Moreton, half-brother of the Conqueror, give to the place an interest not exceeded even by that of Lewes or Richborough. Here was once a city or at least a great settlement bordering upon that great, widely extending forest of Anderida, once covering the Weald of Sussex, which was probably as large, though perhaps not so famous, as the New Forest of Hampshire. The departure of the Roman legions was the signal for piratical descents upon our coasts, and the Saxons under Ella landed on the shore near Pevensey, and slew every Briton they came across.

Pevensey Castle has had a stirring and chequered history. Its stalwart walls, now ivy-clad and crumbling, have survived many an attack in those ages when the strongholds of nobles were called upon to resist not alone the assaults of foreign invaders, but also those of English nobles making private war; and within its walls have languished many whose names are written on the page of history for better or for worse. Brave Queen Maude held the place against the forces of Stephen, and only yielded when brought face to face with famine; and it has had yet another brave woman defender (ranking with Lady Bankes, of Corfe, in Dorsetshire) for the Lancastrians in the last year of the fourteenth century, Lady Joan Pelham.

As one writer has put it, "she wielded her pen not less readily than she commanded and directed the sword." In a letter to her husband—a model of tenderness and felicitous expression—she says, "My dear Lord,—I recommend me to your high Lordship, with heart and body and all my poor might, and with all this I think (of) you, as my dear Lord, dearest and best beloved of all earthly Lords.... I heard by your letter that ye were strong enough with the grace of God for to keep you from the malice of your enemies. And, dear Lord, if it like you to your high Lordship that as soon as ye might that I might hear of your gracious speed, which God Almighty continue and increase. And my dear Lord, if it like you to know my fare, I am here laid by in manner of a siege with the county of Sussex, Surrey, and a great parcel of Kent, so that I may not go out nor no victuals get me, but with much hard." Then, in the concluding paragraph, we get a sight of the tender heart of a devoted and

loving woman, the same in all time and stress, and not variable at all. "Farewell, my dear Lord," writes the beleaguered Joan Pelham, "the Holy Trinity keep you from your enemies, and soon send me good tidings of you.... By your own poor J. Pelham." And then the superscription, "To my true Lord." July 25, 1399.<sup>B</sup>

<sup>B</sup> Rendered into modern English from Brydges's *Peerage*, vol. v, C.H.

A few years later and Edmund, Duke of York, was imprisoned here; and Queen Joan of Navarre, widow of the Duke of Bretagne, and second wife of Henry IV, was also confined here for a period of more than eight long years. The former appears to have been "an uncommon grateful prisoner," for he is said to have left his gaoler a legacy of £20!

In Pevensey town in the sixteenth century lived a jester (professional or otherwise we have not succeeded in discovering), Andrew Borde, a monk, said to be the original "Merry Andrew," and the author of two ancient works, still known to the few, called the *Boke of Knowledge* and *The Wise Men of Gotham*. His witticisms were apparently not seldom directed against the municipal authorities of Pevensey. On one occasion he makes the Mayor assert, with much access of dignity, "Though Mayor of Pevensey I am yet but a man," and accuses a Pevensey jury of having brought in a verdict of manslaughter against a yeoman charged with stealing a pair of leather breeches!

Another detailed account of this latter event says that when the man had been brought in guilty of stealing the breeches by the jury, and they were informed that the theft was a capital offence, they were astounded and unwilling to hang the man and so adjourned the Court, dispatching a messenger hot haste to Thomas Willard, Esq., of Eastbourne, the town clerk, to beg his opinion whether it would be possible to reverse the present verdict and bring in a fresh one. It happened that Lord Wilmington, with the Chief Baron of the Exchequer, was at dinner with Mr Willard when the messenger arrived, and upon Mr Willard telling these two gentlemen the nature of the message he had received, the Chief Baron (as a joke, one must suppose) said, "Instruct them to reverse the present verdict and bring in another of manslaughter." To this advice Lord Wilmington also assented, and Mr Willard advised accordingly, with the humorous result we have already mentioned. 48

Whilst yet another Mayor, who received an important letter by special messenger whilst engaged in the occupation of mending the thatch on his pig's sty, on attempting to read the communication upside down, "was so long a-doing it" that the messenger at last ventured to hint respectfully that if he would attempt to read his letter as did ordinary folk he would make speedier progress towards mastering the contents. The reply must have been crushing, "Hold your tongue, sir!" exclaimed his worship with asperity, "understand that while I'm Mayor of Pevensey I hold a letter which end up I choose."

Andrew Borde's fame as a mirth provoker was so widespread that we find King Edward VI himself came to visit him. The room which by tradition is pointed out as that in which the youthful Sovereign had the interview with his father's old physician is nowadays somewhat of a show place, and the house itself is a quaint one.

It is but five miles from Pevensey to Eastbourne, clean and smart-looking even from a distance at sea, and made yet more attractive to the vision by the charming wooded slopes of Paradise which form its setting or background; but there is no harbour or haven, and, in addition, Eastbourne is too new to have much history.

Two miles south-west of the town rises Beachy Head, the last of the Downs headlands—rugged, impressive, magnificent, almost sheer in places, and green-capped with close-cropped turf. In former times there have been many wrecks on its wave-washed base, till the Belle Tout lighthouse came in 1831 to fling across the dark waters its saving light, and the more powerful and more modern one at the base of the cliff, near what is known as Parson Darby's hole, was erected in 1902 to take its place. 49

Possibly Beachy Head, which towers above us as we sweep round it, but at a respectful distance from the race off the south ledges, with perhaps a flock of tourists on its summit, having the semblance and proportions of flies so far above the water are they, has inspired more poetry than any other headland of the south coast. Most are cognizant of Mr Swinburne's beautiful ode "To a Seamew," which is, alas! too long for quotation, and would be spoiled by omission of a single stanza. But from Richard Jefferies's "The Breeze on Beachy Head" one can cull some vivid lines, and by them bring the headland to the mind's eye though so far from it. "But," he says, "the glory of these glorious Downs is the breeze.... It is air without admixture. If it comes from the south, the waves refine it; if inland, the wheat and the flowers and grass distil it. The great headland and the whole rib of the promontory is wind swept and washed with air; the billows of atmosphere roll over it.... Discover some excuse to be up there always, to search for stray mushrooms ... or to make a list of flowers and grasses; to do anything, and, if not, go always without any pretext. Lands of gold have been found, and lands of spices and precious merchandize; but this is the land of health."

One remembers, too, the description of the headland in *King Lear*. The truth of which, down to the smallest detail, seems to prove beyond question that Shakespeare himself must have visited the spot and have drunk in the salt sea breeze and felt the glorious sun as have other poets and writers. 50

And thus, as we leave the gleaming headland astern, we make for Newhaven by way of Seaford. The latter has by far the more attractive history, as should naturally follow the distinction of being a "limb" of the Cinque Ports. The cliffs are very fine all along to Seaford, and once a haven of refuge came very near being made at Cuckmere close by, but the advantages or claims, or both, of Portland further west prevailed.

It was on the water between Beachy Head and Newhaven that on June 30, 1690, De Tourville, Admiral of the French fleet, having gained valuable information from a Lydd publican of the division of the English and Dutch sea forces, bore down upon the latter and gave them battle. Outnumbered though they were—the French had eighty-five ships to the Hollanders' thirty—the Dutch fought gallantly, but suffered a heavy defeat; whilst the English ships to leeward were unable to come to their allies' assistance until the victory had been virtually won. The English admiral, Lord Torrington, afterwards nearly shared the fate meted out to Admiral Byng sixty-seven years later, but, although committed to the Tower and tried, to William of Orange's keen disgust he was acquitted.



### BEACHY HEAD

Seaford has indeed a chequered history. Like its other stranded neighbours amongst the Cinque and other Ports of the Confederacy, it once possessed its harbour, formed by the Ouse, known even in Roman times. And it sent two representatives to Parliament in the year 1300. Two years later it was commanded to furnish King Edward with a ship for his French expedition, two ships for the King in 1336, and five but eleven years later, so that its growth at that period must have been rapid; but in the reign of the Third Edward the decline of the place was equally marked. It ceased to send members to Parliament, and, with its haven rapidly silting up and the town suffering constant attacks by the French, the place and its inhabitants were soon in evil case. In the reigns of the last-named King and those of Richard II and Henry IV it was repeatedly sacked and burned, and so discontented did the people become with the want of assistance and protection afforded them, more especially in the reign of weak Henry VI, that they were ripe for rebellion, and when Jack Cade appeared they joined him almost to a man. 51

From this period onwards the Ouse now rapidly filled up, so that there was soon but the mere semblance of a port, and finally the river changed its course, found an outlet near the village of Meeching, and ultimately, in the sixteenth century, formed a harbour at Newhaven, in the mere name of which the downfall of neighbouring Seaford is succinctly told.

The French were not, however, content to leave the poor sea-deserted place alone. They made one of their periodical descents upon it in 1545. But on this occasion, with the assistance of gallant Sir Nicholas Pelham, the invaders were beaten off with heavy loss, the event being commemorated upon the worthy knight's tomb in the following somewhat halting lines:

What time the French sought to have sack't Seaford  
This Pelham did repel 'em back aboard.

In 1640 Seaford was once more empowered to send representatives to Parliament, and later on amongst those who from time to time represented what had become a Treasury Borough we find William Pitt the elder and George Canning.

The wreckers and smugglers of Seaford during the latter half of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century were scarcely less notorious than those of Hastings, Rye, and other places on the Sussex coast. Many a vessel was lured to destruction, and many a cargo run almost in sight of the authorities who existed to put down these malpractices. From a letter of a gentleman of Stafford, Sussex, to one of the newspapers on September 18, 1783, we extract the following account of smuggling as it then existed. "There is," he writes, "a most convenient port, about a mile from Seaford, for smugglers to land their goods, and so daring are they become, that a dozen or more cutters may frequently be seen laying-to in open day." On Tuesday evening, between two and three hundred smugglers on horseback came to Cookmere, and received various kinds of goods from the boats, "till at last the whole number were laden, when, in defiance of the King's officers, they went their way in great triumph. About a week before this upwards of three hundred attended at the same place, and though the sea ran mountains high, the daring men in the cutters made good the landing, to the surprise of everybody, and the men on horseback took all away." 52

It is chiefly from such extracts as that which we have just made that any clear idea can be obtained regarding the prevalence of smuggling and the daring tactics of the smugglers of those times.

The prospect of a French invasion in 1803 and 1804 made Seaford and the immediate neighbourhood a scene of unwonted activity. We are told that the Commander-in-Chief, His Royal Highness the Duke of York, and Major-General Lennox issued orders, which were received by the colonel commanding in the district, to the effect "that the French, should they succeed in crossing the British Channel (not English Channel, mark you), would certainly attempt a landing in Seaford Bay," and the orders went on to say that a strict and vigilant watch was to be kept up in consequence.

The conduct of the farmers in the neighbourhood in putting up and "finding for" large numbers of troops for



a lengthy period was greatly commended by one Lieutenant-Colonel Frith in the following year (1804), and the officers of His Majesty's First or North Battalion of Hampshire Militia, which had been concentrated in Sussex, on leaving Alfriston. The letter from the lieutenant-colonel in question expresses that "They feel that they have been received as brethren engaged in one common cause, the defence of their country, and all that it contains most near and dear."

53

Although the French never succeeded in crossing the Channel in force and effecting a landing in Seaford Bay or anywhere else, it is somewhat startling to read such an extract as the following, also taken from a newspaper of the period: "Dec. 28, 1807. On Saturday morning last a daring attempt was made by a French privateer to capture two loaded colliers, lying off Seaford.... The enemy succeeded in capturing and sending away one, and was proceeding to take possession of the other. The latter, however, fortunately mounted two or three swivels, a well-directed discharge from which, it is supposed, gave an unexpected quietus to several of the assailants."

Little wonder need there be if folk along the coast went uneasily to their beds in those days, "fearing" (as one picturesque if somewhat reckless writer says) "lest they should wake from their peaceful slumbers to find their throats cut by the French."

The doings of bold John Whitfield, the notorious smuggler, who for his crimes and constant evasions of the Revenue laws was ultimately outlawed, and made his peace by presenting King George II with a parcel of his choicest wines, "than which the King is said to have declared he never drank better," would fill a book; but, robbed of his picturesqueness and romance, the said Whitfield was, we believe, a sorry villain, and not above murdering a stray "preventive" were he to come athwart his schemes.

However, Seaford of to-day is very different from Seaford of the early years of the last century. Now it is just a pleasant little town nestling at the foot of the Downs, well-sheltered from northerly, north-easterly and north-westerly gales, and yet, from its exposure to the south and west, enjoying warm and invigorating breezes by turn.

54

It has few objects of interest in the usually accepted sense of the term, but in Church Street under one of the houses is a most interesting and ancient crypt, which is by some supposed to have had some connection with the Hospital of St Leonard, whilst other authorities think that the crypt once formed a part of the ancient Courthouse or Town Hall. The vaulting ribs are of plain design, and the bosses of the Early English type. This is one of the most important relics of ancient Seaford. Unhappily the church was allowed, during the later part of the eighteenth century, to fall into a terrible state of disrepair. Much has from time to time been done to restore it, but the restorations and additions have not invariably been done judiciously or with knowledge.

Newhaven, though a good harbour—in fact, the only real haven of refuge of any consequence or ease of entrance between Folkestone and the Wight—is not a place in which to waste much time. The town is picturesque in parts (as, indeed, are most ports), but it is not much frequented by any save those brought hither by business or stress of weather. Although, even as Meeching, its old name, it finds no mention in the Domesday Book, there is little doubt that it is a place of some antiquity, for there are early Norman traces in the architecture of its church, and also the remains of an encampment with high earthworks on the land side near the shore on the west bank of the river. The modern town which has sprung up on the banks of the Ouse as one of the cross Channel ports dates its origin to the great storm in the year 1570, during which the course of the river was changed from its Seaford outlet to a more direct confluence with the sea at Meeching. In the year 1881 the town was made a port, and since then has gained considerable standing as one of the most frequented places of embarkation for France and as a *dépôt* for a considerable amount of Continental trade.

55

It was here that in 1848 Louis Philippe and his Queen, Marie Amelie, landed after escaping from Tréport in a fishing lugger under the unromantic and not easily distinguished names of Mr and Mrs Smith. The Royal fugitives were welcomed by a well-known Sussex character, William Catt by name, who was not only a prosperous miller but a noted fruit-grower. They afterwards took rooms at the Bridge Hotel, kept, as it happened, by a Mr Smith, which circumstance, we are told, "caused his ex-Majesty some considerable amusement and laughter."

The town has the distinction (like Kingsbridge in fair Devon) of manufacturing "a local tippie of some potency." The original brewer, Thomas Tipper by name, after whom the concoction, "Newhaven tipper," is known, died in the merry month of May, 1785, at, as it was reckoned in those times, the early age of fifty-four. The epitaph on his tomb, after reciting various virtues, declares:

The best old stingo, he both brewed and sold,  
Nor did one knavish act to get his gold;  
He played thro' life a very comic part,  
And knew immortal *Hudibras* by heart.  
Reader, in real truth, such was the man,  
Be better, wiser, laugh more if you can.

Local tradition asserts that the said Thomas Tipper was a good friend, too, of the local smugglers; but this in the times in which he lived would not invalidate his claim to have never done "one knavish act to get his gold." His brew, we are told, was prepared with, and owed its "peculiar charm of flavour" to, brackish water, and it is more, we believe, than a mere tale that George IV, whilst at Brighton, imbibed it freely and with no particular harm. One authority goes so far as to assert "with great satisfaction."

56

The church of Newhaven is not only interesting, but has a very beautiful situation on the hillside above the town. The one peculiarity in its architecture which strikes one at first sight is the position of its tower placed at the eastern end, while to the east of the tower is placed a fine semicircular apse—which has its counterpart, with other features as well, in the church of Vainville in Normandy—in which one of the small Norman windows can be seen. The pointed windows are of considerably later date.

The interior stone work, where it has not been carelessly and inappropriately restored, is good. The tower

chancel is a very fine piece of work, and has been less disfigured than other portions of the building.

This ancient church might well have been a "sailors' chapel," such as one finds in places on the North Devon coast and so frequently along the opposite coast of Normandy; but, so far as one can tell, it had no special significance in this respect, though in the churchyard is an obelisk to the memory of Captain James Hanson, a companion of Vancouver on his voyage round the world, who was drowned with over one hundred officers and men by the casting away of his ship, the sloop of war *Brazen*, off the Ave Rocks in the year 1800.

The coast-line, when one has got out of Newhaven and has laid a course for Shoreham eleven miles distant, is first a series of lofty chalk cliffs, with breezy uplands stretching inland, and then three or four miles of Brighton and Hove shore and sea-front. A long line of houses, hotels and mansions of so distinct a character that, so far as we know, Brighton is never, at least by seamen, mistaken for any other south-coast town. Of "London by the Sea," as it has been called, there is neither occasion nor space to speak in detail, but that it is of very ancient origin, though at the present day so ultra-modern, there can be little reasonable doubt. The Burrell MSS tell us that "there are three Roman castra, lying in a line over-thwart the Downs from Brighthelmstone to Ditchelling, from south to north. The first, a large one, called the Castle, about a mile from Brighton eastward, and a mile from the sea." The name is by some supposed to have been derived from Brighthelm, Bishop of Wells, who was afterwards translated to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, and in a volume called *The Family Topographer* occurs the following statement, "Brighthelm was slain on the down immediately above Brighthelmstone, to which place he gave his name." Upon what authority this statement is made, or whether it was Brighthelm the Archbishop or some other of the fairly numerous Brighthelms who figure in history in Saxon times, we have been unable clearly to discover.

The one important, authentic and romantic incident in connexion with Brighthelmstone is the escape of Charles II from the fishing village, which it then was, to the French coast after many wanderings subsequent to the Battle of Worcester.

The town suffered, as did so many others, from the attacks of the French, and in the year 1545 they made a descent upon it in force. Holinshed gives a very full and detailed account of their proceedings as follows: "In 37 Henry VIII, 1545, July 8, the Admiral of France, Mons. Donnebatte, hoisted up sailles, and with his whole navy (which consisted of two hundred ships and twenty-six gallies) came forth into the seas, and arrived on the coast of Sussex, before Bright Hampstead, and set certain of his soldiers on land to burn and spoil the country; but the beacons were fired, and the inhabitants thereabouts came down so thick that the Frenchmen were driven to their ships with loss of diverse of their numbers, so they did little hurt there. Immediately hereupon they made to the Isle of Wight, when about two thousand of their men landed, and one of their chief Captains, named Chevalier Daux, a Provençois, being slain with many other, the residue, with loss and shame, were driven back again to their gallies.... They disanctioned (disanchored), and drew along the coast of Sussex, and a small number landed again in Sussex, of whom few returned to their ships, for divers gentlemen of the country, as Sir Nicholas Pelham and others, with such power as was raised upon the sudden, took them by the way and quickly distressed them ... they turned stern, and so got them home again without any act achieved worthy to be mentioned." As this same account goes on to say, "The number of Frenchmen was great, so that diverse of them who were taken prisoners in the Isle of Wight and in Sussex did report they were three score thousand." Unless this estimate was purposely and grossly exaggerated, the force was one of the largest ever launched against these shores.

A most interesting and curious map, dated "1545 Julye 37 Hen. VIII," is in the Cottonian Library, and was apparently drawn for the chief purpose of exhibiting the attack to which we have just referred, and to afford a plan of the coast, with the possible end in view of the establishment of fortifications and defensive works. It is quaintly illustrated, and upon the sea are more than twenty ships, the largest with four masts, several three, some two, and the remainder one, upon which is hoisted a huge lateen sail. The decks of the larger ships are raised in two or more tiers at both bow and stern like those of the Roman galleys, and each ship is flaunting half a score of flags and pennons. Some have huge *fleurs de lis* in gold on blue, others a red cross on white. On the sea, towards the west side of the map, is inscribed the following curious and, we fear, inaccurate information: "Shypes may ride all somer tem in a myle the towne in V fathome water." On the eastern side of the map is the following inscription regarding the doings of the French: "Thesse grete shyppes rydeng hard abode shore by shoting into the hill and wallies on the towne, so sore oppressed the towne that the cuntry dare not adventure to resscue it."

Then, as regards the land portion of this curious map, at the bottom of the sea near "Hoove" is written, "Upon this west pte may lond C.M. p'sones (100,000 persons) unletted by any p'vision there." On the hills are several "wynde mylles," and above them "the becon of the town" blazing away in a dish-like cresset on a high pole. Many of the houses shown are on fire, and a spot is marked by the following announcement, "Here landed the galeys."

There is on the producer's part of this map a delightful and utterly reckless disregard for what is commonly known as perspective. The roads are in most cases drawn as though absolutely perpendicular, necessitating the most acrobatic feats of the inhabitants who pass along them. As for the "galeys," some of them have performed somersaults on landing on the beach, whilst others are tumbling backwards. The houses are drawn rather smaller than the people who live in them, and there are other equally entertaining anachronisms; but this curious production probably served its main purpose, for defensive towers were built and other steps taken to frustrate any further depredations which might be attempted by the French.

Brighthelmstone had its "quiver" at the thought of the Armada, a little less than half a century later. During a false alarm in 1586, when a fleet of fifty sail appeared in the offing, great activity was shown by the inhabitants, who immediately dispatched a messenger to Lord Buckhurst, lord lieutenant of Sussex, telling him of the suspicious vessels, and he promptly assembled all the men he could muster, "with their armes," and took up a position between Brighthelmstone and Rottingdean. By nightfall we are told his force numbered 1,600 men, and was later on reinforced by the addition of a body of Kentish men. As the fleet made no movement to attack nor any demonstration of hostile intent, at last a fishing boat or two, "with bold men who feared neither

death nor capture," put off from the beach to reconnoitre. They then discovered that the supposed Armada was but the Dutch wine fleet from Spain, held back by the unfavourable direction of the wind from proceeding to their destination up Channel, and thus, so far as Brighthelmstone is concerned, ended its doings with the Armada.

In the terrific storms of December 27, 1703, and in 1705, Brighthelmstone suffered so severely that it is scarcely too much to say that it was ruined. So greatly also did it decline in the next few years that in 1725 the author of *A Tour Through Great Britain* speaks of the place as "a poor fishing town, old-built on the very edge of the sea," and goes on to say that it has a likelihood of being soon entirely swallowed up owing to the rapid encroachment of the sea.

With Brighton, as it came to be called later on, in the days when it was emerging from decline and obscurity to flourish under the Georgian patronage it received, and with the Brighton of to-day, which is one of the great seaside resorts of the world, there is neither necessity nor space to deal. We must on to Shoreham, the quaint little fishing village of smuggling days, now threatened in the near future with development as a seaside resort. Here there is a haven into which one can run in stress of weather, although few, we imagine, would choose to remain in it longer than necessary.

In the old smuggling times it was notorious, and even in the present day there are "tub holes" in not a few of the older houses, and not many years ago, in a house near by the church, one such was brought to light when the back part of the building was pulled down. It was connected with the shore by a passage, long ago filled up at its seaward end, and in the latter were found more than a score of "tubs," and several packages of tea and lace. Of the spirit one who was there states "it was by no means bad, over-woody, perhaps, but still by no means entirely spoiled and certainly not undrinkable." Of the tea none was of use, and the lace was much rotted, notwithstanding the thick oilskin covers to the bales, and in most instances the rats had made use of it for nesting purposes. In the centre of two bales, however, some yards were found undamaged, which, as the lace was well on for a century old, more than paid for the alterations which the owner of the house was making.

61

But even Shoreham, straggling and uninteresting as it mostly is nowadays, has figured in what has been called "rustling and purple romance" in the past, for was it not from Shoreham, or, at all events, hard by, between it and Hove, that Charles II escaped? The story of Charles's wanderings is so well known that there is no need to recapitulate them here, but there is a most interesting document entitled, "The last act, in the miraculous Storie of his Mties escape; being a true and perfect relation of his conveyance, through many dangers, to a safe harbour; and out of the reach of his tyranicall enemies, by Colonell Gounter; of Rackton in Sussex; who had the happiness to bee instrumentall in the business (as it was taken down from his mouth by a person of worth a little before his death)," which in the part referring to the King's movements at Shoreham is, we think, worth quotation.

We are told that on the evening before his escape, "At supper, the King was cheerful, not showing the least signe of feare or apprehension of any daunger...." The boatman and also Charles's host were present at supper, the latter waiting upon the King, and then afterwards "the Coll. (Colonel Gounter) began to treat with the boateman (Tettersfield by name, afterwards referred to as Tattersall), asking him in what readiness he was. He answered he could not of (get off) that night, because for more securitie he had brought his vessel into a breake, and the tyde had forsaken it, soe that it was on ground.... The King, then opening the wenddowe, tooke notice, that the wind was turned and told the master of the Shipp. Whereupon because of the wind and a cleere night, the Coll. offered 10ll (ten pounds) more to the man to gett off that night. But that could not bee. However they agreed, he should take in his company that night. But it was a great business that they had in hand, and God would have them to knowe soe, both by the difficulties that offered themselves, and by his help, he afforded to remove them."

62

When, however, all was thought to be settled, the boatman demanded the insurance of his vessel, and, after some demur, Colonel Gounter agreed to this, he placed the figure at £200. Obtaining a promise of this, he yet appears to have raised difficulties in the way of a start, much to the Colonel's fear and annoyance. The Colonel then appears to have taken a stand by telling the man that there were other boats to be had, more especially after the man had declined to move unless he had Colonel Gounter's bond for payment of the money.

Then we are told, "In this contest the King happily interposed. Hee saith right (said his Matie) a Gentleman's word, especially before witnesses, is as good as his bond. At last [delightful phrase!] the man's stomach came downe, and carrie them he would, whatever became of it, and before he would be taken, hee would run his boat under the water. Soe it was agreed that about tooe in the morning they should be aboard. The boateman in the meane tyme, went to provide for necessaries, so he (the Colonel) persuaded the King to take some rest. He did in his cloaths, and my Ld. Willmot with him, till towards twoo of the morning. Then the Coll. called them up, showing them how the tyme went by his watch. Horses being ledd by the back way towards the beach. They came to the boate, and found all readie. So the Coll. tooke his leave, craving his Maties pardon if anything had happened through error, nor want of will or loyaltie.... The Coll. abided there, keeping the horses in a readiness in case any thing unexpected had happened."

63

"At 8 of the clock I (the Colonel) saw them on sayle and it was afternoone before they were out of sight. The wind (O Providence) held very good till the next morning, to ten of the clock brought them to a place in Normandie called Fackham (Fécamp), some three miles from Havre de Grace. 15 Oct. Wenseday. They were no sooner landed, but the wind turned and a violent storm did arise soe much that the boateman was forced to cutt his cable, lost his anchor to save his boate, for which he required of me 8ll, and had it. The boate was back againe at Chichester by Friday to take his fraught."

Then follows a significant note, "I was not gone out of the towne of Brighthelmstone twoe houres but soldiers came thither to search for a tall black man 6 foot and 4 inches high."

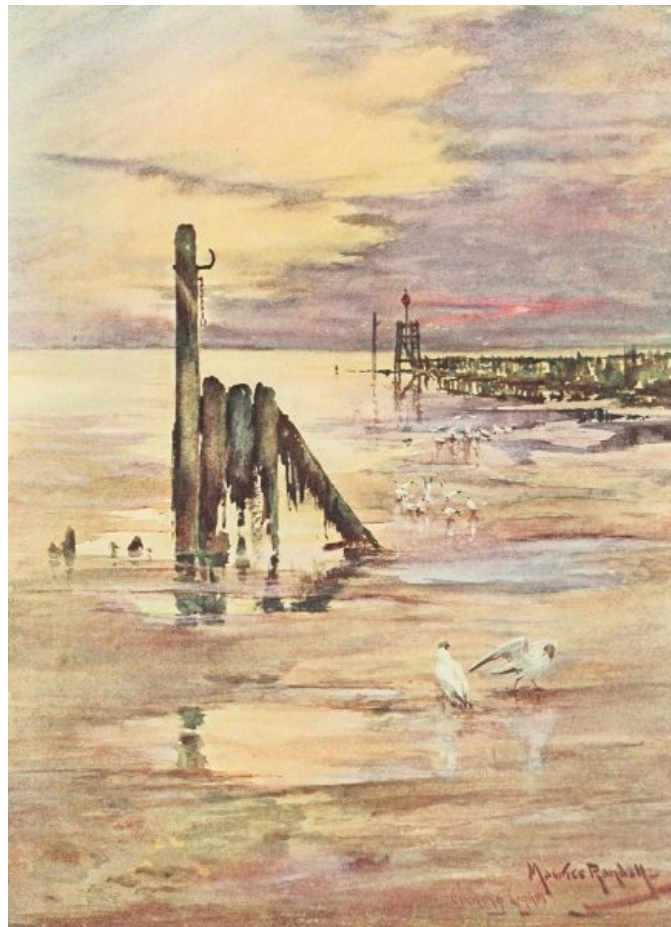
Accounts vary as to whether the King actually came to Shoreham at all. By some it is thought that the day or two previous to his coming to an inn at Brighton were spent at Ovingdean at the house of a Mr Mansell about three miles from Brighton, or what is now Kemp Town.

That the King did not always, after his Restoration, remember those who had been of service to him during the period of his adversity is proved by the story that even Tattersall was forgotten. The old seaman took a curious way of reminding his Sovereign of his neglect. He sailed the boat in which he had carried Charles to Fécamp up the Thames and moored it off Whitehall. The hint was taken. Charles directed that the brig should be taken into the Royal Navy as a fifth-rate ship of war, and renamed her the *Royal Escape*. Tattersall himself was duly appointed captain with a substantial salary, and a pension in addition of £100 per annum, an amount equal in value to about £380 of present-day money. This was also for several generations paid to Tattersall's descendants.

An ivy-clad cottage on Southwick Green is still pointed out as that in which Charles slept on the night before his escape to France. It is known as King Charles's Cottage, but how far tradition is to be relied upon in this instance we are unable positively to assert.

Shoreham harbour formerly was of much greater area than nowadays, when, as one writer puts it, "Nature has been too kind to Shoreham folk by giving them too much land, by taking from them most all the water save that which lies in the channel of the Adur." In former times, indeed, Shoreham had some reputation for the building of fast-sailing luggers and other craft, many of which, in the last half of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth centuries, were engaged in smuggling ventures and privateering.

And who could blame the descendants of the men who suffered so much in early times from the attacks of their neighbours across Channel if they profited by the purchase of their goods in the shape of cognac and lace, or, at a pinch, helped themselves without purchase when the two countries found themselves at war?



**LOW TIDE AT LITTLEHAMPTON**

Shoreham privateers were not a whit less skilfully handled and bravely fought than those sailing out of larger and more famous ports of the west country. The town, in Armada times, had furnished a fair share of ships and men with which to fight the Spanish Dons, and the spirit which animated the local seamen of the Elizabethan age was not "dead bones" in those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as is shown by the extraordinary exploits of a certain Captain Gyffard. He was an enterprising man this Captain Gyffard, who when he was ashore (which was not, we are told, very often) had his anchorage at West Blatchington, while he did his seafaring and fitting out at Shoreham. That he was a man of great ambitions we gather from the fact that he had a scheme by which the then Duke of Buckingham was to finance him, and share the spoil. There appeared something dangerously like piracy in the detailed scheme of the worthy captain, and the Duke failed his man. But Captain Gyffard found money and men, and after all many a goodly prize was towed by him into Shoreham.

Another worthy of the town, a certain Captain Scross, had less nicety of judgement regarding the right of others than we could have liked. One day, whilst cruising in search of plunder aboard his ship, the *Dolphin*, he espied a Dutch man-o'-war standing up Channel with a prize in tow, which proved to be a Swansea barque. Scross gallantly went to the rescue, recaptured the Welsh ship and promptly set sail, and towed her in triumph to Shoreham; but, mark you, as his own prize! Poor Powell, her master, was in dire distress, but, notwithstanding his arguments and appeals, Scross "froze on to his prize," and refused to give her up, and even

her dispossessed captain's appeals to the Admiralty, made over and over again, had no effect, and he never appears to have received either justice or satisfaction.

Shoreham has had the dubious honour in the past (to be accurate, in 1770) of having its returning officer for Parliamentary elections summoned to the Bar of the House to give an account of his misdeeds. It happened in this way. The Borough in those days sent two representatives to Parliament, and it occurred to a body of ingenious souls that these elections might be made the source of much profit to themselves, so they formed themselves into an organization called the Christian Club! It met at the inn for the reputed purpose of transacting charitable and other highly commendable business. The members were not summoned by the usual means of letters or verbal notice, but by the hoisting of a certain flag on the inn. The funds by which the members used to grant assistance to each other were the proceeds of "rigged" elections. In those days there were comparatively few electors, so that most were members of the Christian Society; but at last their real object was discovered. One of the defeated candidates lodged a petition, and it was then found that the Returning Officer had calmly secured the election of the gentleman who enjoyed (on the payment of an agreed and substantial sum) the good will of the Christian Society members, by the simple expedient of disallowing the votes recorded for his opponent. It is said that this revelation of corruption helped materially the passing of the great Reform Bill. However that may be, the Returning Officer was severely censured, the right of voting was extended to every forty-shilling holder in the Rape of Bramber; and as a punishment no less than eighty-five (or about three-fifths) of the Shoreham "free and independent" electors were disfranchised.

66

It is New Shoreham that most people see, and that usually passes under the name of Shoreham. The old Shoreham, with its interesting and fine Norman church, is but a tiny place nowadays, famous chiefly for its wooden bridge over the Adur leading to the old smuggling inn known as the Old Sussex Pad, which was burned to the ground a few years ago, and was once the haunt and hiding place of the most notorious smugglers of the district, and literally honeycombed with secret chambers, "tub holes," and recesses for the stowing away "of humans when there was a hue and cry, and smuggled goods."

New Shoreham Church, dating from about 1100, is one of the finest in Sussex. It was once attached to the Abbey of Saumur, to which foundation it was presented by William de Braoze, Lord of Bramber.... It is around this church of St Mary that by far the oldest and most picturesque portion of the little town is found. Here the eighteenth-century houses, grey and time worn, and perhaps a little sedate in appearance, are grouped so that they form a little colony of ancient things by themselves, and have a charm which few fail to appreciate. In one of them once lived a certain Captain Henry Roberts, a Shoreham man, who accompanied Captain Cook on several of his voyages, and ultimately died of fever at sea. In others dwelt several merchants of distinction at the end of the eighteenth century, whose wealth rumour asserted was not unconnected with smuggling, privateering, and the slave trade.

67

Two poets of great distinction have found inspiration at Shoreham (and how many artists with brush and colours we wonder?), and have written of the old church, and the shallow, yellow, and almost currentless stream, which when the tide has rushed Channel-ward is little more than a large ditch, and leaves a great expanse of sand, mud flats, and oyster beds uncovered. The fine poem *On the South Coast* in *Astrophel, and other Poems*, by Mr Swinburne is too long for complete quotation. Here, however, is a portion which calls up Shoreham to the memory:

Rose-red eve on the seas that heave sinks fair as dawn when the first ray peers;  
Winds are glancing from sunbright Lancing to Shoreham, crowned with the grace of years;  
Shoreham, clad with the sunset, glad and grave with glory that death reverses.

\* \* \* \* \*

Skies fulfilled with the sundown, stilled and splendid, spread as a flower that spreads,  
Pave with rarer device and fairer than heaven's the luminous oyster-beds,  
Grass-embanked, and in square plots ranked, inlaid with gems that the sundown sheds.

Squares more bright and with lovelier light than heaven that kindled it shines with shine  
Warm and soft as the dome aloft, but heavenlier yet than the sun's own shrine:  
Heaven is high, but the water-sky lit here seems deeper and more divine.

But one must not linger by the way, for the harbour itself, as we have already said, is not one to remain over long in.

68

And so up anchor and away with the ebb down the coast; flat and uninteresting now, though in the background at first rise pleasant heights, with Lancing College buildings and Chapel amid some trees on the slope of a ridge above the Adur. That strange conglomeration of derelictions from duties manifold converted into the semblance of quite imposing and sometimes artistic habitations known as "Bungalow Town" is soon passed; and then the serried rows of houses marking Worthing sea-front soon lie stretched out along the low, shingly shore. But there is nothing here to detain us, for Worthing has not much history that concerns us, and is not a port (though a pleasant spot enough and picturesque) with the conspicuous clump of trees marking ancient Chanctonbury Rings to the north, and we are bound for the last haven we shall enter before dropping anchor in the busy waters of Portsmouth Harbour.

Littlehampton is a quaint port on the River Arun, which is so delightful from just beyond Ford Junction onwards. All the way to Pulborough one has flower-decked fields, old and ruined castles, picturesque villages, and historic manor-houses to cause one to stray from the river's bank on exploration bent. Of course, there is no great depth of water much above Arundel for even small craft; though fairly large vessels can get up as far as Arundel town bridge.

Formerly Littlehampton, which has a narrow but picturesque entry past the jetty with its lighthouse, and the windmill in the background, was a place with trade of some considerable importance, which the rise of

Newhaven much injured.

The place, like Shoreham, has attracted many artists, amongst them that charming painter of truly English rural landscapes Mr B. W. Leader, R.A. The town should be celebrated if for nothing else for its sunsets. "Out of Italy," exclaims one enthusiastic artist, "I have seen no sunsets with such a range and splendour of tints as at Littlehampton in Sussex."

The town can, however, also lay claim to some antiquity, for an allusion to it appears in the Domesday Book, proving that it was then a place within the usual meaning of the word. But even before then it was known as "Hanton," was held in Anglo-Saxon times by one "Countess Goda, and furnished land for one plough, with two cottars and one acre of meadow." For long from its position near the mouth of the Arun it was known as the Port of Arundel, the estuary being in ancient times much wider than one would now imagine. In former times the town seems to have attained to considerable size and importance, owing chiefly to the trade between it and the Conqueror's Duchy and the passage to and fro "of many notable knights and commoner folk."

It was here that William Rufus landed in 1097 after one of his periodical visits to his Duchy. And to Littlehampton came some of the prisoners from Crecy, brought hither across seas by Richard FitzAlan, the 13th Earl of Arundel, in 1347. He was wise to bring them if the story is true that their "ransoms were of so great a summe that they served to paye for the building of the Great Hall at Arundell," and other additions.

Another Richard FitzAlan (his grandson), in the reign of Henry IV, brought no less than eighty French ships captured in the Channel, and laden with 20,000 tuns of wine, into the port; which Froissart averred made it possible to purchase in London the best wine for fourpence a gallon! And at Littlehampton? Well, small wonder that "men and wenches were merry, and had full stomachs and light hearts for many a day thereafter."

Many other strange things and important personages throughout the centuries were landed at this little Sussex port, amongst them "a great wale," and Philip Howard, who, after having been taken on the high seas, was brought to Littlehampton, and conveyed thence to London, the Tower, and the scaffold.

Its trade in the Middle Ages would appear from contemporary accounts of its houses, buildings and population, and maps to have been much larger than the size of the place would lead one to presume. In 1672, however, it had only its church, manor house, and fourteen other dwelling houses, and a few warehouses. But during the succeeding hundred years several attempts were made to improve the harbour, and the depth of water over the bar, and from the *Grub Street Journal* of January 1, 1736, a copy of which, framed and glazed, is now in the possession of one of the inhabitants, we learn "The new Harbour at Littlehampton in Sussex was opened on Monday, and there was 7 feet of water at half spring tide, and 9 feet when the tide was highest, and in all likelihood it will prove the best harbour on that coast."

But these high hopes were destined to be unrealized, and Littlehampton has made practically no progress as a port during the last hundred years, though its popularity as a pleasant and pretty holiday resort is ever increasing. It was to the Earl of Surrey in 1790 that the town owed its start as a health resort, and after Surrey House was built other fashionable folk resorted hither.

There is still a certain amount of shipbuilding done; but we have never of late years seen any vessel on the stocks approaching in size the craft of 900 tons which were formerly launched. And we fancy the industry—perhaps because of the greater use of steam—is a declining if not a dying one.

With the demolition of the old parish Church of St Mary in 1826 to provide a larger building Littlehampton's sole really ancient building disappeared. The modern (old style) building does not commend itself to the fastidious in architecture; although it scarcely, perhaps, entirely merits the uncomplimentary epithets which have been applied to it from time to time by architects and others. In it there are a few interesting relics, and fragments of the fine earlier building which was Transitional Norman in character. They include the Norman (some say pre-Norman) font, of bowl-shaped design which fitted it for immersion.

But if the town itself nowadays has to rely rather upon its modern than its old-time attractions, it can boast of a neighbourhood wonderfully rich in beautiful scenery, and historic memories and buildings. A week or even more at Littlehampton can be well spent in visiting such places as Arundel; lovely North Stoke, where the Arun winds at the foot of wooded hills most delightfully; South Stoke; Amberley, with its beautiful church, churchyard, and fine castle; Felpham; and Clymping, with its fortress church, to name but a few.

Most leave the picturesque little port with regret and carry away memories of its sands, edged most delightfully with grass lawns, and backed by pleasant residences.

From Littlehampton onward to Selsey Bill the coast is flat and utterly without scenic interest, though its story is rich with romance. Millions of sea birds feed in the marshes of the Bill, and its immediate neighbourhood, but the seals which are said to have given it its name are those of long ago. Once round the Bill, and Portsmouth is right ahead, with the Wight winking at one in the shimmering haze of a bright summer day.

## Chapter III

### Portsmouth—Ryde—Cowes—Yarmouth

It is not too much to say that the approach to Portsmouth by sea from the east on a fine summer day, with the Isle of Wight rising from amidst the waste of waters right ahead, looking like a piece of agate gleaming through the sun-born haze, is one of great beauty.

On such a day, indeed, Selsey Bill, and the low-lying, much-broken coast which stretches between it and Southsea Castle, with Hayling Island, in shape like a deformed foot, dividing the entrances to Chichester and Langstone Harbours, seems almost to melt into the sea itself.

In the many creeks of these harbours there are picturesque spots well worth exploring by those who have the time, and for whom the open sea does not possess greater attractions. Of the inlets indicated, Bosham is by common consent the most beautiful as well as one of the most frequented; it can be reached fairly easily, but trouble awaits those who venture in anything larger than a dinghy up beyond the creek. In Bosham Reach many a Danish galley has ridden at anchor, and with the village are linked names great in the dim past ages of history—Vespasian, Titus, Canute, Harold amongst the number. In the interesting and ancient church the great Viking's daughter lies buried, whilst the bells of Bosham—so the story goes—lie in the fairway hard by Cubnor Point, sunk there when the Danish pirate ship in which they had been placed went to the bottom in judgement for the sacrilegious act. And there were people living not so many decades ago who had heard, or said they had heard, them ringing when the tide rushed out.

So it will be seen that around this sleepy little town, so far removed from the more bustling current of modern life, hangs a savour of old romance. And there are yet folk alive who can yarn of the smuggling days when Bosham and Chichester Creeks harboured many a bold free trader, and saw many a good cargo "run." 73

As one passes along this bit of much and deeply indented coast, inland beyond which are the swelling heights of the Portsdown Hills, green-grey and desolate-looking ridges with almost an unbroken summit line, crowned and pierced by many suspected and unsuspected forts, the great naval station for which one is bound climbs up out of the sea ahead; most pictorial at the distance of half a dozen miles; most interesting at close quarters.

Behind the serried rows of houses of the "Service" folk, which almost encircle the matting-like area of Southsea Common, lie vistas of blue-grey roofs of work-a-day folks' dwellings, and the huge roof spans of the building and fitting sheds of the Dockyard; with here and there masts or some giant crane breaking the sky line above them.

Seen first at sunset, when entering Spithead from the eastward, the glamour of romance—which noonday sunshine is apt to somewhat dispel—seems to hang over the great naval station; and the flat and uninteresting town takes on an element of picturesqueness which doubtless has tempted artists to paint what would otherwise not be very paintable. Southsea beach is much favoured in good weather as a place off which to bring up. But within the harbour—when once its difficult entrance with the tides running all ways inside, and a perfect crowd of launches, ferries, and small craft and outgoing vessels to add to one's perplexities have been safely threaded—there is good anchorage and much to see.

There is no busier harbour on the south coast than Portsmouth, for in it business and pleasure, war and peace, are indissolubly linked. On the eastern shore is the Naval Dockyard, the steamboat stages, and most of what commerce comes into the harbour; on the western, chiefly construction sheds, slips, fitting-out yards, and industries connected with the pleasure craft which, during the summer months, add such life and beauty to the Solent and home waters generally. 74

The harbour itself simply teems with life. Not a moment passes throughout the hours of daylight that some craft or other—whether battleship, torpedo boat, destroyer, excursion steamer, yacht, or trading schooner, barque, brigantine, or rust-red collier—is entering or leaving it through the narrow jaws between Blockhouse Fort and Point Battery. A French writer has said "It is the one spot I have seen in England that impressed me with the tireless activity and sense of the nation's naval greatness." And after a few days spent in the harbour one realizes the truth of this statement.

If making a lengthy stay one is scarcely likely to find anything approaching a snug berth nearer Gosport or the Hard than up a little distance beyond the entrance to Weevil Lake near the Coal Hulks. If fortunate enough to pick up a mooring buoy here, one is not too far removed from the life of the harbour, nor has one too long a pull down to Gosport or Portsmouth Hard.

But now something concerning Portsmouth and its neighbouring town of Gosport. The name of the latter, a quaint old-fashioned town which is being slowly but surely absorbed by the Government needs, is traditionally supposed to have been derived from the words God's Port, or the port of safety or deliverance, which was bestowed upon it by Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, on his landing, A.D. 1158, after a perilous voyage from the coast of France. There is, however, another version of its origin, which, whilst stating that it was Henry of Blois that bestowed the name, gives as the reason the saving of his brother King Stephen's life when the vessel in which he was returning from Normandy was wrecked on the coast near Stokes Bay. Actually, it would appear more probable that the name is derived from Gorseport, or the haven among the gorse, with which most of the dry land in the neighbourhood was formerly covered. There is, however, some authorities aver, amongst the archives in Winchester Cathedral a deed by which a grant was made to the inhabitants of the place, enabling them to call it God's Port. 75

One of the most remarkable features connected with the harbour is the number of villages which grew up on its shores with the names of which the word "port" became incorporated.

The privilege of holding a market at Gosport was granted to the village by the Bishop of Winchester, who,

however, was not entirely disinterested in the matter, as he received the tolls of the old market house. The latter was of wood, and was an interesting building containing in its upper story some apartments which served as offices for the bishop's baronial court. Unfortunately the old place shared the fate of many other interesting survivals from medieval times in the neighbourhood, and was pulled down in the year 1811, when a more commodious market house was erected nearer the shore.

Portsea, which lies to the north of the railway and Portsmouth Harbour station with Portsea Island, which but for a narrow channel or waterway would be a peninsula, has for centuries been an interesting and important portion of the district nowadays known generally as Portsmouth. Its interest, however, has in the past, as now, been chiefly of a maritime nature. It does not appear to have had any very great importance on account of its trade at any period of its history. But almost from time immemorial fleets have assembled here before setting forth upon expeditions; and hither they have returned, often battered, though generally victorious. Here also armies have foregathered for foreign service, and have returned "from the Wars." But Portsea never seems to have ranked with Southampton as a mercantile port; it has always been more of a naval and military establishment. Even in ancient times its position must have commended itself to strategists, for in those days it must have been practically impregnable, except at one or two points, by reason of the fact that it was surrounded by water, and the mud and marshland which lay along its shores rendered landing by an enemy extremely difficult, if not impossible, and the approach of craft of any size impracticable, except here and there where the shore was hard, or there was a sandy beach. 76

Even the Romans appear not to have invaded Portsea Island, for there are no relics of their occupation discoverable upon it. Its slightly elevated plateau was, however, admirably adapted for use as a camp and for the assemblage of armies, and it is doubtless to this fact that the town largely owed its foundation. In Saxon times it was a Royal demesne, but ultimately was given by Alfreda, Queen of Ethelred, and, strange as this may appear, aunt and military teacher of Alfred the Great, to the church at Winchester.

At the suppression of the religious foundations in the reign of Henry VIII it was given to the College of Winchester, into whose possession the greater portion of the land on which Portsea was built, as well as the advowsons of the churches on the island, passed.

Since then, as every one knows, it has become one of the most important sections of the naval and military Portsmouth of to-day.

The mere mention of the latter town, with its many and crowded memories of the past, seems to bear with it a taste of salt air and the invigorating quality of a sea breeze, and there seems little doubt but that the Danes harried Portsmouth on several occasions, as they did most south coast towns of any consequence. And it is also equally probable that it was here that some at least of the galleys with which Alfred the Great formed the nucleus of the English navy were built, and that they sallied forth through the narrow harbour mouth to inflict the crushing defeat upon the marauders in the Solent, which constituted one of the most important of the many naval battles that Alfred fought. 77

It was near Portsmouth, too, that Harold II's fleet two centuries later cruised aimlessly about for some time ere sailing northward with the object of preventing the landing of William of Normandy, which took place eastward further up the coast; and it was here, in 1139, that Matilda, daughter of Henry I, landed with a handful of knights, and a few serving men, to attempt to win the English throne; and Portsmouth was also the place of departure for Richard Cœur de Lion on his final expedition to the Holy Land.

Indeed, almost every foot of ground upon which the older portion of the town now stands is pregnant with historic events, and memories of the England of the past which, from the dim ages when Portsmouth began to take shape, has been ever great, upon the narrow and wider seas, save for a short period in the reign of that pleasure-loving monarch, Charles II, when the Dutch swept the Channel.

As one walks its streets memories come to one of the innumerable gallant men—many unsung in ballad and unrecorded in the pages of history, though deserving both honours—who during the past centuries have set forth boldly upon enterprises for the preservation of Britain's empire of the sea and the maintenance of her honour and glory afloat.

There is the famous "Hard." Who that has read Marryat's *Peter Simple* does not know it, and cannot in his mind's eye conjure up the picture of the famous place with the pig-tailed "salts" who frequented it in Nelson's, and Howe's, and Rodney's times?

Mudie, in his *History of Hampshire*, though doing scant justice to the interest and story of Portsmouth, gives a fairly vivid sketch of the famous "Hard" about this period. He writes: "Immediately beyond the gun wharves there is an opening, with the buildings of Portsea on the other side. This is the Common's Hard, and it and the row (houses) opposite are much devoted to the sale of frippery, so that this is neither the most cleanly nor the most moral spot in England. It is," he goes on to say, "the great landing-place from the ships in the harbour—at least, for the common sailors and those who keep up intercourse with them.... This common Hard displays no very pleasant scene in times of peace; in war time it must be far worse." 78

But even Mudie sees some use in the Hard, though a questionable one, as he adds, "But as such scenes are inseparable from places where sailors resort in great numbers, it is probably better to have it thus concentrated than if it were dispersed all over the town."

It was not, however, until the reign of King John that the town appears to have attained any great prominence as a shipbuilding port; but during the reign of that monarch, and ever afterwards, there are frequent mentions of it, as such, in the Records. About the same time as the commencement of shipbuilding at Portsmouth we find an account of the assembly by Henry III in 1229 of a great army for his French war in Poitou, undertaken in order that he might recover the possessions which John had lost. The naval preparations for the campaign, however, seem to have been inadequate, as we find the "assemblage of men so great that they were with but difficulty numbered," but they had to be disbanded for lack of both stores and transport across seas. Here, too, to be exact, upon what is known as Southsea Common, nowadays the resort of ogling nursemaids and children when not used for drill, Edward III in the summer of 1346 gathered together the army



of knights and fighting men, and good bowmen, upwards of 30,000 strong, which shortly afterwards won for him the stricken field of Crecy against the French army of four times the number. Amongst the 30,000 French who lost their lives was the King of Bohemia, whose crest and motto—three ostrich plumes and *Ich Dien*—the Prince of Wales afterwards adopted. At Portsmouth, too, in somewhat later times were assembled the armies of John of Gaunt and of Edward IV, both bound for the interminable French wars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. 79

Afterwards Henry VIII in 1545 used the ground as the site of the huge depôt needed for the victualling and fitting out of the hundred high-sterned, cumbersome ships with which he intended to sail and attack the French coast.

The French, however, were already at sea, burning for revenge on account of the English having taken and destroyed part of Boulogne, and suddenly, in the July of 1545, with a boldness which it is not easy for us to understand, the French sailed across Channel with a fleet of considerable strength and lay to just off Brading for lack of wind. King Henry VIII, who was at Portsmouth at the time, and had dined aboard the *Mary Rose* ere she set out with the rest of the fleet to meet the enemy, was on Southsea Common an interested, if not alarmed, spectator of the Frenchmen's audacity.

But owing to lack of wind neither fleet became generally engaged, and the affair, which might have been a naval battle, descended to the level of a mere desultory fight between the French galleys and the English ships which had succeeded in creeping out nearest the French fleet ere the wind entirely dropped. The *Mary Rose* was not one of the ships near enough to take part in the engagement. She was manned, so one authority asserts, with officers and seamen who had so good an opinion of their own importance and skill that they considered themselves "fitter to command than to obey." The gun ports were opened, the guns run out, and, by carelessness on account of the calm, the latter were not properly secured. As the day wore on, however, a breeze suddenly came, the ship heeled over to it, and in consequence the windward tier of guns crashed across the deck, causing the ship to heel still further over with the great additional weight. The lee ports were suddenly dipped under water, the sea rushed in, and a few moments later the great, unwieldy ship sank with 600 on board of her. 80

It is said that the watchword of the fleet on that memorable occasion was "God Save the King," and the pass words, "Long to reign over us." Some authorities assert that to these words may be traced the origin of our National Anthem. How true this view may be it is not easy to say.

There have been other disasters near the same spot, too; notably the loss of the *Royal George*, the 108-gun ship of Rear-Admiral Kempenfeldt, which sank at Spithead on August 29, 1782, whilst heeled over for the repair of a pipe. All hands were aboard to the number of about 600 souls, including women and Jews. Also there was the sinking of the *Newcastle*, which went down with her crew in 1703; the loss of the *Edgar* and 400 lives by the blowing up of her powder magazine in 1711; and that of 98-gun line-of-battle ship *Boyne* from a similar cause in 1795.

War always brought stirring times for Portsmouth, for though, perhaps, the hum and bustle was not equal to that of to-day's stress and hurry, these things are, after all, comparative, and the seamen of "Bluff King Hal's" time worked probably with as good or better will than those of our own in manœuvring the galleons and caravels, which must, as one writer says, "have been fickle craft in all save a beam wind."

Leland when he visited Portsmouth found it a place of great interest. For one thing, he saw the old ship, *Henri Grace de Dieu*, in the dock, which seems to have impressed him greatly. As he says, it was "one of the biggest ships that has been made within the memory of man." He also saw the great iron cable which was used for blocking the harbour entrance in times of feared attack. A similar contrivance to that in common use, for example at Dartmouth, and Fowey, in those days. Regarding the town itself Leland is not very enthusiastic, for he calls it "bare, and little occupied in time of peace." which presents a striking contrast to what it was even in Nelson's day, when "the great activities incidental to a seagoing and naval nation were ceaselessly going on." 81

Southsea Castle, which owes its origin, as do so many other similar fortresses along the south coast, to King Henry VIII, was already in existence when Leland paid the place his visit. It was built about 1540, and in that time was probably accurately described by him as a "ryghte goodlye and warlyke castill." Here Leland's spelling varies from that of his own when describing other castles. But spelling in those days was often not an author's strong point. The castle, to which Henry paid several visits, seems to have served its purpose for about a century after its erection, as it was immune from attack; but in 1626 it fell a partial victim to fire and had to be rebuilt.

The most stirring period of its history is that of the Civil War, when Colonel Goring was supposed to be holding the town for King Charles. Its armament for those days was fairly strong, consisting as it did of a dozen 12-pounders and other smaller pieces, besides a good supply of "hand guns, pikes, swords and other weapons of offense." The Governor was a Captain Chaloner, who, on the night when the Parliamentarians came to attack it, had spent the evening in the town carousing with Colonel Goring and returned to his post the worse for drink, and had to be awakened out of sleep on the approach of Parliamentarians to the attack. He promptly made the best terms for himself that he could, and even went the length of drinking confusion to the King. Gallant Colonel Goring made an attempt to retake the place, but meantime it had been strongly garrisoned and so successfully resisted the Royalist attack. The capture of the castle sealed the fate of the town, which had been besieged for a month. 82

For a second time in its history, rather more than a century later, the danger was to come from within. In the year 1759 some soldiers were filling cartridges by the aid, it is supposed, of a "naked light," when the open powder barrels exploded, with the result that the castle was almost destroyed. It was, however, once more rebuilt and afterwards was used as a prison. At the time of the dreaded Napoleonic invasion the Government of the day, realizing the importance of the place from a strategical point of view, made several additions, and strengthened it materially, amongst other things fortifying the ramparts. Nowadays it is not possible to speak very authoritatively of its strength; but its usefulness has since the beginning of the nineteenth century been

from time to time assured by additional armament and works.

The records of Portsmouth and its Harbour have not always been creditable. There have been mutinies, treasonable firing of the dockyard, and even assassinations in its streets, stirring the inhabitants to the core, and leading at the time to much excitement and gossip.

The most tragic event in the town's history was the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham whilst he was at Portsmouth engaged in gathering together a second force for the relief of La Rochelle, then besieged by Cardinal Richelieu.

The house in High Street in which the Duke was fatally stabbed by the fanatic, John Felton, on August 23, 1628, although much altered, is still standing. One thing should be noted. The house was never (as has been frequently stated) an inn named "Ye Spotted Dog," but a private residence, at that time owned by a Captain Mason, then Governor of Southsea Castle, who afterwards became famous as the founder of the town of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, U.S.A. The assassin, who struck down the King's favourite after the Duke had become unpopular on account of his arrogance and two unsuccessful wars undertaken at his instigation, was a lieutenant in a foot regiment. It is supposed that, being overlooked for promotion and arrears of pay due to him, somewhat preyed upon and may even have unhinged his mind. Be it as it may, on a fine August morning he gained entrance to the Duke's temporary residence, and, finding him standing in the hall, as he was about to start to visit the King at Southwick, he stabbed him. So swift and silent was the blow that for some moments no one recognized the murderer. "Then amid great confusion, and the piercing shrieks of the Duchess and her maid, Felton stepped forward and acknowledged the crime."

It was with difficulty that he was saved from immediate execution, but the reprieve was not for long. He was, however, for the time protected and taken to London for trial. He was executed at Tyburn on November 26 in the same year, and his dead body was exhibited as a warning on Southsea Beach. The site of the gibbet where Felton hung rotting in chains is near Clarence Pier.

He must have been a man of resource and some considerable daring, for when he was promised the rack by the Earl of Dorset if he did not disclose the names of his supposed accomplices, he successfully put an end to the possibility of his being racked by declaring that if put to the torture the first name he would mention would be that of the Earl of Dorset himself!

Viewed in the light of the present day, another crime, though a judicial one, committed at Portsmouth was the execution of Admiral Byng "for not having done his utmost to take, seize and destroy the ships of the enemy" during an engagement with the French off Minorca on May 20, 1756. Latter day historians appear agreed that at most his was an error of judgement; but in those times the nation generally was subject to what modern writers term "nerves," and just then popular feeling would scarcely brook the news, let alone the fact, of a defeat or a drawn battle. Be that as it may, the Admiral was brought to trial, condemned, and on a bleak March morning in 1757, "when the sea and sky were grey as though in dudgeon at the crime," he knelt blindfolded upon the deck of the *Monarque* at Spithead, and, after letting fall his handkerchief, fell pierced by five bullets. He was less a criminal than one of those periodic scapegoats sacrificed to veil the errors of greater and more powerful men. Voltaire gives a cynical account of the episode in his *Candide*, remarking, amongst other things, that if Byng did not approach near enough the French, neither did they draw near him, adding that in England it was thought advisable to shoot an Admiral now and then to encourage the rest!

Less than twenty years later the dockyard had a narrow escape from destruction by fire. In the year 1776 James Aitken, known as "Jack the Painter," set alight to one of the sheds, happily with little result as regards damage done. Arson in those days, in fact until the middle of the last century, was a capital crime, and Aitken was condemned and duly hanged by being strung up to the masthead of the *Arethusa* sixty feet in the air, and afterwards was hung in chains near the mouth of the harbour. A lurid sidelight upon the doings and morals of those times is afforded by the circumstance that the skeleton was ultimately stolen by some sailors and pledged in satisfaction on a drink bill at one of the Gosport inns. "Truly," says a somewhat censorious writer of the period, "these sailormen being neither better nor worse than the soldier men neither fear God nor man."

As might be expected, Portsmouth has not in the past been entirely free from spies and traitors during war time; but, as a rule, these have had but short shrift when discovered. Perhaps one of the most notable of traitors who happened to be caught was one David Pyrie, at the time employed as a clerk in the Navy Office. He was found to have disclosed information regarding the naval preparations and movements of the fleet to the French Government in 1782 during the Napoleonic wars. Upon trial, which took place in the summer of that year, he was condemned to what must nowadays strike one as a barbarous sentence, namely, "to be hanged by the neck, but not until he was dead; that he should then be cut down, his bowels taken out and burned before his face; and that his head should then be taken off, his body cut into four quarters, and (this is a grim touch of unconscious humour!) to be placed at the disposal of his Majesty the King." Southsea was the spot selected for the carrying out of this terrible sentence. "There were," we are told, "over much people present to see the traitor die, so that many pressed against the others to their hurt."

There are two outstanding and arresting things above all others in the Harbour—they are the *Victory* and the dockyard. In the former we have enshrined noble memories of the greatest of all Britain's sea kings, and of deeds the lustre of which time cannot tarnish whilst there dwells in the hearts of men a love of country and of courage nobly shown; in the latter we have almost all the modern as well as much of the ancient interests of Portsmouth encompassed.

Men, whilst talking eloquently of the might of modern machinery, of speed, of tonnage, of submarines, of destroyers, of *Dreadnoughts* and of the devastating hail of bullets which the modern battleship and cruiser can discharge, yet look across at the *Victory*, that survival of the most brilliant episode in our naval history, with loving eyes. And, as one lies at anchor in sight of the old ship, whose decks have run blood for England's sake, whose ports have belched fire as she weathered the battle, and whose sides have sung the music of salt water as she drove through it, amid the forest of masts, and in sight of the spires and towers and giant cranes of this great naval port, memories crowd upon one of the great deeds done in the past, and of their significance. The

men who may in the future serve to keep England great will not probably, after all, accomplish more than those through whose courage, resource and skill she became so.

A detailed description of the dockyard is beyond the scope of the present volume; but its existence cannot be entirely overlooked. It is not difficult to “get over”—some, and we are inclined to agree with them, assert it is far too easy—but after all one is only shown what it is good for the stranger to see; unless, indeed, one’s patriotism and respectability (as was ours) is vouched for by some high official; but when once inside the evidence of activity and of naval greatness is almost appalling.

Within a comparatively small area one finds gathered together battleships of all types of the last twenty years or so—smart new cruisers; long, low torpedo boats; and the bigger destroyers, wicked-looking in their neutral-tinted slaty-greyness, by scores; huge travelling cranes and shears rearing their clustered beams heavenwards, and capable, some of them, of lifting 100 tons as easily as a man could a fourteen-pound shot; Nasmyth hammers, Titanesque instruments which, whilst beating iron plates flat and thin as easily as a smith moulds a horseshoe, can yet close upon a watchglass without cracking it. Amid all these gigantic and impressive instruments of destruction and construction one is able to feel how insignificant an atom man, the originator of all these things, often is in comparison with his own handiwork.



**PORTSMOUTH. ENTRANCE TO HARBOUR**

Then there is generally a terrible object-lesson of the destructive powers of modern guns and gunnery in some out-of-date battleship, which, as a target, has been subjected to a hail of projectiles. Riddled and rent asunder almost as though her sides were of cardboard instead of foot-thick steel plates, battered out of semblance of anything resembling a ship, one is made to feel in some measure what the horrors of a modern naval battle would be. One can scarcely believe that within the few short minutes in which the poor maimed craft was exposed to the hail of shot and shell, such destruction could have been wrought. Certainly one is made to realize that between her decks, which in real warfare would have held seven or eight hundred men, no living creature could have existed long. 87

Then in the construction yards one catches glimpses of battleships coming into being; and in the dry docks—the first of which owes its existence to the initiative of Henry VIII in 1495, and was in constant use for many years—one finds all sorts and conditions of ships undergoing repairs. In “Anchor Lane” one has another object-lesson in what is practically a street composed of anchors ready for any demand or contingency. Many things have changed; but the anchor and the block, though the size and pattern of the former have from time to time been modified, remain, we are told, practically the same as a century or more ago. The navy blocks—which are made of elm after “pickling” in salt-water mud for at least two years—are made in precisely the same way as when a century ago the elder Brunel invented and introduced special machinery for their manufacture.

The Gun Wharf never fails to interest the visitor, be he a sailorman or civilian. Here stacks, or “parks,” of guns of various sizes, but mostly big, are to be seen, forming, as a visitor once not inaptly remarked, “an object-lesson concerning the wastefulness of progress,” for comparatively few of the hundreds of weapons there gathered together for the scrap-heap have been discarded because of any flaw or other fault, but merely because they have become outclassed or out-of-date. In connexion with the Gun Wharf are the buildings containing the vast supplies of arms, from which at a moment’s notice 40,000 or 50,000 men could be equipped. 88

A large volume would be required to deal adequately with all the many interesting features of the dockyard and its life; but as one watches the men at work, the seamen getting stores aboard, or fitting out, one cannot but feel that in their tireless and swift activity there is still that spirit animating the men of all grades which from Armada times have served to make them the best seamen afloat. Each century, from the closing years of the sixteenth, has brought its wonderful record of work done within the dockyard walls, just as each age has done what was at the time required of it swiftly and well. In the eighteenth century the vast number of sixty-six huge line-of-battle and other war ships were launched from the slips, amongst them the *St George*, *Prince of Wales*, *Princess Royal*, and famous *Ramillies*, all of ninety-eight guns, with the leviathan *Britannia* of one

hundred; and in the succeeding century this output was more than doubled.

From Portsmouth Dockyard, too, went afloat the first paddle boat, the *Hermes*, and out of it from Henry VIII's reign onwards have gone galleons, line-of-battle ships, ironclads innumerable, flying "the meteor flag of England," to earn immortality and the crown of glory which attaches to brave deeds done and daring acts accomplished.

Amid the modern bustle and life of Portsmouth town there yet, happily, remain for those who care for such things some memorials of the glorious past. The old Sally Port is one of these places. There, surely, if in any place in the town, ghosts must walk, where once so many famous men, and those destined to become famous, embarked for enterprises which but too often proved the truth of the Gray's saying, "The path of glory leads but to the grave." The tablet affixed to this old gateway tells its history better than any eloquence. It reads, "From this place naval heroes innumerable have embarked to fight their country's battles." 89

In the High Street stands not only St Thomas' Church with its imposing memorial to the murdered Duke of Buckingham in the south chancel, and the house where the Duke was assassinated, but also the George Hotel at which Nelson spent his last hours before setting out on the cruise which ended in death and the victory of Trafalgar. Here he breakfasted on September 14, 1805.

At any rate, at this time, as a contemporary writer says, "He was physically of a frail and unheroic build, being slight, sickly-looking, and weak. Moreover, ere he set forth on his last glorious voyage, dysentery and fever had already shattered his frame so much that a far less wound than he was destined to suffer would as likely as not have proved fatal.... He had a hacking cough, but there was that in his eye—fire and the unquenchable glint of genius—which, with his high and noble courage, made him yet a hero and a born leader of men and deviser of great affairs."

In Broad Street stands the Blue Posts Inn. Not, alas! the immortal hostelry of Marryat's *Peter Simple* and of innumerable other sea stories since his day, but a bastard growth which sprang up after the old inn was destroyed by fire in 1870. The old rhyme, which was scratched on one of the window panes,

This is the Blue Postesses,  
Where the midshipmen leave their chestesses,  
Call for tea and toastesses,  
And, alas! forget to pay for their breakfastesses.

must, we think, in its day have been one of the most quoted of all poetic efforts.

The famous Star and Garter inn is, fortunately, still standing hard by the Point or Floating Bridge. Here, in the cosy bar parlour, which seems redolent of other days, one can sit and smoke at the same table round which Nelson, Howe, Rodney, and other "old sea dogs," used to foregather, gossiping, possibly discussing plans of campaign, and smoking old-time churchwardens, which had the great advantage of smoking cool and keeping the smoke out of their eyes. Among the many other famous visitors of the past were Louis Philippe on his flight into exile, Sir John Franklin and King William the Fourth, "the Sailor King," who when Prince of Wales often occupied a bedroom which is still shown. In the coffee room is a curious survival, a huge cupboard, or secret chamber, measuring about 10 ft. by 6 ft. There is nowadays no door to this room, which tradition asserts was a hiding-place from the pressgang, or possibly (which seems even more likely) was a "hole" used by smugglers. The Star and Garter remains a fine relic of old Portsmouth, and one of the most interesting survivals of former days. 90

There are, however, not a few others which space will not allow our mentioning in detail, amongst them Lord Howe's house in Highbury Street and the little shop of John Pounds, the originator of the Ragged Schools; but at least a little more than a passing mention is claimed by the birthplace of Charles Dickens in Commercial Road. The future novelist, however, did not live here long, as his father, a Pay Clerk in the Navy, was thrown out of employment at the time of a wholesale reduction of the staff. In consequence the family, fallen upon evil times, removed first to Chatham and then to London, where, as all the world knows, Charles earned a few shillings a week by pasting labels on blacking bottles.

The most interesting ecclesiastical building in Portsmouth, at least to seafarers, is the Garrison Church, which was once the *Domus Dei*, or Hospital of St Nicolas, the patron saint of seamen. It is one of the few survivals of the ancient hospitals, once so numerous, at which all who came to them could reckon upon receiving hospitality and assistance. Founded in the first years of the thirteenth century by Peter des Roches, a Crusading Bishop of Winchester, it was afterwards richly endowed by King John and his successors. At the Dissolution of the religious houses its revenues were worth, in the money of to-day, upwards of £1,000 per annum; but with its suppression the charity as well as the buildings themselves suffered ruin. The church itself was for a time used as a storehouse, and although in the following reign Queen Elizabeth did something to repair the buildings the attempt was not very extensive. In Stuart times, however, the Deputy Governor of the town lived here with his suite, and it was in this house Catherine of Braganza—who landed on her coming to England to marry Charles II in 1662 at the old Sally Port—lodged. And in the *Domus Dei* the private celebration of their marriage took place, followed a few hours later by a public celebration in the Governor's house. The record is kept in the archives of St Thomas's Church. The church of *Domus Dei* contains many deeply interesting memorials and articles of ecclesiastical furniture. The fine groined roof dates from the thirteenth century and is a part of the original building. 91

To the *Domus Dei*, it is interesting to note, some of the captured and sick Spaniards out of the Armada ships, as well as some of Drake's wounded seamen, were brought, this being the last occasion on which the building was used for its original purpose.

Around Portsmouth itself are, it is needless to say, many picturesque and interesting places, but to most seafarers, because of its connexion with the Napoleonic naval wars and picturesque situation at the head of the harbour, Porchester Castle will make most appeal.

Long before Portsmouth had any existence Porchester was a Roman and Saxon fortress under the name of

Caer Peris. In the days when Roman galleys made their way up the tortuous channels of the harbour Porchester was their objective, and it is here that “a strong camp such as is familiar in many parts of the country was formed.” In the name Porchester many authorities trace the fact that before the tidal currents of the Solent had silted up the channel and the beach on which it stood, it was a port in the true sense of the word, and was so distinguished from the other “chesters” of Wessex by its prefix. There is a legendary story concerning the village of Porchester that it was in Saxon times one of the twenty-eight chief cities of Britain, then known as Caer Peris, which was built by a son of Belin, named Gurgant, who lived about 375 B.C., and that it was here that Vespasian landed on invading the country to make war on the Belgae.



### FAREHAM

The site of the castle itself, which stands on the eastern side of the tongue of land, is large, the huge quadrangle within which it is contained occupying nearly nine acres, and the view of it as one approaches it up the harbour is impressive and singularly picturesque. The Great Tower or Keep standing at the north-west corner is the oldest remaining portion of the original building, and dates from Saxon times. Most of the buildings are nowadays in a ruinous state, but there are several floors in the Great Tower which are still in fair repair, and can be visited. These were provided for the accommodation of the host of prisoners incarcerated here during the French wars, for whom room could not be found on board the prison hulks in the harbour. The life of these captives and their occupations is told most interestingly in Sir Walter Besant's story, *The Holy Rose*. How numerous the unfortunates were and how inadequate the accommodation as regards sanitation, light, air, and room may be gathered from *The General History of Hampshire*, which states, “At one time during the great war there was a multitude of nearly five thousand prisoners cooped up within the walls of Porchester Castle,” and that then and in 1761, when there were numerous French and Spanish prisoners of war confined there, “the old building suffered much from pulling down temporary structures put up for their use, as well as breaches made in the walls by prisoners who escaped from their confinement.”

During the Napoleonic wars it is stated that a total of no less than 8,000 prisoners of war were incarcerated at Porchester Castle, where they languished until they died, were exchanged, or were released at the end of hostilities. To occupy time, which must have hung heavily on the hands of most—only a comparatively small number being provided with employment either in the grounds of the castle as gardeners, or as servitors on their comrades—many made toys, which they sold when they could to visitors and others, whose curiosity had drawn them hither, for the purpose of supplying themselves with additional rations and tobacco. Some of the ingenious articles so fashioned out of wood, or sometimes carved out of the bones of the prisoners' food, are preserved in the museum at Portsmouth and in the curio cupboards of houses in the district. In the middle of the last century ships, carts, boats and animals so carved could occasionally be picked up in the cottages at Porchester and the neighbouring towns and villages of Fareham, Cosham, Wallington, and Wymering.

At the conclusion of peace at Paris, in June, 1817, the last of the prisoners departed, and the castle was for a time partially used for barracks, but soon was abandoned to the fate which overtakes all disused buildings, decay and ruin. Nowadays it has little of interest save the memories of former times when Kings (notably King John) frequently visited it, and when its cellars of wine were famous. In its somewhat scanty records occur some curious entries, such as “Paid to Peter de Roche, Bishop of Winchester, in 1220, 100s. towards the cost of fortifying the castle.”

And another, “On June 12, 1205, the Constable of Porchester was ordered to supply a ship, and on June 23rd the villeins of Clere Episcopi, with wine.”

It would also appear from these old records that the castle was chiefly used as a Royal storehouse, for we find an order, dated February 6, 1227, for the Constable “to let one Nicholas, of the King's chamber, have and take to London for the king's use fifteen hundred pounds of wax kept in the castle.”

In the middle of the last century—though it may scarcely be credited—there was some idea of converting the

castle into a hospital; but the Commissioners appointed to report upon its suitability or otherwise for the purpose discovered in the building, which was by that time fallen into ruin, with the rooms badly ventilated and lighted, possessing practically no drainage and no outbuildings, situated upon a low, bleak spit of land and surrounded by miles of mud flats exposed for long hours daily, and containing within its encompassing walls the parish church and graveyard, few recommendations for the purpose in view. The scheme was, therefore, abandoned and the place given over finally to decay.

The original Augustinian Priory, which was established in 1133 within the outer walls of the castle, was removed to Southwick, Hants, two decades later. Of the old foundations, and more especially of the beautiful and magnificently-proportioned chapelries of famous William of Wykeham, to whom Winchester Cathedral owes so much of its beauty, scarcely a trace remains. It was at Southwick in 1445 that Henry VI's marriage was celebrated with Margaret of Anjou.

Porchester Castle Church, dedicated to St Mary (originally a portion of the Priory founded by Henry I), standing in the south-west corner of the quadrangle, has some good Norman work in it. It has been from time to time somewhat unhappily restored, but possesses a most interesting and notable Norman font. The church, as a whole, moreover, is very picturesque.

Porchester Castle, as one leaves it, as we did at sunset on a summer evening to thread our way down the tortuous channel back to Portsmouth, forms a singularly impressive and romantic picture. The ancient ivy-grown keep, the crumbling walls, the air of hoary antiquity (alas! so ruinous), and the luminous evening haze which at such times seems to envelop it form a picture which does not soon fade from the mind, and conjures up memories of the stirring days of old when the fortress was able to resist the fiercest attack which could be directed against it.

Nowadays, as one unromantic individual said, "It could be demolished in ten minutes under the fire of modern artillery"; but artists and all for whom the past has an interest or significance will wish that Porchester may be permitted to fall into gentlest ruin and slow decay unmarked by violence, and softened each year by added beauty.

Although Portsmouth Harbour is so interesting and full of life, when the time comes to up anchor and make one's way out into the Solent past the immortal *Victory* and the host of other craft which seem to be ever hanging in congested groups just outside or just inside the Point and Point Battery, one is generally ready. Portsmouth may be an exciting and interesting, but it cannot be called a restful, haven.

The Island seems to beckon one with its tree-crowned heights and wooded bays and sunny beaches. It is never unpicturesque, even from the distance of Southsea or Spithead; near by it is lovely. And never more so than in the early hours of a summer morning when there is a fresh breeze ruffling the water of the Solent and driving even a barge along a good six or seven knots. If one lays a course for Sea View and drops down the coast to Ryde, one can see something of its beauty as Spring Vale, and then that legendary haunt of the fairies and "little people" Puckspool, slide by. Not so many years ago there were those living near Spring Vale who had seen the tiny folk upon moonlight nights (or said they had, which is, of course, much the same thing) dancing on the edge of the shore by the pool, or glassing their tiny, whimsical faces in the water; and children used of summer days to lie in wait for the tiny folk who never came; but now even children are much too sophisticated to believe in these things; and so Puckspool is only a name.

Past the lovely woods of St Clare, and then Ryde comes into view. It is a smart "towny" place in the summer, and the serried rows of houses on the sea front and lower slopes of the rising ground gleam at one whitely and uncompromisingly. The spire of All Saints forms a fine landmark as well as an ornament to the town.

The town's reputation with yachting folk rests chiefly, we fancy, upon the fact that it is smart and fashionable, and is the headquarters of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. As for the anchorage, except in settled and fine weather it has nothing to recommend it. Ryde is dear, as are all the island places, and is more likely to be appreciated by the fair weather sailor and the yachtsman who "does" it because he should than by those for whom salt water, a good handy boat, and plenty of sea room have attractions. It is not a place with much romantic history attached to it, nor was it of great moment in the days when Portsmouth was climbing upwards out of obscurity; indeed, until the commencement of the eighteenth century, Ryde was little more than a collection of fishermen's huts. Its one excitement in past ages must have been the descent of the French in the reign of Richard II, who burned what there was to burn, as being one of those places where watch and ward were kept for the defence of the island and the narrow seas.

The author of *Tom Jones* wrote of it about the middle of the eighteenth century as follows: "This pleasant village is situated on a gentle ascent from the water, whence it affords a charming prospect. Its soil is a gravel, which, associated with its declivity, preserves it always so dry that immediately after the most violent rain a fine lady may walk without wetting her silken shoes. The place ... is so shaded with large and flourishing elms that its narrow lanes are a natural grove or walk, which in the regularity of its plantation vies with the power of art, and in its wanton exuberance greatly exceeds it."

We have quoted Fielding because if one substitute town for village, the description which he penned a century and a half ago is fairly accurate as regards the general characteristics of Ryde of to-day. We have, however, known it rain so that a lady could *not* immediately afterwards have ventured out for a walk "without wetting her silken (or other) shoes." But one must allow the famous novelist some latitude.

There are practically no buildings of any interest except All Saints', erected from designs by the late Sir Gilbert Scott, which, though a modern church, is worth a visit. In the immediate vicinity, however, a couple of miles or so westward stands Quarr Abbey, or what remains of the ancient foundation, plus a rather unpicturesque farmhouse built from the debris. There still stands, however, a huge barn, said to be the ancient refectory. The Abbey is reputed to have been the first Cistercian foundation in England, although at least one other claims that distinction. Quarr, its name was derived from the quarries in the immediate neighbourhood, was established in 1132 by Baldwyn de Redvers, who was afterwards made Earl of Devon, and given lordship of the island. To fill the institution a party of Norman monks of the Benedictine Order were brought over from

Savigny, but a few years later it was given over to the Cistercians. De Redvers was a generous founder, for to the Abbey, which he had dedicated to the Holy Virgin, he gave "broad lands," and, his good example being followed by his successors, at last the Abbot of Quarr became one of the great personages of the Island, and was twice Warden of the Wight. The chapel, which was from all accounts "a richly architected and elegant fane," contained some fine and beautiful tombs. Notably those of the founder and his wife, William de Vernon, in his day a Lord of the Island, who bequeathed, what was in those times, the enormous sum of £330 for the erection of "stately and adequate memorial to himself."

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Here, too, was buried the Princess Cecilia Plantagenet, daughter of Edward IV, who was a beauty of her age, and after the marriage of her sister Elizabeth to Henry VII became Lady Welles. The second husband of this unconventional Princess was a commoner, one Master Thomas Kyme or Kyne, to whom she is stated to have borne two children. After her second marriage she retired to Standen, and lived there for a period of three years (1504-7), dying at the age of thirty-eight.

The memorials of all these were defaced or utterly destroyed at the time of the suppression of the religious houses.

The Abbey was fully fortified in the reign of Edward III by Royal licence, as it had been attacked in a previous reign by the French pirates who made periodical descents upon our coasts, and was on account of its great wealth "in treasure as well as lands" liable to future attack. The stout stone wall which was built to encircle it enclosed an area of no less than forty acres. Fragments of the sea gate, which had a portcullis, and the wall can still be traced; as may also some of the foundations of the Abbey itself which have of recent years been excavated.



### COWES. SUMMER

On the suppression of the monastic institutions by Henry VIII, Quarr passed by purchase into the possession of two brothers by the name of Mills, belonging to Southampton, who promptly set to work to pull down the Abbey, Church, and other monastic buildings. In the reign of James I, Sir Thomas Fleming, Lord Chief Justice of England, purchased the estate from descendants of the Mills family. So great was the destruction wrought by the vandalistic tendencies of the latter, that we are told "even in the reign of Charles I there was little more remaining to be seen of this great Abbey and its dependent buildings than at the present day."

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Hard by the Abbey grounds is a delightful woodland spot known as Eleanor's Grove, where tradition asserts the Queen of Henry II, who was a prisoner in the Abbey, lies buried in a golden coffin, which, though often sought for, has never yet been discovered!

Onward from Quarr along the coast to Cowes one passes Fishbourne, and wood-shaded Wootton Creek. One must only linger to point out the pretty village of Wootton Bridge at the head of the creek, with its feet almost in the water, and the fine sweep of Arreton Down as a background. Formerly this was a busy spot, and in the good old smuggling days many a cargo, which had escaped capture in the open Channel or in Christchurch Bay and the Solent, was silently landed on the well-wooded shores of Wootton.

Cowes has not inaptly been called "the Mecca of yachtsmen," and in the season at one time or another, to use a common phrase, "everybody who is anybody" will generally be found in its streets, or on the yachts in Cowes Roads. Along from Wootton Creek the shore is picturesque, and as one passes Norris Castle (with the twin towers of Osborne in the background) and rounds Old Castle Point pretty West Cowes and the ivy-mantled Royal Yacht Squadron Club House come suddenly into view.

Cowes is a distinctly picturesque and interesting-looking place from the water; has a much greater air of antiquity than its more bustling rival Ryde; and with the Medina cutting the town in half has the real air of a port.

The water, too, seems along this little piece of island coast to melt into the land, so frequently is the shore

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shaded and beautiful with leafy dells, and giant trees waving their branches skyward in the ambient air of summer. Across the Solent, though distant, there is the not less lovely prospect of the Hampshire highlands, and the many tinted stretches of green and grey-green woodlands which mark the New Forest on the horizon.

It is not easy to get a snug berth at any time during the summer months at Cowes. During "the week" late comers will have to put up with what they can get, or go elsewhere; or anchor far outside the charmed circle of beautiful craft, which makes Cowes Roads during Regatta week a unique water pageant, and a thing to be remembered.

If one is going to spend a week at Cowes it is delightful to do so in the river somewhere off the Folly Inn on the Eastern side of the Medina; or a little further up off Roche's or the old Mill. One is out of the way of harm (and there is plenty of that going round in the river when the tide makes out like a mill race) and one is yet not too far out of the way. Roche's Mills have not always been as peaceful as to-day. Here, as at Porchester and elsewhere, were confined numerous French prisoners of war, though how the buildings were adapted for the purpose of a gaol it is a puzzle to imagine.

Cowes, notwithstanding its appearance of, shall we say, possible antiquity, is not an "old, ancient place," such as many of the more western and more eastern seaports along the coast. It may be said to date its origin as a town from the year 1540, when Henry VIII erected, out of the materials of Beaulieu Abbey across the water on the skirts of the forest, one of the numerous protective castles which he dotted along the south coast. The growth of the place, however, must have been slow, as more than a century later, in the reign of Charles I, we are told that the town consisted of but some half score of small houses. The usefulness and possibilities of its harbour were (if we may accept the evidence of another authority) long before this discovered, so that in the early years of the seventeenth century "sometimes as many as two or three hundred vessels of all kinds and sizes were to be seen at anchor off it at one and the same time." 101

Cowes was destined to become a shipbuilding port of some consequence in the days just prior to and during the Napoleonic Wars. From the Cowes yards, amongst other ships too numerous to mention, were launched the *Repulse* and *Veteran*, each carrying sixty-four guns, Nelson's old ship, the *Vanguard*, the *Cerberus*, thirty-two guns; the *Hero*, and many another. In the year of Waterloo the first building yards of any great consequence for pleasure craft were started by Messrs White, who have, since those far off days, sent many a swift and successful yacht afloat. The necessity for such a dock as the Medina, made in 1845, measuring some 330 feet in length and 60 feet in width, will give an idea of the importance of the shipbuilding industry of Cowes in the past as well as the present.

But though, with the rise of yachting into popularity, Cowes may be said to have rapidly come to the front as "a resort of fashion and frivolity," long ere this, about the middle of the eighteenth century, it was attracting attention as a sea-bathing station, almost rivalling Weymouth. A poet of sorts ventured to affirm—

No more to foreign baths shall Britons roam,  
But plunge at Cowes, and find rich health at home.

And in the early years of the nineteenth century there were a good many bathers amongst the aristocracy frequenting the place and neighbourhood. Cowes, however, nowadays is scarcely a sea-bathing resort of particular note.

It may be safely asserted that the town has seen more than its fair share of Royal visitors. Of late years such visits have been mostly of a pleasant character. It was not, however, always so. Charles I was one of the exceptions. He landed at Cowes on September 22, 1647, and was taken to Newport as a prisoner to be confined in Carisbrooke Castle. And three years later his two children, the boy Duke of Gloucester and the unfortunate young Princess Elizabeth, also landed here bound for a like destination and imprisonment. Most of the members of the Royal House of Stuart came to Cowes at one time or another; sometimes on private visits, at others on public functions, as when Prince Charles (afterwards Charles I) honoured a military review by his presence in 1618. Henry VIII was also at Cowes on more than one occasion. And of course coming down to more recent times the late Queen Victoria, her children, and the present King and Queen have been at various times frequent visitors. 102

Of buildings of interest and note there are few in Cowes. Not only from its position but also from its connexion with much of the yachting history of the town Royal Yacht Squadron Castle, the Club House of the premier Yacht Club of the world, attracts most notice. Founded in 1812, it was not, however, until 1815 that the Club may be said really to have been established, when a meeting of the then members was held at the Thatched House Tavern (an ancient hostelry) standing in St James's Street, with Lord Grantham in the chair, and many distinguished and noble members present to support him. This meeting appears to have consolidated the Club, and to have infused new life into it. It had several homes at Cowes ere its present one; meeting early in its history in the Medina Hotel, and later on at the Gloucester Hotel. In 1856 its present Club House was acquired from the Marquess of Conyngham, who gave up to the Club his lease of the property, which he held from the Crown. The old Fort was at once rebuilt and considerably enlarged; two of the ancient guns being preserved and ultimately placed in the Club grounds.

No one who knows the Club house can fail to admit the charm of its situation, with its fine outlook east and west and across the Solent, and its well-kept and delightful lawns, shaded and backed by the historic elm trees. The prospect from the platform or terrace is indeed a wide one, including within its range the Motherbank, off Ryde, and the Spithead forts to the eastward; with Calshot Castle, the Portsdown Hills, and Southampton Water to the North; and the entry to Beaulieu River and Lympington westward. 103

The yachts belonging to the Squadron (doubtless because of the wealth of the members) have always been distinguished for size. And even in the early days of the Club (as can be seen in the picture by W. Huggins, painted in 1835) there were some large and powerful vessels flying the Club burgee. The Earl of Yarborough's (then Commodore) *Falcon*, a full-rigged ship of 351 tons carrying twenty-two guns!; the *Pearl*, of 130 tons; *Dolphin*, 217 tons; and the *Pantaloön*, the Duke of Portland's brig, being amongst the largest craft.



This was one of the most prosperous and interesting periods of the Club's history. Then into its racing arena came the famous *Arrow* of Mr T. Chamberlayne, which was so successful from year to year in all the races for which she was entered that at last she was requested not to compete! A distinction which has been conferred, we believe, upon no other yacht.

In the year 1851 the Royal Yacht Squadron gave a cup to be raced for, which the *America*, schooner, belonging to Mr J. C. Stevens, Commodore of the New York Yacht Club, won. It is this cup, erroneously known to Americans as the "Queen's Cup," and to English people generally as the "*America Cup*," which has been the cause of such frequent contests off Sandy Hook in the endeavour of various keen and patriotic English yachtsmen to regain possession of the coveted trophy. Very recently<sup>C</sup> the squadron consisted of 230 members, the fleet of 108 vessels, comprising 45 steam yachts, 10 steam (auxiliary) schooners, 28 schooners, 13 cutters, and 12 yawls, with a total tonnage of upwards of 20,400 tons.

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<sup>C</sup> These figures must be taken as approximate. They vary considerably from time to time.

Including in the past and present His Majesty's yachts *Formosa*, *Aline*, and *Britannia*, and such well-known boats as *Emerald*, *Alarm*, *Egeria*, *Sunbeam*, *Czarina*, *Mirage*, and *Wanderer*, to mention only a few.

The election of the German Emperor as a member, and his interest in yacht racing, has on several occasions, when his boat has been over here, added considerable interest to the Regatta week and races.

The history of the premier Yacht Club, in which His Majesty King Edward VII has taken so great an interest, and of which in the past more particularly he has been so active a member, may properly fill a volume by itself. There is plenty of romance in the story; just as the record of the Club may be said to be a history of English yachting in miniature. It is the ambition of every wealthy yachtsman to belong to the Squadron (comparatively few realize it) and beyond the *éclat* which attaches to membership there are certain privileges which are valuable from a monetary point of view. One is that of entering foreign ports free of dues. A more sentimental privilege, shared by no other Club, is that of flying the white, or St George's ensign, which is carried by vessels of the Royal Navy.

The old blockhouse or castle of Henry VIII, the present home of the Club, had long ceased to be of strategic importance, and even in the time of the Commonwealth had been chiefly used as a prison rather than as a defensive work; but during the French war a small garrison occupied it. The Restoration dramatist, William Davenant, the author of amongst other plays "*The Temple of Love*," acted at Whitehall on Shrove Tuesday, 1634, and "*The Wits*," his comic masterpiece, produced at a private house in Blackfriars in 1633, wrote a portion of his "*Gondibert*" whilst a prisoner in it.

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Nowadays the uses of the castle and the character of its frequenters are as far apart as the poles from those of long ago. Now in place of the garrison of old, "fair ladies and gallant men" make the place alive in summer with chatter, gossip, and laughter; and though naval and military uniforms are occasionally seen within its precincts, the sartorial attractions are rather the toilettes of the ladies from the salons of Paquin, Redfern, Doucet and Marescho Soeurs than the tailoring of naval and military outfitters. The frequenters of the castle lawn during Regatta week form a crowd almost as cosmopolitan as it is brilliant. As a fair American off a "Yankee" yacht once said, after a London season, "It's a sort of Hurlingham by the sea with a dash of Buckingham Palace garden party thrown in to steady things."

There is only one other building of any great antiquity in West Cowes, the old Church of St Mary. It is, after all, however, not very ancient, for it only dates back to the middle half of the seventeenth century; but it has the distinction of being one of the four churches erected during the Protectorship of Oliver Cromwell. Though built in 1653 it had to wait for its consecration till after the Restoration.

The principal feature of the town of Cowes itself which remains in the mind is the narrowness of its main street (which in reality is its sole business thoroughfare of distinction), and the almost metropolitan beauty and costliness of the goods displayed in some of its shop windows. The High Street, however, is always fascinating during the yachting season by reason of the crowd of well-dressed and famous people who throng it; making it appear more like Bond Street in the merry month of May than the rather mean and narrow thoroughfare it actually is.

There is little to interest one at East Cowes, which is chiefly given over to fine houses and villa residences. Whippingham Church possesses attractions for most American visitors, and for those to whom a pretty church with sentimental memories, rather than distinguished architecture and antiquarian interest, appeals. Though originally one of the oldest churches in the island, it has (from the time of Nash's vandalism) suffered much in the way of alterations, restorations so called, and additions. So that nowadays little remains of the original building or of antiquity.

106

Most yachting folk take a trip up the Medina to Newport, and historic Carisbrooke. It is well worth doing, although there is nothing of interest in Newport itself. But a description of the castle and its engrossing historical story and associations does not come within the scope of the present volume.

Few, save the "butterfly" type of visitor and yachtsmen, we fancy, after all regret the time for departure from Cowes when it comes. The town has little interest save its modern side of seafaring life, and fashionable amusements. And in this circumstance presents a sharp contrast to the fascinating and historical havens along the coast of the mainland both eastward and westward of it.

Along the coast westward, past pretty Gurnard Bay beloved by those who picnic, and Newtown haven, where, hidden away—much as is Buckler's Hard across the Solent in Beaulieu River—lies the decaying Francheville, once an important harbour and town, rivalling in prosperity and population Newport itself, and then Yarmouth comes in sight almost at the extreme north-western corner of the Island.

It is a quaint, quiet, foreign-looking old place, lying low with a fine sweep of hills for a background, where a day or two can be pleasantly enough spent. In its past history one catches a glimpse of stirring days and sea-

roving life such as distinguished the many ports of Devon and Cornwall in those far-off times when to go a-pirating was to show one's enterprise and patriotism, and exhibited as well sound commercial instincts which would do credit to the average company promoter of the twentieth century. Yarmouth still possesses some standing as a port of embarkation and debarkation between the island and the mainland. It was so distinguished in its more prosperous days, and indeed as far back as the twelfth century, when it was incorporated by Baldwyn de Redvers, Earl of Devon. It was very probably in those remote times addicted to piracy, and that on a fairly extensive scale, for the town appears to have earned the vengeance of the French on several occasions. The latter were over at Yarmouth "much to the town's hurt and loss, and the people's affright," in the year 1377, when so many other seaports on the south-west coast suffered severely from Norman and Breton marauders. The place on that occasion was burnt almost to the ground and sacked. The inhabitants fleeing inland towards Newport, to return later to find their homes destroyed, the best ships in the harbour gone, and the smaller boats scuttled. 107

Once again, about a century and a half later, in 1524, a noted French pirate named Claude D'Annebaut was descried approaching round Sconce Point, and although some sort of resistance seems to have been offered it was futile, for the bold sea rover landed his men, drove those of the inhabitants he did not butcher out of the town, which latter he promptly set about plundering and burning. He appears to have saved the lives of "some of the properest maids, and wives not too long wedded for his own good pleasure and that of the pirates with him," in addition to which outrage D'Annebaut, who to do him justice was a "proper rogue and no respecter of God nor man," burned down the church, took the altar vessels, and saw that nothing of portable value was left for the people of Yarmouth.

It was then that the great castle builder, Henry VIII, came to the rescue, and in 1539 a blockhouse or round tower was built on the site of the destroyed church, and in it were mounted "a sufficiency of great cannon to keep at bay those bloody pyrates the French." Of whatever size the "great cannons" may have been, they appear to have served their intended purpose most successfully, for although the French on several other subsequent occasions were seen off the coast at the back of the island and in the jaws of the Solent, they did not further trouble Yarmouth. 108

So, on its peaceful way, went the little town, which one may imagine was very much what it is at the present time, consisting of a group of a few score of houses planted on the low-lying land at the mouth of the Yar. Notwithstanding the fact that few of the houses are of any great age, if one except the interesting George Inn, which was once the residence of Sir Robert Holmes, and had the honour of sheltering Charles II on his visit to the town in 1671, Yarmouth has that old-time air of sleepy indifference to modern ways and modern things which is not the least part of many an old-time seaport's charm. Except in the summer, when hordes of excursionists from Lymington and Bournemouth invade its old-world street, the town appears to go to sleep, and dream of the time when some bold smuggler of the Hampshire coast used to run his cargoes here, and when tubs and bales on which no duty had been paid formed the contents of many an honest and upstanding man's cellar. Only a few years ago, indeed, the pulling down of one of the old houses was frequently the means of bringing to light a forgotten or hidden "cache" in which tubs and bales of lace had long lain concealed.



**YARMOUTH, I.O.W.**

The town, notwithstanding the absence of buildings of note, has a general picturesqueness; but the church is a seventeenth century building, not even good of its style. In it, however, there is one fine and interesting monument erected to the memory of Sir Robert Holmes, Knight and Admiral, concerning whom there are very diverse opinions. An Irishman by birth, Holmes was undoubtedly a born "ruffler," who appears to have commenced his career—which ultimately provided him safely enough with money, honour and preferment—as a soldier of fortune. He served with distinction under Prince Rupert and Charles I, and also against the Dutch later, although one writer has referred to him as "the cursed beginner of the two Dutch wars." He entered the Navy some time after the Restoration and gained honour and success. It is his capture of a Dutch treasure ship 109

from the Guinea coast in 1663 or 1664 to which the poet Dryden refers in his *Annus Mirabilis*;

Holmes, the Achates of the General's fight,  
Who first bewitched our eyes with Guinea gold.

The gold taken out of this vessel being minted into coins to which was given the name guinea. The first bore the image of an elephant upon them, having been made, as stated, of African gold.

There seems to have been no end to Holmes' naval activity, for in the following year he captured New Amsterdam from the Dutch, giving it the name by which it has ever since been known, New York, out of compliment to the then Lord High Admiral of the English Fleet, James, Duke of York. Some of his after exploits have "a strange though admirable flavour of piracy about them." Notably his expedition on the coast of Holland, when he burned a number of villages, destroyed two men of war, and captured upwards of a hundred and twenty merchantmen.

One of the most romantic episodes of his life was when he acted as second to the Duke of Buckingham in the famous duel in which he killed his opponent the Duke of Shrewsbury. The story goes that the Countess of Shrewsbury came disguised as a page to witness the encounter, in which she had a double interest, one of the combatants being her husband, the other her lover. 110

Ultimately bold Sir Robert settled down in 1667 to a shore life as Governor of the Wight, which office he held until his death in 1692.

Even his monument enshrines an adventure, as characteristic, one would imagine, as any in which he was ever engaged. Underneath the whole affair, at any rate, lurks a spice of the Irish wit which is said to have distinguished him, and to have made him an agreeable opponent and even victor. Holmes upon capturing a French vessel, found on board of it, so the story goes, an unfinished statue in marble, intended to be completed as one of Louis XIV of France, and to be then placed in the palace at Versailles. The sculptor who was engaged to carry out the work happened to be on board the ship, and it occurred to the ingenious Sir Robert that here was an excellent chance of obtaining a monument of himself at a low cost. So he compelled the artist to complete the figure as a portrait statue of himself, and then had it placed in the church of the town for which, notwithstanding his overbearing ways and erratic methods, he had done so much.

If the likeness is a good one—and there seems reason to believe it is—it is not difficult to understand the character of the man it represents. In the strong featured, hard, and masterful face one easily traces evidence of the qualities which made him a terror to the Dutch, and one of the most successful of the legalised sea-rovers of the last half of the seventeenth century. In the life story of Sir Robert Holmes there is, indeed, enough of romance and adventure to make a shelf of novels of the type of *Westward Ho!* were there but a new Kingsley to use the material.

And as one stands out of the little harbour, on one's way further west, long after the pleasant little town, low-lying but picturesque, has faded out of sight astern, it is the memory of this old sea dog, truculent no doubt, but an Englishman to the backbone, that remains in the mind, "routing the King's enemies, and carrying fire and sword instead of merchandise, along the coasts of Holland and through the Channel, and across the wide Atlantic to the New World." 111

## Chapter IV

### Southampton—Beaulieu River—Lymington

To enter the generally placid stretch of sea known as Southampton Water, in the early morning of a summer's day or at sunset, past the crooked nose of land on which Calshot Castle stands, whether it be aboard a Castle liner or a forty-footer, is an experience of great charm. We know of few wide stretches of sea water which are so beautiful and so interesting, or where the effects of morning mists and the rose and gold of sunset skies are seen with greater charm. And as one advances up the Channel past the mouth of the pretty Hamble River, and Netley towards Hythe, where so many bring up (though with small craft it is possible to sail on past Millbrook to Redbridge and enter the Test), glimpses are seen of the edge of the distant New Forest and the green-grey trimming to the Hythe shore.

Nowadays Southampton Water is, indeed, a busy, though silent, highway, for along it pass all kinds of craft from the wherry to the stately Atlantic liner; from the white-sailed racing cutters to the barges with red-brown canvas and a look of the Thames and Rochester about them, with dingy colliers and rust-red "tramps" as a foil to pleasure craft. Different nowadays, indeed, is the Water from what it was when frigates and seventy-fours spread their wide expanse of snowy canvas to catch the light north and north-westerly airs which came down from the Hampshire highlands, and when trading brigs and East Indiamen crept up with the flood.

Hythe, but for an excess of mud which is the bugbear of most tidal estuaries, is as good a place off which to bring up as any seafarer could wish. In its sleepy narrow streets, quaint houses, and picturesque gardens lies a charm which is very grateful after a week or two on salt water. The townlet, which clings, as it were, to the outskirts of the New Forest, with its feet all the while in the water, is rightly enough beloved of artists, who, in the quaint old-time roofs and walls of its houses and cottages and its amphibious inhabitants, find types and inspiration. Here, in the flesh and in a garb which generally contains tacit concessions to the joint needs of shore life and sea life, one meets characters which might have stepped out of the pages of W. W. Jacobs's *Sunwich Port*. Descendants of the men who half a century or so ago, at the darkling of the moon, made their way up the silent stretch of water, with boats loaded to the gunwales with contraband spirits, tea, and silks (after surreptitious visits to French luggers in the offing off Eaglehurst), and who, upon safe landing at dead of night, melted away with their packhorse trains into the solitudes and thickets of the New Forest.

113

There still hangs a romantic flavour around old-world Hythe which places it in sharp contrast to its big, up-to-date, bustling neighbour across the water. From Hythe, too, one may push one's way up to Redbridge, in gig or dinghy, and thence onward, through green, flower-decked meadows and past rush-grown pools, with a background of swelling, wooded uplands, to historic Romsey, with its abbey (founded in 907 by Edward the Elder), which saw the coming of the Norman conquerors and knew also what terror marked the inroads of the Danes.

Southampton, the "Liverpool of the South," whose now ruinous and picturesque walls once did such excellent service against the French pirates of long ago, and, indeed, probably saved, not alone the town, but also the county from being sacked and over-run with fire and sword, retains many historic memories in spite of the bustling spirit of modern commerce which now pervades it.

The history of the town dates from the far-off times of the Roman occupation, at a period far anterior to the date of the Christian era. Of this occupation and of the possession of the surrounding country by the Roman legions of Julius Cæsar and his successors there have been many evidences discovered in recent and former times within the confines of the town. The pulling down of ancient buildings, the making of sewers, and excavations for dock extensions have often resulted in the discovery of beautiful ornaments and burnt clay vessels dating from Roman times. And there also exist traces of the Roman road which led from Southampton northward to Winchester, and of the Roman fortified camp of Clausentum hard by at Bitterne on the River Itchen.

114

The first authentic record of the Saxon occupation of the town, then known as "Hanton," "Hantune," or "Old Hampton," occurs in the ninth century, when the place would appear, from existing chronicles and records, to have been one of considerable importance. Several authorities, indeed, ascribe the protecting walls, and the castle and keep, situated in the north-western corner of the town, to the Saxons. Of these things, unhappily, but few traces now remain. The town, with its sheltered harbour and its rising prosperity, did not escape the attention of the Danes, who, at various times during the ninth and tenth centuries, proved such scourges to the various places on the south coast. The town, in fact, might almost have been considered at those periods as a landing-place or base from which the Danes ravaged the surrounding country and directed their attacks upon Winchester and other inland towns.

During the reigns of Ethelwolf, about 838, and Ethelbert, about 860, so well carried out were the raids of these Danish pirates, and so large was the force taking part in them, that even inland Winchester itself was reached along the ancient Roman road and plundered.

To antiquarians the fact that in the reign of Athelstan, 928, two mints were set up at Southampton will be evidence of its size and importance, and doubtless the existence of these money-making institutions had not a little to do with the fact that a few years later the Danes again made one of their descents upon the town and plundered it without mercy. Edmund Ironside, in consequence of the hold these invaders succeeded in getting upon the country, had on the decease of Ethelred to consent to a division of it with the Danish King.

115

During the reign of King Canute in the following century, when the Anglo-Danish Government was firmly established, Southampton was made the principal Royal residence, and, at any rate, traditionally there are many spots in the town associated with the name of this ruler. Several places in the neighbourhood of Southampton—Lymington, for one—claim to be the scene of King Canute's historical rebuke to his courtiers. Tradition, however, places the spot at Canute's Point, a projecting spit of land at the mouth of the Itchen.

Regarding the incident to which we have referred we cannot do better than quote Camden, who himself derived his information from that old chronicler Huntingdon. By him we are told that the king, "having caused his chair to be placed on the shore as the tide was coming in," said to the latter, "Thou art my subject, and the ground I sit on is mine, nor can any resist me with impunity. I command thee, therefore, not to come up on my ground nor wet the soles of the feet of thy master." But the sea, immediately coming up, wetted his feet, and he, springing back, said, "Let all the inhabitants of the earth know how weak and frivolous is the power of princes; none deserves the name of king but He whose will heaven, earth, and sea obey by an eternal decree." "Nor," we are told, "would he ever afterwards wear his crown, but placed it on the head of the crucifix."

This tale, like that of the heroic Sir Bevis of Southampton (who conquered the thirty-foot high giant) and his squire Ascupart, which is inshrined in a ballad and in chap-books, may perhaps be mythical to a high degree; there are however stirring stories connected with the ancient port which may be accepted as being founded upon actual facts. 116

The Hanton of Danish piratical raids, burned and ravaged by those terrible scourges of our eastern and southern coasts, was, however, destined to be rebuilt again and again, and eventually become one of the great ports of the Western world and the *locale* of an extensive passenger traffic.

After the Danes there came from far Genoa, sailing the stormy waters of the Mediterranean and the wild stretch of the Bay of Biscay, other marauders scarcely less dreaded or less cruel; and then, when Hanton was more able to resist and when commerce came flowing towards the island kingdom from the scattered nations of the east, there sailed up the ten miles of blue-green water, so lovely and changeful as to inspire poets, the rich argosies and galleys laden with stuffs, carpets, wines, woods, gold, silver, and gems.

Since the days when Norman William defeated Saxon Harold on the bloody field of Senlac the history of Southampton becomes much more authentic and clearly defined. Indeed, in the years immediately following the Norman Conquest its importance, from its nearness to the coast of France and of Normandy and its splendidly protected harbour, was more than ever appreciated, and it soon became a favourite port of embarkation for the Norman kings on their way from England to their French duchy.

With the coming of renewed and greater prosperity the religious houses and institutions, which had suffered so severely at the hands of the Danes during the times of internecine disorder, were rebuilt, reorganised, and restarted on their careers of ecclesiastical and charitable usefulness. Many of the old churches and monasteries, of which there were not a few in the town and neighbourhood, were reopened, and in the reign of Henry I (1124) the Priory of St Dionysius was founded. The ancient walls were strengthened and rebuilt, and the castle was styled a Royal fortress by Stephen, and in the following reign the town received its Charter of Incorporation, which subsequent monarchs down to Henry VI on various occasions confirmed. 117

Henry VIII was, as we have already seen, keenly convinced of the value of fortifications, and after a visit paid to the town, in company with unfortunate Anne Boleyn, the defences of the town in general and the walls in particular were by his directions put into a better state. In addition the king gave a "great piece of ordnance" (a valuable gift in those days), which is still preserved and venerated; but if Henry, by these acts and the building of that outer work of defence, Calshot Castle, did something to preserve the lives and property of the citizens from foreign attack, a little later in his reign, when the suppression of the religious houses was undertaken, the town and immediate neighbourhood suffered as severely as any part of the south of England from the doings of Thomas Cromwell and his abettors. The abbey of Beaulieu, Netley, and St Denys, the Grey Friary and other charities were suppressed, and their revenues, accumulated wealth, and priceless treasures in the shape of plate and reliquaries were seized, and whatever abuses existed, and doubtless many did, Southampton was in many ways the poorer for the confiscation.

It was one of the several places in the counties of Hants and Dorset which benefited by the liberality of King Edward VI in the matter of a Foundation Grammar School. The visit of the king and his reception at the hands of the townsfolk in 1552 was of so satisfactory a character that a Free Grammar School was founded and a building erected in Bugle Street was used for the purpose until as recent a date as 1896, when the school was transferred to a more commodious home in West Marlands. The old school building nowadays is used for the purposes of the Court for the county magistrates.

Southampton was visited by "Good Queen Bess" on several occasions, and the present arms of the town date from August 4, 1575, when the Queen granted them by a patent. In them are incorporated a shield bearing the county roses, supported by two lions rampant. The shield itself is surmounted by a castle, out of which rises "a quene, in her imperial majestie, holding in the right hand the sword of justice, in the left the balance of equitie." In addition to these appear also "two ships-proper on the sea." 118

Charles I and his Court and Council came and stayed at Southampton in the first year of his reign to escape the plague, and whilst here the King renewed and extended the charter, possibly, as was often the case, for a valuable consideration.

Just forty years later the town was visited by the plague, and not only did the inhabitants die off by thousands, but the place was brought to a terrible condition of desolation and want. As in many other towns of Hampshire and the adjacent county of Dorset, a public subscription was opened, and the King (Charles II) himself headed it with a handsome donation.

Since the times to which we have thus briefly referred many Royal persons have visited Southampton, adding, by their visits, to its prosperity and prestige; but their doings have not been of engrossing interest to any save the townsfolk, and call for no detailed reference here.

Of long-past times, when knight and squire and man-at-arms passed along the High Street, which to the present day has preserved something of its old-time quaintness, and beneath the Bar Gate to the waterside, from whence they used to embark on board the transports of that day for the French wars of Edward III and Henry V, there remain many traces. Of the interesting imposing town walls which formerly enclosed the place there are—more especially along the west shore—considerable, though somewhat ruinous, portions left standing. 119

Once washed at high tide they are now separated from the water's edge by a wide roadway and promenade. The walls, which are about forty feet in height, are embattled, and pierced for the discharge of arrows and firearms by the defenders. One of the most prominent features of this stretch of wall along the west shore is the fine, high corner tower—but alas! much spoiled and hidden by the modern inn literally built on to it—known as the Arundel Tower, from the fact that considerable repairs were made to the original structure in the latter half of the fifteenth century by one Thomas FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel. It was with the idea of protecting this tower from the action of the sea (which until quite comparatively recent times washed its base at every tide) that the lightermen of Southampton were by ancient custom enjoined to carry stone from the Isle of Wight and deposit it on the shore near the walls to counteract and break the force of the water.

Almost midway between the northern and southern extremities of this stretch of wall is another semi-circular tower, with a high parapet, which rejoices in the somewhat singular name of the Catch Cold Tower. Further southward along the wall stood the fourteenth-century entrance to the town known as the Bridle Gate, at the foot of Simnel Street, leading up from the waterside to the base court of the castle. The keep, a circular tower, stood on a high mound of made earth. Hard by is one of the most interesting survivals of former times, an exceptionally well-preserved vault of the late Norman period, possibly the wine store of the castle, and bearing on the stone sides of the doorway marks, we have ourselves seen, caused most probably by the porters' shoulders as they passed through with their loads, and just beyond this is a stretch of arcaded wall, the arches of which are in different styles, on top of which runs a parapet and a walk for the sentry to pass along.

120

This piece of the old walls contains traces of several interesting Norman windows and doors dating from about the twelfth century. The new battlemented top afforded complete protection to the defenders and permitted them easily to cover with their arrows or shot an approaching enemy.

It is through one of the arches we have referred to—several of which were probably open for the purpose of affording means of ingress and egress for the townsfolk—that the interesting building commonly known as King John's Palace is reached. Historians are fairly well agreed that this almost unique building—a Norman dwelling house—with its thick rough walls, tiny windows and rough-hewn rafters, was the king's house attached to the neighbouring castle in the reign of King John, even if not used as such by other Sovereigns. An inspection of the National Records provides a considerable amount of information concerning its repair at various times, safe custody, and the fact that it was esteemed as a Royal residence. In an adjacent wall are the remains of a fine Norman fireplace, by the side of which it is even likely that Henry I waited in November, 1120, for news of the White Ship and his son, Prince William, who was drowned by its wreck off the French coast. The West Gate is another deeply interesting relic of long ago, and forms the remaining building of interest contiguous to this portion of the old town walls.

There are many scattered traces of the walls still discoverable, notably near the Royal Southern Yacht Club House, close to what is known as the Water Gate, and adjoining the God's House Tower in the south-east portion of the anciently enclosed town and the Polymond Tower to the north-east.



**SOUTHAMPTON**

The famous God's House, Hospital, and Chapel, although the ancient house has been sadly modernized, is one of the most interesting blocks of buildings in Southampton. The last-named is also known as the French Church, or St Julian's, from the fact that it was devoted to the use of French Protestant refugees. In the chapel lie buried the bodies of three distinguished men of Henry V's reign, the Earl of Cambridge, Lord Scrope of Masham, and Sir Thomas Grey of Heaton, whose conspiracy and execution form a stirring incident in Shakespeare's play, *Henry V*. 121

It was whilst the king was waiting with his assembled host in 1415 for a favourable wind to carry them to the invasion of France that a conspiracy to murder him was discovered, in which the three persons we have just mentioned were implicated. In those stirring times trials were speedily gone through, and within a very few hours of the discovery of the ringleaders in the plot they had been tried, condemned, and executed outside the Bar Gate.

Although God's House has been modernized and has not such architectural interest as, say, the Earl of Leicester's Hospital, Warwick, St Cross, Winchester, and others we could name, it yet forms a good example of the ancient hospitals, or alms houses, and is amongst one of the oldest still remaining in England. The chapel dates from the latter end of the twelfth century, and is in the Transitional Norman style of architecture. It is only fair to say that the restoration, so far as the interior is concerned, has been very carefully and sympathetically done. The exterior has been cased, and this, of course, has destroyed much of its interest. The chancel arch is almost Early English in character, and the doorways are of the round-headed type; and at the eastern end there is a piscina of (probably) thirteenth century workmanship.

The date of the foundation of the hospital is not certain, but it is popularly thought to have been sometime during the reign of Henry III. In the year 1332 Edward III confirmed the various grants which had been made in connexion with it, but two years later conveyed it at his queen's instigation to the then recently founded College of Queen's Hall, Oxford, which still holds the patronage. The ancient house buildings have now passed away, and their place has been taken by others more in keeping with modern ideas as to convenience and sanitation. 122

The chapel, as we have already stated, happily survives. In the reign of Elizabeth, and possibly even before that time, it was given as a place of worship for the refugees who had fled from Catholic persecution and Spanish tyranny in the Netherlands. But in the reign of Charles II complaints having been made that English Nonconformists used the place as a refuge against the harsh laws which then pressed so heavily upon them, and a complaint also having been lodged by residents in the Channel Islands that their fellow countrymen were prejudiced against the English Liturgy by the Nonconformists attending the chapel, it was ordered that in future the Liturgy and service should be conducted in the French language as at the chapel of the Savoy in London; and the service is so performed down to the present day.

The East Gate of the town as long ago as 1773 proved so great an obstruction to commerce and traffic that it was pulled down. It was not of any great historical, architectural, or antiquarian interest, and had probably been at various times "tinkered" so that little of its original features, or even materials, remained at the time of its demolition.

Southampton's most notable and impressive survival of medieval times is found at the northern extremity of the ancient walled town, where the new town may be said to meet the old. It stands—as did Temple Bar—an interesting, though incongruous, survival amidst the noise and throng of twentieth-century traffic, houses, and bustle. Known anciently as the "Barred" Gate (corrupted eventually into the name "Bargate" it now bears), it is undoubtedly one of the "Bars of Hampton" which we find mentioned as far back as the twelfth century. 123

Although portions of the Bargate are of widely different periods—the arches which span the roadway and two footpaths—for example, it is still preserved very much as it stood in medieval times, and forms a most interesting example of Norman architectural work. The north front is wonderfully well preserved, and the projecting buttresses and finely-moulded arch, with the picturesque front of semi-octagonal shape, with heavy machicolations, form a very striking object on approach. This front is of somewhat later date than the central part of the gate, and the lions *sejeant*, now placed on either side once stood on the bridge at the far side of the ditch which ran outside.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth a Guildhall was formed in the chamber above the main entrance gate, and this has been at various times enlarged and improved, and is now used as a police court. On the northern side it is lighted by the ancient arrow-slit windows from which approach was opposed. The justices' room, with its uncompromising benches, where the sessions are held, contains several interesting relics of former times, among them the two paintings said to be those of the far-famed giant Sir Bevis, whose sword is preserved in the armoury of Arundel Castle, who played so great a part in medieval romance and ballads, and of his Squire Ascupart. The exploits of these two personages are of a distinctly legendary and even mythical character, but they figure considerably in the history of the town. The paintings were formerly exhibited outside on the walls of the gate tower. The ditch outside the gate was a double one, spanned by a stone bridge, which existed until a comparatively late period. The bank which extended between the two ditches was anciently set aside as an archery ground with targets where the bowmen of the town used to practise.

The original Bargate was undoubtedly Saxon or early Norman, consisting of a large, square central tower, with two round flanking towers, the semi-octagonal front having been erected probably somewhere about the fourteenth century. This ancient structure is undoubtedly one of the chief attractions for the archaeologist in Southampton. Its existence has been several times of late years threatened by those who regard it as an obstruction to the traffic and commerce of the town, but hitherto the attempt to secure its demolition has failed, and it is to be hoped that the gate may be spared as an almost unique (so far as the southern counties are concerned) specimen of medieval architecture of its kind. 124

Although in comparatively recent times there were many other interesting Norman and fifteenth century buildings, or remains of them, in the town, some palaces of kings and princes, others fine houses of rich merchants of long ago, there remain but few and scattered traces of them nowadays.

Of ecclesiastical buildings St Michael's Church, dating from the commencement of the twelfth century, and

still retaining many of its original features, is the chief. The tower is, probably, the oldest portion of the church, the nave and aisles being of considerably later date than the original building. The latter suffered several times at the hands of the French pirates, whose descents proved such terrifying experiences for the townsfolk in the early part of the fourteenth century. The nave was burned by these marauders in 1338, and much damage was done to the other parts of the building. There are several interesting features in the interior; a very ancient font of black limestone and a small collection of chained books never fail to arouse the interest of the antiquarian. The lofty modern spire somehow strikes an inappropriate note when seen in contrast with the somewhat "squat" building, but as a landmark it has its uses.

That the Southampton of long ago was a much more picturesque and even more interesting town than that of to-day is easily understood. Leland, who was, perhaps, rather inclined to err on the side of awarding too warm praise to the places he visited and liked, refers to it in his *Itinerary* as possessing in the reign of Henry VIII "one of the fairest streates that ys yn any town of al England, and yt is well builded for Timbre Building," and the impression made on the youthful King Edward VI was of a town which had "for the bigness of it as fine houses as be at London." 125

In those days, too, the wealthy merchants of Southampton almost rivalled those of Bristol and Plymouth.

Southampton of to-day may be described as a fairly picturesque town, though modernity and convenience, rather than beauty, distinguish the suburbs, which are so constantly extending on all sides landward; but yachting folk find it a pleasant port, and, moored off pretty and quaint Hythe within reasonable distance of the Royal Pier, can pass a week-end or even longer comfortably enough.

Almost every seaport has its distinguishing feature, and a long acquaintance with Southampton inclines one to think that the mingling of the old with the very new is what strikes the observer most forcibly. But the greatness and spirit of Southampton is not really fully realised until one stands amid the vast docks which cover so many acres. It is interesting to imagine what the merchant-shippers of former times, whose vessels were brought alongside wooden jetties and rickety wharves, would say could they but see the immense docks, colossal cranes, and busy quays of this twentieth century town.

Here craft of all kinds come and go, taking in and discharging cargoes from every quarter of the globe, bringing to the twelfth largest port of the kingdom the wines of the south and the rich and varied merchandise of Africa, India, China, the two Americas, the West Indies, and the countries of the Levant. Amid the docks, wharves, workshops, shipbuilding yards, boiler factories, and huge, unlovely warehouses of the waterside portions of the town, it is possible to realize to some small extent the ocean-going commerce and widely spread empire of the seas held by Great Britain. 126

With the ever-increasing dock extensions, Southampton each year becomes less of a pleasure town and more a great centre of commerce, carrying trade and passenger traffic overseas.

Coming up the Water, at sunset, as one gazes at the lowering, smoke-hung town ahead, with its forests of masts pencilled against the lemon-hued sky, it has a strange, pictorial beauty that full daylight denies to it. The beauty of a great port half-slumbering, half-awake, with a myriad lights creeping out one by one to challenge the silvery stars.

But Southampton Water, with all its charm, will, sooner or later, be left behind by the true vagabond of the sea, and, once Calshot is rounded, one passes along the yellow, shingly shore, with its dark belt of woods heading for Lepe, and the mouth of the Beaulieu River. This somewhat tortuous and difficult tidal way takes one into the heart of Hampshire's most lovely creek. Need's Oar Point is well named, as many have found after getting on the delusive mud of Beaulieu Spit, and one is lucky, if the tide is making out, to get so far before the ebb becomes too strong. With the flood, which will not keep one waiting more than three or four hours, and a favouring breeze one can soon run up as far as the bend of the river just below Buckler's Hard, where there are moorings, snug enough so long as no craft comes drifting down with the stream.

There is nothing in the south of England quite like Beaulieu River, or, perhaps, one should say like that portion of it which lies between the Solent and Beaulieu Abbey bridge, nine miles inland. Above the bridge all the various little streams of the Forest, which have filtered through bogs, meadows, and marshes, come together in a vast mere, the result partly of the natural narrowing of the valley, partly of some old monkish engineering works, and the overplus of this fresh water pours ultimately over the weir opposite the palace gate into the lower level of the salt water river. Above the bridge are water-lilies, rushes, and fresh water weeds and plants, and below it seaweed and saltings. Then for a course of nine miles there flows a broad, rapid, winding stream on its way to the distant sea through woods and meadows gay with flowers. Here, then, is a river left with sylvan banks undisfigured by either towing-path or factories, and whose grey-green waters are unvexed by fussy tugs or begrimed barges. 127

About five miles up from the sea is St Leonards, once a part of the abbey domain. From close by one gets one of the finest views for miles round, with peeps of Hurst Castle, the Needles' passage, and distant Spithead, and the Isle of Wight itself, to the south, stretched out widely east and west.

The ruins of St Leonards consist of a portion of the walls of a great granary fully 220 feet in length and 50 feet in width, which is now covered with ferns sprouting from every crevice, and a beautiful little chapel, the walls, floor, and windows of which are covered with a mass of plants, weeds, and creepers. Both gables of the chapel are still standing, and from beneath the ivy peep out remains of rich carved niches and tracery. In its decay the deserted sanctuary presents a lovely picture, for flowers blossom on the walls—amongst which are to be found dog roses, cranesbill, yellow barberry, wallflowers and brambles. The ancient farmhouse, the garden of which the chapel adjoins, is a handsome old house containing low, comfortable rooms, and a row of dormer windows in the roof; and the lover of the picturesque should certainly visit lovely, though ruinous, St Leonards.

In Beaulieu River there are four tides, not two, and thus it presents a rapidly changing aspect of silvery flood and ebb, which at times leaves much of the bed bare with patches of yellow gravel and here and there little pools and saltings, where seafowl and birds disport themselves and feed, and glistening squadrons of white-plumed swans sail stately to and fro. 128



Into this river, with its tiny winding creeks, which, in some instances, seem to run up into the woods themselves, in ancient times crept Danish galleys and French pirates intent upon attacking and despoiling the rich, peacefully situated, and beautiful Abbey of Beaulieu, of which, alas! few traces now remain; and thus it was that later in the history of the little red-bricked village which lies at the head of this romantic waterway, one John, Duke of Montagu, fortified his Palace of Beaulieu with moat and towers and battlements against the dreaded attack of the French privateers, who, slipping into the Solent between the Needles and Hurst Castle, made occasional raids up the Beaulieu River.

The beautiful woods which for miles clothe the river banks are probably not less ancient than the most historic portion of the New Forest itself, for there seems little doubt that the land here was wooded ground since the beginning of history. So broad is the river but a little distance below Beaulieu that, apart from the tides, there is little to suggest that it is other than an inland lake; and certainly nothing in its silent tree-clad hills to apprise the wanderer along its banks, either upwards from the sea or downwards from Beaulieu, of the existence of the strange, half-deserted village which suddenly comes upon the view round a sharp Z-like bend of the river.

Almost hidden from the sight and knowledge of man are the picturesque, though melancholy, remains of the little village which a century ago was a busy hive of industry and a veritable cradle of the British Navy of Nelson's time; but in the single street of red-bricked dwellings, once more numerous, now weathered by the sun and wind of the passing years, is a memorial, melancholy but romantic, of the days of "the wooden walls of old England," when the great shadow of Napoleon dominated Europe. Here nowadays, so far off the beaten track, lie fragments of the great shipbuilding yard which once flourished on the banks of Beaulieu River, and its story is worth the telling. 129

In the middle of the eighteenth century John, Duke of Montagu, who, in addition to his lands in this retired corner of Hampshire, owned the vast and prosperous Sugar Island of St Vincent, and inherited the rights of the ancient abbots of Beaulieu to a free harbour upon the river, conceived the idea of making a seaport upon its banks at Buckler's Hard. His methods were characterized by great perspicacity, and soon the grants of land which he was prepared to make at a merely nominal rent, and free delivery of timber, proved the means of starting what afterwards became not only a prosperous, but also a famous, community. The name, Buckler's Hard or Quay, was derived from a local family called Buckler, who, however, were not destined to become connected with the shipbuilding industry.

Favoured by the fact that the spot was close to an immense store of magnificent timber, then, as now, growing in the New Forest, and to the famous Iron Works of Sowley, it was scarcely surprising that the duke's scheme ultimately turned out quite as satisfactorily as he had expected. The noble owner of the river advertised widely the fact that ships could leave it in any wind, thus demonstrating the advantages that it had over other places such as Bristol on the Severn, and some of the ports of the Thames.

This and other claims which he made had the effect of attracting to the place a firm called Wyatt and Co. In September, 1743, the *Surprise*, of twenty-four guns, the first battleship built upon the river, was launched.

At this time the little village, which sprang up to meet the needs of the shipbuilding industry thus started, was, apparently out of compliment to its founder, known as Montagu Town; but every important reference to the place in historical records and other works is by its first name, Buckler's Hard, and the other name must have speedily fallen into disuse. 130

With a rapidity which was almost magical, there sprang up rows of houses, slips, forges, and shipbuilding yards. And soon this spot of then almost primeval solitude, where oaks old and young grew side by side almost to the water's edge, and where but for the weird and plaintive cry of seagull or peewit, and the boom of the bittern, there reigned unbroken silence, was transformed into a scene of bustle and activity, with the sound of hammer and anvil and the hum of many voices. In this secluded creek, in the dark hours of England's need, when she stood almost alone in combating the relentless advance of the great Napoleon, were built some of the most famous ships that have ever played their part in English naval warfare. From the time of the launch of the *Surprise*, which was put into commission in May, 1750, when war was declared against France, to the time when the great war ended, ship after ship was launched from Buckler's Hard, destined afterwards to play a gallant part in the struggle by sea, which only ended with Napoleon's defeat at Trafalgar and Waterloo.

The first vessel launched, though comparatively small, had a crew of 160 men, and was at first commanded by Captain Antroby, and was destined to play a creditable part in stirring events by sea, for the *Surprise* captured several French vessels, amongst the number the well-known *Vieux*, and was actively engaged in the Mediterranean during part of her commission.



### THE NEEDLES

In the designing and building of many succeeding ships one family, Adams by name, seems to have played the most prominent part. The name of Henry Adams, who, when thirty years of age, undertook the control of the shipbuilding yards, which he directed for the lengthy period of sixty-two years, first appears in a deed dated 1801, made for the firm of Adams and Co. The success of the *Surprise* appears to have led to the greatest activity at Buckler's Hard, and on the hillside above the winding river quite a small town grew, the importance of which will be more easily understood when it is remembered that at the time of its great prosperity upwards of 4,000 men were engaged in the yards. 131

From the sloops, which was the type of the first craft built, the designers proceeded by natural stages to frigates, and then battleships, which were towed down the river and round to Portsmouth to be fitted out and manned. The *Surprise*, of 1743, was succeeded by the *Scorpion*, of eighteen guns, three years later; and after a period of three years by the *Woolwich*, of forty-four guns. After this came the *Kennington*, *Lion*, and *Mermaid*, the second named having sixty guns. The *Gibraltar* followed in 1756, and on her first cruise captured the *Glaneur*, a handsome, swift, heavily armed, and strongly manned privateer, which was bought in by the Navy and renamed the *Gibraltar Prize*. The following year saw the launch of the *Coventry*, and the next year of a big frigate, the *Thames*, carrying thirty-two twelve-pounders. This latter ship saw a great deal of service and captured a large number of privateers from the enemy, but was at last unfortunately forced to strike her flag to the French owing to the enormous superiority of the attacking force. Whilst in the possession of the enemy she proved not less successful than when manned by British seamen and made prizes of no fewer than twenty English ships, but in 1796, after a great fight, she was recaptured, and fifteen years later, in company with the *Cephalus*, made a prize of eleven French gunboats and a felucca without loss, and a short time afterwards landed her marines in Sicily and, supported by men of the 62nd Regiment, defeated the French and captured a town. 132

A few years later the *Europe*, which was destined to be the flagship of the fleet in Newfoundland Waters under Vice-Admiral John Montagu, was launched; and other vessels of large tonnage, including the *Vigilant*, a sixty-four gun battleship of 1,374 tons, came from the Buckler's Hard yards. The memory of one at least of the vessels, the *Garland*, of twenty-eight guns, was perpetuated in a ballad sung in those days by West Indian negroes, which ran—

You go aboard de Flag ship,  
Dey ask you for to dine;  
Dey give you lots of salt horse,  
But not a drop of wine.

You go aboard de *Garland*,  
Dey ask you for to dine;  
Dey give you plenty roast beef,  
And lots of rosy wine.  
Ho! de happy happy *Garland*, etc. etc.

Two vessels bearing the name of *Hannibal*, an honoured one in the British Navy, were launched from Buckler's Hard, but the first had the misfortune to be captured at Sumatra by the French, who handed her crew over to the tender mercies of Tippoo Sahib, and many of them died in captivity, owing to the cruelty with which they were treated. The second *Hannibal* was launched about the year 1810, and not much more than twenty years ago there lived at Buckler's Hard in one of the houses which are now, some of them, falling into positive ruin, an old man who remembered being present at the launch of this fine ship when a small boy, and who received "a quart pot of sugar" from one of the men who came to take the ship round to Portsmouth to be fitted out.

But by far the most celebrated vessel which left the slips at this Hampshire shipbuilding yard of long ago was the *Agamemnon*, preceded by the *Brilliant* and the *Zephyr*. This magnificent vessel was commanded by 133

Lord Nelson at the siege of Celvi, where he lost his right eye, and afterwards took an important part in many of the actions of that time. She was one of the victorious fleet at Copenhagen, and in the action off Cape Finistère. But her greatest feat was when in company with the *Swiftsure* and the frigate *Euryalus* she played a gallant part in the Battle of Trafalgar.

So important did this shipbuilding yard become that King George and Queen Charlotte came on a state visit to Beaulieu in 1789, and went over to see the *Illustrious* leave the slips. And such was the skill of these Hampshire shipbuilders, and so considerable the resources of the place, that it is said a seventy-four gun battleship was frequently built in less than three years, although to her making went more than two thousand oaks cut in the New Forest hard by, some hundred tons of wrought iron, and thirty tons of copper rivets and nails.

There were brave doings at Buckler's Hard in those days when the ships were launched, and this although the spot was so secluded, lying as it did just beyond the verge of the New Forest itself, and was even less accessible than it is nowadays.

To the launching came hundreds and even thousands of country folk from far and wide, with a good sprinkling of gentry in their carriages or on horseback, many of whom joined in the festivities, balls, and entertainments, which were given in a large and lofty room of the Adamses' dwelling house. This house, which is the bottom one on the left hand side of the one remaining grass-grown and deserted street, was the scene of many festivities. The Dining Hall, that once echoed to the sounds of toasts and merriment, and of the gliding, lightly flying feet of dancers, is now little more than a lumber place in which when we were last there was a tangle of nets, fishing tackle, and boat fittings. The famous dinners given on the occasion of the signing of the contracts, or the completion of the vessels, were also in the old times given in this room. And many a Georgian beauty and many a beau, the first with powdered hair and dressed in hoop skirts and brocades, and the latter in wig, flowered waistcoat, gay coloured coat and knee breeches, must have passed up the old staircase and tripped a gay measure in the ancient dining hall. 134

On several occasions Royalty came in state to launch and christen the huge "wooden walls of old England," which stood ready for the ceremony upon the slips. King George was invariably entertained in the Adamses' house, and one can imagine the state of excitement into which the little town was thrown on the occasion of these state visits. Often, too, came news of the doings of the Buckler's Hard ships in far-off waters, tidings of victories won over the French, and of gallant deeds done by the men who manned the vessels.

But with the end of the great French War the prosperity of the place gradually declined; and on the death of Henry Adams, at the great age of ninety-two, the building of ships at Buckler's Hard fell away. During the zenith of its prosperity no less than sixty battleships were built in addition to many merchant vessels of large tonnage.

On the death of Henry Adams his two sons succeeded him, and for a time carried on the business. Their ultimate ruin and that of Buckler's Hard was brought about not so much through fault as through misfortune. The builders failed to carry out a Government contract to build four men-of-war in a year, and were unwise enough to go to law with the Admiralty. They lost their case, and in consequence not only were they ruined, but the prosperity of the village, which owed its very existence chiefly to the enterprise and administrative ability of Henry Adams, rapidly declined.

Nowadays of the vast sheds which once covered the shore not a trace remains; and only a heap of overgrown brickwork marks the spot where, in the busy blacksmith's shop, from sunrise to sunset once rang the hammer on the anvils, forging bolts which once held the great timbers of New Forest oak together. 135

There is left but one small street, and an isolated house or two of the former busy townlet, red-bricked, and with cross beams black with age, sloping roofs, and tiny paned windows. And almost the only indications of life are to be seen along the shore where the grass has overgrown the old slipways, and where a few children and fisherfolk now congregate, or near the tiny pier to which, during the summer months, excursion launches and small steamers occasionally come.

Down the street, once thronged with workmen, now grass-grown, as well as along the once busy road which skirts the river for some little distance towards Beaulieu on the Buckler's Hard side, cattle wander and sheep occasionally browse. But, notwithstanding its deserted appearance, the little group of decaying houses, which looks almost a derelict cast up by the tide, has an attractiveness that comes of its traditions and picturesque situation. There stands the little street with the river flowing at its foot, a memory of a bygone age, with the walnut tree in the Adamses' garden still surviving, green and fruitful.

And, as is only right and proper, Buckler's Hard possesses its ghost. A grey lady who wanders at times, so the story goes, along the deserted street at nightfall; and there are tales of uncanny sights and weird sounds which are heard in several of the houses. From the bulging window of the little room in the Adamses' house, in which so many of the battleships were laid down on paper by their designers, is a beautiful peep of the river and old slipways. And here, no doubt, stood, one eye on the paper before him, and the other on the yards and the work which was going on near the river's brink, Henry Adams, whose descendants are to be found at the present day in various walks of life far removed from that of shipbuilding. These occasionally return to the scene of their family's departed glories, and wander through the rooms of the old house, which has so many memories of stirring bygone days and the famous folk who once came to it. 136

At the end of this picturesque waterway stands Beaulieu Palace, and the ruins of the ancient Cistercian Abbey, which was founded by King John very early in the thirteenth century, and completed by his son and successor Henry III. The Abbey, which was one of the most beautifully situated in the south of England, owed its origin to a dream. According to the tradition upon which this idea is founded members of the Cistercian Order having greatly displeased the King, they were summoned by him to Lincoln, where it is said he intended to have them trodden to death by horses.

The monks escaped, however, owing to the refusal of the soldiers to carry out the King's barbarous order. And at night the King dreamed that he was condemned at the Last Judgement to be scourged by the very monks he had intended to have slain. This dream—as did many similar ones at that time—made a great impression

upon the King's mind; and as an acknowledgement of the evil he had intended to do, he determined to found an Abbey for the accommodation of the monks of the Cistercian Order as a propitiatory act to the Almighty.

It was at Beaulieu, which name means "fair spot," and indicates the loveliness of its situation, that he built an abbey set amid primeval forest trees, and washed by the meadow-bordered waters of the River Exe, which widens out into Beaulieu Creek. The privilege of sanctuary was conferred upon the Abbey by Pope Innocent IV about 1235, and on several occasions celebrated personages availed themselves of the protection that the Abbey was thus able to afford. Claiming sanctuary the Countess of Warwick, wife of the King Maker, took refuge here in April, 1471, after landing from France at Southampton hard by, and learning of the defeat and death of her husband at the Battle of Barnet. A few days before, too, to Beaulieu also came Margaret of Anjou, who also landed on English soil on the day of the Battle of Barnet, with reinforcements for her husband, Henry VI. 137

A few years later there hastened to Beaulieu a very different sanctuary seeker in the person of Perkin Warbeck, of ridiculous memory, the tool of Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy and the Yorkists, in flight before the forces of King Henry VII.

At the time of the suppression of the monasteries in 1539 to 1540 it is recorded that there were no less than thirty-two men, some with wives and families, living under the protection of the abbey walls.

After its dissolution as a religious foundation the Abbey and its lands experienced various vicissitudes; passing into the possession successively of one Thomas Wriothesley, afterwards created Earl of Southampton; then, by marriage, into that of Lord Montagu, the founder of Buckler's Hard; and afterwards into the family of the Duke of Buccleuch, also by marriage; and lastly was settled in 1884 by the then Duke on his second son, who three years later became first Baron Montagu of Beaulieu.

The Abbey ruins are very fragmentary and much less extensive than is the case with many institutions of a similar character which were destroyed about the same time. Anciently the grounds had an area of more than a mile and a quarter, and the church—only a fragment of which now remains—then consisted of a lengthy nave, aisles, transepts with aisles, and apsed choir, with a lofty central tower crowning the whole. When the Abbey fell into the hands of the despoilers, much of the stone of which the church was built was taken away to Hurst and used to build the castle and fort at that place.

Strange as it may seem there was anciently a prosperous vineyard attached to the Abbey, and wine was made in considerable quantities by the monks. Tradition asserts that grapes have been gathered as late as the middle of the eighteenth century; but of the vineyard no trace now remains save the ruins of the old winepress still visible about eighty yards north of the church. 138

The seat of Lord Montagu, the Abbot's Palace, is beautifully situated amid fine trees, and in close proximity to the Abbey ruins. Since it was converted into a private residence by Thomas Wriothesley, the first secular owner, it has undergone many periods of reconstruction, which have resulted in the present somewhat castle-like building.

After a day or two in Beaulieu River most yachtsmen will be inclined to agree with us that there are few more lovely spots, and if, instead of pushing up the river as far as the bend below Buckler's Hard, one brings up snugly just off Exbury Hard, under shelter of the tree-clad point on the West bank, one need have little fear that any other craft will foul one, whether coming down or up the river, as the tide sets off to the east shore.

To get out of Beaulieu River is a more difficult matter than to get in. To attempt the feat except on the ebb is almost bound to end in disaster, for there are plenty of shoals, and mud abounds. The great thing is to get out on the very top of the ebb, and not cross the line from one boom to another on the same side. If these two points are observed, the westward flowing stream will carry one as far as is needed, and then one can stand away along the coast to another Hampshire creek, more frequented, though less beautiful than Beaulieu, which leads up to quaint, old-world Lymington, with its memories of the old yachting and yacht-building days of three or four decades ago.

It is difficult as one brings up at the north end of Short Reach just below the baths, in sight of the town which seems to hang on the side of a hill, or moors alongside the town quay, to realize that long ago Lymington was a more important place than Portsmouth. Yet so it was, for the port of Lymington fitted out and supplied several English Sovereigns—Edward III amongst the number—with twice as many ships as the town which was destined to become the great naval station of to-day. 139

Lymington did not escape from French marauders, but, fortunately for the town, on one occasion the wit and charm of a certain lady named Dore so enchanted the leader of the pirates, that he went away without doing damage. The story goes that upon the landing of the pirates their leader being very hungry, he decided to put off plundering the town until his appetite was satisfied, and the house of the said Madam Dore promising the best larder, "he (the pirate leader) entered therein and made his demand. The lady of the house set before him the very best her larder provided, keeping him company with such good humour, and plying him well with good wine; when he had finished he gallantly thanked her, made his bow, and embarked without doing the smallest injury."

The wit and resource of Lymington ladies in ancient times must indeed have been considerable, for another heroine, a Mrs Knapton, figures in a romantic story connected with the Monmouth rebellion. There was a considerable party in favour of the "Protestant Duke" in the town, and the conspirators, who sought to plan how they might best assist Monmouth, met at the house of a Mrs Knapton, and deliberated over pipes and ale. But unhappily, on the occasion of one of their meetings, intelligence reached them that a party of soldiers had entered the town with a view to arresting them. Mrs Knapton promptly hustled the conspirators out by the back windows of her house, removed the pipes and ale mugs; and in order to account for the smell of tobacco in the room muffled up her face in flannel, so that when the soldiers entered they discovered nothing but an old woman, to all appearances suffering from acute toothache, and puffing at a long "churchwarden," evidently with a view to relieving her suffering. 140

The ancient townlet, with its one business thoroughfare of any importance running down precipitously to within a few score yards of the harbour itself, has in the past seen stirring times; and when the Duke of Monmouth had actually landed at Lyme Regis, intent upon driving his weak and vacillating uncle from the throne, he was proclaimed in Lymington High Street, and upwards of a hundred men marched off towards the West Country to fight in "King Monmouth's" cause. Several Lymington men paid the penalty of their Protestant zeal with their lives, when the "Bloody Assize" of the infamous Jeffreys held session at Winchester.

In the past, too, Lymington folk were not less skilful "free traders" than the rest of the famous smugglers of the Hampshire coast, and in the waterside houses existed—and probably still exist—"tub holes" and pivoted hearthstones in and beneath which many a bale of tea and lace and keg of spirits found temporary resting places.

Nowadays, however, though Lymington possesses an old-time, sleepy air, and is picturesque with irregular buildings, and surrounded by pretty country, it has lost much of its prestige even as a yacht-building place. Visitors come, it is true, and there are excellent enclosed sea baths, and it forms a pleasant enough week-end halting place on a cruise. But were it not for the steamboat service, which causes many to pass through the town on their way to and from the Isle of Wight, it would doubtless sink into one of those "sleepy hollow" little towns which seem to have had a past, to possess a tranquil present, and will have no one can tell what sort of future save one of gentle, gradual decay.

From Lymington, however, the ever attractive New Forest with its many beauty spots, is easily reached, and a day or two passed on the river, with land trips to fill in the time, is not ill spent. 141

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## Chapter V

### Poole—Swanage—Weymouth—Portland

The entrance to Poole Harbour, which lies at the extreme western limit of Bournemouth Bay, is one which yachtsmen have learned to approach with caution, lest they should take the ground on Hook Sand. But whatever the difficulties of navigating the tortuous channel which leads up to Poole Quay, past pretty Brownsea (to which custom has added the superfluous word "Island," the determination "ea" or "ey" meaning island) and its imposing castle dating in part from the time of Henry VIII, maybe there is such a charm about what has been called "the Lake Land of Dorset," that few lovers of the picturesque will pass the Haven mouth and leave it unentered.

Brownsea is, indeed, a beautiful out-of-the-world spot, with its ancient castle, once a block house of some strength, standing on guard, as it were, at the entrance to the main channel of the harbour. In the little village down by the quay, one finds a curious blending of Italian names and English dwellings, just as one finds also in the walled-in gardens of the castle relics of Italy, in the shape of medieval well-heads, etc., set amid typically English surroundings.

The castle was burnt out some years ago, and afterwards partially rebuilt, but in it is preserved a considerable amount of the old building.

On the island there is a delightful little church standing on a knoll in the centre of a woodland glade, and amid the plantations in early summer one finds a wealth of rhododendron blossoms of all kinds, scarcely to be equalled anywhere else on the south coast. The island itself is shaped like a horseshoe, and has openings towards the east, with high ground running round the edge. The views from this high pine-clad ridge, which forms so prominent a feature of the island, are extremely beautiful, and tradition states that the great Turner himself when on a visit there said that he had seen few more exquisite effects of light and shade and form in landscape than are to be found in the panorama from the western side of the ridge overlooking the beautiful Channel and the Purbeck Hills. Indeed, sunshine or storm, sunset or sunrise, it would not be easy anywhere along the coast to find more exquisite views than are to be seen in the silvery waterways of Poole Harbour, the wide stretches of moorland which environ it, and the Dorset highlands which form so impressive a background. It would indeed be difficult for an artist to find no pictures in the misty beauties of the gleaming marshland; the purple and russet of the swelling heaths, streaked here and there with patches of golden gorse; the sand dunes, gleaming yellow and jade green all around; and the wild black heath stretching ridge on ridge from the indented shores until it reaches the steep slope of Nine Barrow Down, or merges with the distant view, where the famous Agglestone lies solitary and desolate.

There is little doubt that Poole Harbour, which was probably centuries ago much more navigable than it is now, might have been made, and indeed might still be made, a place of some considerable utility as a naval station for a torpedo flotilla, and might even regain something of its prestige as a commercial port. Shut in to the south-west by the high chalk ridges of the Studland Hills, and sheltered on the east and north-east by the wooded slopes of Canford Cliffs and Parkstone, the harbour appears, when viewed from the highland, rather like a huge inland lake than a sheet of water connected directly with the sea. Not quite half the distance on the way to Wareham by the main channel, and on the northern shore of the harbour, stands the old-time and picturesque town of Poole.

Concerning the origin of Poole there is still considerable difference of opinion, but most authorities are agreed that it is less ancient than has been formerly claimed for it. It would appear to be certain, from the fact that none of the older chroniclers or chronicles—William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, Asser, and the Saxon Chronicle amongst the number—contain any mention of Poole, though referring frequently to other Dorset towns—Wareham, Wimborne, Dorchester, and Swanage, for example—that the place did not exist as a town in even Roman times. Roman remains have, however, at different times been unearthed in the neighbourhood, and there seems little doubt that the Roman by-road from Badbury Rings, now called the "Old Bound Road," probably led down to the waterside near one of the present-day quays.

Additional evidence that no hamlet or town of any importance existed where Poole now stands, even in the year 991 A.D., is afforded by the fact that, although the chronicler records an inroad of the Danes of that year in the following terms, "The army (of the Danes) went again eastward into Fromemouth, and everywhere they went up as far as they would into Dorset," there is no mention of their having ravaged any town on their way to Wareham. Even the great, and, on the whole, singularly complete, Domesday Book does not contain any mention of Poole, although nearly every town of which there is now a trace in Dorset appears therein.

Indeed, from the evidence we have briefly mentioned, it would appear that Wareham, for even a considerable period anterior to the Norman Conquest, was the port in this harbour, and for the existence of Poole there was not then any great reason. At all events, we know that it was from Wareham that Duke Robert of Gloucester, a natural son of Henry I, set sail in 1142, and how King Stephen, the enemy of Queen Maud, of whose cause Earl Robert was an adherent, came to Wareham in his absence and burned the town and captured the castle.

It would appear that Poole took its rise somewhere about this time (the middle part of the twelfth century), owing chiefly to the destruction of, and frequent attacks made upon, Wareham by the contending factions in those times of civil war. Probably the merchants and shipowners of Wareham established themselves at Poole, which was a point considerably nearer the sea, in consequence of the fact that the fortifications of Wareham, whilst evidently not strong enough to protect their interests, served the unfortunate purpose of attracting attack. But whatever may have been the reason for the foundation of Poole there seems little doubt that towards the end of the first half of the thirteenth century it was a town and port of considerable note and size, whilst Wareham had undoubtedly rapidly declined. It is possible, of course, that even in Stephen's reign there was a collection of houses near where the commercial part of present-day Poole stands.

Soon after the foundation of the town, under the circumstances we have described, it had grown to be an important piece of the Manor of Canford, with some considerable, if as yet a somewhat fluctuating, foreign trade. The inhabitants would appear, from historical data which have come down to us, to have been often troubled by the imposition of taxes and burdens by the Manor, and in consequence there was the loss of security which militated against the increase in the number of foreign vessels trading to the port. To rectify this the merchant inhabitants doubtless made up their minds to obtain some charter of self-government, such as was possessed by several other towns in the county. The difficulty in the way was persuading the Lord of the Manor to grant it. The latter happened at that period to be William Longsword, son of the famous Earl of Salisbury and grandson of Fair Rosamund, who appears to have been amenable to a monetary consideration for rights which he might be supposed to be unwilling to give *con amore*. It was the necessity of raising money to enable him to take part in the Crusades of St Louis that made William Longsword ultimately concede the rights which the inhabitants of Poole were so anxious to obtain. He was one of the most famous of the Crusaders who fought against the Saracens in Egypt and in Palestine. 146

The price for which William Longsword granted to Poole the desired rights was the sum of 70 marks, the equivalent of about £475 of present-day money. The charter, which has been preserved in the archives of this ancient borough, makes it clear that the privileges for which the inhabitants were prepared to pay so considerable a sum included the exemption from ordinary duties which were levied, except that of 2s. on every ship sailing to foreign parts overseas; the right to nominate its burgesses from which the Lord of the Manor might appoint his reeve, which afterwards grew into the office of a mayor; the privilege of having the courts, to deal with matters connected with the Manor, held in the town itself at fixed periods; and that no burgess should be brought in guilty of any offence if unable, by reason of absence at sea, to appear in these courts; and that the port reeve should have power to deal with all cases relative to foreign merchants in the absence of the bailiffs of the Manor. This last a privilege which was valuable as preventive of former vexatious delays.

It may be gathered from these circumstances that at this time Poole was already a considerable port, with a busy merchant-shipping trade. The date of this first charter has been by authorities fixed as about 1248, and thus it appears that it was in the reign of Henry III that Poole first began to take its place as a town and seaport of England. A quarter of a century at least before this, however, it had been included in the lists of ports which were liable to make a contribution of ships for the King's use, a custom intended to supply a deficiency caused by the non-existence of a Royal Navy. 147

In the reign of Edward III William Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, who was a distinguished soldier and fought at Crecy and Poitiers, granted the town another charter empowering the reeve to assume the title of mayor. This was in the year 1371, so that there has now been an unbroken succession of mayors in Poole for a period of upwards of five centuries. Henry VI not only gave a licence to the town to hold a market on Thursdays and to have two fairs annually, but also by letters patent gave power to the mayor and burgesses to fortify the place, and when this had been done Poole became officially a port.

Various privileges were granted by succeeding Sovereigns, and ultimately Elizabeth constituted Poole a town and county of itself with its own Court of Record, sheriff, and coroner, and other privileges. The early history of the port was probably much the same as that of other similar places on the south coast, only that Poole was in a measure protected by the tortuous channel which had to be traversed ere the town itself could be reached by water, and was therefore a safer place than some from attack. But not only had the merchantmen of Poole trading overseas to contend with foreign foes, pirates, and even the sailors of rival ports on their own coasts, but they had also on occasion to provide both ships and men for the prosecution of wars in foreign parts. Frequently the King claimed in war time all the ships which were to be found in the harbour.

There survive many writs, or records of them, addressed to the bailiffs of La Pole (as Poole was then called) for the furnishing of ships, and the three first Edwards, as well as Henry III, were pretty constant in their demands for such assistance in the prosecution of their French wars. In those days, however, the transforming of a merchant ship into a man-of-war was an infinitely simpler matter than in Nelson's time or the present, for every merchant ship which sailed from the English ports was habitually heavily armed to enable it to resist the attacks of pirates and other foes, and therefore all that needed to be done was to put aboard her extra seamen, well-armed, and the soldiers she was to transport to a foreign shore. 148

More especially in the reigns of the first three Edwards was Poole called upon to supply men and vessels, and at the long blockade of Calais in 1347, four Poole ships, manned by nearly five score seamen, bore their part, as did also other men from the ancient borough in the great sea fights of the time of Sluys.

But though Poole lost both in treasure and men its full share during the French wars, there was yet greater loss destined to fall upon it, for the plague known as the Black Death, which was probably originally brought about by the caravans from Central Asia to South-Eastern Europe, and from thence spread into Italy, France, Spain, and even England, proved terribly deadly in the county of Dorset, and swept Poole with relentless destruction. Not even the great plague of three centuries later brought so much havoc in this particular district, and we are told that vessels full of the dead, unguided by human hand, floated or scoured the northern seas, carrying the curse of infection with them wherever they drifted. Commencing very early in Dorset at Melcombe Regis, it seems to have travelled inland and devastated the towns of Bridport, Dorchester, Wareham, Blandford, Spetisbury, Wimborne, Shaftesbury, and Poole. How many died at Poole it is, of course, impossible to say; but there is little doubt that this terrible visitation, which took place in 1348 and 1349, practically decimated the population of the towns we have named.

With the end of the French wars there came a time when the fortunes of England were none too bright, and a famous French seaman, John de Vienne, a nephew of the stout defender of Calais, gathered together a strong fleet, with which he successfully and terribly harried the seaboard towns of the southern coasts. Rye, Hastings, Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, Dartmouth, and other places were attacked and partially destroyed. Poole did not escape, but was attacked and burned ere the marauder returned to his native land with much booty and renown. 149

About this time England was also threatened by a great fleet lying on the Flemish coasts at Sluys, which was

intended to transport an invading army to these shores, but the French lingered over their preparations till too late in the year, and the great collection of ships which had mustered for the purpose of invasion was broken up, never to be reassembled. But though this menace was removed, the commerce of Poole suffered as did that of other ports from the wars on the Continent, and rumours of wars to come, for the foreign ports to which Poole ships had traded were either of themselves now hostile or were beleaguered, and thus trade in its usual sense had become well-nigh impracticable.

It was at this period, and for the reasons we have just given, that the thin border line was crossed which separated the heavily armed merchant vessels, prepared to fight if necessary, from the unashamed pirate, and Poole became noted for its piratical craft and their daring deeds from Flanders down to Portugal. The almost land-locked waters of the harbour, with tortuous and, except to natives, unknown channels, afforded just such a base for piracy as was most suitable and convenient. Indeed, it was not long before the need or circumstances of the time produced the man in the person of one Harry Paye, or Harry Page—known to the Spaniards as Arripay—who became a pirate, and afterwards in the reign of Henry IV rose to be one of the most famous of all the English corsairs, that made the English Channel a place of terror to all traders and even the coast towns of the Bay of Biscay apprehensive of his visits. 150

This famous pirate of Poole used to sail out of harbour with one or more well-found and well-armed vessels, with which he scoured the Channel as far east as Flanders and as far west as Finistère, with occasional expeditions further south to towns on the Spanish and Portuguese littoral. He was well known and feared by both the Spanish and French mercantile marines, and so successful were his operations that tradition states on one occasion after an expedition he returned to Poole with no less than a hundred vessels captured as prizes along the Breton coast. For some weeks after it would appear that Poole kept public holiday, and the inhabitants gave themselves over to all sorts of debauchery and excess; and we are further told that “many puncheons of good Porto wine and kegs of brandy were broached by the notorious pirate, and partaken of by all and sundry on the quay of Poole, and in the adjacent streets. So much so that there was scarcely a sober man in the town, and for days no one thought of business or anything save eating and drinking and making merry.”



**POOLE HARBOUR**

Almost equally daring exploits by this Harry Paye, who formerly had been associated with Lord Berkeley in command of the fleet belonging to the Cinque Ports, gained for him such a reputation that in a Spanish chronicle he is spoken of as “a knight who scoured the seas as a corsair with many ships, plundering all the Spanish and French vessels that he could meet with.” His exploits were not, however, solely concerned with the seizure of ships and cargoes on the high seas, for he took and burned Gijon and Finistère, and amongst other notable exploits carried off the famous crucifix from the Church of Sainte Marie of Finistère, which was considered one of the most valuable church ornaments as well as the most holy of crucifixes in those parts. Castile was also attacked by him and his band of freebooters, and we find an entry in the same Spanish chronicle, “He did much damage, taking many persons and exacting ransomes, and although other armed ships came there also from England it was he who came oftenest.” 151



But though the famous Harry Paye was so successful in his expeditions, the town from which he sailed was not destined altogether to escape from the consequences of his unlawful acts. Not unnaturally a vindictive feeling sprang up against him along the French and Spanish coasts which he so frequently attacked, with the result that a desire for retaliation and revenge became very strong in the first years of the fifteenth century; and, indeed, in 1405, the French sought the aid of Henrique III, King of Castile, in a joint expedition for an attack upon Poole.

For this purpose the Spaniards collected some forty vessels and set sail for La Rochelle, where they were to be joined by the French contingent of the fleet. Eventually they reached the Cornish coast, and whilst sailing eastward towards their goal landed here and there and ravaged and burned various villages and towns. Ultimately Pero Nino, who commanded the fleet, finding himself near the retreat of the famous Harry Paye, determined to attack the town forthwith. For this purpose the Spanish and French ships entered the harbour, and sailing up it came early one morning in sight of Poole.

Apparently the town walls were not then existent, or, at all events, not in a thorough state of defence; but the French commander, no doubt with memories of the pirate's skill and courage in his mind, thought it would be rash to attempt to take vengeance for the many depredations of the famous Poole buccaneer. A Spanish force, however, was put ashore, and a large number of houses were set on fire. The inhabitants managed to hold one of the larger buildings on the quay for some considerable time against the Spanish attack, but so fierce was the latter that the defenders at last were compelled to retreat by the rear of the building, and the besiegers on entering found the place full of arms and sea-stores of all kinds, which they carried off to their ships. Seeing some of the Spanish boats swiftly retreating down the harbour, the inhabitants rallied, and, on being reinforced from the country round about, returned to the attack of the Spaniards who had remained behind to continue the sacking of the place, and a very large number of people were killed and wounded, the brother of the pirate amongst the number. 152

Having in a measure carried out his intentions of taking vengeance upon the town and inhabitants of Poole for the piratical doings of Harry Paye, Pero Nino retreated to his ships and once more set sail along the coast.

No doubt the attack from which they had suffered did much to convince the townsfolk that the defence afforded by a tortuous channel of approach was not a sufficient one against attack from the Spaniards or the French, and, therefore, after a somewhat lengthy period of eight and twenty years since Pero Nino's descent upon the place, we find in 1433 the Royal permission granted to fortify the town. We gather from contemporary records that Poole had speedily recovered from the damage done by the Spanish and French invaders, and, in fact, it even prospered by the carrying on of a retaliatory warfare with the latter, who, owing to their defeats by Henry V and the conquest by the English of Northern France, were scarcely in a position to defend themselves along the coasts.

Poole under the Tudors flourished, became a portion of the Crown property, and not only were fortifications made on the seaward side, but also on the land side. Owing largely to the fact that under the weak rule of the House of Lancaster the trade of the country in general, and of Poole in particular, greatly languished, the town undoubtedly espoused the Yorkist cause, although neither Poole nor indeed the county of Dorset appears to have taken any active part in the Wars of the Roses. 153

Henry of Richmond appeared in 1483 off South Haven in a single ship which had been separated from the other vessels of his fleet by a storm, and he would doubtless have landed had it not been for the fact that Poole and Dorset men favourable to Richard held the shores against him. When, in after years, he succeeded in ascending the throne he appears to have remembered the action, and the town in consequence suffered from neglect during his reign.

In Henry VIII's reign the Manor of Canford and with it the town of Poole were granted by the King to his natural son, Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond and Somerset, and during this period a block house, which was afterwards superseded by a castle, was erected on Branksea or Brownsea. The town of Poole was responsible for the manning of the block house, but the King appears to have supplied weapons and ammunition.

In the reign of Elizabeth the place suffered very considerably on account of the insecurity of trade by sea; but, notwithstanding this fact, the number of ships belonging to the port about this time was upwards of twenty, ranging from fourteen to seventy tons. Of course, compared with the ships of the present day, even the largest seems insignificant, but it should be remembered that in those days a vessel of even fifty tons was considered large, and the one in which Drake circumnavigated the world was only twice that size.

Poole during the wars in the low countries undoubtedly took some part in the struggle which was going on there between the Dutch and the armies of Alva and Parma, and it is recorded that 300 soldiers raised in the west country were embarked from Poole. The town does not, however, appear to have taken any active part in the defeat of the Armada; probably the port was unable to supply big enough ships for Drake's fleet, but there is little room for doubt that the privateers and merchantmen of the port helped the harrying of the Spanish ships when their formation had been broken up by the gallant attack of the fleet under Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher. 154

During the Civil War Poole was on the side of Parliament, as was the whole county of Dorset, save Corfe Castle, Wareham, and a few isolated dwellings of Royalist gentry; and although at one time the King's forces succeeded in dominating the county from one end to the other and holding all but the towns of Lyme Regis on the west and Poole on the east, the Royalists were ultimately overcome, but in consequence of the Poole malignants' attitude Charles II, on his accession to the throne, caused the fortifications of the place to be razed to the ground.

Wareham, however, was a Royalist stronghold, and, in consequence of this, a Parliamentary ship was anchored off Poole Quay, so that it might assist in the guarding of the town and command the Hamworthy Road and Ferry, by which detachments of Royalist troops frequently came and went on their way to and from Wareham.

During the Civil War the town was visited by the plague, but in the reigns of Charles II and James II it

appears to have progressed steadily if slowly. Its history, however, during that time is chiefly made up of the ordinary events of a seaport of the kind and does not contain anything of much note. The sympathies of the inhabitants during the Monmouth Rebellion were distinctly in favour of the duke and against James II, but, fortunately, as events turned out, Poole escaped the terrible retribution which visited all towns which had taken an active part in the ill-starred venture of the "Protestant" duke, and although, as in other towns, the heads and quarters of rebels hanged at Poole were set up as grim memorials, there is no reason to suppose that they were necessarily those of natives of the town. 155

In the last years of the seventeenth century the port became once more famous for the commercial enterprise and naval gallantry of its inhabitants. In 1694 one Captain Peter Jolliffe, the owner of a small vessel named the *Sea Defender*, witnessed the capture of a Weymouth fishing boat by a French privateer in Studland Bay. The gallant captain, regardless of odds, forthwith went boldly to the rescue, although the privateer was at least three times his strength and size, and not only made the freebooter abandon the prize, but evidently so harried him that he ran ashore near Lulworth, where the vessel was seized by the inhabitants and the crew made prisoners. Captain Jolliffe was presented with a handsome gold chain and medal from the King as a reward for his gallant exploit.

In the following year another Poole seaman, William Thompson, master of a fishing boat which was only manned by himself, one seaman, and a boy, attacked and captured a privateer sloop hailing from Cherbourg, carrying no less than twenty men, and brought her in triumph into the harbour.

One of the most romantic portions of the history of Poole during the last two centuries is connected with the many smugglers who dwelt in the town and neighbourhood. During that period smuggling formed the livelihood of many fishermen and seaboard dwellers along the whole of the south coast. Numerous attempts were made to put down the contraband trade in consequence of a petition presented to the House of Commons by legitimate traders, who stated in it that home manufacturers were greatly decayed by reason of the quantities of goods run, and entreated the House to attempt to deal with the evil. However, notwithstanding the many endeavours on the part of the navy and coastguards to suppress smuggling, the latter was in many parts of the county of Dorset so organized and carried on with such daring that all efforts to put it down were defied, and a state of absolute terrorism was created which affected not only the inhabitants of the neighbourhood where the smugglers carried on their operations, but even, to some extent, the men of the preventive service themselves. 156

Poole Harbour, with its many creeks and inlets running up into wide stretches of desolate heath, formed an almost ideal district for smuggling operations, whilst the thickly wooded chines and secluded stretches of sandy beach, extending from the harbour mouth at South Haven, past what was in those days the tiny hamlet of Bourne, half-hidden amid pine woods and heather-clad valleys, to the eastern point of the bay formed by Hengistbury Head near Christchurch, were also well adapted for the "running" of rich cargoes of silks, lace, tea, tobacco, and spirits.

Indeed, this wide extending stretch of yellow sand, with its numerous chines, or "bunnies," and its devious and unfrequented paths running inland to the outskirts of the New Forest was the scene of not a few romantic, as well as desperate, encounters between the men of the preventive service and the local smugglers, and at the loftiest part of the westernmost cliffs of the bay—then more sheer than at the present time—there is a spot where a bold and famous smuggler held one of the revenue men head downwards whilst his comrades ran the cargo on the beach below, threatening the man that if he fired his pistol or gave any other alarm he should be dropped from the height on to the beach below.

It was, however, at Poole itself that one of the most historic and daring exploits of the south-coast smugglers took place.<sup>D</sup> In September of the year 1747 one John Diamond, or Dymar, agreed to purchase from a well-known gang of smugglers a large amount of tea then lying in Guernsey, awaiting conveyance to the English coast. This was safely shipped; but, unfortunately for the smugglers' enterprise, the vessel whilst on its way up Channel, was sighted, chased, and captured by a revenue cutter commanded by a Captain Johnson. The cargo was seized, confiscated, and carried into Poole and lodged in the Custom House. This act on the part of the authorities so aroused the anger of the persons who had found a considerable sum of money for the undertaking that the famous gang of smugglers principally interested in the business came from distant Hawkhurst in Sussex, sixty or seventy strong, and armed to the teeth, for the purpose of attacking the Custom House on Poole Quay and recovering their property. They arrived in Poole by way of Lyndhurst about eleven o'clock one Tuesday night, and, having left some thirty of their number on the different roads, the remainder of the party stealthily entered the town by a back lane. Leaving their horses in charge of several of their comrades, they immediately proceeded to break open the Custom House in defiance of the preventive men, and succeeded in possessing themselves of the confiscated tea. This amounted to many bags, with which they loaded up the pack horses and rode off across the wild heatherland lying to the north-east of the town, till they came through Fordingbridge to the New Forest, and thence finally reached their haunts in Sussex. 157

<sup>D</sup> See "*Smuggling and Smugglers in Sussex.*"

On their journey home this armed band of desperadoes was seen by many people, and amongst the latter was one Daniel Chater, a shoemaker of Fordingbridge, who was recognized and given a pack of tea by Diamond, the leader of the smugglers. Possibly the gift was made in the hope of purchasing Chater's silence; but, whatever its reason, it led to the most disastrous consequences for the recipient.

A reward was ultimately issued for the apprehension of the smugglers, and upon the fact that Chater could give important evidence of identification against the law-breakers becoming known, William Calley, a king's officer, was sent to take Chater to be examined by Major Batten, J.P., of Sussex. Unfortunately for both the Customs officer and his companion, this intention became known, and on their way they were seized by a number of smugglers, and, after having been tortured and dragged from place to place, were brutally done to death. 158

Although the disappearance of the two men created a hue and cry, the fact of their murder was only made

certain six months after by the confession of one of the smugglers concerned in it. Fifteen men were tried at Chichester, of whom six were hanged for the crime (another, John Jackson, dying almost immediately after sentence), three others were also executed for breaking open the Customs House at Poole, and of the rest the majority got terms of transportation or were sent into the Navy as a punishment.

Although this was undoubtedly the most famous deed of the smugglers in the neighbourhood of Poole, and the doings of the Hawkhurst gang have been enshrined in the pages of G. P. R. James' old-fashioned but exciting romance, *The Smuggler*, it was by no means the only crime or romantic incident connected with contraband trade in the district during the latter half of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries. How daring and impudent the smugglers of Poole and the immediate district became is borne out by the fact that it was recognized by the authorities that it was impossible for them to capture the band or seize the contraband goods without military assistance.

As late as the year 1835 we find a record that the *Mary Ann* of Poole entered the harbour, supposed to be laden with coal, but really engaged in running a cargo of spirits. Of the 600 tubs which were in her 400 were successfully landed ere the true character of her freight was suspected.

Although numerous other similar exploits could be related, and many interesting stories were current but a few years ago among the older folk of the district, with the advent of and growth of free trade and the increase of the population along the Dorset and Hampshire coasts, smuggling gradually declined, and at length the race of Poole smugglers became extinct. 159

Poole nowadays, though having a considerable trade in timber with the Baltic ports and in seaborne coal, has, on the whole, declined rather than advanced from its position as a port in its palmiest days. There are but few buildings remaining of any note, and even its chief church is an unpicturesque structure standing at the west end of the town a little north of the quay and somewhat at the back of the High Street. It is of no antiquity, although it probably stands upon the actual site of a much more ancient building. Poole is still, however, a busy seaport, and the High Street, which is of considerable length, generally wears an air of movement and enterprise, although the sea trade of the town has very much altered in character of late years. In former times it was of a much more general nature, and its ancient and prosperous trade with Newfoundland was its chief stand-by. Its shipbuilding, which was once a source of considerable prosperity, has of late years greatly declined, although some small yachts and boats are still built. The quays form one of the most interesting and busy portions of the town; and on them may be seen many types, in whose faces can still be traced some of the characteristics of the old sea dogs who fought during the latter half of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries so gallantly and stoutly against the French.

Within the net-work of narrow alleys running in and out amongst the more solid red-brick houses that flank the quay—remnants of the prosperity of merchants long since dead—picturesque bits of architecture are discoverable, with old-time doorways hidden away in grass-grown courtyards, and fragments of the ancient town walls beautiful with lichen and weather-stained by ages of storm and stress. 160

The modern town has grown up rather by extension of its borders than the substitution of new buildings for old, and the older warehouses and dwellings by the waterside dating back a century or so have not, as a general rule, been pulled down to be replaced by new ones. The extension and growth of the town is chiefly marked by the more modern houses which have been built along the roads leading to Parkstone and Bournemouth on the rising ground to the north-east of the town.

Poole, picturesque of approach by water though it be, is, after all, we think, seen to the greatest advantage when viewed from the encircling highlands from the south-east, south-west, east, and north-east. Then distance lends a softness to its more unlovely part, and the haze of smoke and vapour which generally hangs above the town and the distant glimpses of the lagoon-like harbour serve to make up a picture of delight and interest.

Westward from the harbour mouth over the lofty chalk downs, at the eastern foot of which the picturesque little village of Studland nestles, lies Swanage, in a sickle-shaped bay, where, at least according to tradition, a desperate naval engagement was fought between King Alfred and the Danes. The town of late years has developed from a quiet old-time resort into a semi-fashionable watering place, which to those who knew Swanage years ago possesses less attraction.

The old town was built with stone from the famous quarries on the heights above, in the western and sharper curve of the bay, where its single street still winds tortuously from the shore inland, flanked on either side by grey stone houses, whose stone slab roofs form congenial ground in which house leek, stone crop, and many coloured lichen flourish. The architecture of old Swanage was of such charming irregularity as to give the place almost a foreign look when approached from the water, or seen at a little distance. It is upon the heights to the south-west, and along the low-lying and gradually rising ground which skirts the Bay with its fine sandy beach, and ends beneath the shelter of the bold ridge of the Purbeck Hills, that the new town has been chiefly built. 161

Save when an east, southerly, or south-easterly gale is blowing, Swanage is quite an ideal spot for the yachtsman to spend a few days, while the ruined, grim, and ever interesting fortress of Corfe Castle; the beautiful "Golden Bowl" at Kimmerridge; and picturesque Wareham with its historic memories provide plenty of interest in the form of excursions for those who wish to indulge in shore-going pleasures.

To the west of Swanage, along a coast line of about 22 miles, which, iron-bound at first, passes through various stages of rock, chalk, and sand, with the Dorset highlands always looming in the background, lies Weymouth, much as Swanage does, in the curve of a bay very similar in configuration, though much greater in extent.

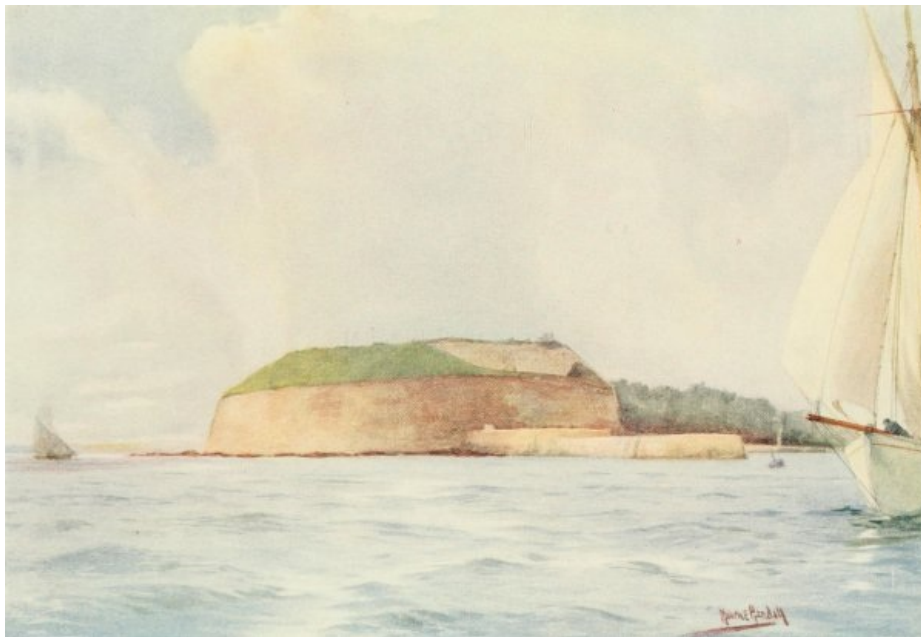
Of old Weymouth, the objective in the past of pirates and freebooters, there nowadays remains very little. The modern town, which has sprung up gradually, spread landward and northwards, and has, in the process, slowly though surely obliterated the more ancient of its features. From its wide esplanade, running almost half the length and round the whole of the most acute curve of the bay, is a prospect of rugged coast and breezy highlands, scarcely excelled in picturesqueness and charm by any other on the Dorset seaboard. Charmingly

situated, and in summer washed by the sapphire sea, modern Weymouth has nowadays taken a prominent position as a yachting port, and as a summer resort for the better type of holiday-makers.

Weymouth, in its age and the historical interest which attaches to it, has a distinction possessed by comparatively few seaside resorts. Of its antiquity there can be no question. Records there are which indicate its probable existence as a port of trade for the ancient merchants of Tyre, even before the Roman invasion of Britain. Many relics of those far-off times in the shape of ornaments, pottery, Druidical, Roman, Saxon, and Danish remains are frequently found in the neighbourhood, and undoubtedly in Roman times Weymouth was connected by a vicinal way with the great military road which passed through Dorchester.

The rise of Weymouth to a place of importance would seem to have been somewhat rapid, for in Edward I's reign it appears to have been esteemed of too considerable a size and wealth to remain in the possession of the monks of Milton Abbey, to whom it had been granted by Athelstan, the founder. It was then taken by the Crown, and formed a portion of the dowry given by Edward I to his Spanish wife, Eleanor of Castile.

Over and over again in history during succeeding centuries, the town appears, dimly sometimes, forming as it were a background of some historical event, and at others playing a more active part in the stirring doings of troublous times. By the middle of the fourteenth century Weymouth had risen to a condition of considerable maritime importance, and at this time it supplied no less than twenty ships for the siege of Calais. The position of Weymouth will be more easily understood when it is remembered that the port of Bristol supplied only two ships more, and the port of London five; although in both cases the vessels sent were probably of considerably greater tonnage.



**THE NOTHE, WEYMOUTH**

In 1377 the French, who had by no means forgotten the part that Weymouth had played in former years in supplying men and ships for the attacks upon them, during one of their periodic descents upon the south coast, visited Weymouth, and burnt the ships in the harbour, and also a very considerable portion of the town itself. Indeed, so greatly did the place then and subsequently suffer from the depredations of the French, that in the reign of Henry IV the inhabitants petitioned to be relieved of their Customs dues on account of their poverty, and this exemption was granted for a period of twelve years.

Referring to Weymouth, Leland the historian, writing about this time, says: "This towne, as is evidently seene, hathe beene far bigger than is now. The cause of this is layid unto the Frenchmen that yn times of warre rasid this towne for lack of defence."

During his reign Henry VI, owing very likely to the continued attacks of the French, and with the object of rendering the place less worthy of their attentions, transferred its privileges as a port, and its wool-staple to Poole, and thus it was deprived of much of its commercial standing and trade. Nevertheless Weymouth throughout medieval times, and in stirring periods of national history, has been the port of embarkation or entry for many royal personages. Probably no more pathetic figure ever landed on the sands of Weymouth Bay than Queen Margaret of Anjou, who arrived off the town in company with her young son on April 14, 1471, in the hope of aiding her husband, King Henry VI, to regain his throne, almost at the very hour when the cause in which she had so great a stake was being lost on the fatal field of Barnet. Only a few weeks later the Queen, dethroned, and deprived of her husband, suffered disastrous defeat at Tewkesbury, where her son was assassinated after the battle.

The next royal visitors who landed at Weymouth were Philip, King of Castile, and his Queen, Joanna, who with a large fleet, numbering eighty sail, were driven on to the English coast by a violent storm, and obliged to take refuge in Weymouth Bay. The landing of the King and Queen, both of whom had been very ill, with their retinue of knights and servants, was effected with some secrecy, with the result that the alarmed country folk, when the fact leaked out, saw in this royal disembarkation not a landing brought about by force of circumstances, but an invasion, and one, Sir Thomas Trenchard, of Wolveton House, hastened to the spot with a

force composed of all the available militia and his own retainers, where he was speedily followed by Sir John Carew with a like force. On discovering who the supposed invaders were, Sir Thomas Trenchard gave them a welcome, but told King Philip bluntly that he would not be allowed to return on board his ship with his followers until King Henry VII had seen him. It may be imagined that the King of Castile spent some uncomfortable moments until the Earl of Arundel arrived from London to escort him and his Queen to the capital. At that time Spain and England were by no means on friendly terms, and the sea-sick King and Queen had landed much against the advice of their captains and generals, who feared lest capture might be their fate, and the hospitality offered prove of an embarrassing kind.

During the reign of Henry VIII, on several occasions there were fears of a French invasion, and about this time the King built Sandsfoot Castle on the southern shore of the spit of land forming the Nothe, which until the building of Portland breakwater was an important landmark. Leland mentions this as being, "A right goodlie Castel havynge one open barbicane." The shell of this still remains, and is a witness that the place was of very considerable strength, if not of great size.

For many centuries before the reign of Elizabeth, what is now usually known as Weymouth comprised two distinct towns, one bearing the name of Melcombe Regis, and the other that by which the town is now known. Both these places possess their own charters of incorporation, and, owing to the fact that there was only one harbour for both of them in medieval and even later times, long continued and violent disputes frequently arose between the respective inhabitants; and not infrequently blood was shed in the encounters which took place concerning such matters as the imposition and apportionment of Customs dues, and the common use of the harbour. By the merging of the two towns into one in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the causes of friction were happily removed. 165

Several times Weymouth was attacked (as were other Dorset and Devon seaports) by the French privateers, who were little better than pirates, and infested the Channel especially during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. On one occasion, after damaging a large number of the ships which lay at anchor in the harbour, and "cutting out" and carrying off a vessel of about sixty tons, named *The Angel of La Rochelle*, the privateersmen landed and did considerable damage to the houses of the town itself. The attempt to enter the harbour proper and seize other vessels therein was, however, defeated by the bravery of the townsfolk, who training some pieces of ordnance upon them repulsed the body of pirates who had landed, and drove them back to their ships with considerable loss. The pirate leader, named Purson, was so enraged by his want of success, that he threatened to return later on and burn the town to the ground. To execute this threat he appeared off the town during the following year, but owing to the diligence of the townsfolk during the time which had elapsed since his last visit, the place was so strongly fortified that he was unable to effect a landing and carry out his intentions of burning the town.

Weymouth furnished no less than six ships for Drake's fleet in 1588, when the fear of the coming Armada so greatly affected all towns on our southern coasts. Some of these ships, too, were of considerable size for that period; one, *The Golden Lion*, being 120 tons. It may be gathered from this considerable contribution to the national fleet that Weymouth must have in a large measure repaired its fallen fortunes. The Weymouth vessels bore a gallant part in the running fight, between "the English bloodhounds" and the huge, unwieldy galleons, which extended from Plymouth Sound to the Bill of Portland, and one, at least, of the Armada vessels was taken by the Weymouth ships and brought into the roadstead. One can easily imagine what enthusiasm the capture of the huge, high-sterned, and altogether cumbersome Spanish vessel aroused, and how, as a contemporary writer states, "the townsfolk, waving kerchiefs and shouting with mad joy, thronged the shore, and gazed out across the rippling waves to where the prize and her captors had brought up at anchor." 166

During the Civil War, which came a little more than half a century later, Weymouth and Melcombe Regis were undoubtedly more Royalist than Parliamentary. Unfortunately for the town both forces contended hotly for its possession, and a considerable amount of damage was done to the buildings and houses, some of which until quite recent years bore traces of shots embedded in the woodwork and plastering, and also in places showed bullet holes.

The town was held by each of the contending parties in turn several times during the War, being occupied by the Earl of Caernarvon and the Royalist forces in July, 1643, without any resistance on the part of the Parliamentary party. In the following year the town changed hands once more, and suffered very considerably by the severe punishments meted out by the Parliamentarians to some of the inhabitants who had assisted the Royalist cause. Several people, amongst others John Miles Constable and Captain John Wade were hanged at Weymouth, and a good deal of the shipping on the Weymouth side of the harbour was destroyed, and part of the town burned down by the Roundhead Colonel Sydenham, who afterwards defended the place successfully during a siege which lasted eighteen days. 167

It was one Dennis Bond, a member for the borough, who moved during the Parliamentary session of 1654, "That the Crown and title of King should be offered to the Protector."

Charles II intended after the Battle of Worcester to escape from Weymouth, if possible, but owing to the watch that was kept upon that port, had to abandon the attempt, although for some time he lay hiding in what is still known as the King's "hole" at Trent House, near Sherborne.

With the tragic doings in the West of England during the Monmouth rebellion, Weymouth itself seems to have had little or no part, although it appears more than probable that some Weymouth men rallied to the standard of the ill-fated Duke at Bridport or Taunton.

The history of the town as a seaside resort commences a century later with the visit of George III in 1789. Finding it picturesque and healthy, the King afterwards made it his chief summer place of residence. Although the town was at this time, according to a contemporary writer, not much more than a straggling assemblage of fishermen's huts, with a few family mansions and merchants' residences along the sea-front, with a wide expanse of low, marshy ground at the back of them, it soon became a fashionable resort. Then the present-day busy and prosperous chief thoroughfare of St Mary's Street was little more than a row of thatched cottages with

a few shops and houses of larger size sandwiched in between; whilst the other street, known as St Thomas', was an ill-paved road leading to some small houses with picturesque gardens and wooden fences in front of them.

With this first visit of King George III, the rapid rise of the town was assured, for not only did a large number of the nobility and Court officials take up their residence in attendance on the King and his family, but also numberless other fashionable folk, anxious to follow the Court, and by doing so bask in some of the glamour which surrounds royalty, came in great numbers. More houses became necessary, and as the old town then afforded few good building sites, a large number of the new residences were erected on the ground skirting the magnificent bay, and facing the sea. 168

Weymouth in those days must have resembled St James's Park and the Mall, rather than a moderately prosperous seaport, for in and out of the houses along the front came perfumed Georgian dandies with their "clouded" canes and snuff-boxes in hand, to stroll along the Esplanade, where in sedan chairs stately Court ladies, rouged, patched, and crinolined, took the air attended by gallants in the gay and bright attire of the period. To Weymouth from all the district round, the country folk flocked to gaze and stare at the quality with wondering eyes, much as they would have gone to see any other sight or raree-show. The King took to bathing, and the Royal machine was, we are told, "a right Royal cumbersome and elaborate affair, and many folk daily come into the town to see His Majesty and the Court bathing in the sea-water half a furlong out from the shore. And some days the crowd be so great on the sands that people are pushed into the water against their will."

One suspects that few types of men can from time to time have afforded Royalty more amusement of a quiet sort than provincial mayors. At all events, a Mayor of Weymouth, during one of the visits of King George to the town, was destined to afford "comic relief" to a ceremony of some importance.

The occasion was the presentation of an address of welcome to the King, and we are told that the Mayor, on approaching to present it, to the astonishment and dismay of all, instead of kneeling, as he had been told to do, seized the Queen's hand to shake it as he might that of any other lady.

Colonel Gwynne, the master of the ceremonies, hurriedly told him of his *faux pas*, saying, "You should have kneeled, sir." 169

"Sir, I cannot," was the reply.

"Everybody does, sir," hotly asserted the Colonel.

The Mayor grew red, and, evidently much upset, amidst the ill-suppressed laughter of those in the immediate vicinity, who were aware of the "scene," and had overheard the colloquy between Colonel Gwynne and his worship, exclaimed, "Damme, sir, but I've got a wooden leg."

History, unfortunately, does not tell us what the King's comment was, but that he was amused none can doubt, for Royalty in those times (as now) dearly loved a joke. But in the phrase, "a smile suffused the face of Her Majesty—unshocked by the strength of Mr Mayor's language—and the King laughed outright," we have one of those touches which serve to illuminate the doings of those days.

In the papers of that day, too, are to be found many interesting items, and accounts of the "rufflings" of fine gentlemen, and the frailties of fine ladies. More than one duel was fought on the stretch of sand near Sandsfoot Castle, and on the breezy upland just above the north-east curve of the bay, whilst an elopement sometimes sent an angry father and sometimes husband posting hot haste after the fugitives along the Plymouth Road.

The town was naturally much exercised concerning the long war which ended only with the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. The circumstance of the Court being at Weymouth during some of the most stirring events in national history at that time made it the centre of news. Indeed, the King was out riding when tidings of the great victory of the Nile was brought to him by courier, and on that night Weymouth was ablaze with delirious triumph, and the scene of astounding enthusiasm. After the King had returned from his ride, and had mastered the dispatches, he sallied forth upon the Parade, and joyously accosted every one he knew, and told them details of Nelson's doings. 170

Weymouth at this period suffered, as did most coast towns, considerably from the ever-present fear of invasion; and so great was the satisfaction when peace was proclaimed after the long struggle, that an open-air dance was held in the streets of the town, in which the four Members of Parliament for the borough, and their families, took part. The number of the couples dancing was so great that, we are told, they filled the whole of the length of the main street thickly.

In the fashionable and pleasant watering-place of to-day, which has, indeed, sobered down from those stirring and somewhat uproarious times, it is difficult to trace much of the old town, but although it declined in favour somewhat in the early 'fifties and 'sixties of the last century, from the position of importance and popularity to which it had attained because of the patronage of King George and the Court, it has nowadays become one of the favourite resorts of West of England holiday folk, and is a yachting port of convenience and repute. And even amid the bustle of modern life it seems somehow or other to preserve in its atmosphere and comparative quietude of life many of those old-world characteristics which distinguish so many Dorset towns, whether they be set inland or on the coast. Weymouth possesses a good harbour and an excellent roadstead, and although it has declined of recent years as a trading port, from the position it held in ancient times, it remains popular with yachting folk by reason of its beautiful situation, and the many picturesque and interesting spots which lie in the immediate neighbourhood.

Just round the Nothe, the green and jutting headland between which and the pier the entrance to Weymouth Harbour lies, are Portland Roads, the magnificent harbour in which, when not at sea, the Home fleet frequently anchors. To every one who has yachted along the south coast, or gone down the Channel into the outer seas, this roadstead, and the Isle of Portland—which is in reality no island at all, but a peninsula—are perfectly familiar. 171

Known chiefly as the site of one of our chief convict prisons and of almost world-famous stone quarries, Portland, or the "Isle of Slingers," forms a unique seamount, and is a place of considerable interest. This strange

tongue of rocky land, which has been called "the Gibraltar of England," is connected with the mainland by the wonderful Chesil Beach, which is an immense ridge or bank of pebbles some fifteen miles in length, varying in height and ranging from 170 to upwards of 200 yards in width. The beach is separated from the mainland as far as Abbotsbury by the Fleet. The word "Chesil" is Anglo-Saxon for pebble. The stones vary greatly in size, being largest at the Portland end and gradually decreasing until they become quite small at Bridport, where the beach meets the cliffs. So regular, indeed, is this decrease that fishermen landing on the shore at night can easily tell their approximate whereabouts upon taking some of the pebbles in their hands. The stones differ greatly in material and colour, being drawn by the current from all portions of the south-western coasts. There is a tradition among the Portlanders that anyone finding two pebbles alike will be paid a reward of £50, and many fruitless searches have from time to time in former years been made. That this truly marvellous agglomeration is due chiefly to the action of south-westerly gales and the obstruction presented by the Isle of Portland to their dispersion eastward is generally agreed.

There have been many wrecks upon this famous beach since the days when the Roman galleys swept along the coast filled with Cæsar's legions down to modern times; and rescue is rendered very difficult, and sometimes impossible by the huge rollers which break upon the shingle during southerly and south-westerly gales, creating a terrible under-tow which has over and over again been fatal even to strong swimmers, who attempt to reach the shore from wrecked vessels. Indeed, such a terrible number of disasters have taken place at the Portland end of the beach, that the little creek or bay lying in the curve where the island joins it has come to be known as Dead Man's Bay. 172

A little more than a century ago a fleet of transports was wrecked there, with a loss of over a thousand lives, and many miles of the coast was for weeks afterwards strewn with wreckage.

During the terrible storm of November, 1824, the *Ebenezer*, a sloop of nearly a hundred tons, laden with heavy stores and war material was swept from the sea right over the beach and safely deposited in the Fleet.

To the geologists, the antiquarians, and those interested in the survival of old customs Portland is of peculiar interest, and it is not wonderful that novelists should have found in the "rugged" isle an appropriate background for their romances. Victor Hugo has described the spot very fully (if somewhat inaccurately) in his *L'Homme qui Rit*; and the greater portion of the action of *The Well-Beloved*, that strangely elusive romance of Thomas Hardy, takes place upon the island, in the neighbourhood of Fortune's Well, and Pennsylvania Castle, built by the grandson of the famous William Penn. This book contains some of the finest pen pictures of the scenery in "The Isle of Slingers" ever written.

There are two lighthouses at the southern end of the island; the lower one was built as long ago as 1789, and the higher one in 1817, rebuilt just half a century later. Both are furnished with extremely powerful lights, which can be seen for many miles along the coast.

## Chapter VI

### Bridport—Lyme Regis—Axmouth—Teignmouth

Two-thirds of the distance from the Bill of Portland across the wide expanse of West Bay lies the little old-world harbour of Bridport, with its quaint mouth into which runs the tiny river Brit, from whence the name is derived. The town itself stands some two miles from the harbour at the foot of a picturesque and well-wooded hill.

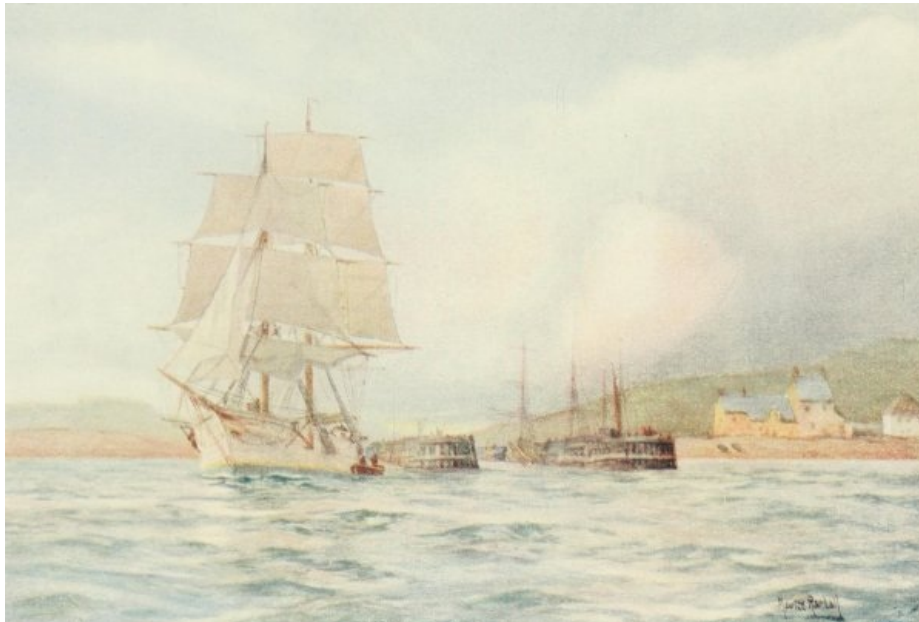
On the quay is the famous George Inn, at which King Charles II lay when he came there a fugitive, having ridden over from Charmouth, where he had been almost discovered by a more than ordinarily suspicious ostler and an unusually logical blacksmith, who reasoned that as the fugitive's horse had been shod in four counties, and one of them Worcester, the owner of the horse might be the fugitive King on whose head so high a price had been placed. Charles, however, was warned in time, and spurred on to Bridport, and thence to Salisbury ere the hue and cry was raised, ultimately reaching Shoreham, where he took ship for the French coast.

To-day Bridport by the sea is just a quiet, picturesque little resort, where weary workers and holiday makers, whose taste is not for the bustling, fashionable type of watering-place, may find rest and quietude from the over-energetic and noisy world without, with the open and uninterrupted expanse of West Bay spread in front of them, sunlit, grey, peaceful or storm-driven by turns, whilst northward and north-eastward lie the green undulating hills and vales of Dorset.

The port is nowadays of comparatively little consequence, and has much declined from the times when there was a good deal of trade with Archangel and Riga for the importation of flax and hemp, and a considerable coasting trade also.

Bridport town, which is prettily situated, and has an old-world flavour hanging about it, lies chiefly in a hollow of the hills and on the well-wooded slopes. Nowadays, except when market folk have flocked in from the surrounding country, bringing with them a temporary air of industry and bustle, it has a somewhat "sleepy hollow" atmosphere, apparently undisturbed by the happenings of the great world which lies beyond it. In its streets on market days, at all events, one sees many true Wessex types—farmers who might have stepped right out of the pages of one of Thomas Hardy's novels; sun-tanned and buxom dairymaids, whose joys in the glory of the girt (big) shops is only equalled by their love of gaudy colours and cheap finery on Sundays and at fair times; gaitered drovers with weather-beaten faces, still happily some of them wearing the picturesque smocks of their fore-fathers, give an air of added picturesqueness to a picturesque calling; shepherds that remind one of Gabriel Oak in *Far from the Madding Crowd*; and the Darbies and Joans of neighbouring villages and hamlets, hale and hearty old Wessex folk who have seen many years but few changes, with their crinkled russet cheeks and country gait.

Bridport is surrounded by one of those dairy districts for which Dorset is noted, and not a little of the famous "blue-vinny" cheese finds its way into the market.



**BRIDPORT**

The town has on several occasions since its foundation been upon the very verge of attaining to a position of some importance, and but for ill-fortune might have become one of the more prosperous ports of the southern coasts. But it has, one must admit, in the end sadly lagged behind, and at the present time is merely a fairly well-to-do country town, not over-burdened with life or activity of any kind. Centuries ago, at any rate, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, when it possessed a mint and a priory, Bridport was of some considerable standing as a trading town; and in the reign of Henry III the town and surrounding lands, which formed a royal demesne, received a charter, although not actually incorporated till some three centuries later.



It has always been noted for its manufacture of hemp ropes, cords, and sail cloth; and so highly were these articles of Bridport production esteemed, that the greater proportion of the canvas and cordage used for the rigging and sails of the English Navy from early times, as well as that of the ships which so bravely attacked and gloriously defeated the Spanish Armada, were of local manufacture.

There is an ancient and historic joke at the historian Leland's expense, in connexion with the industry of the town. In olden times not only was hemp largely manufactured into rope and canvas in the town, but the raw material itself was grown in some considerable quantity in the immediate neighbourhood, which gave rise to the quaint saying of Fuller that when a man was unfortunate enough as to be hanged, "he was stabbed with a Bridport dagger." This having reached Leland's ears during his tour of the southern counties, and being understood by him in the literal sense of the word, he solemnly afterwards stated that "At Bridport he made good daggers," which error has probably caused as much amusement and discussion as any mistake of the kind ever made by an historian of standing.

Although Bridport in ancient times was a place of some note, it has never played any very important part in the history of the west country; but it suffered, as did most other towns in Dorset, from at least two visitations of the Plague, the most serious of which, in 1670, we are told "did not spare any man, but caused many deaths in the town and the villiages near by, so that of the dead many remain unburied."

During the Civil War Bridport formed one of the pawns in the mighty game which was being played by the contending Royalist and Parliamentary forces for the possession of the west of England. 176

Forty years later, too, the town was again to see an armed force approach it, when on the fine Sunday morning of June 14, 1685, after a night march from Lyme, the Duke of Monmouth arrived before the place to attack the Dorset militia which "lay in the town to the number of about 1200, with a hundred or more horse."

The Duke's forces were about 500 all told, and advancing with some amount of discretion and stealth, under cover of the morning mist, and meeting no outposts nor resistance they succeeded in entering the town by way of the Allington Bridge, where they surprised a considerable number of the King's troops, who, after standing to face one volley, turned tail and fled to join their comrades who were encamped in a field on the opposite side of the town. Then the streets became the scene of sharp skirmishing between the rival forces. The townsfolk taking little or no part in the conflict, but according to one account, "though much alarmed (they), kept well within their doors, scarcely daring, indeed, to thrust their heads out of the windows lest they might fall victims alike to their curiosity and the bullets of the King's or Monmouth's men."

It was in the cross streets and in the main street near the Bull Inn that the hottest skirmishing took place. Ultimately, the Duke's followers, under the command of Lord Grey and Colonel Wade, advanced to the attack of the western bridge at the far end of the street by which they had entered the town. Here the Dorset militia had been rallied by their officers and stood so firm that after receiving a volley or two from them the Duke's men were commanded to retreat by Colonel Venner, who himself galloped away along the road back to Lyme after Lord Grey, who had already fled, leaving Colonel Wade to extricate his small force as best he could. The Colonel was a good soldier, and not only succeeded in withdrawing his forces in good order, but actually carried with him a number of prisoners who had been captured when he succeeded in entering the town. The Dorset militia for some reason allowed Monmouth's men to retreat unpursued. On their way back to Lyme Colonel Wade and his followers were met by the Duke of Monmouth himself, with a reinforcement of troops. This skirmish, which resulted in a score or so of killed and wounded, has always been esteemed a most unfortunate affair for the Duke's cause. Out of it none of Monmouth's officers emerged with credit save Colonel Wade; although it would appear that his raw troops behaved with considerable steadiness and bravery. 177

As happened in the case of so many other towns, Bridport was, however, soon to pay dearly for that Sunday morning visit of "King Monmouth's" followers; for a few months later Judge Jeffreys arrived on the business of the "Bloody Assize," and soon a gallows tree was erected in the marketplace, and a round dozen of the townsfolk were hanging to it. As happened at other places, if one may believe the records remaining behind, not a few of the unfortunate victims were entirely innocent of offence.

In the church, which is a fine building, chiefly Perpendicular in style, with early English transepts and Perpendicular inserted windows, is a brass erected to the memory of "Edward Coker, Gent., second son of Captain Robert Coker, of Mapowder, slain at the Bull Inn in Bridport, June 14, An. Do. 1685, by one Venner, who was an officer under the late Duke of Monmouth in that rebellion."

Bridport, from the time of that stirring Sunday morning of two-and-a-quarter centuries ago, has had an uneventful history. Even the great wars with France, which had so great an influence on most south and south-western coast towns, seem to have affected it and disturbed its serenity but little, and nowadays it is chiefly noted for its old-world atmosphere and stolid indifference to the more modern methods of trade and business life. To antiquarians this little town, set amid the green of the hillside, presents a few attractions in the form of old houses and buildings, which are chiefly situated in South Street, where there is a fine Tudor House. And there are the remains of the once rich St John's Hospital at the rear of the houses on the side of the eastern bridge, where the final skirmish in 1685 took place. 178

Bridport beach, which is skirted by a few villas and some of the old-time thatched cottages, is of finest shingle—so fine, indeed, that it may be mistaken at a little distance, and at first sight, for sand. The narrow entrance to the harbour and quays is flanked on either side by cliffs, which here attain a considerable altitude. As a haven the port is useless. The seas which run in the wide expanse of the West Bay when a gale blows, are far too high to allow of threading the "needle's eye" entrance to the port without grave risk of disaster. It is, in fact, just as Mr Hardy phrases it, "a gap in the rampart of hills which shut out the sea."



### LYME REGIS

Westward of Bridport, some eight miles along the coast, lies the ancient and picturesque little town of Lyme Regis, which has probably played as great a part in the history of Dorset, and indeed of the south of England, as any place of its size. The town, which nestles in old-fashioned retirement upon the border of the sister county of Devon, consists of a few steep and narrow streets on the rocky and somewhat wild portion of the coast which lies midway between Bridport to the east and Colyton in Devon to the west. The little port itself, with its famous Cobb, lies in a hollow at the mouth of the River Lyme, and on the slopes of the two cliffs which shut it in on either side. Of late years it has somewhat developed as a quiet holiday resort, but like other Dorset seaports, it is of considerably less account now than formerly. It would be more favoured by yachting and holiday folk were there more water in the harbour at low tide; for the place is quaint and interesting, and the country round about quite lovely. 179

The principal portion of the town, which presents so picturesque an aspect as one approaches it from the sea, has been built in the cleft and on the slopes of a deep combe, and the chief street appears almost as though it would slide into the water. It is through this combe or valley that flows the little stream from which the town takes its name.

Leland in his itinerary describes Lyme as "a pretty market town set in the side of an high rocky hille down to the hard shore"; and this description of so long ago is almost equally accurate at the present time.

Lyme Regis has never been a large town, but it has from very early times been a place of some importance. At the latter end of the eighth century, by a Charter of Kynewulf, King of Wessex, one manse was granted to the Abbey of Sherborne for the purpose of supplying the monks with salt, and as early as the reign of Edward I, it was enfranchised and enjoyed the liberties appertaining to a haven and a borough. It had so far grown in importance, indeed, that in the reign of Edward III it was able to supply him with four ships and sixty-two seamen to take part in the Siege of Calais.

Like so many other towns along this coast, it was often attacked, and on several occasions almost left in ruins, by the French during the reigns of Henry IV and Henry VI. And in the middle of the sixteenth century there was a renewal of these attacks, but the marauders were repulsed with very heavy loss. Lyme Regis, however, soon seems to have recovered its prosperity, and only a few years later we find that it supplied two ships, named *The Revenge* and *Jacob*, with a good complement of men, to join the fleet which was gathered together for the purpose of attacking the Spanish Armada. These two ships no doubt played a gallant part in that wonderful running fight, a part of which took place in sight of Lyme, which ultimately resulted in the scattering of the vast fleet intended by Philip of Spain to threaten not only the independence of England, but also the religion and civil liberty of its people. There are yet remaining some records of the doings of the two or three score of Lyme Regis men who sailed away to throw in their lot with the ships of Drake and Frobisher. Lyme, though it led a quiet, untroubled existence from that time onward, for nearly three-quarters of a century, was also destined to play a very important part in the history of the Civil War between King Charles I and his Parliament. 180

The famous siege which began on April 20, 1644, and lasted till June 15 of the same year, proved to be one of the most important events in the history of the west country throughout the progress of the war. The town was not well constructed for defence, but the attempt to strengthen it was carried out with the greatest heroism by the inhabitants, under the direction of Colonel Seeley and Lieutenant-Colonel Blake, who afterwards became the famous admiral. The attacking force was under the direction of Prince Maurice, the nephew of the King himself, and the failure of the Royalist siege operations did not a little to injure the military reputation of the General in command.

The besiegers centred their forces at Colway and Hay, having early captured these two houses, and also the score or so of men who were stationed as defenders in each. Altogether Prince Maurice had upwards of 3,000 men under his command and, with the assistance of some of the country folk who were pressed into the service, batteries were speedily thrown up, and several fierce attacks made upon the town, which soon, indeed, began to

experience all the hardships incidental to a close investment.

By the end of May provisions had run so short that there was some likelihood that a surrender would be rendered inevitable, and at the beginning of June Colonel Seeley dispatched a communication to the "Committee" of the two Kingdoms, urging that relief might be sent by land with provisions, and stating that if this were not done the town would undoubtedly have to fall. The defenders, however, were not idle, and several sorties were made with a view of dislodging the besieging force from the new positions it had taken up. None of these attempts proved successful, and the condition of the town was, in consequence, not altered for the better, and both provisions and ammunition were rapidly depleted. 181

The condition of the beleaguered garrison now became very serious, but happily news reached Lyme on June 15 of the approach of the Earl of Essex, who was stated then to be at Dorchester, with a force of some 13,000 horse and foot, and on Prince Maurice becoming aware of this fact the siege was raised, and the Royalist forces departed in the direction of Bristol.

The rejoicings on the day of the departure of the Royalist troops were unhappily destined to be marred by one of those acts of terrible fanaticism and cruelty which have often defaced the brightest pages of history, and frequently have been connected with gallant deeds and brave endurance. On realizing that the siege was raised, some of the soldiers of the garrison sallied forth to Colway and Hay House with a view of discovering whether any Royalists still lurked there; and on reaching the latter place found a poor old Irish woman, who had been attached to the besieging force, remaining behind. Actuated possibly by religious as well as political fanaticism, the soldiers seized her and drove her through the streets to the waterside, where after she had been ill-treated and robbed of all she possessed, they killed her, and then slashed and cut her body to pieces with their swords, and cast her mutilated remains into the harbour.

Another version of the incident, that of Whitlock, states that the poor old woman was slain and almost pulled to pieces by the women of the town; but whichever version may be the correct one, the incident remains a blot on the historic siege which was so gallantly and bravely endured by the inhabitants. 182

After the siege was raised, the life of the town again resumed the even tenor of its way and old-time habits, until on a bright June day in the year 1685—to be exact, June 11—a small fleet of three vessels hove in sight off the Cobb, and at 8 o'clock the same day James, Duke of Monmouth, landed with about sixty adherents, and a small body of troops. Thus began what was destined to be one of the most romantic and tragic episodes in the history of the town, and of the west country. The Duke, who on landing had fallen upon his knees to thank God for preservation during his voyage, and to invoke divine assistance in his adventure, immediately afterwards proceeded to the market-place, and there having set up his standard, caused a proclamation to be made to the crowd which had by that time gathered together. Afterwards he and his staff took up their quarters at the fine old gabled George Inn, which was unhappily destroyed by fire in 1844, where they remained for a period of four days. The news of the Duke's landing spread like wildfire through the western counties, and was sent to King James II in London, in what must have then been quite record time. The Mayor of Lyme, immediately the ships appeared in the offing, guessing their mission, himself sped from the town and sent the news to Westminster post haste; less than thirty-six hours elapsing before the courier reached London.

The Duke, who was received with wild enthusiasm, soon set about recruiting his small force, after having been welcomed by the school children of Lyme with shouts of "A Monmouth! A Monmouth! The Protestant Religion!" and by noon on the day after his landing more than a hundred young men of the town had enlisted under his banner. We are told that by sunset of the same day the number of adherents had increased to upwards of 1,000 foot and more than 150 horse. The town was wild with enthusiasm, even children paraded the streets with banners, and not only the commoner folk, but many gentry also came in from the out-lying districts to join the Duke's forces, amongst the latter of whom were Colonel Joshua Churchill, Colonel Mathews, Mr Thomas Hooper, and Mr Legg, all of them well-known and influential local gentry. 183

On the following day, June 13, there came to the town of Lyme one—then twenty-four years of age—who was destined to achieve greater immortality, as the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, than even the ill-fated master he elected to serve during the perilous days and adventures which followed.

During the next day or two from far and near came vast numbers of men into the town armed with all sorts of weapons, but few with guns, to the number of nearly 12,000. "More," we are told, "than could be received for the lack of the wherewithal with which properly to arm them."

Mr Gregory Alford, the Mayor, had not only sent news of the Duke's landing to King James, from Honiton, to which place he had fled at the sight of Monmouth's little fleet, but had pursued his course westward from that town, and as he sped along the countryside had warned the constables of the various villages to summon the militia and *posse comitatus* to resist Monmouth's progress. This activity undoubtedly forced the Duke to make a somewhat premature advance. It was in consequence of this that he left Lyme with his force on June 15 and proceeded to Axminster. He had little cavalry, unless one could count as such the country folk mounted upon horses and ponies taken from off the land, and a mere handful of gentlemen, squires and the like, upon their own nags.

As the Duke's force marched along, more adherents came to his standard, but these were far fewer in number and of less importance than he had been led to suppose would be the case. Some also of the more important farmers and yeomen whose farms were situated in the villages through which Monmouth's army passed professed sympathy with his cause, but few did anything more active. 184

The Duke's progress, indeed, was not, as he had hoped, one of triumph, but was rather of a dispiriting character. Save at Taunton, where he was enthusiastically received, there was little outward show of support, and many desertions took place almost daily. Indeed, it soon became apparent that his followers, ill-clad, and badly armed, were in no way fit to successfully cope with the forces which were being hurriedly arrayed against them.

On July 1 the Duke's diminishing force marched from Shepton Mallett to Wells, and thence to Bridgewater, where they were met by a deputation from Taunton, entreating the Duke not to return again to the town which

was already beginning to suffer from having received him so enthusiastically a week or so previously. From this day Monmouth's cause may be said to have rapidly declined; and during the double back to Sedgemoor from Bridgewater, nothing but disaster and discouragement attended him.

Lord Feversham lay with the King's forces at Sedgemoor after having made some rather feeble and ineffectual attempts to get in touch with Monmouth. It was decided at a council of war that the latter's forces should attack those of Lord Feversham by night, and one Richard Godfrey was sent to find out the number and position of the Royal troops. In due course he returned with, so far as it went, a true, but unfortunately very incomplete account. He stated for one thing that the enemy were not entrenched; but he somehow or other omitted to take notice of the fact that a deep "rhine" or great drain lay across the track by which Monmouth's men would be compelled to approach. In this "rhine," we are told by a contemporary writer, the water was only about two feet deep, but the soft bottom had enough mud to drown a man. This astonishing omission of Godfrey's undoubtedly cost the Duke the battle; although the man was not a traitor, as has been stated by some authorities, but merely a blunderer, which, indeed, on occasion brings about even more disastrous results. 185

The two opposing forces were, according to several contemporary accounts almost equal as regards numbers. Feversham's was, of course, better armed, but there was the advantage of a night surprise to set against that fact, had it not been for the "rhine." The attack of the Duke's small body of horse failed, and the rest of his force, evidently finding themselves outflanked, broke and fled. Then at dawn, or soon after, ensued one of the most relentless pursuits, followed by a series of massacres in cornfields, barns, and coppices, under the hedges, and in the ditches of the countryside, which was only to be equalled a little later on by the bloody work of Jeffreys himself. In the immediate district it is estimated that at least 1,200 of the unfortunate followers of Monmouth were slain. The Duke became a fugitive, and was ultimately captured near Wimborne, and taken thence to London for trial and execution.

A few weeks after Lyme Regis was to pay very dearly for the part it had played at the time of Monmouth's landing, and early in September, Judge Jeffreys condemned thirteen Lyme Regis people at Dorchester, several of whom were mere lads; and these were executed in Lyme on September 12.

From the date of the Monmouth Rebellion the history of the town has been quite uneventful, and it gradually declined from the position it once held as a centre of trade with Morlaix in Brittany, and other ports of the Continent. In former times, too, it had a considerable trade in salt, wine, and wool; in elephants' tusks, and gold dust from African coasts; and also for many years in serges and linens, though the last named trade was destroyed during the latter part of the seventeenth century by the war with France. The general foreign commerce of the town may be said to have declined from that date until the end of the eighteenth and the commencement of the nineteenth century, when it became practically extinct. 186

Nowadays Lyme relies almost entirely for prosperity on its popularity as a seaside holiday place of a quiet type, and as a marketing town for the district round about. The famous Cobb, or pier, one of the most ancient along the south coast, is familiar to every one who knows Lyme. It is some 1,200 feet in length, and partakes rather of the nature of a breakwater, although nowadays it is much used as a promenade by visitors and residents. It is thought to have dated from about the time of Edward I, and has certainly done something to prevent the encroachment of the sea, that in former days used to cause the inhabitants of Lyme a very considerable amount of anxiety. The little harbour itself is picturesque, and not entirely devoid of that form of life which comes from the presence of a considerable number of coasting vessels which are engaged chiefly in the export of cement stones.

Lyme Regis can boast of literary associations of considerable interest, for here it was Miss Mitford spent a somewhat long period of her youth in the early days of the last century, and Jane Austen also stayed on several occasions in a large white cottage standing at the harbour end of the little parade. It is generally thought that Jane Austen wrote considerable portions of her novels whilst at Lyme, and also drew upon the local scenery and characters for the purpose of her books. At any rate there is a great deal of Lyme Regis matter in *Persuasion*; and Bay Cottage claims to be the original of Captain Harville's house. It was, of course, from the steep flight of steps of the Cobb that Louisa Musgrave leapt.

The exterior of Lyme parish church is of less interest than it might be, owing to the jacket of stucco with which it has been inadvisedly enveloped. But within the building are not only a fine Jacobean gallery in good preservation and a carved wooden pulpit, the gift of one Richard Harvey, a merchant prince in the days of the town's prosperity; but also some interesting tapestry of great age. The colours of this have lost their freshness, and have faded to that vagueness which is the pathos of many such ancient and decaying things. 187

Seafarers should not forget that it was at Lyme that Sir George Summers, who is called the discoverer of the Island to which he gave his name, now known as the Bermudas, was born. The real discoverer, in 1522, appears to have been a Spaniard, Juan Bermudas. The group was not inhabited, however, until the casting away of Sir George Summers upon the principal island in 1609.

Lyme Regis can scarcely hope to revive into a place of any great importance, but it is nevertheless a charming little town with many features of interest, and some beautiful and picturesque scenery surrounding it; whilst in the summer season a considerable influx of visitors make it a bright, though still old-fashioned, place at which to stay.

Westward along the coast from Lyme to Beer Head, which is the last of the great chalk promontories to the west, the coast is very fine. The sea has done its work of erosion with the result that all along the shore the cliffs have fallen, forming a sort of undercliff, somewhat similar to that on the southern side of the Isle of Wight. The fall of the cliffs, too, has not always been gradual, for towards the middle of the last century one landslip amounted to some forty or fifty acres in extent, and with it went one orchard and two cottages. Of later years, however, this picturesque coast appears not to have suffered so severely from the sea's inroads as in former times, with a result that here and there along the cliffs houses have been built in such close contiguity to the edge as would, from past experiences, appear recklessly dangerous. 188

On the east side of Beer Bay is a straight and lofty cliff, and under this headland, called Haven Cliff, there

was formerly a pier and landing quay, where vessels of some considerable tonnage could enter; but of this there is now scarcely a trace.

At the commencement of the fertile valley which runs inland from the shore stands Seaton, formerly a mere village, now becoming quite a fashionable holiday resort; but the quaintest and prettiest spot in the bay is Beer, on the other side. Just in the little cove behind Whitecliff lies the fishing village with its ancient caves and quarries which are still worked. In the old smuggling days these formed, as it were, ready-made stores for the cargoes which were run, and many a successful trip was made across Channel by the Beer smugglers, much to their own profit and the loss of the Government.

But Beer, even in the smuggling days, was noted for at least one legitimate industry, that of lace-making, and it was in this little village that Queen Victoria's wedding dress was made. There is, unfortunately, no harbour, and so it is much less visited by yachtsmen than it would otherwise be.

Along the coast westward there are many lovely spots; one, soon after lofty Beer Head is left behind, is Branscombe Chine, with the village hidden from the sea in a beautiful little valley where three streams meet. Here, too, lace-making is even nowadays carried on. All along the coast to Sidmouth the scenery is lovely, broken into charming little chines and verdant with foliage. To enjoy it fully one must be able to hug the cliffs closely. Soon the coast line begins to trend south-westward, and Sidmouth, one of the prettiest spots of all Devon, is reached. On the western side stands High Peak, with its lofty cliffs, rearing themselves 500 feet above sea level, and between is the valley of the Sid, with swelling uplands all around. Unfortunately for yachtsmen who love the picturesque, and for whom comparatively quiet Sidmouth would have attractions, there is no harbour.

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The haven or quay which must once have been there is now covered at high tide. That anciently there was a harbour seems little doubt, as we are told that on the west side of a roof of rocks known as Whitledge Roman remains are frequently washed up.

Geologists seem to be of the opinion that all the coast between Bridport to the east and Otterton Head to the west has either been swallowed up by the sea or has sunk very considerably. For it would be out of the question for ships of such a size as once traded to north and west African ports from Lyme to have entered the latter with the water there is in the harbour at the present time. To drop anchor off Sidmouth early on a fine summer's morning is almost like approaching fairyland. The valley with its beautiful woods appears a perfect gem of its kind, and up from the little town and off the sea, ascend to the hills on either side the morning mists and the blue-grey smoke of early fires; whilst the red cliffs of Salcombe glow yet redder in the light of sunrise. The sea off Sidmouth has a wonderful range of colour and transparency, which artists of the school of Napier Hemy, and Tuke would fully appreciate. Underneath the cliffs it is almost a deep olive green, whilst further from the shore it becomes a deep sea-green, and where the sand lies, a shade of golden-green hue.

One of the prettiest coves hereabouts is just beyond High Cliff, and into it even quite a fair-sized boat can get comfortably enough if the channel is known. This cove, Ladram Bay, has many curious rock formations, as well as unexpected holes and corners of great charm.

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## Chapter VII

### The Coast to Teignmouth—Torquay—Brixham

From Sidmouth to Exmouth, although the coast is picturesque and interesting, there is no harbourage of any account. Those who do not know the land may, upon looking at the map, jump to the conclusion that in the estuary of the Otter there is not only a picturesque creek to be explored, but also good anchorage. But, alas, their hopes as regards the latter will be disappointed. The mouth of the river is so silted up that no yacht, and certainly no vessel of any tonnage, attempts nowadays to enter it, and thus there is no shelter unless the wind happens to be directly off shore. Hard by, however, a few cables' length beyond the western "hook" of land which almost locks the mouth of the river, is Budleigh Salterton, partially concealed from the sea, and one of the most delightful and picturesque of spots along the stretch of coast line which lies between the border of Dorset and Teignmouth. The cottages are many of them isolated from the street by the tinkling brook, which runs through the village and falls eventually into the Otter, and are approached by charming rustic bridges. In the gardens, which are pictures all the year round, flourish hollyhocks, sunflowers, sweet peas, sweet williams, marigolds of flaming hue, stocks, nasturtiums, myrtle trees, roses, lavender, and all the sweet country flowers which seem especially to favour the cottage gardens of fair Devon. The village is well worth seeing, and, indeed, during the summer months, the coasting yachtsman is a familiar figure in the little street, at the upper end of which stands the picturesque church.

The River Otter is navigable in a dinghy, and at the head of the estuary, about two miles from the sea, and half a mile from the river, is the interesting little village of Hayes Barton, which has peculiar interest for those who love the sea, because here Walter Raleigh, sea-dog, fine gentleman, conqueror of Virginia, and introducer of tobacco and the potato, was born in 1552, in a two-storied, thatched house, which nestles at the foot of the hills, and happily still remains much as it was in Raleigh's time. 191

There is little of interest along the coast from Budleigh Salterton until pretty Dawlish is reached. The wide-mouthed Exe is as disappointing as the smaller Otter estuary, but we imagine few who do enter fail to remain long enough (usually bringing up off Star Cross, two miles up from the sea on the western shore) to visit historic Powderham Castle and Exeter.

From the Exe onward, especially near Dawlish, the coast is exceedingly pretty, and it becomes more and more charming as one approaches Teignmouth, which lies chiefly upon a tongue of low land stretching from the wooded hills or cliffs to the mouth of the estuary, with Little Haldon's crest 800 feet above sea level in the background, and the other hills sheltering the pretty little town from the north and north-east very effectively. The harbour of Teignmouth is a fair one, and might easily be much improved. Indeed, it seems a great pity that something has not been done to make it rank with that of Torquay, even though there are undoubted difficulties in the way, which do not exist with the famous yachting and holiday resort, in the shape of a shifting bar, and the heavy seas which sweep into the harbour mouth, more especially during easterly gales. Formerly the Den, which now affords so inviting an expanse of green lawn to the lately come ashore, can have been little more than a sand dune, or a sandy and muddy spit thrusting out southward into the river's mouth and breaking the inrush of the sea.

It is probably to the fact that Teignmouth consists of two distinct parishes—East and West Teignmouth—that the pleasing irregularity of architecture arises to which many writers have from time to time referred. The most picturesque portion of the town is that nestling under the wooded cliffs which gradually rise to the moorland beyond, and the slopes of Little Haldon. 192

Teignmouth, which is a typical west-country port, from its low-lying situation has suffered in the past, and will doubtless suffer in the future, from inundations. In seasons of great rain the bogs of Dartmoor and the moorland surrounding Haldon, contribute miniature torrents to the Teign and the Tame, so that they are swollen, and when meeting the incoming seas are forced backwards like a bore with disastrous results for the owners of low-lying property. On such occasions as these the harbour, enticing as it seems in summer, becomes no place for the average yachtsman.

But it is, nevertheless, an interesting and picturesque little port, built beneath the shelter of the hills, and situated right at the mouth of the estuary of the River Teign, which at low tide is left almost dry twice a day. In the harbour there is generally a good handful of craft of a fair tonnage, some of them with bowsprits almost in the windows of the stores and houses by the waterside, and all of them careening over at low water in picturesque impotence.

As for Teignmouth folk, they are just Devonians to the heart's core; a trifle slow of speech (as much as their forbears were quick of action), with kindly hearts, and a soft burr at times in their homely fisherman's talk, dwelling in a sunny, favoured spot, where life goes on slowly, if steadily, and where as yet the commerce, such as it is, knows little of modern rush and competition.

Teignmouth of to-day, with its modern houses and bright, sunny streets, has little left of antiquity. Probably the most ancient dwelling does not date back two centuries, and except for the tower of St James's Church, West Teignmouth, there is little left of antiquarian interest. One must not, though, forget the really beautiful reredos (alas! disfigured by texts in the niches where once stood figures of beautiful workmanship) with its exquisite moulding of leaf and knot design, and its small figures of saints so perfectly carved as in most cases to be easily identifiable. 193

Not a few ancient writers have accounted for the red colour of the cliffs throughout this part of the Devon coast by the old tradition that the Danes in ancient times killed so many of the inhabitants hereabouts that the blood of the slain dyed the soil for all time. And Teignmouth is by several stated to have been the landing place of the Danish pirates on several of their expeditions or raids, but there would not appear to be any very sound historical basis for this assertion. It seems beyond question, however, that the marauders did land somewhere along the Devon coast, and enter the valley of the Teign, burning and ravaging as they went. In the first year of

the eleventh century they were out on one of their expeditions, and burned what is described in the chronicles as Teigntun or Tegntun, which may have been any of the "Teigntons," either Bishop's Teignton or Kingsteignton. It is also not unlikely that the little settlement at the mouth of the river now known as Teignmouth, but which is not even mentioned in Domesday (although certainly existing) received a share of their attention. The Saxon fortress church of St Michael, which, unhappily, was pulled down and re-erected in the third decade of the last century, was most probably originally built to place a check upon the depredations of the invaders, and to defend the town.

Edward the Confessor granted the Manor of Dawlish, till then a Royal Manor, to Leofric, his chaplain and chancellor, in or about the year 1044, and the boundary to the south-west was Teignmouth. The original grant, in which St Michael's Church is mentioned, is preserved amongst the documents and charters of Exeter Cathedral, and serves, at least in some measure, to date the old and former church. In time this same Leofric became Bishop of Crediton, but transferred the seat of the Bishopric to St Peter's Church, Exeter, and at his installation, which was a most imposing ceremonial, both his patron the King and the Queen were present. With the coming of the Conqueror many changes ecclesiastical as well as civil took place, but Leofric was permitted to retain his See and its possessions. And after the siege of Exeter was a thing of the past, the Conqueror confirmed the gift of Edward the Confessor to his faithful "Bishop Leofric," but with this difference, the manors were granted to him "for the See of Exeter," and not, as formerly, for his private use and enjoyment.

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Leofric appears to have left all his lands and possessions to the See, but a subsequent holder, Bishop Bruywere, towards the middle of the thirteenth century, gave Dawlish and the portion of Teignmouth to the Cathedral itself to endow the Dean. The Bishops of Exeter appear always about this period to have reserved the Manor of Bishop's Teignton for their personal benefit. They were undoubtedly powerful, and unless history slanders them "were not so law-abiding as one might have anticipated," seeing they were the spiritual leaders of men. Indeed, there are several mentions of illegal markets being held under the Bishops' auspices, which doubtless brought money to their treasuries, and accounted for their refusals to abandon their privilege.



### FISHING FOR MACKEREL OFF EXMOUTH

Regarding the history of Teignmouth in the Middle Ages it is sufficient to mention that the town enjoyed some considerable measure of prosperity, as the different historical documents relating to it prove. The port was situated at West Teignmouth, and that there was a foreign trade of some extent seems certain. It was one of several towns which were called upon to furnish jointly a ship for use in Edward I's expedition to Scotland, but in those days enforcement of such orders must have been attended with some difficulty, if one may judge from the way in which they were successfully set at defiance. There then existed extensive salt works or salterns, which originally were features of many low-lying strips of sand dunes and land along the south coast, when salt was a far more valuable article than it is nowadays.

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An interesting sidelight upon the ecclesiastical manners of those far-off times is thrown by one of the ancient registers of the Bishops of Exeter, which tells in language comparing favourably with the "vivid at all costs" style of "our own correspondents" of the present day, how a feud raged between one John Eustace, the incumbent of West Teignmouth Church and his parishioners. We are told that so hot grew the dispute, and so high ran local feeling, that a large number of the parishioners set upon their priest even with "diabolical fury," and that in retaliation John Eustace (who truly must have carried a hot heart beneath his priest's cassock) so far forgot that he should preach and practice peace and not the sword, that he hired some one unknown to stab his bitterest opponent, one Henry Baker, with a knife.

As often happened in those far-off days, the merits of the case seem to have been rather overlooked, and judgement, as was also not infrequently the case, was given of a most comprehensive kind. The priest was removed from his office, and the recalcitrant parishioners were promptly excommunicated. That this local disturbance of long ago was of a serious and somewhat widespread character is to be gathered from the fact that the populace of Teignmouth almost to a man (to say nothing of the women, who sided mostly with the

priest) took sides, and eight years after the excommunication and suspension the feud was still burning. So much so, indeed, that the attention of the King himself was called to the fact. The then rector of Bishop's Teignton (who had much to do with the affairs of West Teignmouth Church), wise man that he was, did not seek to settle the matter, but when the parishioners showed signs of once more getting out of hand, he promptly applied for a licence to enable him to leave his cure and travel abroad! His excuse was that he required the permission to enable him to proceed on a pilgrimage to Rome, and for study. Thus did Sir William Kaignes or Keynes exercise that discretion which a cynic has declared is the better part of valour, leaving the Bishop of Exeter himself to settle the points in dispute, and bring the parishioners to a sense of their contumacy and wrongdoing. Eight years or more after the feud broke out the Bishop received the submission of the parish; every man, woman and child in which it would seem, from a contemporary account, had not only actually or tacitly to acknowledge their wrongdoing and ask pardon, but also do penance to obtain it. 196

One of the most stirring incidents of Teignmouth history occurred in 1340, about Lammastide, when a body of French—called in those times pirates, rightly or wrongly, as one happened to regard retaliatory measures of the foe across the water—entered the harbour and sailing up the river set fire to the town and sacked it, besides “barbarously putting to the sword sundry of its inhabitants.” But whatever may have been the extent of the damage effected, the place made a satisfactory recovery in a very short time, for seven years afterwards we find the port and inhabitants contributing seven ships and 120 seamen towards the fleet that Edward III was gathering together for the siege of Calais. It is not presuming too much to imagine that Teignmouth men, like most of their kind along fair Devon's coast, set out with some alacrity to avenge the deeds of the “pirates” of seven years before, and saw the tree-crowned Ness which marks the western side of the harbour entrance dip beneath the blue water astern, with mingled feelings of regret and exultation.

So in order that the town might not in the future fall an entirely unresisting victim to “pirates” and marauders, bulwarks of timber and rubble were thrown up, the proper maintenance of which devolved upon the two parishes jointly. 197

The life of Teignmouth during the next century was probably much as that of other small coast towns of Devon, where the harbour, however suitable for trade and commercial growth, had unfortunately insufficient depth of water to permit of the entrance of vessels of any very considerable tonnage. Indeed, it is probably owing to this deficiency—and to the fact that in former times there were few means of adequately deepening or keeping harbours and harbour mouths clear, that Teignmouth, admirably situated as it is as a port and for commerce, has never risen to any great commercial eminence.

In the past its chief industries were fishing, fish curing, and salt making; and in pursuit of these it took its uneventful course. Leland casts an informing eye over the place during the marvellous journey which he undertook, and crystallized in his *Itinerary*, reaching Teignmouth sometime during the thirties of the sixteenth century. Of the place he says, referring to the ground upon which East Teignmouth is built and the “Den” stands, “The Est-Point of the Haven is callid the Poles ... a low sandy Ground other cast out by the Spring of Sands out of the Teign or els throuen up from the Shores by rage of Wynd and Water, and thys Sand occupieth now a greate Quantitie of Ground bytwene Teignmouth Towne, where the Grounde mounteth and Teignmouth Haven.”

Leland goes on to say that “ther be two Tounes at this Point of the Haven by name of Teignmouth, one hard joining the other;” and also states that at the date he writes the houses at West Teignmouth on “the peace of Sanddy Ground afore spoken of ther caullid the Dene” had not been built many years. Leland's name the *Dene* (meaning a dune or bank) being a much more comprehensible one than its present form *Den*. 198

The stories of the destruction of the towns “by the Danes, and of late Tymes by the Frenchmen” were doubtless told to the indefatigable traveller and diarist. But, as is so often the case with him, Leland is not entirely accurate, and is at fault in referring to East Teignmouth as Teignmouth Regis.

During the years immediately succeeding his visit the place seems to have declined, rather slowly, but nevertheless surely, and a century or so later we find a well-known writer describing it as having been formerly considerably more resorted to and held in higher esteem. This same authority appears to have accepted the tradition of the Danish landing and wholesale slaughter of the unfortunate inhabitants in its entirety, for he ascribes the colour of the cliffs—which forms so striking a feature of local scenery—to the bloodshed which traditionally took place. He writes in pursuance of this theory that it is in memory of the Danes' atrocious massacre that the cliff is so “exceedingly red”; and adds that at the memory of the crimes the place “doth seem thereat again full fresh to bleed.”

The inhabitants at the time of this later historian would seem to have become slothful as their town declined. Perhaps the one circumstance may be traced to the other. At any rate we are told that at the time the country was in the throes of Civil War, and Royalists and Roundheads were marching and countermarching around Exeter, the inhabitants discontinued their practice of keeping the bulwarks and defences of the harbour and town in repair, which led to the promulgation of an order from Exeter calling upon them to fulfil their duty.

Then for fully a century history is silent as to the progress or doings of the town and its people. The veil which so often at that time obscured the history of the smaller and more secluded places on the south and west coasts, seems to have also enwrapped Teignmouth. And it was not lifted until the last decade of the seventeenth century, when the town again became the theatre of stirring scenes. 199

In those days the ports and sea-coast towns of the West were most of them not only undefended in the sense of not possessing fortifications, but were “out of touch” with the rest of the world to such an extent that they presented great temptations for attack to England's enemies who were neither weak nor few. In a word, for a hostile force to effect a landing seemed to be the easiest thing in the world. Both the Duke of Monmouth in 1685, and William of Orange, after the Revolution, three years later, had done this with ease. It is, therefore, perhaps little to be wondered at that the banished King James II and his adherents in England should, without much difficulty, have persuaded Louis XIV to attempt a landing on behalf of the Stuart cause, upon the almost defenceless Devon coast. Louis had no love for England or for Protestant William, and also probably was



anxious to unburden himself of James II, who promised to become a perpetual pensioner and trouble so long as he was in France, or rather, one might perhaps say, out of England. So when James II, relying upon the representations of his adherents in England, succeeded in persuading the French King that the English people were longing for his return, and would give him an enthusiastic welcome, Louis prepared a fleet for invasion in support of the Jacobite cause. In pursuance of this design Admiral de Tourville set sail, and made his way with his squadron up Channel, to fight the combined Dutch and English fleets.

Owing no doubt to the fact that the affairs of this country were still in an unsettled state, William and Mary of Orange not being as yet firmly established on the Throne, and a large number of the people still favouring the Stuarts, the English fleet detached itself and allowed the Dutch single-handed to engage De Tourville, who succeeded in crushing them. The result of this action, fought on June 30, 1690, was to place the south, and especially the badly defended south-west coast, at the mercy of the French admiral and his fleet, and to bring well within the bounds of possibility the invasion that his expedition was intended to accomplish. But the spirit of the West Country was aroused, and the fighting blood of the old sea-dogs of Devon asserted itself. So when De Tourville and his fleet of warships and galleys, which had been brought up from the Mediterranean for the purpose of the projected invasion, appeared off the coast, something had already been done towards defence by the summoning of the militia and country folk. One can imagine that the appearance of the lumbering galleys—and the tales that were rife of the life of the slaves who manned them—had not a little to do with the zeal with which the people of the West set about to put their defences in order.

De Tourville appears to have wasted his opportunities, for a contemporary document, which is of great value and interest as being probably the work of an eyewitness, tells us "The French fleet having been on our coasts for several days, sometimes coasting about, other times at anchor in Torbay, has had this good effect, as to put us in a very good posture of defence." Then follows what is probably the best account extant of the part Teignmouth played in the disturbing and stirring events which ensued.

"On Saturday morning, July 26 (old style), about daybreak, the whole fleet, being with their galleys, about one hundred and twenty sail, weighed anchor and stood in for a small fishery village called Teignmouth."

Macaulay writes concerning the event, "The beacon of the ridge above Teignmouth was kindled, Hey-tor and Cawsand made answer, and soon all the hill-tops of the West were on fire. Messengers were riding all night from deputy-lieutenant to deputy-lieutenant, and early next morning, without chief, without summons, five hundred gentlemen and yeomen, armed and mounted, had assembled on the summit of Haldon Hill." Quoting again from the account to which we have already referred, we find, "about five o'clock the galleys drew very near the shore of the said place, their men of war at the same time played their cannon on the shore for the space of about an hour or an hour and a half, which scared the poor inhabitants from their cottages, they first taking with them what of any value so short a warning and great plight would permit them."

It is, of course, doubtful if the French admiral knew of the "raising of the countryside round about," but whether he did or did not, we are told "The inhabitants being fled, the invaders immediately landed their men in the long boat(s) to the number of one thousand foot, who being no sooner come in shoar but they presently set the town on fire; which was soon done, there being never a house in the place but was thatched except the parson's, which was covered with Cornish slate. They likewise burnt two or three fishermen's boats in the river, and the beacon, and plundered some other straggling houses."

One can imagine how the wretched inhabitants watched the destruction of their homes and property from the neighbouring heights, or even so close by as the Ness which, being well-wooded, afforded cover; or perhaps, waited in the sheltering rocks and crannies on distant Haldon, in hopes that after all the enemy might not have effected a landing, only for these hopes at last to be cruelly dissipated by the column of smoke which floated upwards and across from the burning village, telling its tale of destruction.

Not content with the burning and sacking of Teignmouth, bands of the marauders made their way across the river to Shaldon and St Nicholas, and to villages up the river, which in each case they plundered and burned. Except for the communion plate and other sacred articles found in the churches (which the invaders thoroughly ransacked) there could have been, one would imagine, little of value to repay their search in the villages they visited. But from St Michael's they undoubtedly carried off, amongst other things, the famous herrings made of gold, and presented as votive offerings centuries before by the fishermen of the parish. Not only was everything of value stolen from the churches, but the books were destroyed, the pulpits defaced, or pulled down and burned in bonfires, together with the wooden communion tables.

Then, as has been recorded, "Upon the news of this villainous attempt and bold invasion, the militia of the county, horse and foot, immediately made a body, and marched after the invaders, showing a great deal of zeal and resolution.... The invaders having intelligence by their scouts of the posture of our forces, and that we were moving towards them, they immediately prepared to return to their ships...." But before doing this they took the precaution to send "seven or eight small pieces of cannon just by the shoar side to play on our horse in case we came too quick upon them."

The destruction wrought was estimated at no less than £11,000, a sum which in those days represented several times its present-day value. So serious, indeed, was the position of the poor fisherfolk of Teignmouth rendered, owing to De Tourville's visit, that King William and Queen Mary themselves made an appeal to the country on their behalf. The Royal letter which was issued and read in upwards of ten thousand parish churches, and elsewhere throughout the country, had the result of so arousing the sympathies of those who listened to the recital of the Teignmouth folk's sad plight, that the money to rebuild the place was soon forthcoming. In the name "French Street," the landing of De Tourville's force is commemorated.

How long the town was a-building there appears to be no record; but it is certain that the new town much surpassed the old in convenience, size and healthiness. For many years, naturally enough, fear of the French was very prevalent, and as a protection a battery was formed on the shore at the end of the Den.

Regarding the lasting effect upon the country at large of what, at so long a distance of time, may be looked upon by some as merely the destruction of a small fishing village, and not as an event of any great importance,

Macaulay says:

“Hitherto the Jacobites had tried to persuade the nation that the French would come as friends and deliverers; would observe strict discipline, would respect temples, and the ceremonies of the established religion. The short visit of Tourville to our coasts had shown how little reason there was to expect such moderation from the soldiers of Louis. They had been on our island only a few hours and occupied only a few acres, but within a few hours and a few acres had been exhibited in miniature the destruction of the Palatinate.”

The terror of a French invasion lasted for many years; it was, indeed, revived, and it became again prevalent at the time of the long war with Napoleon. But for more than a hundred years the history of Teignmouth was uneventful and even tranquil, save for the doings of the smugglers who gained some prominence in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and of whom there were many famous desperadoes along the Devon and Cornish coasts.

Then came another scare of possible French invasion at the time when, indeed, the whole of the south coast from the Foreland to Land’s End was agitated by the spectre of “Boney.” And at Teignmouth, “though the place was now provided with a battery as a wall of defence,” on at least one occasion during the year 1797, the inhabitants suddenly forsook their homes and once more fled in confusion and affright to the recesses of Little Haldon. Some, we are told euphemistically, “in a state bordering upon that in which they entered the world. By the which at least one unfortunate maid died of a cold so contracted.” The origin of the scare on this occasion, when it was confidently asserted that the French had landed near Torquay, and were burning and ravaging the countryside, was the accidental ignition of a stack of furze on Stoke Common over the Ness. But no invaders came to disturb the peace of the affrighted town, and after a few hours of discomfort and dismay, the crestfallen inhabitants slowly by twos and threes returned to their homes. 204

Teignmouth, about the year of Waterloo had acquired something of a reputation as a watering place or seaside resort and boasted not only the usual Public Assembly rooms, in which Georgian belles and Georgian beaux were wont to disport themselves at routs and balls, and (if gossip may be credited) drink dishes of tea, and game for high stakes; but also a theatre, library, and other social places of resort. A quaint but vivid picture of the life of the town at this period is obtained in the *Guide to Teignmouth*, by Risdon, published in 1817 in three slender volumes, one of which refers to Teignmouth and neighbourhood. There would appear to have been the usual attractions offered by seaside resorts in these times, for we have a mention of a good coach service between the town and Exeter, with carriers’ wagons for those who could not afford coach fares. And there were Sedan chairs for hire, Bath chairs, and donkeys for the venturesome maidens; with whom, we are told, such a means of locomotion was a passion. The more staid and steady matrons were accommodated with horses and pillions, and many a gay and humoursome scene was enacted, we may warrant, upon the “fine sandy beach” of which much is made, or along the shore where no “obstruction was permitted which could interfere with the pleasure and progression of riders.” In several old prints published early in the last century, one catches glimpses of the fashions, foibles, and pastimes of “young ladies and gentlemen” who, as regards attire and carriage, might have stepped out of the pages of *Persuasion* or *Pride and Prejudice*. 205

During the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Teignmouth appears to have suffered a gradual decline, from which it did not recover until the railway came in 1846, gradually making the town what it is to-day—a modern, picturesque, holiday resort, pleasant alike to landsmen and yachtsmen.

To-day the trade of Teignmouth is considerable, as is indicated by the constant presence in harbour of a number of craft of medium tonnage, and groups of barges with picturesque square-cut, red-brown sails. The sea-going commerce of the place is nowadays chiefly the export of china clay, brought down from the pits at Newton Abbot in the barges, but there is also some little trade in wood pulp, timber from Norway, flour and oil.

There is a tale with the true flavour of the supernatural about it relating to the jutting crag on Hole Head, to the north of the town, which bears some remote resemblance to a “Parson” after which it is named, and the “Clerk,” which stands far out from the shore. Once, so the tale goes, a priest of Dawlish was riding homeward with his clerk from Teignmouth, where they had been to collect tithes. They took their way by the inland road with its many lanes, and after wandering about came to a standstill, having lost their way.

The night was both wet and stormy, and after a pause they struggled on in the darkness, knowing scarcely at all where they were going.

At length they came to a house which was unfamiliar to them both, but from the windows of which bright lights were streaming, as they seemed to the lost ones, of welcome, whilst from within came the sounds of laughter, merry-making, and music. Happy at their discovery of shelter, the priest and his clerk paused, and almost immediately one of the windows was thrown open, and they were invited to come in. Nothing loth they tethered their steeds, and putting off their riding cloaks entered the house, and were soon enjoying the warmth and gaiety. 206

The party grew more merry and boisterous each moment, and soon the priest, forgetting his sacred calling, having drunk somewhat deeply, burst into ribald songs; in which the clerk, following his master’s lead, joined. At length, however, they realized that it was getting late, and that they ought once more to be riding homeward; and so with heads none too clear from the liquor they had drunk, and legs none too firm from the same cause, they bid adieu to their host, and sought their horses.

Once outside the priest declared that he should never find the way, and that he must have a guide, “even though it were none better than the devil himself.”

On hearing this remark, his host, who had invited him to enter the house, volunteered to put him and his companions in the right way for Dawlish. He then guided the travellers to the end of the road, and told them to keep straight on. However, they had not gone very far ere they found themselves riding through water, which kept rising and rising, although but a few minutes previously they had believed themselves not only on dry ground, but a safe distance from the sea. They turned, as they thought, inland, and made every effort to escape the water, but the more they urged on their horses the higher the water rose. In their fright they called loudly for their guide, who had disappeared, but their appeals for help called forth loud and mocking laughter from a

little distance. Then came a flash of vivid lightning, and their late guide appeared to them in his true guise—the devil, tail and all! He jeered and mocked them, and pointed to the sea into which they had ridden, and from which they could not now escape.

What became of the two unfortunate wayfarers the story does not actually say, but it tells us that their horses were found by a countryman going to work early next morning wandering riderless along the sands; whilst at Hole Head appeared the two rocks now known as “The Parson and Clerk.” 207

There is also a legend that the beach near the Head is haunted (as is that of Woollacombe in North Devon) by the spectre of an old gentleman, who for his sins is set the task of making ropes out of sand until Judgement Day.

If staying any time in the harbour one can do far worse than take the dinghy and pull up the river for a few hours' fishing. The salmon fishery of the Teign (which owes its origin to the late Frank Buckland) is good, and during the period from March to September provides interest for many visitors to the town, who watch the operations of the fishermen from Monday morning till Friday at sunset, as they cast and draw their seines. Quite big fish are sometimes taken, and a 56-pounder is by no means unknown. The fish are often brought ashore, laid on the beach, and sold by auction; and when a good haul has been made, we have known them bought sometimes as cheaply as sevenpence or eightpence a pound.

The upper river is lovely. The low cliffs which skirt it for some distance are edged with foliage, and are beautiful in the spring with apple-trees in full bloom and wild cherry blossom in thick, snowy-white clusters, affording a striking contrast in rural beauty with the busy harbour and quays a few miles away below the bridge.

Alongside Teignmouth quay there are often quite big steamers noisily unloading or taking in cargo; colliers, grimy and red with rust, busily discharging their useful though unpicturesque freight; whilst the clay barges are being cleared of their lumps which are picked up on spiked sticks by the men who are locally known as “lumpers,” and thus transferred from the barge to the quay or the hold of another vessel.

At high tide there is generally some craft or other—a Norwegian timber brig, a trading schooner, or a coasting tramp steamer coming in or going out of harbour, which gives animation and an interest to the scene. 208

But yachtsmen, even of the least fashionable type, do not remain long at Teignmouth, but make for the westward to Torquay. The coast is very pretty, and one passes in turn Labrador, then the Minnicombe Bell Rock, Watcombe, and then Petit Tor, with jagged crest and sides looking out over the sea. The coast then becomes rocky off shore, which it has not been for many a mile, and to pass along it to Torquay either in the early morning, or towards the late afternoon, when the shadows of the cliff fall in charming colour upon the surface of the water, and the luxuriant vegetation which crowns the cliffs and headlands is seen at its best is to enjoy an experience of loveliness and even glamour not easily forgotten. The memory of the beauty of the scene remains as we once left Teignmouth at a little after sunrise on a July morning, when the shore was yet wreathed in mist, and the light soft and pearly-grey. As the sun climbed out of the sea eastward towards Portland, the mist rolled away, and the red cliffs with their crown of pleasant green trees and luxuriant vegetation gradually disclosed themselves. The reflection of all this beauty seemed literally to be falling into the calm, deep green sea, whose surface was only here and there disturbed by ripples where the young morning breeze flecked it.

Then appeared Babbacombe Downs, on which the cowslips grow within sound of the sea, and nowadays there are golf links and smart villas, and Oddicombe, with its white pebble beach forming so vivid a contrast to the still red cliffs in the bright light of early morning. Then ever delightful Anstey's Cove, excelling in beauty even Babbacombe, and both of these with deep water close in shore. Through the passage between Hope's Nose and the Orestone, where there is also deep water, one glides at once into Torbay; beautiful almost beyond description, with its three and a half miles of shining sea lying between picturesque Daddy's Hole, and sheer upstanding Barry Head, which forms the southern horn of the bay, flat-topped as Table Mountain itself. 209

Torquay is so charmingly situated, and presents, as one passes London Bridge, and enters the harbour, such a beautiful picture of tree-clad heights and foliage amid which the picturesque-looking villas are embosomed, that it is little wonder the town has been popular with both holiday folk and yachtsmen for many years, and has been often likened to towns on the Italian Riviera, and by the great Napoleon himself to Porto Ferrajo, Elba.

The harbour is a good one, and of considerable size, and in summer time there are many white-winged craft within its basin which can lie snug enough in any save strong easterly or southerly gales, when a nasty sea outside makes an uncomfortable swell within.

From a beautiful watercolour drawing by David Cox (reproduced as a print at the end of the eighteenth century) one is able to see that even then the wooded heights above Meadfoot Sands and the present harbour and the lovely coves along that favoured shore from Daddy's Hole to Hope's Nose were being gradually dotted over with houses and villas set picturesquely amid the green.

It is claimed for Torquay that it is not only singularly beautiful (which is best and most speedily realized by those who approach it from the sea) but that it is favoured by so equable a climate that it is difficult to say positively when the town is seen at its best. Those, indeed, who, like ourselves, have visited it at various seasons of the year, cannot easily decide which is the most pleasant and beautiful. Whether in winter when a climate resembling that of Mentone for mildness ensures astonishing vegetation, and flowers almost unknown at that season at other similar towns on the south coast; in spring, when the hills take on the tender green of oaks, beeches, and birches to supplement by their beauty the “evergreens” which have done so much to make the scene charming throughout the winter months, and when spring flowers gem the hillsides, meadows and lanes with blossom; in summer when the sky is deep blue, and the waters of Torbay scarcely less so, and the red-sailed trawlers out of Brixham show up blots of colour in contrast to the white-winged yachts which come into the bay from the east, and south, and west, “things instinct with life upon a painted sea,” and ashore all is sunlight and brightness; or in autumn when the sea takes on more sombre hues, but the hillsides, bright with the exquisite dying tints which blaze forth from the branches of oaks, beeches, chestnuts, sycamores, copper beeches, and elms, and the creepers on the houses, supply a yet more vivid note of crimson, gold, and brown. It 210

was doubtless of this wealth of beauty in each succeeding season that caused a great writer to say, "of all places on the coast of England I would, if condemned to pass my days in one spot, choose Torquay."

From the deck of a yacht in harbour many, though truly not all, of its attractions are speedily obvious, and a short time ashore reveals most of the rest. On all hands, when once the commercial part of the town is left behind, one is charmed by shady roads, pretty gardens and equally delightful vistas (not alone from Chapel Hill and other well-known vantage points) which appear on almost every hand.

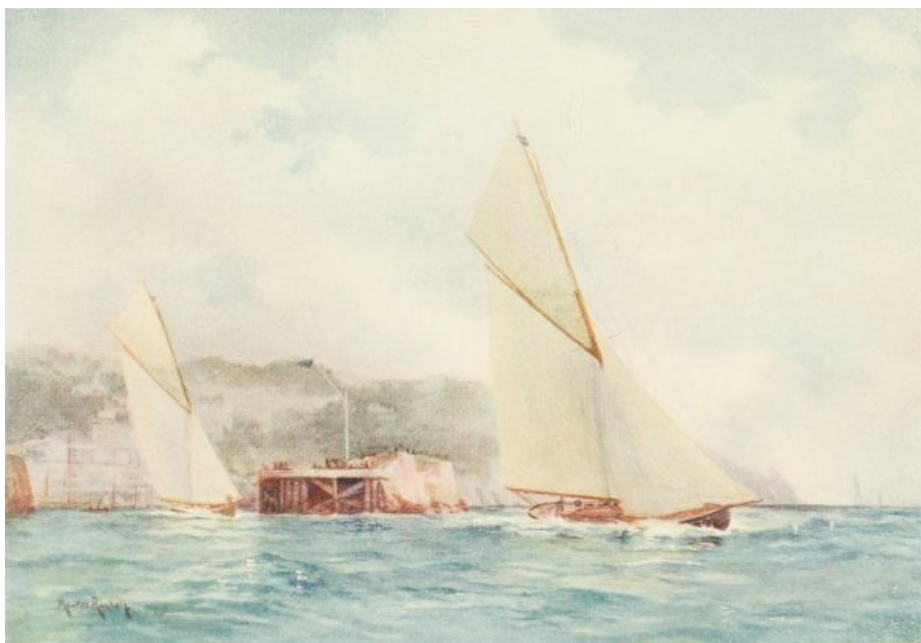
Anciently, Torquay formed one of the most important manors into which in those days the district round about was divided. The manor was known as that of Tor or Torre, and the earliest direct reference to it is found in Domesday. At the time of the Conquest it was bestowed by William of Normandy upon one Richard de Brewire or Brewer, whose descendant, William, Lord Brewer, in 1195, bestowed a portion of the manor on the Church, and founded the monastery afterwards to become famous, and known as Tor Abbey, the ruins of which, set amid fine avenues of elms, chestnut, and limes, look out over the green and gently sloping fields once forming the Abbey grounds, and lead down to the seashore. The Manor ultimately passed into the possession of the Mohuns by the marriage of Lord Brewer's daughter Alicia with Lord Mohun. 211

The Abbey, on account of other grants of land made to it by pious benefactors, as the years sped by ultimately became the wealthiest of all the Premonstratensian monasteries in England, which Order had been founded in Picardy in 1120 by Norbert (afterwards canonized by Gregory XIII in 1584).

It was not only—as were most of the religious foundations in the Middle Ages—the centre of the ecclesiastical, but also of the social and industrial life of the district round about. The chief rules of the Order related to the leading of a pure and contemplative life, and provided that the monks should themselves labour for the common weal. This Order of Premonstratensians, also known as the Norbertines, was noted for its industry, and for the fact that the brethren were skilful cultivators of the soil. Those at Tor Abbey were evidently no exception to the rule, as their wide and perfectly cultivated lands of the past bore witness; they are also generally supposed to have been the founders and promoters of the woollen industry, for which the West of England was afterwards destined to become famous. In addition to the many duties of their Order they undertook the teaching of the children, and were always generous patrons of art and learning. Some of the most saintly and wise of men in the Middle Ages in England sprang from the Premonstratensians, who were noted for their boundless charity and good works.

It was from the civil community which gathered round the Abbey, and the people who built their homes within the shadow of its patronage and protection that the beginnings of what is now known as Torquay undoubtedly sprang. These spread first along the shore to the north-eastward, as fishermen came and settled down here and built their dwellings, and a small trade with other villages along the coast was gradually built up. 212

The history of Tor Abbey, though interesting as reflecting the life of those far-off times, was comparatively uneventful. It was chiefly made up of the coming and going of travellers, occasional alarms of possible marauders, and the simple pleasures and events of life and death. It need not, therefore, detain the general chronicler. About 1540 the Abbey shared the fate of all other institutions of the kind, when King Henry VIII brought about the Dissolution of the religious houses, and it probably deserved its hard fate much less than many of its neighbours. The King promptly granted the fair lands—he had stripped the building of its possessions, sacramental vessels, and doubtless the much revered altar cloth made of the famous "cloth of gold"—to his favourite, John St Leger, from whose family it passed in time once more into that of the Mohuns. Finally, in 1653, it was sub-divided into two portions. The Abbey domain went to Sir John Stowell, by sale, who resold it to Sir George Cary in 1664, in the possession of whose family it remains. The Manor of Tormoham passed into the hands of the Earls of Donegal by marriage, but was sold a little more than a century later to Sir Robert Palk, an ancestor of Lord Haldon, whose family continued to own it until recently.



**TORQUAY HARBOUR. ENTRANCE**

The Tor Abbey House of the present day owes its origin to one Ridgeway (a descendant of Lord Mohun, the original possessor), who had purchased the Tor Abbey estate granted by King Henry to John St Leger from the then owner. Though this building is severe, and devoid of any great artistic merit, in it are incorporated some interesting features of the ancient Abbey, remains of which in the form of the old church and chapter house, and the refectory (now used as a chapel) are so picturesque and interesting a feature of the Abbey grounds.

Although there is no doubt that throughout the distant centuries known as the Middle Ages a handful of scattered dwellings of yeomen, fisherfolk, and the like constituted all that is now known as Torquay, to this hamlet, whose very existence was so largely dependent upon that of the great religious house which dominated its life, came at times more than an echo of passing stirring events. Not far distant from it on occasion were enacted some great and strenuous events of history. The Wars of the Roses, and later the storm and stress of the coming Armada, amongst them. Tor Abbey, indeed, has more than a legendary connexion with the destruction of the great fleet of Philip of Spain, for upon the capture of the Spanish flagship *Capitana*, the huge vessel and her crew were given over into the care of Sir John Gilbert and George Cary, an ancestor of the Sir George who became the purchaser of the Abbey. The prisoners, numbering upwards of 400, were landed, and confined in the granary of the Abbey, which in consequence even to-day is known as the Spanish barn. For these and other services, including the command of a couple of regiments raised for the defence of the country, Cary was knighted by Queen Elizabeth. 213

It is only a little more than a century and a quarter ago that Torquay commenced to attract attention as a place of any importance, at this period its modern history may be said to begin. Certainly as late as the third quarter of the eighteenth century it was little more than a small village with perhaps a couple of inns, and a few houses of a better sort on the heights. But soon the importance of the Bay, the trade with Newfoundland which had come into being, and the fishing industry in which a considerable number of people were now engaged, caused the inhabitants of neighbouring inland villages to gravitate to Torre—as it was then commonly called. There was at this period, too, a quay of some size and convenience, and it was chiefly in the neighbourhood of this that the new houses were built, so that the life of the rapidly growing town centred round the quay. About this time the place was called Fleet or Fleete, which, derived from the Saxon, means a spot where the tide comes up; and for some time this name (preserved nowadays in that of its principal street) remained unchanged. Then at length Tor Key—modernized into Torquay—came into common use, and eventually entirely superseded the older name. 214

There is little record of the growth of the place at this particular period, but somewhere towards the close of the eighteenth century, the fleet being stationed in the bay, a need arose for more houses, and of a better class, for the use of the officers of the fleet and their families and dependents. These were principally erected along that part of the foreshore which is nowadays known as the Strand, and soon, we are told, people from a distance, chiefly civilians, were enticed hither either by the inducements offered by trade, or by the growing reputation of the place as a beautiful and healthy spot. In those seemingly very remote days the whole of the site on which the town now stands was a series of meadows, wooded heights, dells, and apple orchards. “On the hills above Tor Key,” one writer states, “are woods of greatest charm, split asunder here and there by tiny streams, or clearing where some one of enterprise is about to erect a house.... The meadows in the lower part are fragrant with flowers, and dotted with kine, and in spring time there is a show of apple blossom in the orchards not excelled by any other in the West Countrie....” It is difficult, indeed, now, after little more than a hundred years, for the visitor to Torquay to quite realize that the large, well-built, and commercially prosperous town consisted then of but a handful of scattered houses set amid pastures and virgin woods.

By the end of the eighteenth century, two streets of houses existed, one known as George Street, the other as Cane’s Lane (afterwards renamed Swan Street), and the population which a few years before probably numbered only a few score of persons, reached almost to four figures. The first decade of the nineteenth century saw progress of a rapid character, and by 1803 several new streets had been added to the growing town—notably on the Quay, Strand, and on the ground now known as Torwood Street—notwithstanding the alarm which was at the time so prevalent concerning Napoleon’s projected descent upon the English shores. 215

In no part of the country was the affright more keen than at Torquay, which by many was supposed to be the objective of the fleet which was gathering across the Channel for the purpose of invading our shores. So seriously, indeed, was the possibility of Napoleon’s descent considered, that a meeting was held for the purpose of arranging for the speedy exodus of the women, aged, and children, should the French appear in the bay. It was arranged that the infirm, and all children who were not able to walk a distance of ten miles in a day, should in event of necessity be assembled at a specified place, from whence they were to be driven to Dartmoor in vehicles. Happily for the future of Torquay, Napoleon’s scheme did not materialize, and three years or so later Sir Lawrence Palk constructed the harbour, which was ultimately to form the inner basin. This work gave a considerable impetus to the sea trade and commerce of the place, which in the same year was honoured by the visit of the Princess of Wales, daughter of George III.

Other Royal visits are recorded, during which encomiums were lavished upon the beauty of the town by the distinguished visitors, one of whom referred to it as “an earthly paradise.” But even so favoured a spot could not escape the distress which afflicted the country when in 1846 the harvest failed and bread was in consequence at almost famine prices. Added to this misfortune came one of the severest winters known for many years. In May of the following year Bread Riots broke out, and several bakers’ shops were broken into and looted by the starving mob. The Riot Act was read in Torquay, troops were hurried into the town from Exeter, and some three hundred special constables were sworn in, whilst H.M.S. *Adelaide* and *Vulcan* landed bluejackets and coastguards, with the result that numerous arrests were made, and the riots were soon quelled. Torquay citizens of those days would not appear to have been very amenable to law and order, for only twenty years later much the same scenes were enacted, the Riot Act was once more read, and some considerable disturbance and destruction of property took place. 216

The history of the town from that time onward, however, has been uneventful save for the visits of Royal personages of various nationalities (including the late Queen Victoria, who was at Torquay on several occasions during her long reign) and the usual events of a local character which go to make up the life of a fashionable

seaside health and holiday resort. But in 1870 an event occurred which was to have a great and lasting influence upon the development of the town. In that year the harbour, which had been constructed by Sir Lawrence Palk, afterwards raised to the peerage as Lord Haldon, was opened, and this marked the beginning of Torquay's rise as one of the favourite and most important yachting stations in the West Country. The cost of the harbour works was upwards of £70,000, and seventeen years later they were acquired by the local authorities, who have spent at various times a further sum of £100,000 upon them, and nowadays the harbour ranks as one of the best artificial havens of the south coast.

Few seaside towns of the size of Torquay we imagine have been the temporary home of so many poets, or have been so "sung" of in what formerly was called "tuneful numbers."

One of the earliest to describe the town's beauties in verse was probably the once well-known Dr Booker, 217 who in the year of Waterloo published a poetic effusion entitled *Torquay*, which was of a flattering prophetic nature, if somewhat commonplace in expression. He was succeeded by the Rev. Joseph Reeve; Edmund Carrington, the author of a rhymed account of the small talk and scandal of the town in the early forties, which (probably because of the latter feature) had a marked success; Matthew Bridges, whose poetic work was of a considerably higher order than that we have already named; John A. Blackie, whose work gained the commendation of some distinguished critics; and of later poets mention must be made of F. B. Doveton, who has written many verses of local significance.

Torquay has especial interest for admirers of Charles Kingsley, as it was here that he came in 1855 to live in a cottage at Livermead, overlooking the Bay. As the author of *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*, he appears to have become anathema to the orthodox inhabitants of the then rising watering place, an attitude which was fostered and encouraged by the then Bishop of Exeter, who seems to have regarded Kingsley as a particularly dangerous and outrageous heretic. The local clergy followed the Bishop's lead, with the result that not only were all the churches of the neighbourhood closed to Kingsley so far as his preaching or officiating in them was concerned, but he was completely boycotted.

His biographer states that it was the magnificent view of Torbay which was spread out before him from his cottage windows that led him to meditate upon the historic scenes which had been enacted on the face of those ever-changing waters, and ultimately gave him the germ idea for his famous romance *Westward Ho!*

Of the many other famous poets and authors who have been dwellers in the beautiful town may be mentioned Tennyson, who came in 1840; Lord Lytton, who took a villa on the hillside above Rock Walk in 1856, 218 and spent every winter in it till his death in 1873; Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who before her marriage lived several years in the town; James Anthony Froude; Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, who came here to visit an old widow lady (who eventually left him her fortune) many times in the fifties and early sixties; Robert Louis Stevenson; Henry James; John Ruskin, and many others.

It is with real regret that most yachtsmen leave Torquay and the beautiful bay which lies between Hope's Nose to the north and Berry Head to the south. A bay whose magnificent anchorage would have merited, one would think, the founding upon its shores of a city like Plymouth or Portsmouth, given over to naval construction and service of the State. But strangely enough, with the exception of the holiday resorts of Torquay and quaint Paignton, and the little fishing port of Brixham, it embraces no large town or port. This circumstance must be a matter for wonderment, as one either gazes out over the beautiful expanse of water from the heights of Warberry Hill, or crosses it when bound further westward.

The reason, however, is not far to seek, when one considers the former conditions of life and property upon the coast. The ports, which far back in the centuries had sprung into gradual existence, had now to serve more than the purpose of affording a safe anchorage in "dirty" weather. Those were the days of that predatory naval warfare, which proved so great a scourge to commerce in the Channel, when the sister counties of Devon and Cornwall, and even that of Dorset to a less degree, were ever at issue with the Breton sea rovers. It was, therefore, essential that a great port should form a defence against the attacks of men as well as a protection from the elements. Thus it happened that whilst Falmouth, Dartmouth, Fowey, and Plymouth grew into flourishing shipping centres, Torbay (in which a fleet of battleships could ride secure in most winds), with its widely opened mouth, did not offer the double security that the troublous times demanded. 219

Hither, in the early centuries of the Christian era, came, doubtless, Roman and Danish galleys, devastating the coast; and in later times the daring pirates and privateers out of St Malo, Morlaix, Brest, and other French ports, "who lay in wait like sea spiders under the safe anchorage of Berry head, for merchantmen bound up Channel, or making for Dartmouth."

De Tourville's fleet itself, before detaching vessels for the attack upon and destruction of Teignmouth, lay here in full sight of the terrified inhabitants, who fled inland in fear of capture and confinement in French prisons or the galleys. In later years the bay and neighbourhood, with its coves and creeks, provided just the kind of retirement and shelter beloved of the smugglers, whose daring exploits made the Devon and Cornish coasts famous at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries.

It was in Torbay, too, that the *Bellerophon*, commanded by Captain Maitland, with the captive Napoleon aboard, anchored in August of 1815 to permit the prisoner's transfer to the *Northumberland*, commanded by Admiral Sir George Cockburn. It will, therefore, be seen that the bay has played its part in the drama of history, even though it has missed its destiny as the centre or base of extensive commerce, or naval activity and life.

Brixham is but a short half hour's sail in a good breeze from Torquay. It is a picturesque (if somewhat "fishy") little town with the houses set West Country-wise, in the sides of a chine, and the principal street, known as Fore Street, descending steeply to the harbour itself. Like Torquay, Brixham was originally an agricultural village, which, as time went on, gradually crept down to the water's edge, until its foundations were almost set in the sea, the result being that its inhabitants in time abandoned the tilling of the soil for the harvest of the sea. Nowadays these number nearly nine thousand, most of whom are fisherfolk, or in some way connected with the fishing industry. The Brixham trawling fleet has been painted so often, that it must be perfectly familiar to most readers. Of its picturesque charm for both brush and camera, there can be little 220

question. In the little harbour, which unfortunately for yachting folk is dry at low water, there is no room for the upwards of two hundred and fifty trawlers which, with their graceful lines and red-brown sails, form such paintable groups at their moorings in the outer harbour, just off the Victoria Breakwater, where they are obliged to lie.

Brixham was anciently a manor in the possession of the Pomeroy of Berry Pomeroy, but on its sale at the end of the seventeenth century was split up into a number of small lots, not a few of which were acquired by the more wealthy farmers, merchants, and fisherfolk. These portions were, as time went on, subdivided and split up again either by sale or other means, till at the present time the ancient manor is held by some two hundred persons, all of whom are known as Quay Lords or Quay Ladies, according to their sex.

Brixham men are "characters." Centuries of traffic upon the great waters has given them those features and idiosyncrasies which usually distinguish fisherfolk and seamen at large. But to these must be added a certain element of swaggering independence, which has doubtless come down to them from ancestors engaged in periodical struggles with the French privateers, and the hardy race of smugglers for which the coast was notorious less than a century ago.

The town is just one of those irregularly built picturesque congregations of houses—few of them large—which one finds in the West Country, where the water runs up into the land, and a fishing industry has been created. Many of the buildings have little flights of steps running up to them, rendered necessary by the different levels at which dwellings are placed even in the same street; whilst the fish cellars are everywhere, and the odour of fish is triumphant over the fresh winds from the sea, as well as the perfumed breezes which sometimes fall upon the town from the heights of Guzzle Down. 221

There are other industries, however, besides the capture of fish ("the best fish along the coast," as all Brixham men asseverate with unnecessary strength of language), for there is boat building on a considerable scale, net making, and not a few of the womenfolk of the place are employed in knitting the heavy woollen jerseys which seem the staple garments of the fishermen of the coasts.

Though much of the history of Brixham is obscure, the town has, nevertheless, played an important part in at least two events of historical importance. It was into Brixham that the Elizabethan sea-dog, Sir Francis Drake, sent the first of the galleons captured from Spain when the Armada was skurrying up Channel amid the constant boom of cannon and the smoke of burning vessels, with the bull dogs of Drake, Howard, and Hawkins hanging on its flanks. And it was in Brixham fishing boats (the name of one, the *Roebuck*, has come down to us), of whose fleetness Drake had doubtless heard, that he sent the priceless powder taken from the galleon's magazine to the English ships, which were keeping up that eight days' running fight, July 21-29, 1588, upon the ultimate result of which the fate of England depended.

It was to Brixham, just a hundred and one years later, that William of Orange came, when, on the morning of the fifth of November, 1688, his fleet appeared in the offing off the coasts of Devon. A contemporary account tells us how the morning was foggy, with a thick sea haze, but that later in the day (as though for a good omen) 222 "the sun dissipated the fog, insomuch that it proved a very pleasant day."

One can imagine how the country folk from far and wide came flocking to the capes and headlands of the Devon shore, straining their eyes to catch a glimpse of the coming ships. Some, we learn from the same diarist, thought the fleet was French, "because they saw divers white flags, but the standard of the Prince, the motto of which was 'For the Protestant religion and liberty,' soon undeceived them." Then the fleet entered Torbay, and coming off Brixham, the Prince's barge was lowered, and he was rowed ashore amid scenes of enthusiasm and the sound of cannon; for we are told, "the Admiral of Rotterdam gave divers guns at his landing."

The Prince, his guards, and sundry lords were speedily ashore and received a warm welcome.

It would appear, however, to be a mere legendary story which tells us that he stopped the weigh of his barge when still some distance from the shore, and called out to the people who stood waiting on the quay, "If I am welcome, come and carry me to land," and that thereupon a little man plunged into the water and carried William on his back; at any rate, it finds no place in the authority we have quoted, who appears to have been a keen and accurate observer, unlikely to omit an incident of such importance.



## BRIXHAM

We can gather from this writer a very vivid picture of the scene. The people came running out of their houses to welcome the Deliverer.... And then the Prince, with Marshal Schomberg, and many lords, knights, and gentlemen, marched through the narrow streets up the hillside, whilst those aboard the fleet in the Bay could watch the progress of the procession by means of the flags and banners waving above the house-tops; whilst cheers, music and huzzas floated down and across the water to the ships at anchor. A vivid touch which places before one like a picture the conflicting interests, sympathies, and forces of those troublous times is afforded by a description in which the Catholic as against the Protestant attitude is exemplified. The causes of the rejoicings at Protestant Brixham were construed quite differently by a priest in the house of Mr Carey (probably the owner or a relative of the owner of Cockington) near Torquay, for we are told "This priest going to recreate himself upon the leads, it being a delightful day, as he was walking there, he happened to cast his eye upon the sea, and espying the fleet at a distance, withal being purblind in his eyes, as well as blinded by Satan in his mind, he presently concludes that 'twas the French navy come to land the sons of Belial which should cut off the children of God." Naturally transported by joy and excitement he descended from his point of vantage to tell the occupants of the house, who, being Catholics, had doubtless been "parlously low in their spirits since the flight of the King; and now rejoiced greatly with him." These unfortunate people seem to have celebrated the (as they supposed) happy event by merry-making, and also the singing of a Te Deum. But their joy was short lived, for ere sunset they learned that it was the fleet of William of Orange and not of Louis XIV they had seen. 223

By nightfall over fifteen thousand Dutch troops and mercenaries were safely landed, made up of some twenty-six regiments, and one of the most astonishing things in connexion with the coming of the Prince is the indifference with which the landing of such a large body of foreign troops was regarded by the inhabitants, who welcomed the soldiers as though feeling secure from injury, material or otherwise, and brought in supplies of food for the men, and fodder for the horses with alacrity. In a few days the gentry round about, who on William's landing had held aloof for the moment to consult as to whom they should support, James the fugitive or William the present, decided on the latter course, and the country was bloodlessly conquered. 224

Near the harbour where the Prince landed now stands a memorial statue of him, erected to celebrate the bicentenary of the event.

Since that foggy morning in November, now more than two centuries ago, Brixham has been little disturbed by any events of historical importance. Twenty-five years after William's landing, on the death of Queen Anne, a French warship suddenly appeared off the port and fired three guns. On board was the Stuart Duke of Ormonde, who had conceived the bold idea of effecting a landing there in support of the Old Pretender. The attempt failed, as no one came to his support, and the enterprising nobleman was forced (lest he should be captured by a vessel of the English fleet) to make a hasty departure for the French coast.

During the Napoleonic wars Brixham benefited in a measure from the victualling of the warships of the fleet which were frequently in the bay, and suffered, too, from the depredations of the pressgang; otherwise it must have been much the place that it is now, a quaint, straggling, narrow-streeted, picturesque fishing village, loved rather by artists than other folk.



## Chapter VIII

### Dartmouth—Kingsbridge—Plymouth and the Sound

Past Berry Head, with its crown of golden gorse, its cave known as Ash Hole, supposed to have been the burial place of soldiers of Cæsar's legions, and the house upon its lower slopes which, during the great French Wars with Napoleon, was used as a hospital, and was afterwards given to the poet Lyte by King William IV, one is soon in sight of the rugged pinnacle rock or islet known as the Mewstone, which stands like a sentinel on guard, just outside the entrance to the Dart. The scenery from Berry Head southward is of a very different character from that which distinguishes the coast from Sidmouth to Brixham. The calm loveliness of red cliffs, rich with vegetation, hung with creepers, thick with ferns, and gently fissured, is replaced by rock scenery which grows grander and more beautiful as it becomes more sombre and rugged, whilst in the background are the fertile heights of Devon sloping steeply to the cliffs and many groups of outlying rocks off shore, against which the emerald and indigo sea laps in summer and roars in winter.

As one draws in closer with the land, one is not slow to realize the popularity and importance of Dartmouth and the Dart estuary as a haven and as a port in the strenuous days of old. Even nowadays one might be within a mile or so of the entrance, and yet remain in ignorance of the existence of a town of any size, and only suspect it by the presence of vessels inward or outward bound. The Dart provided just such a quiet and secure haven as in the days when the Channel was infested with privateers and even less reputable craft was essential to the sea-going community of these shores. 226

Around the river which, rising in the centre of wild and lovely Dartmoor, then wandering across bogs, plains, and fertile valleys, and past picturesque towns and villages, finds ultimately so lovely an outlet into the sea, poets and novelists have woven their webs of song and fancy, whilst famous artists have recorded its wonderful charm and beauty upon their canvases. If not one of the most historic rivers of the British Isles, the Dart may yet claim to be one of those around which romance and imagination have been most closely entwined. One cannot talk to Devonians long without becoming aware of the high place that this changeful river holds in their affections. "It is the most personal stream I have ever known," a well-known angler has said. "I have traversed it from almost its source to its end, where at Totnes the fresh water meets the salt after a course through moorland bogs, wide-spreading uplands, and valleys where its brownish waters come rushing and leaping down, and where shady pools, fit homes of silvery trout and salmon, tempt the angler to pause. Throughout its often turbulent course there is nothing monotonous; almost every inch of it is lovely in its own peculiar way. It is, indeed, a Queen of rivers, though the native mind ascribes to it the gender of the opposite sex."

The first glimpse one has of Dartmouth when approaching it from the sea is the ancient castle of St Petrox standing opposite the ruins of its mate of long ago on the Kingswear side. Then one catches a vista—how charming whether in sunshine or when the mists of early morning hang grey-blue above the houses, and have yet to be dissipated by the sun's rays—of the old town which lies almost hidden behind a green slope of land ending in a cliff. Past the ancient castle, built on the edge of the cliff and surrounded by the most delightful woods, where a picturesque old church seems as though almost about to fall into the water from its apparently perilous site on the very edge of the precipice, past villas nestling amid the trees, and rocky shores, past tiny coves, and slaty cliffs, bare except where trees, saplings, or ferns cling to make them beautiful, one comes at last on jade-coloured water, to the town, grey-looking and sheltered by high cliffs and downs behind it, built sheer up from the edge of the river itself. 227

There, amid lofty hills on either side of the widening river or the arm of the sea (whichever one pleases to call it) lies what has been described as "the most beautiful and fascinating town in all Devon." Prince, the famous vicar of Berry Pomeroy, whose book, so full of the Devonian spirit, if somewhat bombastic and ill-balanced in style, may yet be read with profit by those to whom the history of the past of "the fighting, glorious county of Devon," has an interest, describes it thus, and the description save for a few minor details holds good to-day. Dartmouth, he says, is "a large and populous town, situated on the southern side of a very steep hill, which runneth east to west at considerable length of near a mile, whereby the houses as you pass on the water seem pensile (pendent), and hang along in rows like gallipots in an apothecary's shop; so high and steep is it that you go from the lower to the higher parts thereof by stairs, and from the bottom to the top requires no less than a hundred."

Seen from the water near the *Britannia* the old town is indeed charming, with the picturesquely irregular and weathered roofs of the older houses rising tier upon tier, and the grey-blue smoke of chimneys hanging like a perpetual and kindly veil softening crudities of architecture and adding pictorial charm. There are many quaint houses, more especially those built by Hayman about 1634-1640, in the Butterwalk, with the huge, pointed gables and overhanging upper stories wedded to modern fronted shops, in which are displayed "Paris fashions" and up-to-date goods that at first seem out of character with such surroundings. There is, indeed, much of interest for the artist and antiquarian in Dartmouth streets and by-ways, just as at almost every turn ashore and on the surface of the beautiful land-locked harbour there is something to arrest the attention of the casual observer. 228

Much of the history of this ancient and interesting town is obscured by the mists of the ages which have passed since the first settlement was made upon the western shore of the lovely river. But we know that the waters "upon which Roman triremes and Danish galleys, and later huge captured galleons swung with the tide," saw also the assembling together, at the close of the twelfth century, of the Crusaders' fleet, which sailed the long voyage through the Bay to the Mediterranean to join Richard Cœur de Lion at Messina.

Two centuries later the adventurous spirit which has always animated the men of Devon in general, and of Dartmouth in particular, found vent in one of those predatory expeditions against the coasts of Normandy and Brittany for which the place was afterwards to gain so renowned a name. In the last year of the fourteenth century one John Hawley, deciding upon an "enterprise against those pestilent rogues the French," chartered

all the shipping of which Dartmouth could boast for this purpose, and in retaliation for the depredations of “the French pirates upon the coasts of Devon,” set sail for the shores of Normandy and Brittany. How successful this enterprising merchant’s little private naval war turned out may be judged from the fact that he and his captains, or they for him, captured thirty-four French ships with their cargoes amounting to 1,500 tuns of wine. It is little to be wondered at that after the return of the ships Dartmouth “ran red with the luscious wines of France, and that none need go dry so long as they would drink success to the bold men of the Dart and confusion to the French.”

Such expeditions as that of Hawley, however, were sure to have their counterpart in retaliatory descents by the French; and the history of the town—during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries especially—if written, would be one long story of daring and piratical adventures on the part of the men of the Dart, and surprises and alarms from the French, who on several occasions visited the town and plundered it. 229

Nature herself would appear, however, to have given some excuse for these piracies (for to call them aught else would be but the merest euphemism) in that she had provided a haven so admirably adapted not only as a base from which to set forth upon such expeditions, but also as a refuge which though so commodious could yet, on account of its narrow entrance, be easily defended. In the reign of Edward IV the burgesses entered into an agreement with their Royal master for the provision of a “stronge and mightye and defensyve new tower” (now known as Dartmouth Castle) from which a chain was to be stretched in time of need to one on the opposite, Kingswear, side of the harbour’s mouth, for the purpose of keeping out the King’s enemies, the French pirates, and other marauders, the King agreeing to pay the sum of £30 per annum for ever for this service, a large amount, when one considers the difference in the value of money then and now.

That Dartmouth seamen early became famous is abundantly proved by the circumstance that it was a captain hailing from this western port who was selected by the immortal Chaucer as one of the characters to ride in company with the Cook, Prioress, Doctor of Physic, the Franklin, the Frere, and all the rest of that band of Canterbury pilgrims of long ago. Amongst the many “pen portraits” he has given us, few, probably, excel in strength and truth that of the Shipman “of Dertemouthe”; which, after reading the history, and conning the traditions of the town in the stirring times of long ago, one can readily accept as typical of many of the men who, pirates though they were, did their part to fight the battles of England, and uphold the noblest traditions of a sturdy seafaring race. 230



## DARTMOUTH

Chaucer extenuates nothing as he writes (painting a picture of the man, his day, and surroundings at one and the same time):

A Shipman was ther, wonynge fer by weste;  
 For ought I woot he was of Dertemouthe.  
 He rood upon a rouncy as he kouthe,  
 In a gowne of faldyng to the knee.  
 A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he  
 About his nekke under his arm adoun.  
 The hote somer hadde maad his hewe al broun;  
 And certainly he was a good felawe.  
 Ful many a draughte of wyn hadde he y-drawe  
 Fro Burdeuxward whil that the Chapman sleepe,  
 Of nyce conscience took he no keepe.  
 If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond;  
 By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.  
 But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,  
 His stremes and his daungers hym bisides,  
 His herberwe and his moone, his lodemenage,  
 Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.  
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertake:  
 With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake;  
 He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,  
 From Gootland to the Cape of Fynystere,  
 And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.  
 His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.<sup>E</sup>

<sup>E</sup> Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (Macmillan's Globe Edition).

The picture that Chaucer thus paints of the "Shipman of Dertemouthe," though it probably was a portrait, nevertheless was also true of the seamen in those far-off times of almost every sea-going nation, when the right of the ocean was ever that of the strongest, and the only law that obtained with the sea-dogs of England, France, Holland, or Spain was that of might. Whatever the squeamish amongst historians or moralists may say, the bold sea rovers were a natural evolutionary growth of the life on the coasts, and those of Dartmouth amongst the best. But half-a-day's sail in a swift craft away across the Channel lay a portion of France not less fitted by Nature to breed pirates and later on privateers than the fretted coast lines of Devon and Cornwall with their myriad coves and refuges, to which the bold seamen could retreat with their plunder, or to make good the damage of battle or breeze. Just as the sister counties we have mentioned bred their hordes of sea-rovers, so did the coasts of Brittany and Finistère. The instinct of piracy and wrecking dominated both English and Bretons alike, and indeed it was well for England that the bold spirits of Cherbourg, St-Malo, Morlaix, and Brest (to mention but a few places where such dwelt) were counterparted by those of Dartmouth, Plymouth, Fowey, and Penzance.

The men of these ports not only fought when compelled, but (to quote an old chronicle) "lusted exceedingly after the blood and treasure of the French corsairs, and other sea rovers." That the men of Dartmouth were as doughty fighters ashore as afloat is testified by Walsingham (amongst others) in his *Chronicle*. In this vivid, and let us hope veracious, record one finds an account of the attack upon Dartmouth by Du Chastel, who planned a descent upon the south-western coasts generally, as well as an attack upon Dartmouth in particular, in revenge for the depredations of the men of that port on the Breton coast. The news of Du Chastel's intention seems to have leaked out, for when some hundreds of Bretons had been landed with the intention of attacking from the land side at the same time that their friends made an attempt from the sea, the former found that the men of the Dart were prepared to receive them, having entrenched themselves to the number of several hundred behind a deep ditch.

The women of the town seem to have borne an Amazonian part in the defence of their hearths and homes, for we learn that they fought stoutly, "using slings with dire effect, so that many of the invaders, both knights and common men fell beneath their missiles into the said ditch." These and many others were summarily killed by the men, who appear to have given no quarter even if it were asked. On this occasion as on many others the men of Devon proved themselves as well able to defend their homes and possessions as to ravage and take those of other people, and the French, after losing upwards of 400 killed and wounded, and leaving another 200 or so of their comrades prisoners in the hands of the Dartmouth folk, were compelled to seek refuge in their ships as best they could, and ultimately to abandon the idea of attacking other towns on the coast, and return to their own shores.

Scarcely a year elapsed, however, ere the Bretons were back again, and this time, unhappily for the men of the Dart, the news of their coming did not precede them. Dartmouth was surprised, an entrance was forced, the town burned, and many—both men and women—were slain. Thus, in the stirring times of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, ebbed and flowed the fortune of piratical warfare between the hereditary foes of the sea-coasts of Brittany and Devon.

But Dartmouth men and Dartmouth ships were never idle, nor were they always engaged upon mere filibustering expeditions. In the hearts of Devon seamen the flame of patriotism has ever burned, and so on more than one occasion they came in the nick of time to the aid of England, and embarked upon enterprises of national, not merely personal, significance and importance. It was so half a century before the expeditions to Brittany, which brought about the descent of Du Chastel and his force. Then, in 1385, after the death of Edward III and his warlike son Edward the Black Prince, the French were planning one of the periodical invasions of England, which on a grand scale were always doomed to failure, and the English admirals and generals seemed to have become indifferent, or were, perhaps, worn out by the long years of fruitless fighting in Guienne, Poitou, and Brittany. It was then that the Dartmouth men gathered their ships together, and regardless of treaties or

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the lack of national support, swept up the Channel, forced their way into the mouth of the Seine, where the French fleet was being brought together, and preparations for the invasion were going on, attacked the enemy, sank several of the ships, and carried off with them back to Dartmouth four others, including, Walsingham tells us, a knight's barge, filled with spoil rich enough to satisfy the greediest freebooter. This undertaking of Dartmouth folk was of national importance; although such events were usually much more of the nature of merchants' speculations or piracy, which seldom failed to bring about retribution from the equally bold and enterprising Bretons. Indeed, there would appear good reason for supposing that the right to levy "private warfare" was at least tacitly admitted by both English and French rulers of the period, for in an ancient volume bearing upon the subject one finds a distinct statement that at least one English Sovereign, Edward III to wit, aided and abetted his subjects in this matter, the excuse given being the laxity of the then Duke of Brittany in restraining his subjects from similar depredations. Three ports are mentioned, Dartmouth being one, to which the King afforded "help and notable puissance upon pety Breтайne for to warre."

It may be remarked in passing that men who had been bred of corsair stock, who had learned the value of courage and the lust of battle on the open sea, and the fascination of pillage and rapine as early as they learned anything, needed little official encouragement to undertake and continue the predatory warfare beloved and followed so sturdily by their forbears. Whatever one's opinion as to the lawfulness or otherwise of such marauding habits, which often, it may be admitted, told severely on the innocent, it is well to remember the historical fact that these sea-rovers of the West of England formed the nucleus of the British Navy, and the thews and sinews of the power which enabled England in after years to flout the great Armada of Philip of Spain, and to stand alone when Europe bowed before the crash of dynasties, and trembled beneath the tread of Napoleon's legions. 234

Out of the murk of piracy and lawless freebooting upon the coasts of France and Spain was destined to emerge centuries later the material from which were drawn the navy of Nelson, and the victors of Trafalgar, and of many another hard fought fight, men indomitable when engaged at long odds; enterprising and courageous when traversing in solitude unknown seas and unknown lands; chivalrous (yes, chivalrous in measure) when a gallant foe yielded; full of belief in the overruling Providence which had set Britain in the midst of the waters that she might throughout all the jugglery of Empires and nations remain free.

In the State papers and ships' log-books which we have seen may be found material for all the romances that can ever be written of daring doings in the narrow seas, of the pirates, and afterwards of the privateers and smugglers who sailed out of Devon and Cornish ports and coves, and made the Channel during several centuries, war or no war with France and Spain, almost impossible of safe passage to merchantmen of the latter nations, except when strongly convoyed.

Of many of the stirring scenes which the port of Dartmouth must have witnessed, there are unfortunately few historical records. But we know that it was visited by several of the early Kings. Here, too, in Saxon times came Sweyn, son of Godwyn, into whose hands Earl Beorn fell a prisoner, and by him was afterwards put to death about 1049. It was to Dartmouth that the "Red King" William Rufus came in hot haste from his hunting of the deer on Dartmoor in 1099, after receiving the news of the siege of Mans, Dartmouth being the nearest port from which he could embark. 235

Just upon a century later, in 1190, came Richard Cœur de Lion with his army of knights and Crusaders obsessed by the necessity for slaying infidels, and of themselves dying in a far-off land. King John came to Dartmouth more than once, notably in 1214, after his defeat at Roche aux Moines in Anjou. It is this monarch, Leland states, who gave a charter to the town, confirmed in the succeeding reign by Henry III, although another writer, Merewether, states that in 1319 the town set up a claim as having been free in the reign of Henry I early in the twelfth century.

A less pleasant visitor of Royal blood was Prince Maurice, nephew of Charles I, who besieged and took the town in 1643, the Royalists losing possession three years later, when General Fairfax and his Parliamentarians stormed and captured the place after considerable loss of life and destruction of property. Charles I was here in 1643, and (so tradition asserts) held his court in a room of one of the houses in the Butterwalk, and Charles II visited the place after his Restoration, some say with fair Mistress Gwynne in his suite.

But after all it is not to Royal folk that Dartmouth owed its fame in years gone by, but to the sturdy seafarers of whom the famous navigating sons of Devon, Adrian Gilbert, who (to quote a letter of Queen Elizabeth herself) "doth travail and seeke, and by divers meanes indeavoureth and laboureth that the passage unto China and the Isles of the Moluccas by the northwestward may be known"; Martin Frobisher, and John Davis of Sandridge; Francis Drake, and John Hawkins are but a few. It was to John Davis that the task of discovering the sea route concerning which Sir Humphrey Gilbert (the brother of Adrian) wrote a *Discourse* "to prove a Passage by the North-West to Cathay and the East Indies" was entrusted. In all he made three voyages, in 1585, 1586, and 1587, in vessels which are well described in Chaucer's words, "little bote(s) no bigger than a manne's thought"; and afterwards we are told that he sailed into southern seas, and eventually was killed by the Malaccan pirates with whom he had had more than one "brush," leaving behind him a permanent memorial in the name of Davis's Straits between Greenland and Baffin Land. 236

To Queen Elizabeth herself some credit must be given for the encouragement and stimulus her patronage afforded these hazardous enterprises; and if it was because of the reflected glory which would accrue to her, or even direct monetary profit, well, what matter?

In Hakluyt one finds how "certain honourable personages and worthy gentlemen of the Court and Country, with divers worshipful merchants of London and the West Countrie, moved with desire to advance God's glory, and to seek the good of their native country, consulting together of the likelihood of the discovery of the North-West Passage, which heretofore has been attempted, but unhappily given over by accidents unlooked for ... resolved, after good deliberation, to put down their adventures, to provide for necessary shipping, and a fit man to be chief conductor of this so hard an enterprise." Then we are told how one Master William Sanderson, merchant, of London, became the greatest of the adventurers in respect of the money he provided, and how he commended to those who had the adventure in hand one Master John Davis, "a man very well grounded in the

principales and art of navigation," as captain and chief pilot of the expedition. One can imagine the meetings of the adventurers in London, and the zest with which the gentlemen of the Court, the Queen's representatives, secret or open, and the worthy merchants, conned "sea-cards," the charts of Master Martin Frobisher's voyages of a few years before, and the learned and closely reasoned discourse of Sir Humphrey Gilbert himself regarding the existence of the Passage. It may be that among these was the chart of friar Andro Urdaneta, which Sir Humphrey Gilbert states was "made by his own (Urdaneta's) experience and travel ... wherein was plainly set down and described this North-West Passage," agreeing in all points with Ortelius' map. 237

And then there were the preparations at Dartmouth itself. The gathering together of a "company of goodlie seamen, not easily turned from any good purpose, and strong withal in their determination to serve the Queene's Most Excellent Majestie and their countrie well and faithfully in this adventure"; the selection of ships and the fitting out of the same. They who adventured forth on long voyages in those days indeed needed stout hearts, for to the perils of the deep and the unknown were added those of possible starvation and drought.

But at length everything was ready, and (again quoting Hakluyt's vivid pages) "all things being put in readiness, we departed from Dartmouth the 7th of June towards the discovery of the aforesaid North-West Passage with two barques, the one being fifty tons, named the *Sunshine* of London; and the other being of thirty-five tons, named the *Moonshine*, of Dartmouth. In the *Sunshine* we had twenty-three persons, Master John Davis, captain.... The *Moonshine* had nineteen persons, William Bruton, captain."

We are further told that ere the ships dropped the land astern, doubtless in view of risks of the voyage and difficulties of revictualling, "the captain and the master drew out a proportion for the continuance of our victuals."

One can imagine with what interest the setting forth of Davis and his adventurous companions was watched by the townsfolk on the quays, and how doubtless scores of them took the tree-shaded path to the bluff above the old church of St Petrox to watch the two tiny vessels gradually pass out of sight to the west as "the wind being at north, and being fair weather" they departed. How different in dignity and impressiveness is this simple phrase from the fuss, fume, and noisy announcement of the departure of modern Polar expeditions, with rampant personal advertisement, and free "puffing" of commercial wares and stores. 238

Few as were the adventurous souls in the *Sunshine* and *Moonshine*, there was doubtless many a sad-hearted lass in Dartmouth town that night. And in the waterside taverns seamen foregathered over their ale tankards and tots of rum idly speculating as to the existence of a North-West Passage, and as to whether bold John Davis, Master Mariner, and his men would ever see Dartmouth harbour again.

But on September 30 of the same year, when the expedition had been gone just over three months and three weeks, Davis was back again safe and sound with both his ships. The *Moonshine*, which had been lost sight of on the 27th, during "a marvellous storm being come in not two hours before" Davis' own vessel.

His second voyage commenced from Dartmouth on May 7 in the following year (1586); and his third on May 19, 1587.

Something of the spirit which actuated these boldly adventuring mariners of Dartmouth and the old West Country breathes, we think, in the words with which Sir Humphrey Gilbert closes his learned and famous *Discourse*.

He says, "for if, through pleasure and idleness, we purchase shame, the pleasure vanisheth, but the shame remaineth for ever.

"And, therefore, to give me leave without offence always to live and die in this mind, that he is not worthy to live at all that for fear of danger of death shunneth his country's service and his own honour, seeing death is inevitable, and the fame of virtue immortal." 239

From these stirring times of great enterprises is but a step to those which came but a year or two later, when out of Plymouth hard by streamed Drake's little covey of ships on their mission of engaging the vast Armada, which even when Davis and his intrepid companions set forth for their voyaging amid Polar ice and northern seas was a menace that cast a shadow over the national life.

Just as the townsfolk of Dartmouth had crowded to the cliffs at the harbour entrance to see Davis depart on his voyages, and wave him God-speed, so climbed they once again to watch the Armada, which Philip of Spain in his pride had named "Invincible," "wrecking nought that God Himself was with the English fleet and Lord Howard of Effingham," go surging up the Channel, flags flying, cannon belching, with "pictures of the Holy Saints, and coats of arms wrought upon their sails"; and the little English ships hanging to them in hot and furious pursuit.

Then came a time of comparative rest for the beautiful little port on the Dart, which, however, as we have before stated, saw some of the storm and stress of the Civil War. With the bold and successful enterprises of Dartmouth privateers during the long war with Napoleon, or with those of equally daring smugglers at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, there is no space to deal in detail. We need only say that the spirit which had formerly actuated the Hawleys, Davises, Hammonds, Clintons, and Vaughans (to mention but a few)—many of whose enterprises are set forth in the State papers—was not now a-lacking when England experienced once more a time of stress and need, and opportunity for personal gain walked in step with patriotism.

The greatness of Dartmouth as a seaport has departed. In the comparative quietude of her streets and alleys one does, however, seem to catch as it were an echo of other and more splendid days. And in the types one meets by the waterside and in the purlieus of the quays the observant can yet trace something of the old seadogs who, adventuring much, went forth in quest of new worlds and new trade routes, or roved the Breton coasts in search of conflict and of plunder. The waters of the harbour are nowadays, however, chiefly ploughed by pleasure craft, white winged yachts in place of the armed sloops and fast sailing craft, once bent on pillage, or commerce with Newfoundland and other far countries. 240

In the churches—more especially those of St Clement and St Saviour—one finds rich treasures of architecture, and of monuments to men and women citizens of Dartmouth famous in adventure, trade, or philanthropy. In the former church, which dates from the fourteenth century and was fortified during the Civil War, are numerous memorials, the quaint inscriptions which they many of them bear, setting forth in brief the life history of those they commemorate. But it is the church of St Saviour, set in the middle of the quaint old town, also work of the fourteenth century (and earlier), which is the gem of the place. The exceptionally fine screen is said to be an Armada relic; but whether this is so or not, it is sufficiently beautiful to merit the closest attention and examination. All who go to Dartmouth and visit the church should notice the south side door known as the “Dragon” Door, quaint with wonderful representations of animals, and dating, so it is said, from the fourteenth century or even earlier. In the altar piece, the subject of which is “Christ raising the Widow’s Son,” one has some of the finest of Brockedon’s work, a distinguished son of the Dart born at Totnes. And here, too, as in St Clement’s, sleep many whose names were writ upon the town’s roll of fame in the times when Dartmouth gave of her best in battle and discovery.

Totnes seems so indissolubly linked with Dartmouth in history and adventure, that few who come to the outer port with time on their hands fail, we fancy, to find their way up the beautiful river to that inner port, now decayed ’tis true like the outer, but yet of more than passing interest. Of its antiquity there can be as little doubt as of its picturesqueness; although there are those who scout the theory (or statement) of that none too veracious chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth, that Brutus of Troy landed at Totnes. Which story the devout townsfolk from time out of mind have striven to keep alive by the preservation in the pavement of quaint Fore Street of the stone upon which the princely, world-wide wanderer is said to have rested after his landing. 241

In the street we have named, near the beautiful old Eastgate, which stands half-way up its steeply climbing roadway, are some of the most architecturally interesting houses of the town. Merchants’ palaces of the time when Totnes was completely environed by its walls, and “its inhabitants, even in times of trouble, could sleep at ease because of its strong defences.” It is from the old Norman keep, built, so ’tis said, by Judhael de Totenais, that one obtains what local folk proudly assert is the finest view in Devon. From it (let the claim pass unchallenged) one does see a prospect of delight, widely stretching and cultivated fields and uplands, with distant plum-hued Dartmoor on the far horizon to the northward. To the south and in front of the lower town is the beautiful reach of the river up which in ancient times came the returned vessels from distant lands, richly laden with the spoil of commerce or pillage which made the Totnes merchants, if not “rich beyond the dreams of avarice,” yet wealthy amongst their peers.

But Totnes of to-day knows little of sea-borne commerce, and is mainly given over to the pursuits of a country town of somewhat indifferent enterprise, with the sole excitements afforded by recurring market days, and the gossip of the incoming folk from the district round about. A sharp enough contrast to the stirring days of old when excitement and adventurous life was the distinguishing feature, and “none could tell what each tide would bring up from the sea. News of loss or gain, of returned or missing ships, of wealth for prosperous merchants or disaster which might make the richest of them poor.” 242

In the ancient Parish Church of St Mary one has an interesting building dating from the fifteenth century, replacing a thirteenth century edifice which in turn stood on the site of a much earlier Norman church. The beautifully carved screen (said by some authorities to be the finest in Devon), and the registers which date from the middle of the sixteenth century, and contain an astonishing amount of most interesting information regarding the old merchant princes of the Elizabethan and succeeding periods give St Mary’s Church an unusual attractiveness for antiquarians and students.

In its old Guildhall, which is a portion of the old priory of St Mary, granted to the Corporation in the reign of Edward, just behind the church, Totnes possesses a building alive with historic memories of the deepest interest, and containing amongst its deeds and records Rolls of the Guilds from the year 1260, charters of many kings and queens, some of the oldest as clear and almost as fresh as the day on which the pens which wrote them were laid down three or four centuries ago. In its Town Clerks of recent years—especially in Mr Ed Windeatt—Totnes has generally been fortunate in having gentlemen by whom the old records and treasures of the town have been appreciated and carefully preserved. And writers and historians have found their labours much lightened by the excellent manner in which the documents have been collated and arranged.

Those who “know their Dart” will if possible leave this beautiful, sleepy old town, which is set so charmingly on the hillside amid rounded fertile uplands and many-tinted woods just before sunset. Then the passage back to Dartmouth down the river, from the brown water of the Dart to the gradually greening salt water of the estuary, is one of almost indescribable and unforgettable beauty. It lies past Sandridge where that intrepid explorer and much adventuring seaman John Davis was born; and Greenway, where Adrian and Humphrey Gilbert had their home. And then, just before reaching Dartmouth once more one passes the mid-river rock of sinister appearance and tradition, known as the Anchor, to which in former times scolding wives and disobedient daughters were ferried and left to encounter the rising tide, and (as we are told) if “when the water was up to their petticoats the same remained obdurate,” were left until obstinacy yielded to wholesome fear of a complete ducking, or worse. 243

As one leaves the interesting and lovely old town of Dartmouth, and drops the estuary astern, and approaches that long, low headland, Start Point, which lies eight miles to the south-west, one passes the stretch of white, sandy beach, near which took place that fierce fight of long ago between Du Chastel’s Bretons and the men and women of Dartmouth town. On these sands, too, had landed in the autumn of 1370, another adventurer, but of more noble kind, namely, the Earl of Warwick, the “King Maker.”

When once Start Point, with its lighthouse and lighthouse buildings hung upon the western side of the cliff two hundred feet in the air, and looking in the strong light as though cut out of ivory, has been left astern, one comes to the wild looking Prawle Point, with its signal station, and then into the estuary of Salcombe River, leading up to Kingsbridge of ancient renown.

Salcombe has been called “one of the prettiest havens in Devon,” and after a visit one is inclined to agree that the description is not unmerited. It is indeed a delightful spot, as yet largely unspoiled by “development”; 244

picturesquely built beneath the shelter of well-wooded hills. These, clothed with verdure, form a remarkable contrast to the hills on the Portlemouth side which lie bare and open to the strong westerly and south-westerly gales which sweep up from the sea. This same Portlemouth is a straggling collection of ancient, grey-toned cottages, clinging to the sides of a steeply climbing road. In the churchyard is a tombstone to the memory of a farmer who was poisoned by his servant, which is interesting from the fact that the latter's punishment of being burned at the stake is set forth upon the stone so that "all people warning take." The girl was tried in 1782, and condemned to be first hanged and then burned; "which barbarous sentence was duly carried out at Exeter, and was the last instance in England of such a punishment being inflicted."

Just before one reaches Salcombe, which nestles amidst its wealth of myrtles, Portugal laurels, Guelder roses, arbutus, orange and lemon trees, and sheltered even from the soft south wind by Lambury Point, one passes Fort Charles, one of the many isolated Royalist strongholds during the stirring times of the Civil War in the West Country.

Soon after the outbreak of hostilities this fort, which had been previously repaired and reclaimed from almost a state of ruin by Sir Edmund Fortescue "who was for the King," was attacked by Colonel Weldon, Governor of Plymouth, "who approached with both horse and foot to the siege, and made a hell for four months of the little fisher town Salcombe." That the place should have held out so long was a wonder, but the end was bound to come. Fort Charles capitulated, but Sir Edmund Fortescue was allowed to march out with his force with the honours of war, and to retain the keys of his castle. The latter, however, was dismantled (making the retention of the keys a somewhat empty form) and has never since been used or repaired. And thus fell the last place to hold out for the King in Devon. 245

Salcombe, with its narrow streets and ancient houses forming so great a contrast to the newer portions of the town and the villas dotted here and there amid the wealth of green upon its slopes, has an old-world atmosphere, and a picturesqueness which makes most who drop anchor in its fiord-like estuary reluctant to depart, and anxious to return again.

To lovers of English history Salcombe will always be a spot of fragrant and pleasant memory and pilgrimage, from the fact that it was here that the great historian James Anthony Froude lived for many years and did much of the work wherein "he clothed the story of stirring deeds and historic happenings, which had long since been dead, with flesh and blood so that it lives again in the minds and hearts of men." Froude died here in 1894, and many pilgrims yearly make their way to the long, low house with a verandah running round it, and its casements opening out into the charming garden in which he loved to wander, and where Tennyson came to visit him. It was at Salcombe, too, that the poet received the inspiration for "Crossing the Bar," whilst on Lord Brassey's *Sunbeam*, and those who have slipped out of the estuary when the sun is dipping westward can appreciate the picture conjured up in the opening stanza:

Sunset and evening star:  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the Bar  
When I put out to sea.

The tale of Salcombe as regards its former greatness and present-day comparative decay is similar to that of so many other little ports which we have visited and described. Leland refers to it in his *Itinerary* as a "fisher town." But anciently it was more than this. The records of the number of ships belonging to and trading with Salcombe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries prove it to have then been a place of considerable importance. And in the middle of the former century the Customs returns amounted to a sum of about £5,000 per annum. In the latter half of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth centuries Salcombe was a great smuggling place. Was not, indeed, the estuary made by Nature herself for such a purpose? And the smugglers, we are told, "gave much trouble to the riding officers and 'preventive' men of the coast from Dartmouth to Plymouth." 246

Kingsbridge, once a flourishing port with a considerable Mediterranean trade, employing some two hundred vessels not a century ago, is no longer of much commercial importance. The way from Salcombe up to the further town is a muddy channel, almost devoid of picturesque scenery, and beset with mudbanks. But amongst the ancient things which survive at Kingsbridge is the custom of brewing and drinking "white ale," of unprepossessing appearance and considerable potency, said to have been invented at Dodbroke, with which Kingsbridge is so closely connected. It is, indeed, a curious beverage of almost treacly consistency, made of malt, hops, eggs, and flour, fermented with grout, and is best avoided by the stranger.



### KINGSBRIDGE QUAY

In the old Shambles erected in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, which form a picturesque element in the Fore Street, and in the Church of St Edmund, dating from the second decade of the fifteenth century, Kingsbridge holds out some inducement for the visits of antiquarians. In the quaint inscription on the memorial to one Robert Phillips, just outside the chancel door is clearly stated a truism for all who run to read.

Here lie I at the chancel door;  
Here lie I because I'm poor:  
The further in the more you'll pay;  
Here lie I as warm as they.

Bolt Head, rugged and forbidding of aspect, and the Mewstones which guard the western side of the Salcombe estuary must be rounded ere one's course can be laid for Plymouth, along a rugged and wild coast deeply and dangerously fissured, in which are the mouths of the picturesque streams the Avon and Erme. Then come more Mewstones, the number of which along this coast has often caused us to wonder. These passed, Plymouth is right ahead. 247

As one passes up the wide expanse of that unequalled anchorage known as the Sound, where have floated almost from time immemorial the argosies and battle fleets of England, and into which so much of the wealth of the world has been borne in the past as now, the spoil of enterprise or of war, one realizes something at least of the spirit of ancient times. Plymouth has forged ahead whilst many of her sister ports of bygone ages have slowly decayed. Throughout the centuries there has been no rest, no idle contentment with things that are until they cease to be. And thus it is that Plymouth, of all the ancient ports of the West Country on the Channel, has increased in greatness as the years have rolled by.

Few more inspiring and beautiful pictures are to be found along the coast than those afforded by Plymouth Sound. Wedded to fine scenery is bustling commerce. Across the seaway lies the world-famous breakwater, and behind it all along up to Plymouth the sea is beset with craft of all kinds; huge trading vessels, mostly three and four masters, which have voyaged to the ends of the earth; fishing boats, which look like cockle shells in comparison; destroyers, and torpedo boats; tramp steamers belching out black clouds of smoke in rivalry with that of the tugs; and, more majestic than all, the ocean liners and occasional incoming battleships making their way slowly up the Sound.

There are few spots on blue water where is given so great a touch of life to things inanimate. And when one comes to an anchor off Drake's long low isle, or in the shelter of the beautifully wooded Mount Edgcumbe, the ghosts of mighty seamen of the past seem to flit across the scene, and visions of long lost fleets, and adventurers' galleons rise unbidden to the mind. 248

Plymouth is one of those "ancient places in the making of which all periods of national history have had a share." It even disputes with Totnes the honour of having been the landing place of Brutus the Trojan, when some three thousand years ago he paid a visit to these shores. The story that the Trojan champion Corianaeus and a giant of the West Country, one Gogmagog, wrestled a fall on or near the famous Hoe, in which the latter was ultimately vanquished and cast into the sea, is a part of the Brutus legend. The Plymouth Fathers of old time evidently accepted it as having some foundation in fact, as they caused a representation of the giant to be cut in the turf of the Hoe, which remained to remind the townsfolk and seafarers alike of the combat until about the time of the Restoration.

Of the doings and history of the town of Plymouth, known in the Domesday Book as Sutton or South Town, then having about half a score of inhabitants, prior to the Norman Conquest (if any town existed, which one may doubt, notwithstanding Geoffrey of Monmouth) there are practically no records or traces of any kind. Eventually the Domesday hamlet increased and became divided into two portions, Sutton Prior, or the eastern portion, falling to the Priory of Plympton, and the western part coming through grant by the Crown into the possession of the family of Valletort, which still forms one of the subsidiary titles of the Edgcumbe family, whose



connexion with Plymouth is so intimate.

The rise of the port was destined to be rapid, for towards the end of the fourteenth century only three other towns in England had larger populations. Two of these, it may be noted, were ports—London and Bristol—and the third the seat of an archbishopric, York. Long before this period, however, Plymouth possessed a market, and had sent representatives to Parliament. And in the reign of Henry II it received its Charter—the first granted by Act of Parliament, a unique privilege, of which the city fathers have always been justly proud. The first mayor in pursuance of this charter was elected in 1439, William Ketherick by name; who (according to records which have been preserved) was a noted sportsman, and the possessor of “an appetite of right goodlie proportions, though he was but a little man.” There is a story that at the banquet he gave on his election, lest his appetite and that of his guests should run the risk of remaining unsatisfied, there was included amongst the numerous dishes, joints, and delicacies provided, a monster pie, into which “every beast, bird, and fish was put, with spices and other matter,” which measured nearly five yards in length and one and a half in breadth, and indeed speaks volumes for the digestions of those times.

Like its neighbour Dartmouth, Plymouth has been almost from time immemorial the home of daring adventure and warlike enterprises. And like the sister port it possesses a fine and commodious harbour (though one less easily defended), singularly well adapted as a base for expeditions of the kind which marked the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries more especially. But although many of the ships and fleets which sailed out of the Sound for the coasts of France, Spain, and the Americas in bygone times were unauthorized freebooters, early in the existence of Plymouth more truly national expeditions set sail from its quays. For example, towards the close of the thirteenth century a great fleet of upwards of 320 vessels assembled for an attack upon the French coasts; and in 1355—some sixty years later—Edward the Black Prince came here for a similar purpose. And during the wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster there was stir in the old streets by the waterside marking from time to time the arrival of some Royal fugitive or exile. Here, too, came unfortunate Margaret of Anjou, the dauntless, sleepless foe of Edward IV; and the not less unfortunate Duke of Clarence. In the first year of the sixteenth century there landed at Plymouth yet another ill-starred lady, the Princess Katherine of Aragon, on her way to marry Prince Arthur, and destined afterwards to become the wife of his brother Henry VIII. She was entertained right royally by the citizens of Plymouth, chiefly by one of the merchant princes of the port, named Paynter, who lived in a magnificent mansion not far from the waterside, which has, alas! in recent years shared the fate of most historical buildings that come in the way of modern and commercial progress.

But although many books might be written concerning the sailing of the Plymouth corsairs against “the damnable pirates out of St-Malo, Morlaix, and Brest,” and other smaller ports of the Breton coast, and afterwards of the daring doings of ships which, leaving the port as honest traders to the Spanish Main, or West Coast of Africa, yet, when on the high seas, hoisted the black flag of piracy, we have no space to spare in which to describe them in detail. Nor, indeed, to deal with the “bloody adventures of bold seamen out of Plymouth, on the opposite coasts,” nor to recount the marvellous exploits of those who ranged the Spanish Main, and became passing rich by reason of the singeing of the Dons’ beards, and the booty which fell to daring enterprise and bold adventure, where no man valued either his own life or the lives of his foes.

It is impossible, however, to pass without a somewhat detailed mention of the most eventful period of the town’s history when “by some concatenation of Fortune and circumstance so many brave and gallant men of skill and resource dwelt in or came to Plymouth, that they might in the hour of England’s need take upon themselves her strong defence.”

It is not too much to say that Plymouth came to its own in the great days of Elizabeth. For then the magnificent harbour for a time became the centre and focus of all that was noblest and most strenuous in national life and effort. And the position that Plymouth then attained has never been entirely lost. It is the one great old-time port of the South-West coasts which has known no decline and seen no decay.

In the streets of the old town, which has largely passed away to make room for the needs of strenuous modern commerce, were enacted stirring scenes; which, indeed, as one writer phrases it, “made the very pavement stones and quays of the town the stage of history.” Here were gathered, at all events, most of the foremost actors in the great pageantry of the Elizabethan age and the Armada period. Here came Drake, Sir John Hawkins, Martin Frobisher, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Howard of Effingham, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Lord Seymour, and many more sea lords of the Channel and the wider seas beyond. It was the work of these, and others almost as famous and equally daring and patriotic, to raise England to the pinnacle amongst the nations of the world that she occupied by the end of the reign of Elizabeth, and has never since lost. To them in a large measure must be given the credit of planting the seeds of Empire throughout the then known world, which by their efforts in adventure and discovery was so considerably extended during the latter part of the sixteenth century. To these intrepid seamen and explorers of Plymouth and other Western ports we owe not only that shining gem India, but also the vast America we so unhappily lost, the Empire in the South Seas, and the territory of the frozen North lands which cling close to the Pole.

It is, however, more particularly with the great Armada and the setting forth of that band of intrepid adventurers for conscience’ sake, the Pilgrim Fathers, that the history of Plymouth is linked with that of the nation for all time. On the Hoe, now “tamed,” but otherwise much as it was in Drake’s and Raleigh’s time, the merchant princes of Plymouth were in those far off days wont to forgather, to discuss the news of the day, and to watch the outgoing and incoming of the ships in which their fortunes were embarked. And it was to the Hoe that the bold adventurers, who sailed forth into unknown as well as known seas, bearing with them the fortunes of others with their own lives as surety, turned their last gaze as they dropped away down the Sound out into the deep waters.

It is recorded, too, that when any ship was setting forth on an errand of importance, not only did the vessel salute the shore with guns, and the music of the ship’s band (where such could be mustered), but the guns upon the Hoe were fired, the crowd gathered upon it to witness the departure huzza-ed, and music was played.

One can, therefore, easily imagine the excitement which seized upon the town on that Sunday in August, in

the year 1573, when the news came from the look-out that Drake was back from one of his adventurous voyages, and, as a writer of the time says, "all people came rushing out of the churches, insomuch that there were few Christian souls left to hear the preacher."

The same spirit which had made adventurers (and perhaps on occasion pirates) now made heroes, instinct with a high ideal of England's honour and renown. Those were days in which Englishmen bandied no words with the Dons of Spain, but spoke with ball with the breath of powder, as the following instance of Sir John Hawkins's treatment of the Spanish admiral who failed in naval etiquette will show. It happened that the Spanish fleet, some fifty sail, sent to bring Queen Anne of Austria from Flanders to Spain, entered (to quote Sir Richard Hawkins) "betwixt the island and the maine without vaying their topsayles, or taking in of their flags." Sir John Hawkins, on seeing this, made no delay, but commanded his gunner to shoot at the flag of the Spanish admiral's ship as a gentle hint of the breach of etiquette. Again quoting, we find "they (the Spaniards) persevered arrogantly to keep the flag displayed, whereupon the gunner at the next shot lacted the admirall through and through, whereby the Spaniards finding that the matter began to grow earnest, took in their flags and topsayles and so ran to an anchor." 253

As was not unnatural the Spanish admiral sent a boat to Sir John, in command of an officer of rank, to demand an explanation. The English admiral, however, promptly declined to afford any, and moreover told the Spaniard plainly that "as in the Queene's port ... he had neglected to do the acknowledgement and reverence which all owe to another majestie," he must depart within twelve hours whether in fair wind or foul, "upon pain to be held as a common enemy."

It was to men like these that the fate of England could be so surely entrusted. For to dauntless courage and marvellous skill in the arts of seamanship was added the fear of God in their hearts, sometimes curiously obscured it is true, but in reality genuine and inspiring.

For some time before the ships of the Armada cast loose their moorings in Lisbon on May 19, 1588, and set out upon the conquest of England under the command of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the English fleet, under the command of Lord Charles Howard, Sir Francis Drake, and Sir John Hawkins had been collected together and marshalled in Plymouth Sound awaiting the news that the Spaniards were in the Channel. The ships had been chosen and "found" by men who knew what value to place upon sound ships, rigging, and fittings; and under the eye of Howard, Seymour, Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, and others who afterwards bore their gallant part, the English ships (some mere cockboats) which rode at anchor under the lee of Mount Edgcumbe, waiting for the advent of the enemy, and "straining at the cables to get at the Spanish Dons," were made ready. 254



**CREMILL POINT, PLYMOUTH**

The Spanish fleet entered the Channel off the coast of Cornwall on July 19 in dirty weather. Up from the Bay the Spanish admiral in the *San Martin* had led the van, "showing lights at night, and firing guns when the weather was hazy." On their arrival at the mouth of the Channel they found English fishing boats acting as scouts, and so the news of the Armada's coming was first brought to land, and flashed along the coast by desperate riders, and at night by kindled watch fires. Froude gives us an arresting and detailed picture of the dangers which had beset the English fleet in Plymouth Sound during the period of waiting—dangers of exhausted provisions and depleted resources, which were (so the historian states) due to the parsimony of Elizabeth and some of her counsellors. Medina Sidonia summoned his captains aboard the flag-ship to decide upon a course of action. Whether they should await the attack of the English fleet as they proceeded up the Channel, or attempt a surprise and fall upon it as it lay in Plymouth. The King's orders, however, were to make for Margate roads and effect the junction with Parma. So the great unwieldy galleons, crammed to repletion with men, priests, and treasure, made their way up the Channel slowly, and, at first, in order like the shape of a half-moon.

"Long before the Spaniards saw the Lizard," writes Froude, "they had themselves been seen, and on the evening of the 19th (of July), the beacons along the coast had told England that the hour of its trial was come."

“To the ships at Plymouth the news was as a message of salvation. By thrift and short rations, by good management, contented care, and lavish use of private means, there was still one week’s provisions, with powder and shot for one day’s sharp fighting, according to English notions of what fighting ought to be... All wants, all difficulties were forgotten in the knowledge that he (the enemy) was come, and that they could grapple with him, before they were dissolved by starvation.” 255

In this great hour of national danger it must be remembered that the nation was at one. Differences of political faith and of religion were abandoned, “there was saddling and arming in village and town, and musters flocking to their posts.” And on the night of the 19th, with a strong wind setting up the Sound, the English ships, and a few of the privateers, were warped out behind the shelter of Mount Edgcumbe, so that they could readily get clear away to sea. And thus it happened that on the morning when the Spaniards caught their first glimpse of the Cornish coast there were forty ships lying in wait for them in Plymouth Sound.

Froude presents a vivid picture of the succeeding hours when he writes, “The day wore on; noon passed and nothing had been seen. At length, towards three in the afternoon, the look-out men on the hill reported a line of sails on the western horizon ... they swept on in a broad crescent ...; and as the hulls showed clear, it was seen that report had not exaggerated the numbers said to be coming. A hundred and fifty large and small were counted and reported to Lord Howard...”

A hundred and fifty, and beneath the haven lay to meet them but forty odd! There was no hesitation, however. One after the other cables were slipped, or anchors weighed on board the English ships, and they dropped away down the Sound, whilst thousands watched their setting forth with beating and anxious hearts, for the magnitude of the undertaking was great enough to appal the stoutest. The night was cloudy, and it was full dusk ere the Spanish admiral saw that Howard was waiting, and prepared for him. The English ships flitted to and fro between the Armada and the land most bewilderingly, “so that the Spaniards could by no means reckon or make sure of their size or number.” Seeing that to enter the Sound without first fighting an action was quite impossible, Medina Sidonia flew the signal to heave to for the night, confident in his superior numbers. 256

Next day’s dawn found the Spanish fleet and the English ships not yet in touch. The breeze rose with the sun, and about eight o’clock the former got under way with a view of closing with Howard’s ships. But to the Spanish admiral’s astonishment he found the enemy easily took and kept the weather gauge, and either approached or left at will his clumsy “high towered, broad-bowed galleons, which moved like Thames barges piled with hay; while the sharp, low English sailed at once two feet to the Spaniard’s one, and shot away as if by magic in the eye of the wind.”

The action, which, with short intervals, was destined to last for almost a week, commenced by Howard’s flag-ship, the *Ark*, and three others of the English vessels running down upon the Spanish rear line, and whilst traversing it “firing successively into each galleon as they passed, then wearing round and returning over the same course.”

The Spanish commanders were struck with astonishment, and with the English “firing four shots to one,” the huge galleons were raked again and again, and their over-numerous crews thrown into confusion. Meanwhile the rest of the gallant little English ships, the masts of some of which scarce came above the poops of their enemies, were one by one getting into action on similar conditions.

The fight went on through the long morning and into the afternoon, with the Spaniards always wearing and endeavouring to get at close quarters with their nimble foes, but always failing to do so. The Spanish ships being to leeward and canting over to the wind found their shots fly high over the smaller English craft, and their guns could not be sufficiently depressed to overcome this disadvantage. 257

Towards evening a ship was detached from the English fleet to carry a report of the events of the day to Lord Henry Seymour, and a messenger rode off in hot haste to London to ask urgently for more powder and ammunition, of which the English were already running short. During the night Drake went in pursuit of some vessels which apparently had left the main body of the Armada, and Howard himself and his other ships clung close to the Spaniards “sparing powder, but firing an occasional shot to prevent the enemy from recovering from their confusion.”

Terrified by these tactics and the superb seamanship of Howard’s ships, the Spanish huddled together like a flock of frightened sheep, and in the night several vessels fell foul of one another, and much damage was done in consequence. Amongst those which met with such misadventure were the *Santa Catalina* and the *Capitana*. The latter, a galleon of 1,200 tons, carrying the flag of Pedro de Valdez, the only commander on the Spanish side with any reliable or extensive knowledge of the Channel, was so damaged that she was abandoned to her fate (though the Spanish admiral-in-chief, Medina Sidonia, sent a boat to take off her very essential commander, who gallantly refused to desert his ship), and next morning fell a prey to Drake on his return from chasing what had proved to be not Armada galleons but Flemish traders. The prize proved of unexpected value. We have already mentioned what ultimately became of the *Capitana*, but an interesting sidelight regarding the treatment in those days, of prisoners of war, more especially foreigners—who were looked upon by the lower classes of English people as little better than savages—is afforded by a letter from Gilbert to Walsingham dated a few days before the final scattering of the Armada. He wrote, “The cost of keeping them (the *Capitana* prisoners) was great, the peril great, the discontent of the country people greatest of all,” and so, “to save expense, they were fed on the refuse of their own provisions, which was too bad to be taken away, the fish stinking, and the bread full of worms.” 258

It is not inconceivable that had the rough-dealing fishermen of Brixham had their way with regard to the Spaniards, the difficulty of feeding them would not have long troubled those in authority. Prisoners of war in those days in any country found little consideration if unable themselves to pay ransom, or if their rank was not sufficiently high to make redemption probable.

During the succeeding few days the fight went on amid storms and varying winds, the English admiral supplying his necessities of powder and provisions (and dire necessities these were) from the stores of the

enemies' ships which were captured, or which in their unwieldy manœuvres had come into collision, been irreparably damaged and abandoned by the Spaniards.

Knowing nothing of the coast the Spanish commander entreated the Duke of Parma (who lay at Calais) most earnestly to send him pilots. All through that long, running fight up Channel the English policy had been to avoid as far as possible close engagement; to worry the stragglers of the Spanish fleet; to snap up any laggards; and engage any which had out-sailed (as did the *San Marcos*) the main body.

Concerning these tactics the Spanish commander wrote to the Duke of Parma, "The enemy pursue me. They fire upon me most days from morning till nightfall; but they will not close and grapple." Then the writer goes on to request assistance, and, more than anything, powder and shot, as his stock was running low.

At length, having traversed the whole length of the Channel, harassed by the "English bloodhounds, Howard, Hawkins, Drake, Frobisher, and the rest," the Armada straggled into Calais roads. There were missing vessels; and downcast hearts aboard most of the galleons which had won to Calais through the ceaseless English fire. 259

The Armada brought up on the edge of shoal water, which made it difficult to deliver such an attack as would best have pleased and served the English commanders. And so, after a consultation aboard Howard's own ship, in which "Sheffield, Seymour, Southwell, Palmer, Drake, Hawkins, Winter, Fenner, and Frobisher assembled, with the fate of England in their hands," it was decided to launch against the great Armada the fire-ships which were destined to complete "with the additional and saving grace of God's warring elements," the final destruction of the proud fleet of Philip of Spain.

Eight of the smaller vessels which had attached themselves to the English fleet were selected for the heroic service. Their rigging and spars were smeared with pitch, their decks and holds filled with all the most combustible rubbish to which hands could be put, and then, late at night, when "the tide—set directly down from the English position to where the ships of the Armada ... lay" the fire ships were loosed on their mission of destruction with their several crews to pilot them to their destination, when they were to lash the helm fast, belay the sheets, and set the vessels on fire.

Froude describes the scene thus, using as his authorities the letters of eyewitnesses, Howard, Drake, Winter, and other accounts now in the Record Office. "When the Spanish bells were about striking twelve, and, save the watch on deck, soldiers and seamen lay stretched in sleep, certain dark objects, which had been seen dimly drifting on the tide where the galleons lay thickest, shot suddenly into pyramids of light, flames leaping from ruddy sail to sail, flickering on the ropes, and forecastles, foremasts and bowsprits a lurid blaze of conflagration.... Panic spread through the entire Armada; the enemy they most dreaded was upon them." 260

The success of the fire-ships was complete, so far as frightening the Spanish into putting to sea was concerned. Most of the galleons, after some confusion and damage, got clear of the shoals, and lay-to about six miles from the shore. Then when daybreak came, some were seen aground on Calais Bar. During the next few days the running fight was resumed, as at first the galleons strove to regain their former anchorage off Calais, but were driven along the Dutch coast, ultimately to speed northwards towards Scotland, with Howard, Drake, Hawkins, and the rest of the English captains in hot pursuit.

"Without pilots, in a strange sea, with the autumn storms prematurely upon them, and with no friendly port for which to run, he (Medina Sidonia) became utterly unmanned.... On, therefore, sped the Armada before the rising breeze, the English still following. Then as ship after ship became leaky or disabled by the ever-rising storm, and was abandoned with callousness bred of 'a wonderful fear,' what remained of the great fleet of Philip of Spain passed for a time out of English ken, and rushed northwards to destruction and dismemberment."

Howard was at last compelled to abandon the chase. Froude tells us "the English had but three days' provisions left, and to follow further so ill-provided, with the prospect of a continuing storm, was to run into needless danger."

Thus, with the return of Howard's ships to Margate and Harwich, was the "greatest service ever done by an English fleet ... successfully accomplished by men whose wages had not been paid from the time of their engagement, half-starved, with their clothes in rags and falling off their backs, and so ill-found in the necessities of war that they had eked out their ammunition by what they could take in action from the enemy himself."

Plymouth's share in the most glorious event in national history was the chief and ever unforgettable one. And for this reason we have told the story of it somewhat fully. 261

It was from Plymouth that Sir Walter Raleigh set sail with other bold adventurers for America, where he took possession of Virginia, calling the new colony after his none too grateful mistress, Queen Elizabeth, on July 13, 1584.

Plymouth, also, saw the setting forth of a much more significant and peaceful expedition to that New World of which so little was even then known, when the Pilgrim Fathers from Leyden, after sojourning awhile in the great West country port, stepped once more aboard the schooner *Mayflower*, on September 6, 1620, and casting loose, adventured out into the wide ocean, which washed the shores of far distant America as well as those of their native land. It was in remembrance of the last spot in England to give them harbourage that New Plymouth was named. The vessel which bore so rich a cargo of faith to the New World, and has enjoyed such fame, was destined to have a prosaic end. After she had borne the "Pilgrim Fathers" safely across the Atlantic, she was sold as a trader, and after many years in the East India Company's service was lost off Masulipatam on the east coast of India.

Plymouth played its gallant part in the Civil War. The Royalist forces recognized the importance of the possession of such a town and attacked it almost continuously for several years. It also had to stand actual and protracted siege. Over and over again the Royalist troops under Charles I, dashing and gallant Prince Rupert, and many other distinguished generals assailed the town, only time after time to be repulsed with heavy loss. Then came the culminating event one Sunday morning when the slopes and hillside to the north and north-east

of the town surged and rang with the tide and cries of fierce conflict. It was the Royalists' last effort, and with their defeat the siege was finally abandoned. 262

Charles II when he came to the throne did not forget the "malignancy" of the men of Plymouth, nor the stout defence they had offered to his father's attack. It was probably to the latter fact that the existence of "The Citadel," which Charles II built, may be ascribed. For, although nominally for the defence of the town on the sea side, it is significant that the greater proportion of the guns with which it was provided were trained upon the town itself.

Of the many eighteenth-century voyagers who set out from Plymouth, none was destined to win greater renown than Captain Cook, who made the town his headquarters previous to all three of his famous expeditions.

The fear of Napoleonic invasion did not perhaps convulse Plymouth—greatly strengthened as it had become by that time, and kept by ceaseless bustle and activity from the form of nervous dread which afflicted the smaller towns of the south and south-western coasts—but it saw its full share not only of the distress and excitement caused by the long war, but also of the more terrible effects. Many a proud line-of-battle ship, frigate, and corvette which left the Sound with a gallant complement of brave men, colours flying, and bands playing, returned little more than a shambles or a shattered wreck after one of those fierce engagements in the Channel or Bay of Biscay for which the years from just after the French Revolution till well on into the second decade of the nineteenth century were famous.



### PLYMOUTH BREAKWATER

At the close of the war the great Napoleon, broken in fortune and spirit, came to Plymouth in the *Bellerophon*, and remained some little time the object of the greatest curiosity not only to all the townsfolk, but to the countryside at large, the inhabitants of which crowded into the place from distant parts to see the man who for two decades had been the cause of so much misery, and such nights and days of alarm. 263

During the war the Plymouth privateers distinguished themselves as might be expected of vessels hailing from a port with traditions of Blake, Hawkins, Frobisher, and the rest of those gallant Elizabethan captains. But of the many gallant actions, often fought against great odds, and triumphantly brought to an issue, we have no space here to speak.

Of Old Plymouth there is now, alas! little left. Even half a century ago there were many of the ancient houses standing in the streets that the old sea captains trod. But now few of these dwellings remain, and even the historic streets have in many cases been renamed, thus unhappily destroying for ever all connection with the past. In St Andrew's Street there are still a few quaint houses with projecting windows, carved corbels, overhanging eaves, and substantial doors made to resist actual attack as well as to preserve the house against casual intruders. At the bottom of St Andrew's Street stands a block of modern houses, erected in medieval style, and into one of them has been incorporated much of the woodwork of one of the houses which the more modern ones replace. This house is interesting as being, at least by tradition, the dwelling frequently occupied by Sir Walter Raleigh when in Plymouth. In the High Street, too, there are still a few survivals of charm and value, with the ancient archways leading into spacious courts. High Street was, as its name indicates, the chief thoroughfare in Elizabethan times, and must have known Drake, Raleigh, Hawkins, and many another Plymouth worthy and bold sea rover. It is in the heart of the old town where Drake and the chief merchants of his time had their residences.

Of the old inns and taverns, which, as became a seaport, were once very numerous, few if any survive. The most famous was the Turk's Head, probably dating from the time of Richard Cœur de Lion and the Crusades, as did most hostelries bearing that and similar names. In Woolster Street there was the inevitable Mitre Tavern, much resorted to by the gentlemen adventurers, and the officers of Plymouth merchantmen. Here, tradition states, was fought, early one autumn morning, after a night of high play at cards, a "triangular" duel with pistols which sent two gallant gentlemen to their last account. 264

In St Andrew's Church Plymouth has not only one of the largest parish churches in England, but a building of great antiquity, permeated by the spirit of the past. The church is practically what it has been since 1460; the earliest part, which is thought to be the south aisle, dates from 1385, when it was dedicated to the Virgin.

In this ancient fane many of those who have left their mark on history have from age to age and time to time worshipped. Here came Katherine of Aragon, after landing, to return thanks for the protection of Divine Providence during her voyage from Spain. Here worshipped Drake and Hawkins, and the rest of their comrades (brave fighters all, but devout after their kind and age); and after them the Puritans to take the oath of the solemn league and covenant; and here Charles II is said to have accomplished the gift of healing by touching for the King's evil. And although the body of Admiral Blake rested here in company with that of Sir Martin Frobisher only for a time before transference to Westminster Abbey, the heart of the intrepid admiral is popularly supposed to lie buried within the church.

But, after all, those who remain in the Sound below Stonehouse, with its famous Royal William Victualling Yard, and Devil's Point, concerning the origin of the name of which there is so much local dispute, and do not penetrate to the region of the Hamoaze, the Lynher River, St Germans Creek, and the upper reaches of the Tamar, which can be navigated in a dinghy as far as Weir Head itself, know but half the beauties and attractions of Plymouth. 265

Devonport Dockyard, too, is always a place of interest and fascination to seafaring folk. The town seems to shut itself off from the other two towns, and in the past this apparent exclusiveness has led to municipal friction. For a long time the "Dockyard town" was but indifferently supplied with water, and Plymouth firmly refused to allow any of its supply—dating from the days of Drake, who had a good deal to do with getting it for the town—to be diverted to Devonport. Now, however, Devonport has its own water drawn from inexhaustible Dartmoor, and the town has flourished so amazingly that, although the youngest of naval ports, it has become the one of greatest activity and renown.

But there is no space for us to descant in detail of the charming places upon the shores of Tamar, Hamoaze, and St Germans River. Even pretty, old-fashioned Saltash, with its fishermen's cottages clinging to the steep hillside, so that the blue smoke from the lower often seems to veil the higher dwellings, and its ancient church can only be mentioned in passing; and so, too, the fact that its corporation takes precedence of that of Plymouth, and has jurisdiction over the Sound.

St Germans, called after St Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, who came over to Britain in the fifth century, and founded upon the banks of the beautiful Lynher River a monastery, which caused the place to become an important centre of religious life and secular industry, can but be referred to briefly. The church, with its Norman west front and recessed porch, is of unusual interest, as is also the thirteenth-century octagonal, north-west tower.

Port Eliot, the seat of the Eliot family, whose ancestor, Sir John Eliot, played so prominent a part in the period just anterior to the Civil War, stands quite close to the great church, which, separated from it only by greensward and a narrow road, is well worth a visit. 266

But all these things, including Landulph, with its old church and the monument to Theodore Paleologus, of Pesaro in Italy, "descended from ye Imperyal lyne of ye last Christian Emperors of Greece"; and the Castle of Tremanton on Lynher River can only be visited by one who has much time at his disposal.

Of the beauties of Mount Edgecumbe a great deal has from time to time been written. Under its shelter lay Howard's fleet, and along its shady avenues have walked many of the greatest sons of the West Country in past centuries. It is this, as Garrick calls it, "mount of all mounts in Great Britain" that attracts the eye as one enters the Sound, and it is at this lovely heritage of tree-crowned heights, valleys, and wide, stretching sward that one gazes when, with the anchor weighed, one drops down the water bound further west.

## Chapter IX

### St Looe—Polperro—Fowey—Mevagissey—and Some Coves

Lovely Cawsand Bay is one of the fairest of havens and a good place in which to lie in almost all winds save south-east; but with quaint St Looe ahead and a fair wind one does not stand into the bay, but lays a course for Pellee Point and thence round Rame Head, with its ruins of the ancient chapel, and then there is a straight course for Looe Island and the harbour, which, in the season, is so picturesque with and full of pilchard boats.

Seen from the pine-tree-clad hill above the town, and looking up the river to the bridge, St Looe inevitably reminds one of Dinan, just as the Looe River possesses a marked resemblance to the Rance. The architecture of the quaint houses, which huddle close together on the Point and spread upwards to the hillsides, have a distinctly Breton character, which may or may not be because the port of Morlaix is straight across the water.

There are, however, two towns which, whatever the differences in far back times may have been that led to division of strength where one might have imagined such a course undesirable, are nowadays connected by the old, weather-stained bridge of eight arches, on which and against the parapet of which the fishermen ashore lean and contemplate the river and harbour, and artists take up a vantage ground.

This little port is indeed a delightful place, with a climate so mild yet withal so bracing that it threatens to turn this "sleepy hollow," with its memories of past centuries, into a fashionable winter resort, and thus destroy it with that modern bane of picturesqueness—prosperity. A well-known writer has aptly summed up the delight of its quaint architecture, which, as well as its fisher types, has drawn painters from all parts to revel in its sheer delight. He says: "Such houses, never certainly except in some medieval town abroad, show such startling illustrations of the ideas of the old house builders, with gables quaint and rugged as Ruskin could have wished, or Turner desired to paint."

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And there is, indeed, a charm in the narrow devious streets and the little Cornish courts, in which the fisherfolk sit mending or knitting nets, or the jerseys which will do as much as wool can do to keep out the bitter cold of dawn or winter nights.

It is ages since the two Looes (East and West) became one by charter of Queen Elizabeth; but now, though we have left Devon and are in Cornwall, we have by no means left behind the memories of the strenuous life of fighting and piracy of old. And what has been said concerning many a Devon port and haven is equally true of Looe. It was probably (although, alas! records of the daring deeds and piratical descents of St Looe men upon the opposite Breton coast are much wanting) one of the most actively aggressive Cornish fisher towns. But we are sure of one thing, that Looe men were not less quick with the sword, flint lock, and culverin in the past, than with the trimming of sails and the handling of tiller; and that the harvests of blood, of fire, and of sword reaped along the French coast, which lay a hundred miles or so due south, were not less rich or risky of reprisals than those of the bold men of Dartmouth and Plymouth hard by.

That daring deeds were done more or less "outside the law of nations" there can be no question; but, save for an almost casual mention of the doings of the Looe lugger *George* in the famous though somewhat traditional fight with "those hereditary enemies, the French," little has come down to us concerning these adventurers, and only a memory has survived from the early years of the nineteenth century of the Looe privateer of small size but large courage which, whilst cruising off the mouth of the Channel about thirty miles south-west of the Lizard, fell in, not with the French merchantman of which she was in search, but with a famous St-Malo privateer "of much superior force both in guns and men, which she promptly engaged and forced to surrender after a running fight lasting well nigh seven hours." Had the St-Malo lugger known that more than sixty per cent of the Looe boat's crew were either killed or placed *hors de combat* the result of the engagement might possibly have been different; but Cornish fisherfolk do not wear their hearts upon their sleeves, and one can well imagine that the survivors put on a "brazen front with no timidity shown," just as one seems to catch an echo of the rousing cheers with which the striking of the tricolour was undoubtedly greeted.

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Both the Looes did their best to uphold the honour of England during the long struggle with our French neighbours at the end of the eighteenth and commencement of the nineteenth century. Possibly it was the same spirit which made the Looe men amongst the boldest and most successful of smugglers on the Cornish coast in the first quarter of the last century, and this although they were remarkably well looked after by the "preventives." It is only right to add, however, that an inspection and study of many records of smuggling along the South Coast proves conclusively that Cornish "free traders" conducted their operations in a much less brutal and forceful manner than that which characterized the doings of the famous smugglers of the Sussex coast, and which so often led to outrages and scenes of an atrocious character.

A well-known writer upon smuggling says in reference to this point: "As regards the skill and enterprise displayed by those who conducted the trade, it is difficult to award the palm to any one county, though, on the whole, perhaps, and after a careful consideration of all the circumstances of the case, the writer is inclined to give it to the Cornishmen. Not that the east countrymen were one whit behind them in point of courage or activity, but the very fact of having to travel a far greater distance for their goods exposed them to increased risks, and to many dangers from which the trade elsewhere was tolerably exempt, thus giving scope to the highest faculties, and developing seamanlike qualities of no mean order."

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As an example of the risks which the Cornish smugglers, and doubtless those of Looe, were willing to run for the sake of the enormous profits realized when a successful "run" of a cargo was accomplished, it may be mentioned that frequently these bold and hardy seamen would cross to the hundred-mile distant French coast in open boats even in the depth of inclement winters.

Not only would the daring character of the Cornishman seem to have qualified him especially for engaging in a species of enterprise in which were incurred such risks and dangers to life and limb, but the situation of Cornwall, lying as it does at the western extreme limit of England, and in the early days of the last century

almost isolated from other parts of the kingdom, in itself was well adapted to the secrecy so necessary for the successful carrying out of smuggling enterprises on a large scale. No coast line on the south or west of England is more rugged or better supplied with creeks and harbours than that of Cornwall, and, indeed, had Nature been concerned with the provision of an ideal seaboard for the prosecution of contraband trade she could not have formed one better adapted for the purpose. And "to these natural advantages the Cornish smuggler brought in his own person an amount of skill, cunning, and enterprise which was scarcely equalled, and certainly was unsurpassed, elsewhere." It was to the various circumstances to which we have referred that is mainly attributable the fact of Cornish smuggling having survived for a considerable period after "free trading" had been successfully put down along other portions of the south and west coasts. 271

Roscoff, which, until the edict of the King of France of September 3, 1769, was but a tiny fishing hamlet, became (when made by that edict a free port) one of the places on the French coast most frequented by the Cornish smuggling fraternity, and rose to a position of great commercial importance. The action of the French Government was brought about by that of the English, who two years previously had passed an Order with relation to the Channel Islands—till then a smugglers' paradise with an enormous trade in contraband spirits, lace, tea and tobacco—with the object of suppressing smuggling. And even during the French War with Napoleon the contraband trade with the coast of Brittany continued almost unabated. It should, however, be stated for the credit of the smugglers that they frequently afforded important information to the English naval authorities and the Government regarding the movements of the French fleets and operations of privateers, and for this reason, probably, the circumstances which led to such information being obtained were generally not very closely inquired into.

How extensive the smuggling trade was about this period and even a little later may be gathered from the fact that more than a hundred large vessels (luggers and cutters chiefly) were engaged in it upon the south and south-west coasts alone. They varied in tonnage from about 80 to 150 tons, and were not infrequently supplied with means for armed resistance. They were built chiefly at Cornish ports, Polperro, Falmouth, Mevagissey amongst the number, the boats of the last-named port being especially noted for their speed. So much so that they were frequently bought by the Sussex and east coast smugglers, notwithstanding the fact that both Hastings and Shoreham enjoyed some considerable reputation for the building of smuggling craft. Not a few, too, of the larger luggers were during the French Wars fitted out as privateers either by their smuggling owners, or merchants who had purchased them for the purpose. 272

The carrying capacity of the vessels engaged in the trade may be somewhat gauged from the fact that on June 10, 1823, a cutter of twenty-five tons of East Looe took in a cargo of "within a few tubs of 700" of spirits at St Brelade's Bay, Jersey, for transshipment to the Cornish coast.

An interesting light is thrown, by the following recorded incident, upon the life of the revenue men of the district, and the rivalry which existed between them in the period which immediately preceded the decline of the smuggling industry. During February, 1827, "the commander of the *Lion*, revenue cutter, was reprimanded for allowing his boat's crew to take by force part of a 'seizure' made by the coastguard boats of the Looe and Polperro stations." The *Lion's* men, either for gain or glory, the historian does not state definitely which, upon coming up with the Polperro revenue boat, which was towing a string of tubs, set to work to detach some of the latter from the sinking rope. This attempt of the *Lion's* men to take possession of spoil belonging by right of capture to the Polperro "preventives" was stoutly resisted, and during the struggle the knives used by the aggressors to sever the tubs came in contact with the fingers of the commander of the Polperro boat, who appears to have suffered considerably in consequence.

In the records of the coastguard service are many entries which show how busy a part the "two Looes" played in the hazardous enterprises of voyages to and from Roscoff, or Rusco as most smugglers called it, in those distant times. In August, 1833, there were taken "One hundred and fifteen tubs belonging to the *Dove* (a rather favourite name, by the way, amongst smugglers) by the Looe coastguard." Then in the following month there is an entry which conjures up visions of an only partially successful "run," for we find "Five tubs washed ashore at Looe, and a boat marked *Fox* (a much more suitable name than *Dove* for smuggling craft one would think) of Plymouth found on the beach a mile or so west, and another tub in the cliff hard by." 273

Then in the same month the *Elizabeth*, forced to drop some of her cargo overboard when pressed by a revenue cutter off Seaton, just across the bay, lost fifty-seven of her tubs to the Looe boat, which fished up the line to which they were attached.

And a year or so later one reads of "the Looe lugger, *Morning Star*, being chased off the Lizard by the Plymouth revenue cutter and lost sight of in a fog... Next day being again sighted and boarded but found empty." What a world of romance is to be found hidden in that entry? A vision of an exciting chase, with the smugglers aboard the *Morning Star* doing all they knew (and that was much one may rest assured) to give the cutter the slip. Perhaps even seeing to the priming of pistols and muskets lest their attempt to escape should not prove successful. And then the coming on of the merciful fog, the dark night off Looe, the lowering of the boats, loading of the tubs, the cautious rowing ashore towards the signal lights of those who waited anxiously to assist at the run. Then the putting again to sea, the falling in with the revenue cutter, and the innocent and doubtless conciliatory interview when the *Morning Star*, after heaving to, was boarded and searched and found—empty!

Looe must have been a busy place in those days, and many prosperous folk, who though nominally fishermen seldom shot a net, there undoubtedly were. It was no uncommon thing for a £1,000 cargo to be brought safely across from Roscoff, and on a suitable night (a winter's night for choice with not much moon) landed and dispersed through the usual channels on the shore a few miles east or west of Looe. 274

Those were rough times, too, ashore, when occasionally a coastguard would disappear if found too successful or energetic in frustrating the smugglers' doings; but although tradition speaks of several such disappearances details are wanting, and one can only hope for the credit of the Cornish smuggler—who generally seems to have taken rough luck with the smooth without the exercise of undue violence—that these traditions have little foundation upon fact.



Looe, like Plymouth and other west country ports and places, in the olden times possessed "instruments in the shape of a cage and ducking stool or chair for the proper subjugation of women addicted to overmuch exercise of their tongues," and that these somewhat barbarous methods were at least occasionally put into practice and to good and even humorous account the following anecdote will show:

Bessy Niles and Hannah White, two women of East Looe, "having quarrelled and exerted all their powers of oratory on each other," at last decided to appeal to the Mayor, a Mr John Chubb, for the settlement of their dispute.

Each naturally wished to be first in the field, and thus lay her case before his worship without interruption, and make the most favourable impression. The first to arrive, however, was not long left in possession of the mayoral ear, and so incensed was the other on her arrival that she commenced to abuse the first comer with all the eloquence of an unbridled tongue. His worship called the town constable in self-defence, and when the latter arrived ordered him promptly to "Take these two women to the cage, and there keep them till they have settled their dispute."

A decision, we think, that would have done credit to Solomon himself. We are told by Mr Bond, the historian of this exciting event in the history of East Looe, "They were immediately conveyed thither, and after a few hours' confinement became as quiet and inoffensive beings as ever breathed!" If the "cage" of East Looe was anything like those of other places we know of we can well believe that peace reigned after but a short incarceration. 275

The Napoleonic invasion scare, which was renewed after the short-lived treaty of Amiens, affected Looe as it did most towns on the south and south-west coasts. "The country," says Jonathan Couch, "from end to end bristled with volunteers. Even those persons who were not actually enrolled had some specific duty assigned to them in case of invasion," such as the exciting work of driving off the cattle inland, setting fire to the corn, ricks, and other stores which could not be removed to a place of safety. Many honest, though timid-hearted, individuals lived in continual fear, dreading to go to bed, lest they should awake to the call of French trumpets, in midst of the invaders' troops, or perhaps be foully murdered by "Boney's" myrmidons whilst asleep. "A fear," says another historian of this period, "not altogether unreasonable was entertained that a diversion would be made by sending an army into Cornwall to draw hither the troops whilst the main efforts of the invaders were directed against London."

It is interesting to know the total number of Cornish folk who flocked to the defence of their country in this crisis. In the year 1806 there were enrolled in Cornwall no less than 8,362 men and 149 officers, whilst the total effective force of the volunteer army in Great Britain at the same period was 370,860, divided as follows: cavalry, 31,771; artillery, 10,133; infantry, 328,956. The Looe artillery numbered seventy men. At Polperro, close by, there was a large force of "sea-fencibles," as they were called, armed with pikes; as well as heavy artillery under the command of a naval captain. Details of the uniform worn by the East and West Looe Artillery, which was commanded by a Captain Bond, have been fortunately handed down to us. It was, we are told, "blue with red facings, like the regular artillery (what glory!), but with plain buttons. The men," we are further told, "were practised in the infantry exercise when not engaged with cannon. The latter were naval eighteen pounders, fixed in the Church-end battery at East Looe. The men were provided with clothes and had pay on those days when they were paraded, but the officers had no pay and provided their clothes at their own cost." 276

Such is a fairly vivid picture of the times when Looe was a bustling place.

But nowadays it has no such exciting incidents to disturb or stir up the "sleepy hollow" character of its existence, although at one time the place was engaged not only in contraband trade on a truly magnificent scale, but enjoyed quite a large legitimate trade with the ports of Eastern Europe. Except for its fishing fleet, which ventures as far afield as the Irish coast on occasion, and the coming and going of a trading brig or tramp steamer, the pretty harbour, which lies as it were in a cleft between the hills, whose midway slopes are tree-clad, preserves little indication of the bustling life of former times; but, all the same, it is a spot in which to linger, and a snug harbourage in almost all weathers.

Polperro is but a short six sea miles from Looe, and is too delightful a place to be passed by without threading its narrow entrance of less than sixty feet between the piers, which makes it a veritable "needle's eye" not easily to be passed through save in a moderate and fair wind.



## LOOE

The name is said to be derived from Pol or Pool, and Perro supposed to be a corruption of Peter, thus meaning Peter's Pool, or perhaps Peter's Port. Old Leland describes it as "a fischer towne with a peere," but after a visit to it most people will agree that the description does the place but scant justice, for indeed Polperro is a very charming old-world spot.

The entrance is through a gap between two ledges of rock, and once safely inside, the little town, which blocks the way up the narrow valley in which it is situated, is straight before one, with the fishermen's dwellings picturesquely huddled together in the hollow and climbing—with a few houses of greater size and importance—the gorse-clad hillsides. It is a place enjoying some reputation with holiday folk as well as artists and writers. 277

But sheltered as is this tiny Cornish village, lying with its feet in the sea and its head often veiled in the blue-grey smoke which hangs like a cloud of incense over the weather-worn roofs on still days, in south-westerly, southerly and south-easterly gales the sea runs in dangerously high, so much so, indeed, that in former times a boom used to be strung across the harbour entrance to break the force of the waves. Those who have by any chance heard the "organ note" of a gale from either quarter we have named as it roars in at the entrance and sweeps up the little funnel-like valley will not soon forget it. Then with the fisherfolk it is a case of *sauve qui peut* as regards the boats.

The well-known antiquarian and naturalist, Jonathan Couch, who dwelt many years in the village, and, amongst other things, left behind him a history of the place descriptive of it and its many curious customs far above the average of such local works, both from the points of literary merit and interest, paints a picture of storm and stress at Polperro, which we make no excuse for quoting at some length, as it is not only vivid, but also typical of similar scenes to be witnessed "when the stormy winds do blow" in many another haven on the Cornish coast. On these occasions he says, "All who can render assistance are out of their beds helping the sailors and fishermen, lifting the boats out of reach of the sea, or taking the furniture out of the ground floors to a place of safety.... When the first streak of morning light comes, bringing no cessation of the storm, but only serving to show the devastation it has made, the effect is still more dismal. The wild fury of the waves is a sight of no mean grandeur as it dashes over the peak and falls on its jagged summit, from whence it streams down the sides in a thousand waterfalls and foams at its base. The infuriated sea sweeps over the piers and striking against the rocks and houses on the warren side rebounds towards the strand, and washes fragments of houses and boats into the streets, where the receding tide leaves them strewn in sad confusion." 278

The truth of this description will easily be recognized by all who have witnessed a storm and its effects upon the rock-bound Cornish coast. Then there gather upon the points or bluffs above the harbour mouths, or on the sea-swept piers and quays groups of frightened women and children, and men with anxious faces gazing out over the wild expanse of foam-flecked seas to watch for the return of the boats, or, maybe, the manœuvres of some brave ship which has suddenly found herself on a lee shore. Those are times when the heart-strings of men are taut, and when the tears of women are in their eyes. Few sights are more sad, either to sailor or to landsman, than the break up of a fine vessel upon a rocky coast, when the heavy seas pound the strongest works of men into matchwood, and the fabric of the ship seems indeed to dissolve before one's eyes.

Old Polperro folk—mostly women, it must be admitted—still talk with bated breath of the uncanny doings of a certain John Stevens, who dealt in occult arts in the middle part of the last century; and of another "witch," who dwelt in an outlying hut near the quaint village of Crumplehorn, just a short distance up the valley. In the days, which some of the old people yet remember, none would go near her hut after dusk, and at least one old lady survived till comparatively recent times who had seen (so she told us) "the devil or the witch flying up out of the chimney on a broomstick." But these were sights seen in days when the little harbour was seldom entered except by the fishing craft of the place itself, and strangers but once or so in a generation found their way down by the steep hill road to the place where the sea meets the land, and the murk of storm in winter days is so often, by reason of the death and devastation wrought, a firmer limned memory than the glorious clarity of Cornish sunshine and the azure tint of a summer sea. 279

Just as was the case at Looe the chief pursuits of Polperro men in the period from about 1750 to 1835 were only somewhat remotely connected with fishing, smuggling and privateering being much more to the taste of these hardy and reckless seafarers; and, as Mr Couch points out, the place was made for the enterprise. How universal the pursuit of smuggling was at Polperro may be gathered from the following extracts: "The smith left his forge, and the husbandman his plough; even the women and children turned out to assist in the unlawful traffic, and received their share of the proceeds." The men, at all events, generally fell into two classes—"tub carriers," who carried the "tubs" up the beach to the "cache," or inland, as the case might be, slung back and front by the "tails"<sup>F</sup> provided for the purpose on the other side of the Channel; and the "batmen." The former were paid five shillings and upwards a night according to the number of "tubs" they succeeded in carrying, and the latter, who gained their name from the "bat" or bludgeon which they carried and on occasion used for the protection of the carriers, were paid from fifteen shillings to a pound.

<sup>F</sup> Pieces of rope secured round each end of the "tub" for this purpose and also for use should it be necessary to sling the "tubs" overboard to avoid capture.—*Smuggling Days and Smuggling Ways*.

Of the speed and seaworthiness of the craft built at Polperro there have been left several testimonies. Here is one from the *History of Polperro*: "Fine craft too they turned out—clippers which, when manned by skilful and intrepid sailors, would scud away from the fastest of the Government cruisers and offer them a tow rope in derision." 280

One famous craft, the *Unity*, is said to have made five hundred successful trips, and have served on privateering expeditions without having met with a single serious misadventure. Such boats were, doubtless, also the notorious smuggling craft, the *Hope*, *Cruizer*, *Exchange*, and *Happy Brothers*, all of Polperro, and constantly engaged in trips to Roscoff in the first decade of the last century. Several of them were heavily armed as well as strongly manned, and there is little wonder that the "preventives" in this part of the west country were sometimes lax in the exercise of their duty, and lived for the most part on pretty good terms with the fisherfolk who were engaged in the contraband trade.

It is improbable that the Polperro or indeed Cornish smugglers generally recognized smuggling as in any way dishonest, or if they did so, they certainly regarded it as a very trifling offence. And when one remembers that the better-class people and even the gentry frequently bought what spirits, tea and lace they required of the smugglers, and that the "preventive" officers and men not seldom connived at the running of cargoes, and were not above profiting from their laxness, it is not to be wondered at that these bold fishermen, in whose veins ran the blood of adventurers, and pirates of old, should engage in a calling to which their hereditary character would be most naturally adapted.

Sometimes, however, as was the case of Robert Marks, a noted Polperro smuggler, who was killed in an affray with the revenue men on January 24, 1802, and whose epitaph expresses such Christian forbearance towards his slayer, and hope of being rewarded "with everlasting bliss," serious encounters took place, and in the course of years "much good blood and spirits were spilt along the coast." But however outwardly friendly the two opposing interests were, the *History of Polperro* records the fact that "though active opposition on the part of the smugglers was not politic, the people determined, one and all, to offer as much passive resistance as was safe. No one would let a coastguardman a house to live in at any price, so the whole force was obliged to make a dwelling and guard house of the hull of a vessel which was moored to the old quay." 281

So lucrative and attractive was "the trade" at Polperro, and so uncomfortable and risky the "preventive" service, that there is a record of at least three men who "verted" from the revenue service and entered the ranks of active smugglers, one James Rowat, boatman coastguard, having been dismissed the service in 1827 for purchasing a boat "intended to be employed in smuggling."

The fate which overtook boats taken *in flagrante delicto* and condemned was usually that of being sawn asunder in three pieces and broken up; and many a fine lugger and cutter shared this unkind fate, though occasionally very handy and swift sailers were not thus destroyed but were taken into the revenue service, sometimes to be repurchased later on by the smugglers for further illicit use.

But although smuggling loomed so large in the lives and occupations of Polperro folk during the later years of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth century it by no means formed the sum total of their seagoing activities. The Polperro privateers were quite as famous in their way as the smugglers. As was perfectly natural the stern training which was necessary to fit men for the hazardous calling of smugglers, the resource, good seamanship, weather lore, courage, and daring proved equally of service when they were brought face to face with the enemies of their country, whether between the decks of a frigate or line-of-battle ship to which they had been drafted as a punishment for some smuggling exploit, or aboard the swift-sailing Polperro luggers turned for the nonce into free lances as privateers. There were quite a number of stories of privateering days current amongst the older folk a couple of decades ago. One or two are worth quotation, as they come from the lips of active participants or descendants of those who took part in the exploits narrated. 282

There was the case of the *Eagle*, "a heavily armed lugger of some 135 tons, which, finding itself becalmed some sixty miles south-east of Land's End one August morning in the year 1809, was somewhat dismayed to discover a frigate, of undeniably French cut, coming up with the wind, and accompanied by what appeared to be a large *chasse-marée*, or privateer, probably hailing from the port of Brest.... The *Eagle* was perforce compelled to await the coming of the enemy, who, when about three and a half miles off, 'broke out' the tricolour. Fortunately the wind preceded the frigate's coming by some two miles or more, and although the privateer had advanced to within a mile or so of the English boat, through sailing a shorter course and closer to the wind than the frigate, and began to open fire, the *Eagle* was able to trim sails and head for Penzance."

Then followed a running fight with the frigate's bow chasers, throwing shot short but continuously, and the shot of the *chasse-marée* occasionally passing through the *Eagle's* sails or falling aboard. As was often the case, "the English and French privateers gradually outdistanced the larger and heavier vessel, as the breeze was

light, and by six in the afternoon had dropped her hull down.... An hour later those aboard the *Eagle* were relieved to see the frigate give up the chase, and stand away for the French coast.... All these hours the two smaller craft had scarcely changed the positions they occupied when first they got within range of the long gun each apparently carried.... And so the fight went on until almost dusk, when a lucky shot from the bow chaser of the Frenchman brought the mainsail of the *Eagle* down on deck with a run.... Three of her crew had been killed or seriously injured, and half a dozen more were hurt. Now overtaking the English boat hand over hand the Frenchman (who afterwards proved to be the *Belle Etoile* of Brest) came alongside, and, after pouring in a broadside of six guns, crashed into the *Eagle*. Luckily for the Polperro men, the mainsail proved a barrier for a moment or two to the advance of the Frenchmen, who swarmed over the after bulwarks, and in the delay pistols were used to such effect as well as cutlasses that half a score of Frenchmen were put out of action. Inch by inch, however, the superior numbers of the *Belle Etoile's* crew gained possession of the *Eagle's* deck, and drove the crew into the waist; but by good luck one of the latter had thoughtfully (!) loaded one of the smaller guns with pistol bullets, and he and two companions had managed to get the piece inboard and had trained it on the Frenchmen, who were pressing the Polperro men from the fore part of the ship.... There was an explosion, which lit up the vessel and the smoke-grimed and bloody faces of the combatants, and a whole row of Frenchmen fell riddled with balls, which but for the close range would have spread more happily (!) and swept away the whole lot." 283

This diversion decided the day or rather night, and we are told that, "rallying with lusty cheers, the Polperro men not only drove the Frenchmen overboard and back on to their own deck, but followed them up, and after twenty minutes' bloody work, which caused the deck of the *Belle Etoile* to run red, succeeded in gaining the mastery.... After the mainmast had been 'fished' and a fresh yard hoisted, the *Eagle* and her prize, the crew of which was twenty men stronger, and of four more and heavier guns, laid a course for Falmouth, which was reached next day in safety, after speaking one of His Majesty's cruisers." 284

From the *History of Polperro* we take the second account of the doings of its privateering fisherfolk. The story tells how when the *Unity*, a hired armed lugger, was cruising in the Channel off Ushant, with one Richard Rowett of Polperro in command, he discovered at dawn one morning the presence of two French frigates, "one on either side, who hoisted English colours, but from their build and rig he (Richard Rowett) had his suspicions as to their nationality. All doubts, however, were dispelled when a shot was fired across his bows to bring him to, and both immediately displayed the French flag. The nearest hailed him, and, considering the *Unity* to be their prize, ordered him to lie to while they boarded her. This order Captain Rowett feigned to obey, and for the moment shortened sail; but when under the lee of the enemy, who were both lying to, quite contentedly lowering their boats with the sails aback, he suddenly spread all sail, passing ahead of both frigates, took the helm himself, ordered the crew to lie flat on the deck to escape the perfect shower of balls rained from the bow chasers and muskets of the enemy, which, in their anger and disappointment at so unexpectedly losing their prey, were fired on them." Such smart seamanship and daring well deserved the success with which it met, and it is satisfactory to find that the "*Unity* soon escaped out of range without anyone being hurt, and with only very slight damage being done to the sails and rigging."

Very little trace of the stirring times of old is discoverable in the peaceful life and law-abiding inhabitants of Polperro of these prosaic twentieth-century days. It is just a charming little haven with the quaintness which seems inseparable from all Cornish fishing villages, redolent of many memories of gallant and daring deeds accomplished by the ancestors of the contemplative fisherfolk who lounge in the sunshine on the quay—still smoking, maybe, tobacco on which duty has never been paid—when they are not engaged upon fishing expeditions or in saving their boats and belongings during the gales which turn the little haven into a roaring cavern of the winds. 285

Fowey, but seven miles further west, is a much more sophisticated though perhaps not less charming place. For one thing, it has the railway, and another it has, somehow or other, preserved a measure of the importance and prosperity which belonged to it in the days when it, too, owed much to contraband trade, privateering, and hazardous enterprises.

As one enters the Fowey River between the headlands, one truly (in the quaint words of old Carew) "lighteth on a fair and commodious haven, where the tide daily presenteth his double service of flowing and ebbing, to carry and recarry whatsoever the inhabitants shall be pleased to charge him withal, and his creeks, like a young wanton lover, fold about the land with many embracing arms."

Amongst the famous folk who of recent years have come to dwell in Fowey none has sung its praises more lustily than that engaging writer who signs himself so modestly "Q," but whose real name is A. T. Quiller-Couch. In his novels he has put on record something at least of the town's social life and history. "Q" states that Fowey "has a history, and carries marks of it." And he also tells us: "The visitor, if he be at all of my mind, will find a charm in Fowey over and above its natural beauty, and what I may call its holiday conveniences for the yachtsman, for the sea-fisherman, or for one content to idle in peaceful waters." And although he appears to lament that it no longer has a Mayor and Corporation of its own (some may not deem this any disadvantage or discredit) he hastens to assert that "it is as capable of managing its affairs as any town of its size in Cornwall."

No one who knows Fowey and its substantial charms will care to dispute the justness of the eulogies of either of the writers we have quoted. 286

Fowey harbour is indeed a convenient and picturesque inlet, which provides, after the headlands which guard the entrance are passed, a good and pleasant anchorage for all the yachts (and they are many) which come to it during the summer months, and to many other craft besides. The creek, and afterwards the river, extends to quaint Lostwithiel, six miles up, although the depth of water after the first mile or so is not considerable. It is not merely a pleasure harbour, either, for there is a considerable coasting trade, and huge vessels of two or three thousand tons come into Fowey at times to load up with the famous china clay of Cornwall for far distant countries of the world, some of it, so it is asserted, to return again from China and Japan transformed from amorphous masses into the delicate vases and egg-shell pottery of the East, and coloured with designs the equal of which for simplicity with effect only those lands can show.

In the town itself the salt sea breeze comes softened with that of the wind from off the flower-clad heights above it, and from the gardens of many of the cottages on the hill-slopes and upper portion of the little town. In these gardens are many blossoms which find a counterpart across the water on the coast of Brittany. The stocks, roses, hollyhocks, crimson valerian, and wild yellow wall-flowers, and "dragon's tongue" flourish here in the gardens, and in the crevices of the crumbling grey walls, as they do in Breton Morlaix; perhaps a link with the past when Fowey, Cornwall, and Brittany were ever at warfare.



## FOWEY

Of these stirring days there are many traditions, and it is right that there should be. Once Fowey was as noted as any port in the kingdom, let alone the west country, for her seamen, seamanship, and her ships. And when the third Edward, of daring enterprise, sought to gather together a fleet for the attack and siege of Calais in the autumn of 1346, Fowey's contribution is the best indication of the town's importance in those days. To the king's fleet the town sent no less than forty-seven vessels, manned by nearly eight hundred men. London's quota was scarcely more than half as great as regards either ships or seamen, and no other place in the kingdom, save Yarmouth with four ships less, even approached the magnificent provision of Fowey. 287

The town of to-day is in some respects not unlike Dartmouth. It is more open, one must admit, but there is the same close clinging of the houses to the hillside, the narrow entrance, and the river flowing down from Lostwithiel as does the Dart from Totnes. The streets are not less picturesque than that of what may not improperly be considered as the rival town, nor are they less steeply inclined; and there is just the same air of peaceful antiquity in many of its winding alleys. The long straggling street which leads from the railway station is narrow enough to please the artistic eye, if not wide enough for present-day convenience.

Fowey, however, shows some trace of modesty (for which, remembering its stirring history and swashbuckling of old, one might not be prepared to give it credit) when it merely calls its main thoroughfare Passage Street, and not Fore Street or High Street as do many other less important towns.

"Q" speaks of Fowey's open-armed hospitality. This, too, is demonstrated by the neighbourly way in which the houses lean up against one another, and the manner in which the tortuous streets and by-lanes intersect, and merge one into the other as though the chief aim they had in view was self-effacement and the general puzzlement of the stranger.

"The beginnings of Fowey," one writer has told us, "are lost in the mazes of antiquity. It is possible that Saxon pirates had a settlement here which afterwards passed into the possession of others in whose veins the rich blood of corsair ancestors had not been thinned by enervating land pursuits or cessation from struggle with the elemental forces of nature upon the narrow seas and, maybe, wider ones." But whatever those beginnings were, the situation of the place was such as to commend itself irresistibly to the men who were its first inhabitants. "Many have called them pirates," says another writer, for whom the character of the men of Fowey in past times seems of some concern, "but what were pirates? Were they not the very men who built up the greatness of England in the days when greatness upon the seas was not of less importance than to-day, and was only obtainable by irregular means?" 288

With which contention it is not easy for the student of history to disagree. Those were days when *letters of marque* were not required, only a swift-sailing vessel, a good crew of daring men, and the much adventuring spirit which distinguished most of the Cornish seaports at a time even antecedent to what Hals refers to as "the warlike reigns of our two valiant Edwards," when, as he goes on to assert, "the Foyens (not, however, without some inkling, we venture to deduce, of private and personal gain) addicted themselves to backe their princes' quarrels by coping with the enemy at sea, and made return of many prizes, which purchases (plunder) having advanced them to a good estate of wealth, the same was heedfully and diligently employed and bettered by the more civil trade of merchandize."

Thus one gathers that the foundation of much of Fowey's past greatness was of questionable or "uncivil"

origin, and that it was only when Foyens had well-lined their nests that the more legitimate and peaceful callings made any great appeal to them. So greatly did the piratical enterprises prosper that Hals goes on to say, "It is reported sixty tall ships (ships of size) did at one time belong to the harbour."

Unfortunately, however, the bold men of Fowey did not confine their energies to the backing of "their princes' quarrels by coping with the enemy at sea," but sometimes fell foul of their fellow countrymen, as was the case with the men of Winchelsea and Rye, to whom they refused, when sailing near those ports, to "vaile their bonnets at the summons of those towns," with a result that the seamen of Winchelsea and Rye, burning with indignation at the Foyens' contempt, "made out with might and maine against them, howbeit (as Hals goes on to tell us) with so more hardy onset than happy issue, for the Foy men gave them so rough entertainment as their welcome that they were glad to depart without bidding farewell."

In a ballad (too long for us to quote in full) the exploit of Nicol, a widow's son of Fowey, in capturing the celebrated Italian corsair Giovanni Doria (known as John Dory), of the famous Genoese family of the Dorias, who had been hired by the King of France to prey upon the English during the wars of Edward III, is preserved, and testifies to the old-time prowess of Fowey folk.

After Nicol had roamed the seas he sighted the vessel of the redoubtable Giovanni, and with his "goodly bark with fifty good oars of a side" promptly sought to engage the enemy. We are told in somewhat rugged verse, in which there dwells not only a fine fighting spirit but also some poetic licence:

The roaring cannons then were plied,  
And dub-a-dub went the drum-a;  
The braying trumpets loud they cried,  
To courage both all and some-a.

The grappling hooks were brought at length,  
The brown bill and the sword-a;  
John Dory, at length, for all his strength,  
Was clapt fast under board-a.

It seems, however, more than doubtful whether the cannons did roar at the period at which the fight took place. It is more probable that this was a touch of "local colour."

When such successes attended Fowey arms—however unauthorized—it is little wonder that the Foyens sent their ships not only scouring the Channel in search of the French, but also along the Breton coast, "in search of plunder and sometimes of women."

The author of *The Complete History of Cornwall* seems to have had little real love for Fowey folk, whose deeds he recounts, however, somewhat fully and with a suspicion of gusto. He tells us that the pirates of Fowey became unconscionably rich, wicked, and bloodthirsty, and that though, while enriching themselves, they must have assuredly done the nation at large and the west country much service, they were deserving of a fate not much less severe in character than that which overtook the Cities of the Plain. So he tells us, with some elation, how at length, tired of the Cornishmen's depredations, some Norman lords gained from Louis XI "a commission of mart and arms to be revenged upon the pirates of Fowey town, and carried the design so secret that a small squadron of ships and many bands of marine soldiers was prepared and shipped without the Fowey men's knowledge."

This expedition set sail from Le Havre in the summer of 1457, and ran down Channel with a fair wind along the French coast, and then, striking across, in due time came in sight of Fowey, "where they lay off at sea till night, when they drew in towards the shore and dropt anchor, and landed their marine soldiers and seamen, who at midnight approached the south-west end of Fowey town, where they killed all persons they met with, set fire to the houses, and burnt one-half thereof to the ground, to the consumption of a great part of the inhabitants' riches and treasures, a vast deal of which were gotten by their pyratykal practices."

It is not difficult for the student of local histories, and of the existing records of these troublous days, to conjure up from even the scant details furnished by Hals the sad case of the terror-stricken inhabitants of the little port as their enemies poured down into the town by the path across the headland. Hals reproduces for us the scene of sudden and fierce attack, the hasty gathering together of what men there were in the town (for many must surely have been absent), the fight in the dimly or unlit streets, the ruthless striking down of women and children, and of the aged, the *saue qui peut*, followed by a mad rush across the harbour to the Polruan side in search of safety on the further hills, and then the dawn, when the true amount of the devastation wrought could be seen by the survivors. Much—nay, the greater part—of the little town lay a heap of smoking ruins, whilst in the narrow streets, or what had been such, lay many corpses, some hacked beyond recognition and marking the stout resistance that the individual had made to the onslaught of the Breton and Norman marauders, whilst some lay charring amid the smouldering heaps of what once had been homes.

It was with bursting, though, possibly, also thankful, hearts that the survivors of this terrible night saw their enemies depart with whatsoever booty they had saved from the flames and could easily bear. "The news," Hals tells us, "of the French invasion in the morning flew far into the country, and the people of the contiguous parts as quickly put themselves in arms, and in great multitudes gathered together in order to raise the siege of Fowey, which the Frenchmen observing and fearing the consequence of their longer stay, having gotten sufficient treasure to defray the charge of their expedition, as hastily ran to their ships as they had deliberately entered the town, with small honour and less profit."

Soon the Fowey men were afloat again, and "in their fresh gale of fortune began to skim the seas with their often piracies," making descents upon the Breton and Norman coast and exacting a terrible retribution for the ruthless doings of the Lord of Pomier and his men. If one may accept without question the historian, they were not easily satisfied, but many a Norman and Breton village and townlet on the opposite coasts was burned and sacked ere the "slate was wiped clean."

So considerable, indeed, was the damage done that no less a personage than the King of France himself, Charles VIII, known as the Affable, took the matter up and lodged a complaint with Edward IV. It was often a case of rough justice, or rather injustice, in those days. Indeed, justice unalloyed was not easily obtained, as the men of Fowey were speedily to find, for when the king appointed a commission of inquiry to sit at Lostwithiel, some at least of the commissioners appear to have remembered that Fowey men were quick to avenge themselves. That, indeed, on occasion, they had been no respecters of authority (having but a short time before docked a king's herald of his ears), and so they did not come straight to the point with the men who had transgressed, but entrapped them, and in this manner. The commissioners having let it be known that they were come into those parts because the king required men and ships for a new expedition, the Fowey men were induced to ascend the river to Lostwithiel, and promptly (for their loyalty was unquestionable, though their obedience at times left something to be wished for) placed their lives and ships at their Sovereign's disposal.

But the appeal to their loyalty was but a ruse of the commissioners, who, "when the chief men of Fowey were come, promptly seized upon them, took their goods, and without any delay hung their leader." But this was not all, nor the worst, that could happen, for their rivals, the men of the Dart, were allowed to come to Fowey, to seize the vessels in harbour, and remove the chain which (like the one that guarded approach to Dartmouth) was stretched across the mouth of the haven to bar the entrance against their enemies. 293

What the feelings of the Fowey men may have been at this severe and somewhat unjust punishment (for, after all, they were not worse pirates than the men of other Devon and Cornish ports) history does not tell us, but certain it is that the town never entirely recovered from the blow, and that its later prosperity was but a poor shadow of its old wealth and reputation.

No longer did the men of Fowey range the Channel, making strenuous and successful warfare upon the king's enemies, and thus for full two centuries the town played no great part in the history of the west country. Indeed, it is not until the reign of Charles II and the year of the Great Fire that the veil which hides the doings of Fowey lifts for a moment, and shows us that the ancient daring and the sturdy spirit of the inhabitants still survived. After the action in the Channel between the Dutch and English fleets in June, 1666, the latter chased the Virginia fleet, which took refuge in the Fowey estuary and river, and, as Hals puts it, "sailed up the branches thereof as far as they could and grounded themselves on the mud lands thereof."

Upon the Dutch fleet appearing off Fowey and becoming aware of this, a doubly-manned frigate was detached from the main body, which remained cruising off the harbour mouth, with the mission of entering the haven and destroying the English ships. There were, however, two forts, one on either side of the entrance, and as soon as the Dutch ship "came within cannon shot of those forts she fired her guns upon the two blockhouses with great rage and violence, and these made a quick return of the like compliment. In fine, the fight continued for about two hours' time, in which were spent some thousands of cannon shot on both sides, to the great hurt of the Dutch ship in plank, rigging, sails, and men, chiefly because the wind slackened or turned so adverse that she could not pass quick enough between the two forts up the river." 294

In the end the attempt to destroy the fleet had to be abandoned, although one cannot quite comprehend why a general bombardment was not undertaken of "Fowey's little castles," to the credit of which and to Fowey gunners the repulse of the Dutch was due.

Never again, so far as we have been able to discover, did the Fowey forts play so gallant a part in defence of England and of English ships. Possibly they were made ready to do so when the shadow of Napoleonic invasion rested so heavily on the towns and seaports of our southern coasts. Who can tell? But we have found no record of even the fringe of the fighting, which made the Channel an almost ceaseless naval battleground during the long French War, having touched the town of Fowey itself. The coming and going of privateers alone, and the enterprises of the daring smugglers who made the town notorious in the annals of contraband trade may be said to have kept the place in touch with the stirring events of the last years of the eighteenth and early ones of the nineteenth centuries.

Jonathan Couch, in his *History of Polperro*, has something to say concerning the bold smugglers of Fowey. And his account of one of many lawless incidents gives one a very vivid idea of the state of things which existed in the district towards the close of the eighteenth century.

"On one occasion," he writes, "intelligence had been received at Fowey that a 'run of goods' had been effected at Polperro during the previous night, and several men of a cutter's crew were accordingly sent as scouts to get all the information they could. At Landaviddy they met with a farm labourer, who, it was suspected, had been engaged in this particular transaction; they tried to extract information from him by stratagem, but finding that he was not to be entrapped they tried the opposite plan, and threatened him with immediate impressment into the king's service if he did not tell them where the goods were hidden. They succeeded in frightening him, and he informed them that a large number of kegs were hidden in a certain cellar above Yellow Rock, which he promised to point out by placing a chalk mark on the door." 295

"Having from the opposite hill seen this done, a portion of the crew returned to Fowey to get a reinforcement. Headed by the Custom House officers they soon returned, and proceeded in the direction of the cellar. The arrival of the force and their object was discovered, and a band of desperate smugglers, armed with cutlasses and pistols, assembled on New Quay Head, which place commanded an open view of the cellars which contained the kegs. A large gun was drawn down, and loaded and pointed, while a man with a match stood by, waiting the command of the skipper to fire. The revenue men were then defied and threatened in a loud and determined voice. They consulted their prudence, and resolved to send for a still stronger force. In a few hours a well-armed band arrived and rushed into the cellar, but found, to their great disappointment, that, although the place had been watched from the outside, the kegs, which had really been there, had been removed they knew not whither."

In the twenties and thirties of the last century Fowey carried on a brisk smuggling trade with Roscoff, and in November of the year 1832 we read the following: "The *Rose* sailed from Roscoff for Fowey with 100 tubs of brandy," and a little later on in the same month the fact is recorded that the *Eagle*, thirty-five tons, and *Rose*,

eleven tons, both of Fowey, left Roscoff, bound for the Cornish port. Another famous smuggling craft of Fowey, which made many trips across Channel, and was remarkably successful with her runs, and in eluding and also deluding the revenue authorities and cutters, was the *Dove*. This boat was commanded by one of the Dunstons, members of a famous smuggling family, of whom one was living till about twenty years ago, full of romantic stories of the daring deeds of the old "free trading" days. Enough has, however, been said to give some idea of Fowey of the past. 296

Of Fowey of the present very little more need be added to what we have already set down. Although there are many quaint nooks, there are but two historically important buildings surviving from the days of old. One is the fine parish church of St Fin Barre of Cork, standing a little way up the hillside. This church was rebuilt in about 1336, and was appropriately rededicated to St Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors. The interior is of very fine proportions, and there are quite a number of interesting monuments, notably one in alabaster to John Rashleigh. Although the building has at various times been altered and restored, the work has, on the whole, been judicious, and has in no way destroyed the effect of its beautiful and impressive proportions. The exquisite choir screen, though modern and dating only from 1896, is in the style of one of the fine fifteenth-century Devonian screens. The oak pulpit will have a romantic interest for many, inasmuch as it is traditionally supposed to have been made out of the timbers of a Spanish galleon, a prize of Fowey men in the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

The other building of note is Place House, which stands, with its castellated tower showing above the trees and surrounding houses, quite close to the church. It has been for many centuries the family mansion of the Treffry family, and in it is a wonderful porphyry hall, but it is, after all, the romantic element of the building rather than the place itself which has most appeal.

It was in this house that a few men of Fowey, with some women and children, gathered and took refuge on the disastrous night in 1457, when the French, under the Lord of Pomier, landed and sacked the town. Hals writes of the incident thus: "The stoutest men, under conduct of John Treffry, Esquire, fortified themselves as well as they could in his then new-built house of Place, yet standing, where they stoutly opposed the assaults of the enemies, while the French soldiers plundered that part of the town which was unburnt without opposition in the dark." 297

One is happy to know that Place was not taken and sacked, like the rest of the town, on that night of long ago, when the streets ran blood, and women and children were ruthlessly massacred, but stands very much as it was in Hals's day. At various times the house has been restored and practically rebuilt, but it contains many fine and unique relics of Tudor times, including the chair in which Queen Elizabeth sat when on a visit to the then Bishop of Exeter.

One leaves Fowey and its calm, still harbour and environing hills, upon which the houses with their red and grey roofs are grouped so quaintly, with regret. A savour of the past seems to hang about the place, bringing to mind some sad reflections of a bygone greatness; but it is, nevertheless, a charming spot, to which one returns again and again with delightful memories of previous visits to induce equally delightful anticipations of pleasure.

Round Gribben Head and then, without putting into St Austell Bay, we come to quaint little Mevagissey, eight sea miles or so distant from Fowey. The harbour is good, and the fishing industry makes the place both busy and picturesque. The church, dedicated to St Mewa and St Ida, is a fine one, but lacks the tower which in former times was so prominent a feature of the little town.

Heavy seas run at Mevagissey, at times so high, indeed, that the lighthouse at the end of the south outer breakwater cannot be used. Mevagissey, however, is worth putting into, for it is an interesting little place, and a typical Cornish fisher port. Quite close to the town is all that now remains of the once fine mansion of the famous Cornish family, the Bodrigans of Gorran and Restrouguet, which latter name has as much a Breton flavour as many others hereabouts, notably Lannion, and the two Penpouls or Paimpols, which one finds also on the opposite coast. 298

These Bodrigans were a fighting stock, but, unhappily, in the reign of the third or fourth Edward the male line became extinct; but on one of the heiresses of the family marrying a Henry Trenowith, their son was afterwards knighted by Edward IV as Sir Henry Bodrigan, thus reviving the ancient and honourable house.

A romantic, and somewhat apocryphal, legend is connected with this Sir Henry and a rock under Chapel Point, to the south of Mevagissey Bay. The Bodrigans, as was natural, espoused the cause of York during the Wars of the Roses, and in consequence lived at variance with most of their neighbours, who were Lancastrians. Amongst these were the Trevanions of St Michael Carhayes, the Edgecombes, and the Haleps of Lammoran.

Ultimately, of course, Sir Henry—who appears to have been somewhat of a quarrelsome nature and unneighbourly beyond the needs of the times—found himself on the losing side, and after the disastrous defeat of the Yorkists at Bosworth Field on August 22, 1485, he fled to his Cornish home, and went into hiding. His enemies, however, and those who had any grudge against him for over-bearing ways in the past, soon heard of his presence in the district and forthwith set out, led by Sir Richard Edgecombe, to capture him and either hand him over to Henry VI, or perhaps execute rough justice upon him themselves.

Hearing of the approach of his enemies in time Sir Henry was just able to escape from the house and make straight for the sea. Hotly pursued, he reached Chapel Point. With nothing but the sea in front of him there was, apparently, after all, no escape, and his enemies (who had by this time sighted the fugitive) shouted with exultation. Their joy was, however, somewhat premature, for Sir Henry, arrived at the edge of the cliff, which was here about 100 feet high, promptly jumped over! When Sir Richard Edgecombe reached the spot with his followers, and peered down below expecting to see his enemy's mangled and lifeless body, he was astounded and filled with impotent rage to see Sir Henry escaping in a small boat to a vessel which was standing by just a little way from the shore. The fugitive reached France in safety, but his estates were forfeited to the Crown, and granted to the Edgecombes, who had, doubtless, had in view some such reward for their loyalty when they chased Sir Henry over Chapel Point and caused him to take a dive which would have taxed the nerve of a Webb, 299



considering the rocks which lay beneath.

Gorran Haven, another quaint and pretty spot, lies midway between Chapel Point and the Dodman. It takes its name from the Cornish prince, Geraint, whose name has been preserved in that and many other places. Geraint was buried, so 'tis said, on Carn Beacon, which rises some 400 feet high on the other side of Penare Head. Tradition had it for many ages that with Geraint's body was buried much treasure in the shape of gold ornaments and vessels. Until 1855, however, he was allowed to rest in peace. Then came disturbers, who dug up the old Cornish ruler's bones, but found no treasure to reward the sacrilege. So Geraint was re-interred, and rests as of yore in sight of the lovely panorama of headland and sea upon which in life he must have often gazed.

All this land is full of legend as engrossing as the *Morte D'Arthur* itself, just as it is full of rare, wild beauty of coastline, and lovely indentations; but we must on to Falmouth. Past the stern, bold Dodman, which impresses most seafarers as being finer and more abiding than either the Start or Lizard, and past lovely Veryan Bay, with its sheer cliffs scored by many picturesque ravines, and charming coves, and also past Gerrans Bay. 300

And so to Zose Point, between which and the beautiful headland opposite, upon which Pendennis Castle stands, is the entrance to Falmouth and its wonderful haven, in the roads of which a battle fleet can float.

## Chapter X

### Falmouth—Gerrans—St Mawes—Penzance

Falmouth has by more than one famous sea captain and well-known yachtsman been referred to as "the finest harbour of the English coast." It is not necessary for us to dispute the truth of this statement, or point to other havens (Milford, for example) which some may think have equal or greater claim. Those, indeed, who know Falmouth well, or have spent pleasant days there, at anchor or under canvas, will certainly do it justice and agree without demur to any praise which may be given it. One of the chief attractions of Falmouth to seafaring and especially to yachting folk is the "mildness" of its tides. There is no rush out of it as though a mill race were set to balk one's efforts to get in and snugly moor. It is quite possible to accomplish both these things against the tide and wind, if one knows one's way; and when once inside Black Rock there is, for sailing, no place to beat it.

Falmouth Harbour, too, is the very paradise of charming creeks, many of the largest of which have sufficient water to let one sail right in with a moderate-sized vessel, while almost all the others can be explored in a launch or dinghy. The vast expanse of green sea, enclosed on all sides save the south with sweet woods and fields, flower-spangled at almost all seasons of the year, has a wonder-spell peculiarly its own at sunset and sunrise, and during the half-lights which succeed and precede day-dawn and dusk. Then there are, indeed, sky-pictures to be seen, whether one be afloat, on the hills near St Mawes, ashore amongst the quaint, straggling streets, or on the quays watching the wide stretch of calm water take on something of the glory of the colours in the sky, mingled with the reflection of houses by the waterside, or anchored vessels. Then, as dusk creeps on apace, the old town, with its huddle of houses, its murk of blue-grey smoke, its quaint chimneys and broken roofs silhouetted against the sky-line, and its glow-worm lights coming out one by one in the casements, to be answered by the riding lights of ships at anchor throwing yellow, wavy lines on the surface of the water, presents a picture of indescribable charm and mysterious beauty.

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The last of the great harbours of the south-west coast, it is, in many respects, the most gracious and beautiful. On it stand several little seaports, which in ancient times made history, and to-day form such delightful holiday resorts and ports of refuge for the yachtsman who loves to dawdle close along one of the most delightful, if terrible, of coast-lines. As is the case with Dartmouth and the Dart, and Plymouth and the Tamar, so it is with Falmouth and the Fal; but with this difference—it is only in the lower reaches that the Fal is either beautiful or interesting; and it is difficult to say where river ends and sea begins. In the many creeks into which the sea obtrudes when the tide flows in from the Channel one has a variety of scenery which never palls, visit it when one may. And over the low-lying mud banks and marsh land the cleansing flood of the open sea comes with a rippling song, and even in surroundings of fertile fields, woodlands, and hills, a fresh brine in the air tells one that, however far from blue water one may imagine oneself, the "spirit of the sea has but to stir to flood the spot with the keen freshness of ocean's breath." Amid the windings of the Fal, King Harry's Reach, and Truro River, one may spend many pleasant days, touching now and again on ancient things as some grey old church comes into view, with its spire piercing its environment of trees, or some quaint and pretty village, with romantic traditions of the smuggling days, peeps at one across the fields which border the river's snake-like course.

Falmouth itself is a quaint one-street town of no great antiquity as seaports go in the west country; but it is still sufficiently old-fashioned to have about it a certain charm distinctly pleasing in this modern and materialistic age. One writer says of Falmouth that the beauty and popularity of the town is largely due to "letting Nature well alone," and that it is "one of the few unspoilt and much resorted to places in England." Be this as it may, there is no possible doubt regarding the very great popularity of Falmouth with yachting and holiday folk. There are yet some people left even to-day to whom narrow streets, none too sharply defined pavements, and quaint domestic architecture appeals, and all of these things may be found in Falmouth.

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Apparently in more remote times the streets, or street, and Falmouth architecture came in for more adverse criticism, as the Cornish historian, Tomkin, writing about 1730, grumbles thus: "It is a pity when Falmouth was began to be built they had not been more curious (careful) in the choice of the site, which they seem to have, in a sort, entirely overlooked. It would then, considering its extent and the many good buildings in it, have vied with most towns in the west of England, whereas now its principal part consists only of one very long street stretched out at the bottom and on the side of a steep hill, as high as the tops of the houses backwards, and winding mostly as that does," adding, "but this will always be the case where towns are built without any fixed design at first, and every one hath the liberty to carry on his design according to his fancy."

But, all the same, had Tomkin lived, he would have found that the features he decried were those which mostly attract folk to the old town.

As we have before said, Falmouth is not of very remote origin, although there is a legend that it (or some other place which stood for it) had some sort of existence in the far-off times when Phœnicians came to get Cornish tin, and did their bartering for it upon, one would think, the somewhat inconvenient surface of Black Rock. The town as we know it, however, had no more ancient origin than that of Arwenack House, which was built some short time prior to Richard II's time, and was later described by Carew as entertaining one with a pleasant view. The heiress of the Arwenack family married in the reign of the monarch just mentioned one Killigrew of Killigrew, in St Elme. Even so late as the reign of Henry VIII, who caused the castles of Pendennis and St Mawes to be built to guard the haven from the incursions of the French, and possibly also to protect Penryn—which appears to have been then a place of some size and importance—Falmouth in a Chart of the Haven especially prepared for the king's information seems to have consisted of but the one house erected by the Arwenacks. About this time, however, it should be remembered that both Truro and Tregony (which is now high and dry) were ports with considerable trade.

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### ST. ANTHONY'S LIGHTHOUSE, FALMOUTH

The history of the Killigrew family is so bound up with that of Falmouth, and has so many elements of romance, and stirring incidents connected with it, that we find ourselves compelled to deal with it somewhat at length. Moreover, the story serves to throw considerable light upon the life and events of that period when Falmouth was slowly emerging into a place of some maritime importance. That the Killigrews were sometimes lawless, as many of their neighbours undoubtedly also were, goes without saying; but they appear to have had a truly humorous, if somewhat partial, idea of justice, which the following anecdote will exhibit. "All is fish which comes to Killigrew's net" was the sarcastic observation of a succeeding age, but it may be said to apply equally well, and with as considerable a force, to this earlier period in the family history. Somewhere about the year 1582 a Spanish vessel, of the port of St Sebastian, hard by Biarritz, belonging to one Philip de Ovyo and his partner in the enterprise, John de Chavis, was kidnapped from Falmouth Harbour, so the losers declared, by servants or agents of Sir John Killigrew, the then head of the family. 305

The complaint seems to have been pressed home in a manner decidedly awkward and distasteful to the accused, and it was decided that the matter must be investigated. The authority appointed was naturally the Commission of Piracy. Happily (for himself) Sir John happened to be the Commission, and what was more natural (at least, in that easy-going age) than that he should investigate and sit in judgement on a case in which he himself was somewhat nearly interested? But to avoid suspicion of bias or evil he invited another prominent man of the district, Godolphin by name, to act with him. The impartiality of the latter might in this more particular age have been questioned, seeing that Godolphin had been accused of misappropriating some of the cargo and treasure which had come ashore in the wreck of a Portuguese ship not very long before Killigrew's servants' affair.

But for once justice appears to have been done somehow or other by unexpected means. After it was discovered that some of Killigrew's servants were missing from the time of the disappearance of the Spanish vessel, and that one of Sir John's own boats played a prominent part in the affair of cutting out the ship, the Commission (i.e., Killigrew and Godolphin) found that the vessel had been misappropriated, and that the owners were entitled to commiseration. The servants of Killigrew were declared outlaws, and in return for the loss they had suffered the Spanish merchants were given permission to export one hundred and fifty quarters of wheat without paying duty. This may not appear to us adequate compensation for the loss of their ship and its cargo, but they probably made the best of a bad bargain, and considered themselves fortunate to obtain any sort of redress.

Piracy would about this time appear to be the staple industry of this particular district, if not, indeed, also of the greater part of Cornwall. Although outlaws, Killigrew's servants were not long in Ireland, whence they had fled with the Spanish ship, for a short time after the Commission had given its verdict either they or others were once more in trouble, having been concerned in an attempt to rescue from custody "a notorious and bold pirate, Captain Hammond by name, who had been fortunately captured." The pirate and his captors appear to have been on their way to the gaol, where, doubtless, the former would have languished until tried and ultimately "depended for the example and terror of evil doers." The master was, as before, much distressed at the evil deeds of his retainers, but how genuine the sorrow was it is not easy to determine. Suffice it to say that his professed dislike of piracy was not shared by a descendant, one Lady Jane Killigrew, who some few years later, upon seeing a couple of Dutch merchantmen entering the harbour under stress of heavy weather, promptly dispatched her servants to inquire into the cargoes borne by the ships, and other details of how many they had as crews and how they were armed. 306

The report proved so satisfactory that on the return of the gentle lady's expedition of inquiry she determined to go aboard herself and secure what she wanted. Perhaps she was distrustful of the *bona fides* and honesty of her servants, who knows? So she, "thinking it well to pay the Dutchmen some compliment of estate," had a large boat got ready, and, lest there should be trouble, a good strong crew in it well-armed for emergencies. One can imagine—if a knowledge of the Killigrew methods of welcoming strangers had reached Holland—with

what distrust the poor Dutchmen, who had only run into the haven for shelter, must have regarded the approach of her ladyship and her well-armed galley.

The boat speedily swept across the intervening water, Lady Jane and part of the crew clambered up the steep sides of the vessel, whilst the remainder of the party made for the other ship. The Lady Jane soon made clear her demands to the Dutch skipper, whilst the rest of her friends and servants were engaged upon similar work on the other vessel. 307

It would appear from the account which has come down to us that as far as the Dutch themselves were concerned they were prepared, or at least disposed, to accept the inevitable without forcible resistance. There were Spaniards on board the ships, however, and these were not likely to take things quite so philosophically. The result was that some of these were killed. Tradition asserts that the piratically inclined Lady of Arwenack gave the signal for their dispatch. Be this as it may, the Lady Jane succeeded in confiscating a considerable amount of booty, which tradition again asserts to have been, *inter alia*, two hogsheads of Spanish money, whilst her servants and the crew of the galley followed her example with alacrity, and annexed anything of value upon which they could lay hands. Times were rough and justice often lagged, and when it did catch up the evildoer sometimes failed to exact a commensurate retribution. But to Lady Jane, the freebooting owner of Arwenack, punishment was ultimately meted out. She was haled to Launceston Castle (where, doubtless, the notorious Captain Hammond also lay in durance a few years before), and was tried, found guilty, and condemned to be executed. Let us hope, with due regard for her birth, breeding, and daring enterprise.

It would seem that after the escapade of Lady Jane Killigrew, although piracy flourished and at times was conducted in a somewhat barefaced manner, little was done to check it or to bring the chief offenders to justice. Most of the vessels engaged in piratical expeditions to the opposite coast of Brittany doubtless came down from Penryn, as it was not for a century after the affair of the Dutch ships that Falmouth assumed any great proportion or came into note as a western port. 308

It was that enterprising adventurer, Sir Walter Raleigh, who first appears to have grasped the possibilities of Falmouth's magnificent harbourage, when on returning from one of his voyages and putting into the haven he found only one or two houses in addition to Arwenack. Here, thought he, was an unrivalled natural haven absolutely wasted. The impression made upon his astute mind was such that upon reaching London he sought to bring his views before the authorities, detailing to them a scheme for the formation of a haven at Falmouth with a view to assisting vessels not only by a safe anchorage in stress of weather, but also by supplying them with stores and the means of repairing damages received in the open sea. It was undoubtedly in consequence of Raleigh's representations that about 1565 a few houses were erected at Smithick, which name still survives in the portion of the town surrounding the church. This was the beginning of what was afterwards destined to develop into present-day Falmouth.

Mr John Killigrew, afterwards knighted, whose estate of Arwenack had become extended, until it seems to have included Pendennis Head, was quick to see the growth of a town would be greatly to his personal advantage and emolument, and in consequence he appears to have set about to instigate the building of other and better houses at Smithick. As was not unnatural, the existing ports of Penryn, Truro, and Helston, seeing their supremacy, and perhaps even existence, threatened by the new-comer, bestirred themselves greatly to prevent the proposed expansion of the recently built village, even going the length of presenting a petition to James I, pointing out in no measured terms the injury and ruin which would result to them if a rival port were permitted to arise so much nearer the sea, and so much more convenient to mariners. So serious did the matter seem to those in authority that for a time the development of Smithick was checked, pending an inquiry, which was ordered to be held by Sir Nicolas Hals, who was then Governor of Pendennis Castle. His report appears to have been favourable to the proposed enterprise, and many more houses were erected. 309

Although this particular portion of Cornwall was far removed from the great issues of the Civil War, Smithick, or Falmouth, was destined, on account of the vicinity of Pendennis Castle, to feel something of the struggle for ascendancy between Charles and his Parliament. Prince Charles (afterwards Charles II) himself, after having been driven west from Bristol and into Cornwall from Barnstaple in 1645, came here in hot haste and sought temporary refuge in the castle ere taking ship for France, and Queen Henrietta Maria in the previous year also had come hither to embark for the Breton coast and safety. But after the siege of the castle by the Parliamentarians, and the settlement of the country on the death of the king, Smithick appears to have gone on its untroubled way as a rising though still somewhat obscure port.

Under the Commonwealth Sir Peter Killigrew, who had been appointed Governor of Pendennis Castle by General Monk, obtained several advantages for the town in which his ancestor had taken so lively an interest. Chief amongst these was the institution in 1652 of a market, and a little later, the transference of the Custom House to Smithick from Penryn. It was about this period that the town became known as Pennycomequick. The origin of this peculiar name is by no means clear. By some authorities it is supposed to be a cynical reference to its rather "mushroom" growth, or to the eager desire of the inhabitants for wealth, whilst by others it is thought to have its rise in a grouping of old Cornish words, Pen-y-cwm-wick, meaning the village at the head of the valley. It was not, however, destined to enjoy for long (or be burdened with) so ambiguous a name, for at the Restoration in 1660 Charles II issued a proclamation on August 20, declaring that it was his pleasure that the town should henceforth be known as Falmouth, and in the following year granted the town a charter of incorporation under that name. 310

Nine years later the enterprising Sir Peter Killigrew built a quay, and Falmouth may be said to have properly embarked upon its career as a trading port.

In 1688, the year of the coming of William of Orange, was established at Falmouth the famous post-office "packets" sailing to foreign ports and the colonies. These vessels, which were at first of small size, about 180-200 tons, were usually three-masted, full-rigged ships, built chiefly for speed and passenger traffic, no cargo, and well-armed. They had the further distinctions of flying pennants as ships of war, and of having naval officers for commanders. To quote an old account of the service, which at one time numbered some fifty ships running to Lisbon, New York, Gibraltar, Charlestown, Savannah, the West Indies, and other parts of the world, "the

boats were well-found and elegant, the officers and men 'picked,' and so handsome were some of the former that to take a packet voyage, notwithstanding the dangers of winds and water and risk of capture or attack by the King's enemies, was much indulged in."

To give some idea of the amount of mercantile life which this service brought to Falmouth, it may be stated that in 1705 there were no less than five of these "clippers" sailing to the West Indies, five in 1707 to Lisbon, and in the middle years of the century there were frequent sailings to the other ports and places we have named. In 1812, notwithstanding the disturbed state of Europe, and the high seas, a packet sailed "every Friday evening from October to April for Lisbon; for Barbadoes and Jamaica and America on the Sunday after the first Wednesday in every month all through the year, for Surinam and the east on the Sunday after the second Wednesday in every month, for Brazils on the Saturday after the first Tuesday in every month," and so on. 311

This famous packet service remained one of Falmouth's best assets of prosperity as well as its pride until the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, when steam displaced the old-time sailing ships, and the service was gradually transferred to Liverpool and Southampton. The loss of the mail contracts was a severe blow to the town, which not only robbed it of a considerable portion of its trade, but also of its life. This decline was inevitable, of course, as the sailing ship could not compete with the steamer, any more than the old coaches which bore the mails, when landed at Falmouth, to London and other parts, could compete with the railways which linked the ports of transference with London years before the line came to the far western port.

A book might well be written concerning the gallantry which was invariably displayed by the Falmouth packets when attacked (as they frequently were) during the French wars. As we have before said, the vessels were almost invariably well-armed and well-manned, but only for defence. They were forbidden by law to attack; but when the French and American privateers assailed them they frequently found the packets more than a match for their often superior force of arms and men.

Many stories of these naval engagements are still extant, and but comparatively few years ago there were old men living at Falmouth who had taken part in these engagements. One, at least, remembered the famous fight of the *Townshend* of nine guns, and a crew of twenty-eight, counting boys, Captain James Cock in command, which in 1812 on a voyage to Barbadoes, when almost within sight of port, fell in with two American privateers, the *Bona* and *Tom*, of vastly superior force, both as regards weight of metal and number of men. In the former the disparity was five to one, and in the latter rather more than ten to one. The gallant but unequal fight went on for several hours, the privateers battering the packet boat at long range, then running down alongside her and attempting to carry her by boarding. This latter manœuvre was repeated several times, but each attempt was frustrated by the gallantry of the packet boat's crew, and that of the passengers who bore their part in the unequal and terrible combat. As was their custom, the Americans had used chain and bar shot for the purpose of cutting up the rigging of the *Townshend*, with a view to preventing her escape by flight, and the condition of the vessel was such by the time that the second attempt to board her was made that to escape by superior seamanship or swifter sailing was no longer possible. 312

After the fight had been in progress for several hours, the *Townshend* was so terribly "cut up" about her rigging, and had been hulled so frequently by the enemy's shot that she was almost unmanageable, and in addition to this so many of her small crew had been put *hors de combat* that to serve the guns any longer was a matter of the greatest difficulty. Soon, with the loss of her bowsprit, jib-booms, steering wheel and other important gear, she was reduced to a sorry wreck. Then she began to take in water faster far than the pumps, even if they could have been manned, would have been able to keep under. The Americans still continued to rake her fore and aft, as they could now easily do owing to her helpless condition; but still the *Townshend* and her commander refused to strike the English flag. The water rose so rapidly that the carpenter, who was sent down into the hold to ascertain the worst, reported the vessel actually sinking. Half the crew were killed, or wounded so seriously that they were no longer able to render the slightest assistance, and in the end, with tears in his eyes, the English captain, to save other gallant and valuable lives, which would only be uselessly sacrificed by further resistance, hauled down his colours. 313

<sup>G</sup> See *The History of the Post-Office Packet Service between 1793 and 1815* (Macmillan & Co.)

So ended one of the most notable of many engagements in which the Falmouth packet boats of the end of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth century took part. Often, however, though attacked by vessels of superior force they, by courage and skill, managed to avoid capture, and, indeed, both French and American privateers often found they had "caught a Tartar" in a Falmouth post-office packet ship. Such was the historic case of the *Jeune* (or *Jean*) *Richard*, a heavily armed French privateer carrying a crew of close upon a hundred, which, falling in with the packet boat *Windsor Castle*, Captain W. Rogers, with a crew of twenty-eight, and "only light guns," almost on the same spot as that destined to be the scene of the *Townshend's* engagement five years later, attacked her, doubtless expecting to gain an easy prize. The commander of the *Jeune Richard* had, however, "reckoned without his host," for not only did Captain Rogers and his crew gallantly repulse each attempt made by the privateer to board them, but a happy idea of loading one of his 9-pounders with grape and musket bullets occurred to the skipper's mind.

"This gun was then trained on the boarding party from the privateer *with the happiest results.*" The italics are ours. Subsequently, Captain Rogers determined to take the offensive, and with a shout of encouragement he leapt down upon the privateer's deck followed by five of his men, who, after a sharp fight with the disorganized privateersmen, succeeded in driving them down below, and taking possession of their vessel. The *Windsor Castle's* loss was heavy, considering the sparse number of her crew, namely, three killed and ten wounded. But the Frenchman lost twenty-one killed, and had no less than thirty-three wounded. 314

Many another equally gallant tale could be told of the old days, but these must suffice. Falmouth has remembered its heroes of the post-office packet boat's service in a granite obelisk, erected upon the Moor by public subscription. Only too often, indeed, these "unofficial heroes" and acts of daring and gallantry are

overlooked.

But heroic deeds by Falmouth seamen were not confined to those who manned the packets. The privateers of the town that sailed away into the Channel and Atlantic from the safe and beautiful haven which was the scene of such tireless activity and bustle in the days of the long French war, did yeoman service in harrying the shipping of Great Britain's enemies, and often engaged with glory and success the smaller vessels of even the French and Spanish navies. The extraordinary feat of the Polperro ketch, the *Gleaner*, commanded by one William Quiller, which in the year 1814 came in sight of a Spanish man-of-war, not only of considerably greater size but more fully manned, and after a fierce engagement succeeded in capturing the Spaniard and bringing her into port can be more than once paralleled by the doings of Falmouth despatch boats and privateers.

In the stirring days of the Napoleonic wars, Falmouth was indeed a busy place. Carrick Roads were crowded with shipping merchantmen that had entered the haven to escape the French privateers (which were always hovering about the Channel on the look out for prizes) or were waiting for convoy to the West or East Indies; privateers always coming and going, sometimes returning maimed to refit, at others entering the harbour in triumph with a prize in tow; and the King's ships on the look out for likely merchant seamen to replenish their depleted crews.

And in those days, too, the means by which the replenishment was brought about were not always distinguished either by justice or scrupulousness. Not only were merchantmen often boarded, when in harbour and waiting for a favourable wind or convoy, and their best hands impressed, so that when the wind became favourable, or convoy was to be had, they were too short-handed to put to sea; but privateers were also depleted of their crews which, when these vessels had *letters of marque*, was not only a high handed, but actually illegal proceeding. 315

One naval worthy who was in command at Falmouth in these troublous times, when, to tell the truth, England was but ill-prepared to conduct the naval and military campaign into which she had entered, was Sir Edward Fellow, who came of an old Cornish family, and after having done "some very worthy deeds and gallant things in the American War," on the outbreak of the war brought about by the French Revolution, offered his services to the naval authorities, and was appointed to a fine frigate called the *Nymphe*. On his first cruise, when he had filled up his complement with Cornish miners! "owing to the lack of proper seamen," and had finally taken on board as leaven a few prime seamen at Falmouth, he fell in with the *Cleopatra*, a revolutionary frigate in the mouth of the Channel, and after an astonishingly fierce engagement with the Frenchman (who had nailed the *bonnet rouge* to his mast head) succeeded in capturing her and bringing her in as a prize.

As a writer of the period says, "those were stirring days and restless anxious nights along the coast. But into our havens and ports came many prizes to British seamen's gallantry, and prize money literally ran in the streets as it burned holes in the sailors' pockets.... Whilst the officers, though perhaps a trifle more provident, yet denied themselves little of enjoyment so long as the money lasted. But they were gallant lads, one and all, who made Falmouth thus merry by day and night. And when the 'rhino' was spent sailed away with light and stout hearts in search of more glory and prizes." 316

At the commencement of the nineteenth century, when the war was ended by the Treaty of Paris, Falmouth had grown a port of size and note, and it might have been expected that its position would have been maintained, if not improved upon. Vessels of all nations and from almost every quarter of the world made it their port of call, discharged their cargoes there, or refitted. But for some reason or other, in the third and fourth decades of the century, a marked decline manifested itself, and Falmouth of to-day is of less importance than it was a hundred years ago.

The introduction of steam, though of enormous benefit to commerce at large, and indeed to many other ports appears to have adversely affected Falmouth. Ships went more and more to ports further east, and vessels which in former times called in to report arrival or to get stores were no longer compelled to do this by reason of the establishment of Lloyd's signalling station at the Lizard, and the introduction of steam power which made the shortage of stores that so often happened on a long and unduly protracted voyage less and less frequent. Even the building and opening of the extensive docks about half-a-century ago, and the coming of the railway in 1863 have not, as was so sanguinely hoped, enabled Falmouth to retrieve its lost greatness. That so splendid a haven should be less used than formerly cannot fail to be a matter for regret not alone to those for whom Cornwall has a fascination and an undying interest, but to those also who look upon such a circumstance in the light of a valuable commercial and national asset lost.



### FALMOUTH, FLUSHING SIDE

But if denied the greatness which should rightly belong to it as a port, Falmouth has of recent years come considerably to the front as a health and holiday resort. Much has been done to add to the town's natural attractions of a fine climate and beautiful scenery, and in future years the place may hope to become one of the most popular of seaports in the West Country. 317

Though the streets and alleys are many of them quaint, Falmouth possesses few old or important buildings. In the town itself Arwenack House, with its memories of the Killigrew family, is certainly the chief. The fine house, formerly by common consent considered at the time as one of the most handsome and magnificent in the Duchy, built by that John Killigrew who died there in 1567, was unhappily destroyed by fire during the Civil War. One account of its destruction states that the then owner, who was a staunch Royalist, himself set fire to it to prevent it falling into the hands of the Parliamentarians. But another story states that it was fired by the "malicious and envious Governor of Pendennis Castle." The present house, a low rambling place, is substantially the same building as was built in its stead; but although by no means deserving the eulogy lavished upon it as "the palace of John Killigrew," yet has an interest because of its many historical associations, and an old-world air which arrests attention. It is now the property of the Earl of Kimberley.

The Killigrew family was widely extended in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was probably a member of the Middlesex branch of the family, one Thomas Killigrew, who founded Drury Lane Theatre, and opened it on April 8th, 1663, under a patent granted to him by Charles II, whom he had served in exile. He was (like other members of his family, Lady Jane, to wit) "rather greedy for offices and spoil." But according to one authority his main idea of opening the theatre and entering into management was the fact that he had himself written plays. Perhaps he is to be looked upon as the first of actor-managers. It is interesting to note the prices in those early days of the theatre. The first of Killigrew's productions was a comedy called "The Humorous Lieutenant," and the prices in the theatre were 4s. for boxes, 2s. 6d. for the pit, 1s. 6d. for middle gallery (dress circle), and 1s. for gallery. "Sometimes the house was worth £50, and often less, or not more than half," we are told. 318

One of the most famous players under Thomas Killigrew's management was "Sweet Nell of Old Drury," of whose acting "in a comical part" Pepys has left a complimentary opinion, although he thought Killigrew's first production "a silly play."

It was this Thomas Killigrew who was a noted wit, and whose portrait by Van Dyck hangs in the Royal collection at Windsor. A writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine* tells an interesting story of Killigrew's introduction to Louis XIV. The King took him into a picture gallery, and upon pointing out a celebrated picture of the Crucifixion, inquired of Killigrew whether he knew who the principal figures were or the incident it represented. "No, sire," replied Killigrew.

"Then," said Louis, "Monsieur Killigrew, I will tell you who they are. The figure in the centre is that of our Saviour on the cross, that on the right of him is the Pope, and that on the left myself."

After a pause Killigrew replied, "I humbly thank your Majesty for the information you have given me, for, although I have often heard that our Saviour was crucified between two thieves, yet I never knew who they were till now."

The reply of the King to this witty, though caustic and uncourtierlike, speech is unhappily not recorded. The sarcasm was rendered more mordant from the fact that both the King and the Pope were, at the time, engaged in persecuting and robbing the former's Protestant subjects.

Another story of a much more tragic nature is connected with Falmouth, and relates to an old couple who lived towards the latter end of the sixteenth century, a few miles out of the town on the way to Penryn. They had two children—a son and a daughter; and the former—partly owing, so the story goes, to his parents falling upon evil times—ran away to sea, and of him they heard nothing for many years. 319

One winter's night, however, when a great gale was blowing in the Channel, and sweeping across the land from the Atlantic, a stranger came to their door and asked for food and shelter. The old couple allowed him to come in, and gave him food; and whilst he was refreshing himself and warming his chilled bones by their fireside he entertained them with wonderful stories of his adventures amongst pirates and in foreign lands, for he was a sailor man. At last he fetched out of his pocket a piece of gold with which to pay them, and asked them to give him a bed. The old woman, surprised at such wealth, after a time persuaded her husband to permit the strange traveller to remain the night, and showed the sailor upstairs to a room. She remained chatting with him for some time, and during their talk he showed so much money, jewels, trinkets, etc., that she was perfectly dazzled at the sight. The old woman, whose greed had been awakened, left him to his slumbers, and the tired wanderer lay down to rest, well content thus to have obtained shelter from the storm.

Next morning the daughter—who now lived at Penryn,—appeared on the scene, and after the usual greetings she said, "Did not a sailor man come to see you last night?"

"What do you mean, my child?" asked her mother, adding hastily, "A sailor man! What could have put such a thought into your head?"

"Because," answered the girl, "one asked his way here last night, and said he wanted to see you."

"No, no," continued the old woman. "No sailor came *here*."

But all the while the girl's father was fidgeting and looking as though the subject and the questioning was unpleasing to him.

"Father, do you, too, say no one came?" inquired the daughter, anxiously. "Because it was our Dickon who came to see me, and told me he had come back from foreign lands, where he had found a gold mine, and had got as rich as the Grand Mogul himself." 320

"Dickon!" screamed the mother. "Impossible. I should know my Dickon anywhere."

"Then a sailor did come here!" exclaimed the girl. "Oh, mother, where is he? Has he gone away again? There was a scar on his left arm that he got at sea."

The old man had disappeared during the last few words, and suddenly there was a thud of some falling body overhead. The wretched old woman hurried up the narrow staircase, and entered the bedroom the sailor had occupied. The daughter followed her, but was only in time to see her mother fall in a pool of blood and expire.

There in one room lay three dead bodies. The sailor son concealed temporarily under the bed; the father who, at the instigation of his wife, had killed him so that they might become possessed of his wealth; and the old mother herself.

"For many years," so the tale continues, "none would even approach, let alone occupy the accursed dwelling, so that at last it fell into decay. But those who passed at nightfall or during the dark hours did often hear the wailing of the distracted and wicked mother, and some even say they have seen the sailor man's ghost."

Pendennis Castle, upon its jutting headland, is the other ancient building of the possession of which Falmouth can boast. It was erected in 1543 as a portion of a scheme of King Henry VIII's for the complete fortification of the harbour in view of the coming war with France. St Mawes Castle was built upon the opposite shore to Pendennis; but the two other fortifications contemplated were never finished. The importance of its strategic position is apparent to anyone, however unversed in such matters; commanding as it does the coast line, the entrance to the harbour, the Roads, and a large portion of the town of Falmouth itself. The first Governor was John Killigrew, and he was succeeded in the year 1567 by his son Sir John. Queen Elizabeth in 1584 appointed Sir Nicholas Parker, who was succeeded at various times by others, including Sir Nicholas Hals (a relative of his more famous kinsman Hals, the historian of the county); until Sir John Arundell, of Trerice, known to history as "John for the King," was appointed in 1643, and was perhaps the most famous of all Governors of the Castle. 321

Early in 1646 the Castle, which has the distinction of being the last fortress in the country, except Raglan Castle, to hold out for King Charles, was besieged both by land and sea, by Roundhead forces commanded respectively by Colonel Fortescue and Admiral Batten. The Governor, though eighty-seven years of age, stoutly refused to yield up possession when called upon to do so; and the siege lasted six months. Fairfax and Blake both came to the attack; and brave men themselves, they must have been full of admiration for the stubborn old hero who held out against them so gallantly. In Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* is the following account of a siege which was as notable for the zeal of the besiegers as the heroism of the defenders. "The castle refused all summons," writes the historian, "admitting no treaty till they had not victuals for twenty-four hours, when they carried on the treaty with such firmness that their situation was never suspected, and they obtained as good terms as any garrison in England."

The defenders were (according to one account) about two hundred strong, and consisted of two companies of one hundred each; armed pikes, sixty men; calivers the same number; muskets, eighty men; and a few watchmen and other servants.

There was, after the Castle's capture, a rapid succession of Roundhead Governors; but when the King came to his own again, Richard, Lord Arundell, a son of the brave defender, was appointed to the post. 322

The Castle has seen no other vicissitudes of a warlike character since the famous siege; but from time to time additions have been made to strengthen it, and bring it more into conformity with modern ideas. It is manned by companies of the Royal Garrison Artillery.

From the Castle tower there is so fine and comprehensive a view of Falmouth, the harbour and surroundings, that none should miss it. It is, indeed, only when seen from such a point of vantage as this that the true extent and beauty of this magnificent roadstead can be adequately realized. Away but a short distance under the hill of Trefusis lies the quaint little town of Flushing, with its stretch of quays and cottages clustered



upon them, and its perfume of orange and lemon trees which flower and fruit in the open air. Opposite is St Mawes; and a little distance to the north-west lies Falmouth itself, with the picturesque jumble of grey and red roofs, and the docks and quays in which and alongside of which lie vessels from all parts rearing slender masts skyward, or perhaps with an added picturesqueness lent them by drying canvas flapping idly from the yards. Across the water up above St Mawes is charming Gerrans, where one may shove one's nose and lie easy in any weather, conscious only of a snug haven and a charming village.

Picturesque St Anthony should be visited—it can be reached easily in the dinghy from St Mawes, and lies only a few hundred yards inland from the shore of the creek—on account of its fine church, which is generally agreed to be the best example of Early English architecture in Cornwall, and has a beautiful Norman arch to the south door.



### HELFDORD CREEK

But we might advise a score of other excursions up the many lovely creeks of this beautiful haven of Falmouth. Those who have passed through the tree environed "King Harry's Passage" on the way up to Truro, or have explored St Just's creek, or Restonget, or—well a score of others equally lovely, will not need to be reminded of the wealth of interest and beauty here spread out before them. 323

But there is yet the last haven between us and the wide Atlantic—Penzance. We must pass by unentered the many charming creeks of the Helford River, where the woods come down to the waterside, and the inlets provide a snug anchorage for small craft in almost any weather.

Right onward from the Manacles almost to Penzance itself the coast is rocky, dark, and uninviting. No trees soften the brows of the stark looking cliffs, which are here and there torn into great fissures, which look from a little distance out at sea like dark gashes cut with a knife. The coast is not one safe for near approach, and there is, indeed, nothing in the scenery to invite close inspection.

Rounding the Lizard, either in a fresh easterly or westerly wind, is generally a wet job for craft of small tonnage, as a heavy sea speedily gets up. But once round there is a straight run for Penzance Bay, the last haven of any size (and that not a very good one) on the south-west coast.

Penzance lies in the north-western curve of a fine bay, which is, however, too open to afford an ideal anchorage, or much protection in most prevailing winds. As one enters the bay the one striking object is not the town—that, at a distance, is not notably picturesque, and near by is disappointing—but the fine rock of St Michael, which, like its Norman prototype, stands "solitary amid the waste of waters, a townlet upon a rock."

The origin of this outstanding mass, connected with the mainland only by a causeway covered save at low water, is "lost in antiquity," as historians are wont to explain when nothing detailed or more satisfying is forthcoming. Some authorities, however, have thought that the Roman occupation or a period only a short time anterior to it saw the formation—by reason of seismic convulsion—of St Michael's Mount, which was "cast up out of the bed of the sea." Others assert that once the Mount was set inland amid forest glades and primeval woodlands, and was then known as the "hoar rock in the wood." But whatever the origin may be, the fact remains that at the bottom of Mount's Bay undoubtedly lies a forest, which was probably engulfed when the Scilly Isles were torn away from Land's End, which gives some colour to this latter theory. 324

The legend in connexion with this tremendous event is that, when the ancient and romantic land of Lyonesse was overwhelmed, one inhabitant, Trevelyan, swam ashore, and landed and built his house near where the Seven Stones now stand. And whatever truth may underlie tradition, there to this day remains Trevelyan's Field.

Max Müller says that the early monkish owners called the rock and abbey "Mons Tumba," and this connects it with the sister mount set fair and lovely in the wide bay of Avranches.

One thing, however, appears certain, namely, that the Phœnicians in their trade with Cornwall for tin knew

St Michael's Mount when they lay off Marazion bartering with the inhabitants of that then important place. As was the case with the other Mount of St Michael across the Channel, the origin of the monastery was the vision of St Michael which appeared to a hermit. But there is no record of the foundation of a religious house on the rock until long after the visit of St Kyne on a pilgrimage from Ireland in 490. Then, by permission of King Edward the Confessor, a Benedictine Priory was established, which was afterwards taken over by monks of the Gilbertine order who owed allegiance to the Abbey on the Norman St Michael's Mount. The religious foundation underwent various vicissitudes until its final passage into secular hands. Edward III dispossessed the alien monks of Normandy, and the property came into the possession of the Sion Nuns, passing into the possession of the Bassett family (probably on the dissolution of the monasteries), and two hundred years later was sold by them to the St Aubyn's, whose descendant, Lord St Levan, still owns it. 325

Like many another Abbey throughout the land, St Michael's Mount has a history as a fortress as well as a sanctuary. Though far removed from the whirlpool of civil war, which engulfed middle England in the long struggle between the Houses of Lancaster and York, St Michael's Mount was destined to catch an echo of the strife which was laying the chivalry of England in the dust on bloody battlefields and stricken heaths. It was to this fortress that the Earl of Oxford came after the loss by the Lancastrians of the Battle of Barnet in April, 1471. He gained admission to the castle in the disguise of a pilgrim, and once inside made a stout resistance to those of the triumphant Yorkist adherents who attacked it in their endeavour to capture him. Afterwards the Earl surrendered, on being assured of a pardon.

The next notable person to claim sanctuary in St Michael's Mount was Lady Catherine Gordon, the wife of Perkin Warbeck, who, on landing at St Ives in September, 1497, to claim the English throne as Richard IV, under the patronage of Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Richard III, and the Scottish King, James IV, was received by the Cornish folk enthusiastically. Lady Catherine lay in sanctuary there while Warbeck and his adherents marched on London—only to take refuge in flight on the approach of Henry VII's troops when he was engaged in besieging Exeter.

Although during the disturbances which followed in Cornwall on the introduction of the Reformed Prayer Book the fortress saw some fighting, it was not until the Civil War between King Charles and his Parliament that it once more played a prominent part in history. It was commanded for the King by Sir Francis Bassett, and, like most other Cornish fortresses at that period, was gallantly defended. During the siege a former Governor Humphry turned traitor and attempted to gain possession for the Parliament; but his plan was frustrated, and he himself was executed. Sir Francis Bassett surrendered eventually to the Parliamentary forces under Colonel Hammond, the Royalist garrison retiring to the Scilly Islands. 326

Since that siege the castle has played its part in no other event of great importance, although during the Napoleonic Wars there was a certain amount of activity within its walls, brought about by the universal dread of invasion. But a few years previously the guns of the castle had been brought into service for the purpose of scaring off an Irish pirate vessel, which had chased some merchantmen into the Bay. We fear that the weapons must have been allowed to fall into a bad state of efficiency, for we are told "they caused the pirate ship to desist in its attempt to capture the vessels, but alas! did no other damage save kill two of the gunners, which sad event was caused by the bursting of one of the cannon."



**HEAVY WEATHER OFF LAND'S END**

On the northern side of the mount, which is about a mile in circumference at its base, there is a small but snug little harbour, along the quay of which are grouped the fishermen's cottages and other houses belonging to the village. Above these, to a height of nearly 250 feet, rises the Mount, crowned by the imposing and picturesque castle and church. In the early morning, and on days when the mist struggles with the sunshine, it is a weirdly beautiful pile. The oldest portion of the buildings is the central tower, which is probably fourteenth or early fifteenth century work, and forms so prominent a sea mark. The hall and chapel date from the fifteenth century, and there is an ancient cross just above the steps leading to the latter building. The chapel has from time to time been altered and restored, and it was during some building operations of recent years that a Gothic

doorway was discovered, bricked up on the right side of the east end of the church. Behind this was found a vault approached by a flight of steps, and in it was the skeleton of a man supposed to be that of Sir John Arundel. 327

On the top of the tower is what is known as St Michael's Chair, in which recess there is just room for one person to be seated. The tradition connected with this somewhat giddy and overhanging seat is that any bride who has "nerve" enough to climb into it will be gifted with the power of ruling in her own home. But, notwithstanding this, comparatively few ladies, we were told, are prevailed upon to try.

The old mansion, which was erected upon the site of the priory, has largely disappeared; and many of the seventeenth-century rooms have been done away with to allow of apartments more in keeping with modern ideas and requirements. But in the Chevy Chase room, formerly the refectory of the monks, with its stuccoed cornice depicting hunting subjects, a good many interesting details have been preserved.

The views from the summit of the tower and upper walls and windows are very fine and extensive, including not only the whole of the bay, but a stretch of the coast both eastward and westward. Perhaps the most beautiful picture of the Mount itself is from Penzance, when the sunset glow bathes its hoary grey walls in roseate light, and gives to the solitary and impressive pile a mysterious beauty and significance.

In the old smuggling days Mount's Bay was a veritable hotbed of the contraband trade. Many are the stories told of the bold smugglers of Penzance and Marazion; but of all that of one daring free trader, John Carter, known as "the King of Prussia," and his famous retreat at Prussia Cove, a short distance eastward of Cudden Point, has the truest savour of romance.

Carter must have been not only a desperately bold and resourceful smuggler; but also what is known as an "original." As a boy he doubtless got to know every nook and cranny of the little inlet, situated about six miles eastward of Penzance, which ultimately was so intimately associated with him and his daring deeds. Then the place was almost isolated from the outside world; an ideal smuggler's retreat. Even nowadays it is cut off from the rest of the world, and although a most beautiful spot, comparatively few people find their way to it. 328

It was here, with the little island forming a natural breakwater to the cove, that young Carter spent his youthful days, probably planning the deeds which afterwards caused his name to be a household word in the district. He was probably equally well versed from his youth in the ways of the smuggling fraternity, and took to the trade himself as naturally as the proverbial duck does to water. In those days a "likely" spot was not often overlooked by the Cornish smugglers, and doubtless Prussia or Bessie's Cove was used for illicit purposes long ere John Carter was of sufficient age to make the place notorious from Plymouth to Penzance. A writer of the period does not give the people of the coast just above here an enviable character, for after accusing them of wrecking and murdering (when necessary) the unfortunate seamen washed ashore, he goes on to say that their chief occupations were drinking, fighting, smuggling, and all kinds of other wickedness.



**A BREEZE OFF THE LIZARD**

Long before Carter reached his majority, he—and his brother Harry, who, from a diary which has been preserved, appears to have possessed a somewhat sanctimonious soul—began to play his part in the local smuggling enterprises. And it was not long before he became recognized as a leader on account of his masterful character and his resource in daring expeditions planned to defraud the Customs. The nick-name of "the King of Prussia," by which his fame has been handed down to posterity was bestowed upon him by his playmates in boyhood's days; and was doubtless traceable to the interest which the doings of Frederick the Great were just then arousing throughout the civilized world.

The house in which "the King" lived is still by happy chance standing to form a link with the old days of romance, which are so rapidly passing even out of recollection. It is just a typical, low, two-storied thatched cottage with a small fore-garden, and rising ground at the back. When Carter came to live here first is not clear, but it is evident that it was whilst he was quite a young man. He soon set to work to make the Cove, over which 329

he had set up a kind of sovereignty, as perfect as could be for the daring enterprises in which he intended to become engaged. He cut away the rocks at the entrance, deepened and improved the fairway and approach to the beach; and rendered the numerous existing caves more convenient for the stowage of smuggled goods. In addition to all this, a good path was cut in the cliffs connecting up the caves and beach, and road inland.

But, perhaps, the most astonishing part of Carter's work was the fort which he erected on the point to the westward of the entrance to the cove, for the purpose of defending his goods. The remains of it can still be plainly traced, though it is nearly a century and a quarter since it was dismantled.

The battery of guns which "the King of Prussia" placed in position commanded all the sea approaches, and for a time successfully overawed the "preventives," as they were doubtless intended to do. Anyway, there are records existing of the most daring acts of smuggling which took place right under their noses.

However, on one occasion the revenue men from Penzance, when "the King" was absent, perhaps upon one of his periodical visits to the French coasts, came round in force to the Cove, and took possession of a cargo lately landed from France. The bales and "tubs" were swiftly conveyed to the security of the Customs House Store at Penzance. And doubtless the revenue men chuckled over their pipes that night on the easy capture they had made. They reckoned, however, without their host. In due course John Carter returned to the Cove to discover the loss which had happened to him. It did not take him long to make up his mind. "The King of Prussia" was a man of decision. He must get back those "tubs" and bales of his. Besides (as he is reported to have told his adherents) he had promised delivery to "a gentleman of substance and position, and other customers, by a certain date, and as an honest man he was bound to keep his word!"

The same night there assembled on the waste land near "the King of Prussia's" house two score or more of well-armed men, who marching down to the beach took boat for Penzance, where they broke open the Customs House, took forcible repossession of the goods, and sailed away across the bay to Prussia Cove.

That such proceedings should have been possible at the end of the eighteenth century seems almost incredible to the modern mind. But one must remember that Cornwall, or at least the extreme western portion of it, was at that time almost as isolated and remote as the Scilly Isles or portions of the north coast of Scotland.

Such a daring exploit could not, however, long be overlooked; and the Customs House authorities of the district determined to make a supreme effort to put down John Carter and his gang.

So one day not long afterwards the look-out man at the Cove was surprised to see a large cutter approaching, which his knowledge of smuggling and revenue craft at once told him was a foe. The alarm was given, the smugglers hastened to the beach, and manned the battery on the point. The guns were loaded and run out, and with a daring which must have astonished those aboard H.M.S. *Fairy*, the battery opened fire.

For a time the smugglers held the revenue men in check, and prevented them from landing, but at length the latter succeeded in entering the Cove. The battery was stormed and captured. The guns were dismantled and thrown into a pool hard by, reputed locally to be bottomless, and the place was dismantled.

History, somewhat strangely, is silent regarding the ultimate fate of "the King of Prussia" and his companions after their defeat. But it is quite evident that the event put an end to Carter's smuggling exploits; or, at all events, to further ones of the barefaced nature in which he had up to that time indulged with impunity.

All along the coast the revenue men were not altogether unwilling to deal leniently with the smuggling fraternity, and even benefit by such a course of conduct, and it seems, therefore, very probable that "the King of Prussia" lived a quiet life upon the handsome profits of the many successful ventures in which he had been concerned, until the time came for him to leave the scenes of his exploits.

At all events the "stirring and veracious history of 'the King of Prussia' and his comrades" forms not the least entertaining and informing narrative of the old smuggling days in these parts.

The town of Penzance, except for its picturesque fishing fleet, and certain old associations, is not a place of any particular charm. To use the words of a local historian, "It is a town of to-day, and has little or no history." But it is not, after all, of such entirely mushroom growth as the said historian would be held to imply. Its seal, which dates from 1641, is an extremely interesting one. St John the Baptist's head on the charger appears in its design; with the legend "Pensans," which by some is thought to give a clue to the origin of the town's name, Penzance—*pen* being Cornish for head, and *sans* meaning holy. Some more prosaic folk, however, assert that the name has nothing to do with St John, and try to derive it from the ancient chapel to the patron saint of fishermen, St Anthony, which once stood on the land near the quay.

In the present town, which, even from the sea, is not as picturesque as ports usually are, there is preserved in Alverton Street the old name of the district, which comprised not only Penzance, but also Newlyn and Mousehole.

In the Domesday Book it is referred to as Alwaretone, and was at that period one of the most valuable estates in Cornwall. In ancient times there stood at Penzance, Castle Horneck, the home of the lords of the place; and from the middle of the fourteenth century a weekly market and a seven days' annual fair have been held. Existing records tell us that the town prospered to some considerable extent during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; but at the end of the latter, although news was brought to Penzance of the Armada's approach, the Spanish galleons did not even put into the bay, but stood up Channel for Plymouth and the English fleet. Perhaps the inhabitants of the town were lulled by this providential escape from molestation into a sense of security which was to cost them dear. For in the year 1595 on a July morning, when the sea and bay alike were veiled in all too secretive mist, as Carew narrates the event, "four galleys of the enemy presented themselves upon the coast over against Mousehole, and there in a fair bay landed about two hundred men, pike and shot, who forthwith sent their forlorn hope, consisting of their basest people, unto the straggled houses of the country ... by whom were burned not only the houses they went by, but also the parish church of Paul, the force of the fire being such that it utterly ruined the great stone pillars thereof. Others of them in that time burned that fisher town Mousehole; the rest watched as a guard for the defence of these firers."



## PENZANCE

After which we gather from another account the galleys moved away to Newlyn, when, after setting that village on fire, the men who had been landed for the purpose marched on Penzance. Here had gathered a little band of the inhabitants—terror-stricken as they undoubtedly were—headed by Sir Francis Godolphin, who was urging them to offer a stout resistance. But alas! the defenders that should have been were so consumed by fear that when Sir Francis came into the market place to organize his force and appoint to them their several duties, he found only “two resolute shot, and some ten or twelve others that followed him, most of them his own servants. The rest, surprised with fear, fled, whom neither with his persuasion nor threatening with his rapier drawn, he could recall.” 333

This is not a very flattering account of Penzance valour; but the result of the cowardice shown must have been a heavy punishment. In a few hours the town was but a mass of smoking ruins. Having accomplished what they had set themselves to do, the Spaniards re-embarked; and appeared to have seen the wisdom of not proceeding further along the coast. At all events, ere the English Fleet, which was hastening to give them battle, could arrive, they had set sail for Spain and made good their escape. In this wise came to pass and ended the most complete and serious invasion of these shores ever made by Spaniards.

Penzance arose Phoenix-like from its ashes, and in the middle of the seventeenth century “was become a place of some importance and size, so that King James granted it a charter of incorporation.” Till then, at least, Marazion across the Bay, behind St Michael’s Mount, had continued the most important town in the immediate neighbourhood. Leland speaks of it as a “great long town,” and whatever the origin of the name may be, and whether (as tradition asserts) Joseph of Arimathea was connected with it and its tin trade, does not nowadays much matter.

Penzance, during the Civil War, remained for the King, and the town and its inhabitants were destined to pay a heavy price for the privilege of loyalty. The place was seized by the Parliamentarians—at the time they were attacking St Michael’s Mount—and they plundered, partially burned, and sacked as though foreign invaders had landed and had been permitted to wreck their vengeance unmolested. 334

At his restoration Charles II, to mark his appreciation of the Penzance folk’s loyalty to his father, gave the town the dignity of a coinage town. To it, in consequence, all tin within the Stannary of Penwith and Kerrier had to be brought to have a corner or “coin” cut off to test its quality. And, until 1838, every hundredweight of the metal was so tested, and had to pay a tax amounting to four shillings.

Nowadays Penzance is chiefly seeking to advance its claims for recognition as a health and holiday resort. With many, however, the old world claim of romantic interest will weigh more heavily than either those of climate or modern amusements. But, as a sapient guide book relating to a more ancient town, which is also making a bid for popularity on similar grounds, avers, “a town cannot live upon its romantic interest alone, nor on the light of other days,” whatever that last may be. And so we must regard Penzance from a new standpoint, which is easier, as it possesses practically no ancient or historic buildings, and only one street, Market Jew Street, in one of the houses of which Sir Humphry Davy was born, which dwells in our memory as being of any note or picturesqueness.

But sometimes Nature is more than kind to Penzance, and we have seen her transform the distant town, as we lay at anchor on the bosom of Mount’s Bay, into something of almost ethereal beauty, as the soft, pearly light of a June evening enveloped it against a background of crimson and powdered gold.

THE END

## Transcriber's Notes

Punctuation, hyphenation, and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed. When words in quoted text are spelled differently than elsewhere, those spellings have been retained. Old-style and dialect spellings have been retained.

Simple typographical errors were corrected.

Ambiguous hyphens at the ends of lines were retained.

Page [18](#): Likely spurious opening quotation mark removed just before “till they were nearer France”.

Page [24](#): A period may be missing after “I’ll carry my ball to Calais Green”.

Page [52](#): Closing quotation mark added after “laying-to in open day.” This may not be where it belongs.

Page [61](#): Missing right-parenthesis added after “before his death”.

Page [62](#): “10ll” is followed by an explanation that the two els mean “pounds”; the same notation is used for “8ll” on page [63](#).

Page [240](#): “philanthrophy” was printed that way.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FROM THE NORTH FORELAND TO PENZANCE \*\*\*

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